The HANDBOOK of HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Second Edition
This book is dedicated to our late mentor and coeditor, James Bugental. Jim’s landmark work, Challenges of Humanistic Psychology, inspired the present volume. His presence, patience, and clarity inspired our lives.

KIRK SCHNEIDER
J. FRASER PIERSON
The HANDBOOK of HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Theory, Research, and Practice
Second Edition

Edited by

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER
J. FRASER PIERSON
JAMES F. T. BUGENTAL
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Foreword to the Second Edition

E. Mark Stern

Humanistic psychology continuously and awesomely shines forth and expands on its hub of foundations. There remain influences from Eastern wisdom and others derived from the majestic age of Greek philosophy; there too are linkages from personal intuition and, finally, studies and experimentations leading to the thrill of discovery. Involved too are unique new personal meanings derived from the bipolarity of constructs, wisdom drawn from existentialism and phenomenology, hope and tragedy born into romantic appreciation, and profound intersubjective sensibilities drawn by way of enhanced personal responsibility. Dating the main tracks that have influenced humanistic psychology can be an awkwardly speculative project—less so its splendid emergence by way of the American experience. Gertrude Stein dubbed America the oldest country in the world since it was apparently the first to enter the 20th century. Once born, it induced on its shores a democratic humanistic emphasis. America offered a perfect climate for the emergence of a distinctive humanistic psychology just as its founders so elegantly counterpoised individualism with social awareness.

As psychology boldly and perhaps a bit precipitously left the breast of philosophy, what was to become known as humanistic psychology would eventually and fortuitously return to its philosophic underpinnings. Out of the discontentment with behavioral and psychoanalytic determinism and their all too comfortable alliance with medical-model diagnostics, this humanistic “third force” in psychology did emerge. Prepared to commit to the primacy of the experience, this psychology of the whole being called forth a dynamic view of personal authenticity and responsibility. The new frontiers had been cast by the transcendental idealism of Thoreau, Emerson, and Margaret Fuller and, at length, infused with William James’s boundless pragmatism. This ethos eventually gave rise to three seminal figures in humanistic psychology: Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May. Each, with his unique appreciation of the totality of experience, helps enlarge the repertoire of personal potentialities.

Soon enough, some humanistic psychologists embarked on qualitative research, suggesting the Jamesian “will to personate” and stressing Gordon Allport’s individual dynamic organization. Events drawn and parsed from intimate personal accounts shaped this shift to qualitative inquiries. Emphasis was placed on what is distinctive about the person. Often dispensing with genetic criteria, humanistic research seeks to know more about personal meaning. Multimodal investigations, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, have likewise been deployed as a means of fostering extended comprehensibility.

Humanistic psychology in its coherence with philosophic matters is steeped in ontological foundations. Rather than lay emphasis on classical psychiatric constructs,
psychotherapists identified with humanistic psychology are less inclined to envision a person as categorically belonging to a diagnostically determined grouping. In a time in which mood swings, obsessiveness, anxiety, and such are assigned as conclusive descriptors, humanistic psychotherapists commit to a view of the person that is essentially reverential and respectful. Deviations from the norm are likely to be seen as complex attempts at coping with an otherwise alien sense of existence. By contrast, the practice of addressing standardized psychopathological descriptors leads to establishment psychology’s search for empirically proven corrective cognitive strategies. Moreover a growing movement to train and certify clinical psychologists to prescribe psychotropic medications has further polarized the paradigms. Humanistic psychologists and allied practitioners value the exceptional personalized arenas in which people may play out their respective dramas.

There is a disquieting concern that humanistic psychology tends to emphasize the optimistic at the expense of evading emotional darkness. As seen by Carl Rogers, malevolence is hardly native to what it means to be human, while Rollo May considered that demonic aspects play an essential role in the psyche. Paradoxical as these two positions are, most would surely agree that there can be no heaven without a hell. Those wise in the art of psychotherapy might be inclined to agree that there are no unmixed emotions and no endeavors without mixed motives. A key factor in understanding what inquiry means through the eye of humanistic psychology is not only to see things as they are but to revere the experiences from which they emerge and thus to be inspired by the challenges they create. The resulting humanistic awakening as it is represented in psychotherapy is that unwavering enterprise through which both therapist and client strive to marshal their differing emotional heritages in order to better connect with their common humanity.

How phenomena are, how they are experienced, and why they are mattered to the earlier masters of humanistic psychology as well. Toward the end of his life, Maslow was brought to the Salk Institute as a fellow in humanistic biology. When asked to critique the efficacy of various experimental research projects involving rats as subjects, he speculated that the key hidden variable is whether a particular research scientist happened to like or dislike handling the rats.

And so it is that what humanistic psychology has to offer is, first and foremost, a running critique of absolutist notions of what consciousness is all about. Even as the neurosciences configure the workings of brain specificity, humanistic psychology questions how a portrayal of fragments is capable of accounting for any full orchestration of consciousness.

I am very heartened by the contributions of the various researchers and practitioners represented in this Handbook of Humanistic Psychology. Together they comprise a panel of penetrating explorers of the multiroutings of an extended contemporary humanistic psychology. Refocusing psychology, as this collection so inspiringly does, emphasizes an awakening and transformation of consciousness into dynamic experience. While diverse in their vantage points, taken as a whole, they weave an exquisite unity. As a collective of scholarly intimacy, this second edition of The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology welcomes the reader into stimulating conversation with a varied company of compatriots.

—E. Mark Stern, EdD, ABPP
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Foreword to the First Edition

JOHN VASCONCELLOS

We live in a time of enormous and pervasive change and challenge—a time of “raging chaos.” It is clear that our old ways of being and doing no longer work and that our old myths neither hold our allegiance nor hold promise for solving our problems. As Albert Einstein once observed, “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew.”

It is fitting, therefore, that a new book on humanistic psychology usher in our new millennium. It feeds our hunger for a new vision and a new way of being.

Humanistic psychology first came to my attention when my own pain and confusion shocked me out of my old beliefs and tested my sense of myself. I began a search for something to make sense of my life. That search led me to a series of workshops, during one memorable year, with Sidney Jourard, Abraham Maslow, James Bugental, James Fadiman, Rollo May, John Heider, and Carl Rogers. Those experiences saved my life, and they profoundly inform all of my social involvement and politics.

The futurist Willis Harman has identified three profound revolutions that shattered our old ways of being: (1) when Galileo and Copernicus recognized that the earth revolves around the sun (and not vice versa), (2) when Darwin recognized the evolution of species, and (3) when Freud recognized the internal dimensions within us humans. In each case, worlds came apart, we found ourselves in raging chaos, and then there arose a new order.

Today’s “new Copernican revolution” amounts to a most profound shift in our view of our own selves, from a fundamentally negative view of human nature to a fundamentally positive one. In a break from the long traditions of original sin, where we needed to be tamed, we now sense ourselves alive with original grace, needing to be nurtured.

This radical idea upends all that has been constructed on the old foundation. It amounts to a total revolution. It was hinted at by Jourard, who proposed that we become “transparent selves.” It gained credence with Bugental’s observance of “the search for authenticity.” It was given voice by Rogers in his famous aphorism: “I’ve been doing psychology for more than 50 years, and I’ve come to believe that we human beings are innately inclined toward becoming life affirming, constructive, responsible, and trustworthy.” It was elaborated by May when he argued that the utterly free human will should naturally be responsible. It was confirmed by Maslow when he identified our possible “democratic character structure,” in which one’s intellect, emotions, and body are liberated and altogether integrated into one’s becoming a whole person.

What do these eloquent formulations amount to? A new revolution. Whereas the first American Revolution established our right to self-determination, this next revolution demands self-actualization. Simply said, the humanistic view of the self must become
the organizing vision and ethic of our times and of our lives.

According to the 2000 book *The Cultural Creatives*, fully one quarter of American adults already have enlisted themselves, however (un)consciously, in this revolution.

Humanistic psychology offers us the most faithful, hopeful, and loving human path toward our own wholeness and for addressing the most pressing social issues of our times. The present volume introduces us to ourselves and to visions and practices for our lives. Such visions and practices lead to engagements in social action that are grounded in faith, abound with hope, and relate in love.

There is almost nothing as powerful as an idea whose time has come, and this volume demonstrates that our time has come for humanistic psychology. May this book, comprising the very latest in humanistic scholarship, serve to both enlighten and empower us. And may it lead us toward a fully realized human nature in our new millennium.

—John Vasconcellos
California State Senator

REFERENCE

Preface

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER AND J. FRASER PIERSON

It has now been 13 years since the original publication of the *Handbook of Humanistic Psychology*, and important changes have taken place in our field. For one, our dear friend, mentor, and coeditor, Jim Bugental, passed away on September 18, 2008. Jim, as readers of this original volume know, was the inspiration for the *Handbook* and, in no small way, of existential-humanistic psychology itself. We dearly miss Jim and are proud to extend his legacy with this trailblazing new edition. We also would like to recognize our other cherished friends and colleagues who have departed from us over the past 13 years (a few of whom contributed to this volume) and, with their departure, left an indelible mark on our humanistic field. Among these cherished people are Jim’s beloved wife and pioneer in humanistic eldercare, Elizabeth Bugental, as well as Maurice Friedman, David Rennie, Mike Arons, George Leonard, Michael Mahoney, Thomas Szasz, Brewster Smith, Ernest Keen, Clark Moustakas, Arne Col- len, Jeannie Achterberg, and Eugene Taylor.

A second noteworthy development concerns the shifts within psychology as a whole. Neuropsychology, for example, has been on a rapid ascent, while classical psychoanalysis has been on a precipitous decline; multicultural psychology has played an increasingly integral role in everything from research to assessment, while traditional conceptions of the masterful, well-bounded self have dwindled; spirituality has become more prominent, while behaviorism has waned; and finally, the virtual world of Facebook and Twitter, text messaging, and designer drugs have burgeoned, while solitude and introspection appear to be on the wane.

On the other hand, humanistic psychology has been making major inroads in networking with the wider psychological world. As will be seen in the revised introduction, humanistic psychology is now a growing influence from Europe to Asia and in fields as disparate as psychotherapy and social and political psychology. In the United States, humanistic psychology is influencing the new emphasis on personal factors in mainstream psychotherapy, the growing interest in qualitative research, and the burgeoning attraction to the psychology of well-being and spirituality.

In this new volume, there have been 13 new chapters and sections added, along with some 23 new contributors. Major developments in humanistic theory, research, health care, eldercare, multicultural psychology, neuroscience, developmental psychology, awe-based spirituality, social and political psychology, and psychotherapy have been vividly and methodically detailed. At the same time, this volume addresses key controversies that are brewing both within and without humanistic psychology. Among these are the withering pressures on mainstream psychology to shift further from its humanistic roots and to cater to military-industrial interests; the pressure on humanistic and general psychotherapy to
stress short-term, solution-focused interventions; and the pressure on psychology as a whole to become a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) discipline.

Yet for all of these challenges, humanistic psychology remains a powerful force for psychospiritual wholeness, for the larger view, and for the depth of inquiry that few singular disciplines attain. As the Introduction below makes plain, humanistic psychology remains a foundation on which other specialties can rest and on which the entire field of psychology can be both bolstered and integrated. These are not incontrovertible words of course, but they are words that form the backbone of this volume. They are also words that inspire humanistic psychologists, more than ever before perhaps, to work toward a comprehensively humanizing psychology, a psychology that resists the fragmentary and embraces the whole.
**Introduction**

**Kirk J. Schneider, J. Fraser Pierson, and James F. T. Bugental**

Humanism is a ferment that has “come to stay.” It is not a single hypothesis or theorem, and it dwells on no new facts. It is rather a slow shifting in the philosophic perspective, making things appear as from a new centre of interest or point of sight.

—William James [“The Essence of Humanism,” 1905]

What is the next step for psychology, and who or what will lead us into the beckoning age? Will it be the wizardry of artificial intelligence with its computerized models for living? The marvels of neuroscience with its brain–behavior correlations? Evolutionary psychology with its sociobiology of natural selection? Positive psychology with its “measurements” of “the good life” (Seligman, 1998)? The dizzying analyses of postmodernity with their culturally relative truths and patchwork quilt of meanings?

Although each of these paradigms is certain to have its place in the coming age, the reader is asked to envision an alternative scenario. What if psychology’s next step were a holistic one, a rich mosaic consisting of each of the emerging trends but threaded throughout by the depth, breadth, and pathos of intimate human experience? What if artificial intelligence were complemented by poetic illumination, neuroscience were supplemented by experiential inquiry, and evolutionary psychology were matched by holistic reflection? What if positive psychology were linked with depth or philosophical investigation and postmodernism were linked with personalism or transcendentalism?

If this amalgamated vision hints of familiarity, it should. For 55 years, humanistic psychology has grappled with this vision, and during more recent years, that struggle has intensified. The reasons for this intensification are many, but psychology’s relentless yen for compartmentalizing—for fragmenting and subdividing knowledge—is surely at their core. In our haste to find mechanisms, abstractions, and formulas, are we neglecting the being to whom these modalities apply? Are we neglecting lives?

Humanistic psychology poses two overarching challenges to the study of conscious and nonconscious processes: (1) what does it mean to be fully experientially human and (2) how does that understanding illuminate the fulfilled or vital life?

Say what one will about the trials and limitations of humanistic psychology’s past, it is now a seasoned and multifaceted approach. Precisely at a time when technical models for living are in the ascendant, humanistic psychology offers a poignant counterweight to those models and, thereby, a context through which they may become humanized. Humanistic psychology is a concerted brew
of existential, transpersonal, and constructivist theorizing and encompasses a breathtaking investigative range. Still, for all its variety, it converges on the profound and poignant wholeness of the human lot. Whereas there have been extremes within humanistic psychology (e.g., individualism, libertinism, spiritual and secular elitism), this volume reflects the leading edges and maturation of what we call experiential humanism. Experiential humanism embraces all modes of awareness and subawareness—individual, social, biological, and spiritual—but particularly as they resonate with lives. For example, neither aggregates nor abstractions are excluded from the experiential humanistic framework. But the question is to whom and within what contexts these formulations apply. And to the extent that they do not apply, how can we supplement them?

The contributors to this volume have a great deal to say about the living and breathing contexts for psychological inquiry. They have a great deal to convey about the methods and means by which to study such contexts, and they have even more to say about the applications that ensue from such study. Furthermore, we are delighted to announce that with this thoroughly updated second edition of the Handbook, we have added 13 new chapters and sections and 23 new authors to help us extend the humanistic legacy to the emerging generation of students, scholars, and practitioners. Among these chapters and authors are “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements” by Louis Hoffman, Heatherlyn Cleare-Hoffman, and Theopia Jackson; “Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society” by Kirk Schneider; “Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self: An Existential Response to the Postmodern Condition” by Louis Hoffman, Sharon Stewart, Denise Warren, and Lisa Meek; “Humanistic Neuropsychology: The Implications of Neurophenomenology for Psychology” by Brent Dean Robbins and Susan Gordon; “Humanistic Eldercare: Toward a New Conceptual Framework for Aging” by Nader Shabahangi; “Toward a Humanistic-Cultural Model of Development” by Eugene DeRobertis; “The Grounded Theory Method and Humanistic Psychology” by David Rennie and Rinat Nissam; a special section, “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion,” with Kirk Schneider, Alfried Langle, Jürgen Kriz, Lillian Comas-Díaz, Robert Stolorow, Bruce Wampold, David Elkins, and Steven Hayes; “Frames, Attitudes, and Skills of an Existential-Humanistic Therapist” by Bob Edelstein; “The Person of the Therapist: One Therapist’s Journey to Relationship” by Barry Duncan; “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World” by Maureen O’Hara; “An Existential-Integrative Approach to Experiential Liberation” by Kirk Schneider; “Cultivating Psychotherapeutic Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs” by Fraser Pierson, Orah Krug, Jeff Sharp, and Troy Piwowarski; “Humanistic Psychology, Mind–Body Medicine, and Whole-Person Healthcare” by Eleanor Criswell and Ilene Serlin; and “Humanistic Psychology and Social Action” by Donadrian Rice. Additionally, each of the remaining chapters have either been updated or retained in accordance with their current state of respective knowledge and understanding.

Before we expand on the aforementioned, however, let us briefly trace the lineage that led to its formation. (For a more formal exposition, see the chapter “The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology” by Moss, this volume.) Contrary to popular belief, the roots of humanistic psychology are a diverse amalgam of secular, theistic, individualistic, and communalistic strands
that, as suggested earlier, converge on two overarching themes: (1) what it means to be fully experientially human and (2) how that understanding illuminates the fulfilled or vital life.

The birth pangs of humanism are typically traced to fifth-century BCE Greece, during the period of the great philosophers and dramatists such as Socrates, Plato, and Sophocles (Garraty & Gay, 1972; Grondin, 1995). Classical humanism, as it has come to be known, was a turning away from the god-centered preoccupation of antiquity to that which concerned the distinctly “human.” Following Socrates’s famous dictum “Know thyself,” humanistic thinkers elucidated themes such as personal responsibility, choice, love, and fear. According to such humanists, no longer could questions of motivation, morality, or truth be reducible to supernatural dogmas; instead, they required the complex applications of reason and reflection.

The second great flourishing of humanism occurred during the period of the Renaissance, approximately 400 to 600 years ago, when intellectuals such as Pico della Mirandola, DaVinci, and Erasmus rebelled against the strictures of the medieval Church and resurrected Greek humanism. The focus of these intellectuals was on human achievements or the studia humanitatis as opposed to the studia divinitatis (Grondin, 1995, p. 112). This curriculum emphasized “human artistry and culture in the original works of the Greek and Latin authors” (p. 112).

The third wave of humanism emerged during the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. Two major branches reflecting earlier humanistic rifts characterized this wave. Rationalists represented the first branch, and romanticists represented the second branch. Rationalist-humanists, exemplified by thinkers such as Bacon, Newton, and Locke, held that cognition is what distinguishes the human being. The path to the fulfilled life for rationalists was prediction, control, and efficiency (Jones, 1969). On the other hand, romanticist-humanists, exemplified by luminaries such as Blake, Goethe, and Kierkegaard, believed that the heart (or emotions) is the distinguishing characteristic of humanity. To live with heart—with passion, intuition, and imagination—is to live the vital life, according to the romanticists (Schneider, 1998).

The latest wave of humanism began at the turn of the 20th century. In psychology, such humanism emerged as a reaction to behaviorism and deterministic Freudianism. Early critics of these movements—William James (who, ironically, influenced behaviorism), Carl Jung, Otto Rank, Ludwig Binswanger, Medard Boss, and Henry Murray—protested the equation of human with animal or primate being.

By the late 1950s, the American humanistic psychology movement drew on all of the former sources of humanism but developed its own brand as well (deCarvalho, 1991). The answer to the question “What makes us fully and optimally human?” was as varied as the American humanistic psychology movement itself. Given this caveat, however, authors as diverse as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Gordon Allport, Carl Rogers, Michael Polanyi, and James Bugental all coalesced with regard to one intertwining concern—the centrality of the personal. To the degree that American, and to a large extent European, humanistic psychologists turned to the personal or profoundly intimate as the fount of their investigative wisdom, they echoed the Enlightenment romanticists to define their tradition. This lineage, which in turn echoed the biblical and Gnostic lineages of “knowledge or science of the heart” (Martinez, 1998, p. 100; Moyers, 1997), has two main emphases: (1) a holistic or multilayered understanding of psychological phenomena and (2) a
on humanistic concepts such as authenticity and the interpersonal field to reform conventional psychoanalytic theory (Portnoy, 1999; Stolorow, 2011; Stolorow, Atwood, & Brandchaft, 1994). Positive psychology is conveying key humanistic concepts to the mainstream (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Yet humanism (and humanistic psychology in particular) is a great deal more complex than the conceptions of many of its detractors or even its transformers. As the contributors to this updated volume make clear, contemporary humanistic psychology has come a long way since the days of fuzzy-minded or idiosyncratic scholarship (to whatever extent those actually predominated). Now, it is a rich tapestry of diverse and reflective voices that often complement, inform, and even inspire their ostensible detractors. In this volume, for example, we see meditations on the humanistic contributions to cutting-edge research, discussions of the humanistic origins of postmodern narrative psychology, examinations of the complementarity between personal experiences and neuroscience, reflections on the place of humanistic psychology in cross-cultural studies, and considerations of the role of personalism in an era of standardized mental health. We also see leading-edge formulations of humanistic ecology, peace, child rearing, eldercare, multiculturalism, spirituality, and gender studies along with many other traditional areas of inquiry.

The upshot of this elaboration is that contemporary humanistic psychology is an integrative psychology that addresses the most pressing issues of our time. For signs of this integrative resurgence, consider the American Psychological Association’s publication of two unprecedented textbooks on humanistic therapy (Cain & Seeman, 2002) and existential therapy (Schneider & Krug, 2010); the publication of a companion video series on the topics called “Psychotherapy...
Over Time” (Cain, 2010; Schneider, 2009); and the publication of two major books on humanistic philosophy and social psychology emerging in the same year (Bohart, Held, Mendelowitz, & Schneider, 2012; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). There is also an increasing interest in the integration of humanistic principles into mainstream psychotherapeutic practice (see “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy,” this volume; Norcross & Wampold, 2011; Price, 2011; Schneider, 2008; Shumaker, 2012; Wampold, 2008; Wolfe, 2008). These integrations are occurring in spite of, and perhaps even in light of, the countervailing forces of therapeutic manualization and standardization (e.g., Benjamin, 2011; Norcross & Lamberti, 2011; Price, 2011; Shedler, 2010).

Finally, there is an increasing international interest in humanistic theory, research, and practice (see “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements” [Chapter 4] and the special section “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion,” this volume). For example, there has been a sharp rise in existential-humanistic and transpersonal psychology in China (see Hoffman, Yang, Kaklutaskas, & Chan, 2009, for an overview), Russia, and central Europe (Langley & Kriz, “The Renewal of Humanism in European Psychotherapy: Developments and Applications” [Chapter 26], this volume) and active involvement in Canada, Great Britain, the Baltics, Greece, Japan, and Latin America. The first major U.S–China existential therapy conference took place in April 2010, and the second took place in May 2012. The first World Congress of Existential Therapy is due to convene in London in 2015.

What, then, does the most recent incarnation of humanistic psychology offer that is so distinct, compelling, and international? In our view, it is that which the earlier generation of humanistic psychologists also prized—the heart or personal dimension to which we earlier alluded. Unlike the previous generation, however, current humanistic psychology has the benefit of incorporating a wealth of contemporary insight into its personalism, for example, a recognition of its significance for politics and culture as well as for individuals (see the chapters by Hoffman, Hoffman, & Jackson, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements” [Chapter 4]; O’Hara, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World” [Chapter 37]; and Rice, “Humanistic Psychology and Social Action” [Chapter 46], this volume) and an increased openness to its spiritual implications (see the chapters by Schneider, “Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society” [Chapter 6]; Elkins, “Beyond Religion: Toward a Humanistic Spirituality” [Chapter 44]; Krippner, “Research Methodology in Humanistic Psychology in Light of Postmodernity” [Chapter 24]; Pilisuk & Joy, “Humanistic Psychology and Ecology” [Chapter 10]; and Walsh, “Authenticity, Conventionality, and Angst: Existential and Transpersonal Perspectives” [Chapter 45], this volume). The poignancy of the tragic also is highlighted (see the chapters by Stern, “Awe Comes Shaking Out of the Bones” [Chapter 32]; Heery, “A Humanistic Perspective on Bereavement” [Chapter 35]; Greening, “Becoming Authentic: An Existential-Humanistic Approach to Reading Literature” [Chapter 13]; and Mendelowitz, “Fellini, Fred, and Ginger: Imagology and the Postmodern World” [Chapter 14], this volume) along with traditional humanistic accents on hope. In short, the new personalism embraces experiences that matter—that have “resonance validity” (see Schneider, 1999)—regardless of whether or not those experiences pertain to individuals or groups, persons or divinities.

Yet it is precisely such experiences, and such openness, that psychology struggles with today—on all of its major fronts.
Consequently, it too is embattled (see “Historical Overview,” this volume). On the other hand, consider what the personal dimension (the intimate and resonant) could bring to psychology’s various components—to the statistical mind-set of methodology, the standardization mentality of psychotherapy, the group consciousness of multiculturalism, the nihilism of poststructuralism, and the esoterics of transpersonalism.

Twenty-nine years ago, Carl Rogers issued a challenge: Can humanistic psychology, with all of its applied and philosophical richness, become a force in academia and science (Rogers, 1985)? We believe that it not only can but currently is, and we believe that this volume is a testament to that claim.

To the extent that psychology is fractured, rivalrous, and rife with tension, it is also abundant with possibility. This volume is a window on that possibility—a window on a larger view of science. Will the reader welcome this window? Indeed, we the editors believe that the reader will yearn to peer through.

One final note is in order. This volume continues to represent a massive collective undertaking. It remains unprecedented, to our knowledge, that the humanistic community has mobilized so comprehensively, and so devotedly, around its own distinctive vision.

There was, however, another time when the humanistic community undertook such a concerted project, and Bugental’s (1967) Challenges of Humanistic Psychology was its embodiment. We remain greatly indebted to both the participants and the spirit of that trailblazer, and we bear its stamp with pride.

NOTE

1. These represent three basic emphases of contemporary humanistic psychology. Although these emphases overlap and sometimes are used interchangeably with one another (as well as with their umbrella context, i.e., humanistic psychology), they are generally considered to be separate yet historically linked (see the chapters by Moss, “The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology” [Chapter 1]; Taylor & Martin, “Humanistic Psychology at the Crossroads” [Chapter 2]; Arons & Richards, “Two Noble Insurgencies: Creativity and Humanistic Psychology” [Chapter 12]; Josselson & Lieblich, “Narrative Research and Humanism” [Chapter 23]; Leitner & Epting, “Constructivist Approaches to Therapy” [Chapter 34]; O’Hara, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World” [Chapter 37]; Walsh and Schneider, “Authenticity, Conventionality, and Angst: Existential and Transpersonal Perspectives” [Chapter 45]; and Rice, Humanistic Psychology and Social Action [Chapter 46], this volume). Existential psychology emphasizes freedom, experiential reflection, and responsibility; transpersonal psychology stresses spirituality, transcendence, and compassionate social action; and constructivist psychology accents culture, political consciousness, and personal meaning.

REFERENCES


Acknowledgments

The birthing of a book of this magnitude is essentially a labor of love from inspiration and conceptualization to actualization in the very tangible form that the reader holds in his or her hands. We are warmly appreciative of the authors who enthusiastically and generously contributed their current products in theory, research, and practice so that, collaboratively, we could offer a “handbook” of humanistic psychology. We also thank our forebears in philosophy and psychology, whose contributions to the movement of humanistic psychology are of such significance that their presence resonates to our generation and is expressed—sometimes between the lines—throughout the chapters of this volume. We especially acknowledge the inspiration of Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James, Martin Buber, Edmund Husserl, Otto Rank, Martin Heidegger, Paul Tillich, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gordon Allport, Charlotte Bühler, Erich Fromm, Henry Murray, Gardner Murphy, George Kelly, Abraham Maslow, Frederick Perls, Anthony Sutich, Rollo May, Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, Ronald David Laing, Sidney Jourard, and Ernest Becker.

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It is with joy and deepest love that we thank our spouses and dearest friends, Jūratė Elena Raulinaitis and Jeff Hubbell, for the innumerable ways in which they have contributed to this grand adventure. Their loving presence is our greatest inspiration.

—Kirk Schneider and J. Fraser Pierson
Kirk J. Schneider, PhD, is a leading spokesperson for contemporary existential-humanistic psychology. He is the recent past editor of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (2005–2012), vice president of the Existential-Humanistic Institute, and adjunct faculty at Saybrook University, Columbia University, Teachers College, and the California Institute of Integral Studies. A fellow of the American Psychological Association, he has published more than 100 articles and chapters and has authored or edited 10 books (7 of them either have been or soon will be translated into Chinese). These books include *The Paradoxical Self, Horror and the Holy, The Psychology of Existence* (with Rollo May); *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology* (with James Bugental and Fraser Pierson); *Rediscovery of Awe, Existential-Integrative Psychotherapy, Existential-Humanistic Therapy* (with Orah Krug—the accompanying APA video is also available); *Humanity’s Dark Side: Evil, Destructive Experience, and Psychotherapy* (with Art Bohart, Barbara Held, and Ed Mendelowitz); *Awakening to Awe: Personal Stories of Profound Transformation*; and, most recently, *The Polarized Mind: Why It’s Killing Us and What We Can Do About It*. He is the recipient of the Rollo May Award from Division 32 of the American Psychological Association for “outstanding and independent pursuit of new frontiers in humanistic psychology”;
the “Cultural Innovator” award from the Living Institute, Toronto, Canada, a psychotherapy training center that bases its diploma on his existential-integrative model of therapy; and an honorary diploma from the East European Association of Existential Therapy. He is also a founding member of the Existential-Humanistic Institute in San Francisco, which in August 2012 launched one of the first certificate programs in existential-humanistic practice to be offered in the United States. In April 2010, he delivered the opening keynote address at the First International (East-West) Existential Psychology Conference in Nanjing, China, and he is slated as keynote speaker at the first World Congress of Existential Psychotherapy in London, May 2015.

J. Fraser Pierson, PhD, is a licensed psychologist and professor of psychology at Southern Oregon University. She coedited (with Schneider and Bugental) *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory, Research, and Practice* (2001); contributed a piece, “The Awe of Natural Living,” to *Awakening to Awe* (edited by Schneider, 2009); interviewed James Hillman for *The Archetypal Psychology and Psychotherapy Series* (wwwpsychotherapy.net, 2008); regularly
presents on topics pertaining to mental health counseling; and serves on the editorial board of The Journal of Humanistic Psychology. Her current interests include psychotherapist preparation; self-and-worldview transformations associated with participation in sailing and other kinds of “deep play” (see Diane Ackerman’s engaging book by that title); and the dividends of transcendent consciousness catalyzed by awe, particularly when awe is sparked by wildlife observations and encounters in the natural world or by the bonds between companion animals and their humans.

James F. T. Bugental (1915–2008) was a major spokesperson for the humanistic perspective since its coalescence into an influential movement in the field of psychology more than 50 years ago. He was an emeritus and adjunct faculty member at Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center (now Saybrook University) and an emeritus and clinical faculty member at Stanford Medical School. Virtually up to the end of his life, Jim continued to supervise, teach, and write about existential-humanistic psychology and psychotherapy. His major publications include *Psychotherapy Isn’t What You Think* (1999), *Intimate Journeys: Stories From Life-Changing Psychotherapy* (1990), *The Art of the Psychotherapist* (1987), *Psychotherapy and Process: The Fundamentals of an Existential-Humanistic Approach* (1978), *The Search for Existential Identity: Patient-Therapist Dialogues in Humanistic Psychotherapy* (1976), *The Search for Authenticity: An Existential-Analytic Approach to Psychotherapy* (1965), and (as editor) *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology* (1967). He also has published more than 80 articles in professional and technical journals as well as 25 original chapters in books edited by others. Translations of his work can be found in French, Finnish, Spanish, German, Dutch, Russian, Italian, Chinese, and Japanese. He served on the editorial review boards of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, *The Humanistic Psychologist*, and the *American Journal of Psychotherapy*. 
INTRODUCTION TO PART I

To illuminate humanistic psychology’s present, we must shed light on its past—and what a distinguished and colorful past it has been! What, then, were humanistic psychology’s major battles, wounds, and inspirations? Who were the central figures in these scenarios, and how did they influence psychology? Finally, how do we assess the legacy of these pioneers and milestones? Where have they left us as a perspective? To bring these concerns into context, and to set the stage for the unfolding volume, we present four interweaving historical reflections on humanistic psychology.

Beginning with Chapter 1 (“The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology”), Donald Moss provides a succinct and informative historical overview of humanistic psychology. From its rudiments in ancient Greece to its emergence in Judeo-Christianity, to its flowering in the modern age, Moss’s “road map” is both unique and foundational.

In Chapter 2 (“Humanistic Psychology at the Crossroads”), Eugene Taylor and Fred Martin reflect on humanistic psychology’s recent lineage and arrive at some rather provocative conclusions. First, there is a window of opportunity for a humanistic reformation in psychology. Second, the question of whether this reformation actually will materialize remains open. Third, the revitalization of humanistic methodology, personology, and psychotherapeutic investigation is likely to bolster the chances of the reformation, whereas the overemphasis on humanistic folk psychology (e.g., the meditative and somatic traditions) is likely to dampen these chances. The authors leave us with a challenge: Can humanistic psychology “articulate a phenomenological . . . epistemology” as the basis for a new experimental psychology and, beyond that, “a new experimental science,” or will it go the way of disconnection from and the resultant absorption by the positivistic mainstream?

In the next two chapters, the historical perspective shifts to two relatively hidden, if not neglected, humanistic legacies: women and multiculturalism. In a thoroughly updated Chapter 3 (“Humanistic Psychology and Women: A Critical-Historical Perspective”), Ilene
Serlin and Eleanor Criswell forcefully argue that although women’s relationship to humanistic psychology has been complex, at the same time it has been integral, both practically and theoretically. The authors trace the entangled strands of humanistic psychology’s approach to women, women’s ambivalent reaction to those entangled strands, and the present challenge for both women and humanistic psychology. Finally, they address the many promising resonances between women and humanistic psychology, such as the stress on holism, the prizing of interpersonal connection, and the concern with embodiment. The authors conclude that a revived humanistic psychology is contingent on a revived feminist humanism.

In Chapter 4 (“Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements”), Louis Hoffman, Heatherlyn Hoffman, and Theopia Jackson conclude this part of the volume with a groundbreaking discussion of humanistic psychology’s multicultural legacy. They note—as did their predecessor, Adelbert Jenkins, in the first edition of this volume—that although humanistic psychology began, and in many cases evolved, in America in concert with a multicultural consciousness, nonwhites tend not to identify with it. They go on to critically evaluate this anomaly, tracing both the humanistic and the multicultural bases for its emergence. The authors conclude that though humanistic psychology has great potential to live up to its multicultural calling, it must do far more than invite representatives from diverse cultures to join in symposia or write the occasional multicultural article; rather, humanistic psychology itself must be prepared to change. That is, humanistic psychology must open itself to being altered by multicultural perspectives, and not just the other way around. This is a far more radical and, frankly, a more refreshing perspective than has been heard in the past, by any long-standing psychological orientation, and it is fitting that humanistic psychology lead the way. If “humanity” is not core to humanism, then humanism is not core to humanity.
CHAPTER 1

The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology

DONALD MOSS

The humanistic movement in psychology has emphasized the search for a philosophical and scientific understanding of human existence that does justice to the highest reaches of human achievement and potential. From the beginning, humanistic psychologists have cared deeply about what it means to be fully human and have sought pathways and technologies that assist humans in reaching full humanness. Humanistic psychologists criticized the mainstream psychological schools of the first half of the 20th century for proclaiming a diminished model of human nature. Their strivings for a new and better concept of humanity provided much of the motivation for the early flourishing of humanistic psychology.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FULLY HUMAN?

Concepts of Human Nature in Psychological Science

Articulate humanistic scholars such as Abraham Maslow and Rollo May criticized psychoanalysis and behaviorism for attempting to explain the full range of human nature in terms of mechanisms drawn from the study of neurotic patients and laboratory rats. Sigmund Freud wrote monographs about artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci and religious leaders such as Moses. Freud used the concepts of abnormal psychology to explain the lifetime artistic and spiritual achievements of these outstanding humans (Freud, 1953–1974, Volumes 11, 13, 23).

John Watson (1924) arrogantly proclaimed that, given the opportunity, he could condition any human infant to become either a criminal or a scientist by consistently applying the principles of modern behavioral theory (p. 82). Later, B. F. Skinner (1971) attacked concepts such as freedom and dignity and proposed reengineering human society by a process of instrumental conditioning.

For humanistic psychology, this psychological reductionism presented a challenge. Can we study the higher reaches of human nature and discover a new basis for psychological
science? Can we use the higher forms of human behavior to illuminate the lower ones instead of basing all psychological understanding on laboratory rats and the mentally ill? Authors as diverse as Straus (1930/1982), Maslow (1950/1973), and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) formulated this same challenge—to understand humans in terms of their highest potential and through the study of individuals who display the highest levels of human functioning.

**Will Our Science Stifle or Nurture the Fulfilled Human Life?**

The concern in humanistic psychology over inadequate scientific and philosophical models was not merely a matter of achieving a better understanding for the sake of understanding. Rather, reductionistic scientific theories of human behavior run the risk of constricting or reducing actual humans. If the prevailing understanding of humanness within science is narrow, then there is a risk that the same concepts will pervade popular culture as well and diminish the self-understanding and aspirations of the average human. Traditional “naturalistic” psychologies run the risk of harming humans by inviting them to lower their expectations of what is humanly possible.

**A Prehistory and a History of Humanistic Psychology**

This chapter provides a prehistory and a history of humanistic psychology. The history recounts the work of those significant figures in modern psychology and philosophy who provided the foundational ideas and approaches, making humanistic psychology what it is today. The prehistory examines the millennia before the advent of modern humanistic psychology and identifies some of the many antecedent figures who suggested more philosophically adequate concepts of being human. This portion of the chapter must remain sketchy—leaping across centuries at a time—because of the enormous variety of philosophers, theologians, and literary figures who have contributed at least passing insights into what it means to be fully human. More time is spent on antiquity because foundations for later understanding were laid down then. Many Renaissance and modern efforts to restore a more adequate image of humanity have returned to early Greek and Christian texts for inspiration.

**THE PREHISTORY OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY**

**Classical Greece**

*Homer and the Human Journey*

At the dawn of Western civilization, Homer’s *Odyssey* created the image of the human individual as a hero and of human life as a quest or an adventure. Odysseus, returning to Ithaca from the communal quest of the Trojan wars, is detained far from home by the nymph Calypso, the Sirens, and a variety of other dangers and distractions. In the course of the epic, Odysseus becomes an individual and a hero facing danger, battling adversaries, and savoring the adventures of the road. Finally, he returns to his home and family in Ithaca. The modern Greek poet C. P. Cavafy (1961) wrote of each human’s journey to “Ithaca,”

> Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind.
> To arrive there is your ultimate goal.
> But do not hurry the voyage at all.
> It is better to let it last for long years;
> And even to anchor at the isle when you are old, Rich with all that you have gained on the way,
> Not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches. (p. 36)
The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology

The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology

are in truth. Plato’s philosophy conveys a sense of values that we associate with Greek culture and with today’s humanistic ideal. The true, the good, and the beautiful were elevated to the status of ends in themselves. The concept of an \textit{Eidos} (or essence) reappeared in German phenomenological psychology when Straus (1930/1982) conceived of the essence of the person—the true self—as an \textit{Eidos} that one sees actualized only in glimpses, in the course of existence, such as glimpses of light through a prism.\footnote{Platonism survived many centuries after Plato himself, especially in the form of neo-Platonism. Plotinus (205–270 CE) and Proclus (410–485 CE) stand out as central neo-Platonists. Neo-Platonism portrayed each individual human life as a type of falling from an eternal origin in divine oneness into earthly multiplicity. The task of human existence became a journey of inward reintegration, recovering the lost oneness. This metaphysical schema of existence, in which the eternal origin is the true reality and all of life seeks restoration, lingered in the background through the early centuries of the Christian era and resurfaced to influence the medieval and Renaissance views of life. For the neo-Platonists, philosophy remained a pathway for personal renewal through moral and intellectual self-discipline. The pathway of renewal took a mystical turn as an awakening from the normal human, alienated state toward a mystical union with the one and the good.}

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

Aristotle developed his own ethics and psychology, systematically defining the soul and its attributes. Of equal importance for psychological theory, however, Aristotle developed a systematic empirical approach to natural science. In combination with Christianity, this Aristotelian philosophy served as the framework for most of medieval scholastic philosophy, for example, in

\textit{Greek Tragedy}

The Greek dramatists portrayed human heroes struggling powerfully against fates that define the course of human lives. The protagonists are heroic and inhabit a world peopled with gods, demigods, and humans, but their pathways are defined in advance and end in tragedy. The fate of Oedipus is foretold by an oracle and is changed neither by his father Laius’s actions nor by Oedipus’s heroic struggles. The final words of Sophocles’s drama \textit{Oedipus at Colonus} express the tragic view of life: “Cease now and never more lift up these lamentations, for all this is determined.”

\textit{Socrates (ca. 469–399 BCE) and Plato (ca. 427–347 BCE)}

Our image of Socrates is filtered largely through Plato, who recorded many of the Socratic dialogues decades later. Socrates left his heritage in the dialogues—dialectical conversations that sought deeper truths through examination of simple illustrations from daily life (Taylor, 1997). In the Socratic view, the \textit{psyche} is the abode of character, intelligence, and virtue. Human well-being depends on the state of this psyche. Socrates’s philosophy is ethical and personal. Socratic discourse perfects character and instills virtue through knowledge. Knowledge leads to good, and wrongdoing is involuntary and based on ignorance. In Socrates’s view, no human would wish for anything less than true good and true happiness, but many individuals miscarry in their actions because of lack of knowledge of the true good. Enlightenment by reason and dialogue leads to correction of one’s actions and perfection of the human individual.

For Plato (1941), this earthly life is but a dim likeness of the real and eternal life. A human lives as though in a cave without light, and by philosophical reflection, the human gains a glimpse of the true \textit{Eidos}, the transcendent essence of things as they
the works of Boethius and Aquinas. The empirical framework of scientific research in psychology reflects this Aristotelian heritage.

Stoicism

Stoicism as a philosophical movement commenced in Greece with Zeno (ca. 333–262 BCE). It became a widely taught approach to rational living, with influence on leading figures in Greece and Rome, through the time of the Stoic philosopher and Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE). The Stoics advocated a thoughtful human life of self-cultivation, virtue, and wisdom (Inwood, 1985; Long, 1974). Philosophy for the Stoics was a love of wisdom (philosophia [“loving”] plus sophia [“knowledge”]) and calls for a personal search for mastery over one’s own life and emotions through reason. The Stoics developed confession or personal disclosure as a tool for increasing self-knowledge (Georges, 1995). The Stoics taught inward self-sufficiency through reason and wisdom regardless of how external tragedy might affect one’s life. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus (b. ca. 50 CE) anticipated the core of cognitive psychology when he wrote that it is not events that shape human life but rather the view that humans take of these events (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979). The Stoic values of self-examination, self-discipline, and self-determination are consistent with the theories of modern humanistic and cognitive psychologies. The Stoics’ use of philosophy as a tool for living anticipated the present-day movement of philosophical psychotherapy.

Athens and a Humanistic Way of Life

It was not only in epic, drama, and philosophy that Greek civilization conveyed an image of the human. Rather, the entire Athenian way of life, epitomized during the age of Pericles (443–429 BCE), was dedicated to stretching human capacities and talents to a higher level. Athens valued the pursuit of athletic prowess, intellectual competence, artistic gifts, political sophistication, and architectural beauty. The institution of democracy, the academies of philosophy, the flowering of literature, and the displays of art were all part of a public pursuit of higher levels of human potential. The Olympic Games took this cultivation of perfection to the highest possible level.

Christian Authors in the Early Church

The life and teachings of Christ conveyed a new and different image of a perfected life. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:311) and many other texts in the Christian scriptures provide specific values and guidelines for the would-be Christian. The early Christian image of the human placed less emphasis on reason and self-sufficiency than did Greek philosophy and more emphasis on an altruistic love for God, neighbor, and community. One early Christian philosopher, Aristides, writing in ca. 125 CE, described the Christian way of life in terms that still sound familiar today: “They walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they love one another. They despise not the widow and grieve not the orphan. He that hath distributeth liberally to him that hath not” (cited in Foster, 1981, p. 69). This image of loving, communally oriented humans converges well with the communitarian movements in humanistic psychology (Moss, 1998c, pp. 76–78).

Some Christian authors, such as Kierkegaard (1844/1962a), saw the historical figure of Christ as symbolizing that the divine principle entered the human, elevating and glorifying the human. Saint Paul wrote of hearing creation groan in the process of giving birth to a new, glorified human, liberated from enslavement to the law and made perfect in Christ (Romans 8). The early Christian
The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology

writer Irenaeus wrote that the glory of God is a fully alive human (Roberts & Donaldson, 1953). Two and a half centuries after Aristides, during the time of Augustine, the neo-Platonic worldview was so pervasive as to redraw the Christian faith into a search for a return to one’s origins. In his Confessions, Augustine (1980) expressed his deep yearning: “Our hearts are restless till they find rest in thee” (Book 1, p. 3).

Other commentators, such as Nietzsche (1886/1966), read the same biblical texts yet accused the Christian religion of degrading the human to glorify God: “From the start, the Christian faith is a sacrifice: a sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of the spirit; [and] at the same time, enslavement and self-mockery, self-mutilation” (p. 60).

Marx also labeled Christianity as an “opium for the masses”; that is, he asserted that faith was a tool used by the wealthy to pacify and exploit the working class. Workers were promised a reward in the next world, thereby reducing their rebellion and discontent in this world.

Today’s authors are perhaps accurate when they point to the history of Christian thought and the diversity of Christian theologies as showing that each generation interprets the historical phenomenon of Jesus in light of its own cosmology, ideologies, and need. Riley (1997) suggested that the initial Gentile reception of Jesus was in terms of one more classical hero, such as Odysseus, wandering the earth and performing great feats. Riley showed that each age creates its own new image of Christ. The original scriptural message is filtered through the needs and understandings of the present age.

The Renaissance in Europe

The Renaissance began with a rediscovery of the learning of classical antiquity and a return to the original texts. Initially, this meant new translations and new access to Greek philosophy and literature. Later, it meant a return to biblical texts in their original languages, bypassing the versions of ancient knowledge mediated by the Catholic Church and scholastic philosophy. In many cases, Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy replaced the thought of Aristotle, which had formed the basis of medieval scholasticism. The Greek idealization of earthly beauty and human perfection and the Greek emphasis on the sensuality of the human figure reemerged during the Renaissance and remained a crucial strain in the humanism of the 15th and 16th centuries. A look at the work of the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) illuminates this development.

Ficino’s (1985) De Amore was written in the form of a commentary on Plato’s symposium on love and highlights one of the essential shifts in thinking that influenced Renaissance art and learning. Ficino described love as fundamentally a longing for beauty. This is a marked difference from the traditional Christian definition of love in terms of selfless altruism. In neo-Platonic terms, all things—including humans—emanate from the original one, wherein lies beauty, truth, and goodness. Humans, in this framework, are attracted to their primordial origin in the one and are drawn by beauty and truth. Ficino suggested that earthly love, including attraction to sensual beauty, participates in metaphysical and divine love.

This new viewpoint “baptizes” a worshiping of human beauty, and the results are evident in Renaissance art. Renaissance statuary and art portray the sensual beauty of the human figure, and Renaissance portraiture portrays the complexity of human individuality. Both are ubiquitous in Renaissance churches.

Humanism and the Reformation

In northern Europe, the Renaissance took the direction of a humanism exemplified by the
Dutch scholar Erasmus. At the same time, the breach with medieval tradition and authority took the form of the Protestant Reformation of the Christian church, nurtured by a return to the original scriptural texts.

*Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1469–1536)*

For Erasmus, the human is the center of creation. The measure of God’s goodness is that God created a rich world to unfold the nature of the human. Man is a “noble animal, for whose sake alone God fashioned this marvelous contrivance of the world; he is the fellow citizen of the angels, son of God, heir of immortality” (*The Enchiridion*, cited in Augustijn, 1991, p. 53). Erasmus anticipated Kierkegaard in the former’s emphasis on the human individual: “Man stands before God as an individual and takes counsel only of God and his own conscience. Man’s responsibility and ability to live his own life receives all the emphasis” (Augustijn, 1991, p. 55). Erasmus’s heated debate with Martin Luther was triggered by Luther’s critique of Erasmus’s essay “The Free Will.” Erasmus insisted on a role for the human will and personal responsibility, as well as God’s grace, in achieving salvation. Luther, in turn, argued that grace alone provides salvation for the human.

*The 19th Century*

The 19th century saw the emergence of a number of key philosophical and literary movements with significance for modern humanistic psychology. This section reviews the works of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. One also could highlight the movements of British and German romanticism in literature and Marxism in political economics.

*Søren Kierkegaard: The Dawn of Existentialism*

The Danish thinker Kierkegaard (1813–1855) wrote passionately about the existence of each human individual. He criticized the established church, philosophy, and society as lulling humans to sleep with a false sense of security. Kierkegaard believed that too many individual humans did not see any need to struggle with the direction of their personal existence. They assumed that they already were Christian and modern by birthright. He compared the average human’s condition throughout life with that of a peasant who falls asleep in his cart while the horse pulls him home. Kierkegaard believed that philosophy should act like a mosquito and sting the complacent individual awake, to direct and experience the course of his or her own life or to awaken the individual and “oblige him to judge” (Kierkegaard, 1859/1962b, p. 35). Throughout his work, Kierkegaard confronted the myriad self-soothing defenses by which individuals preserve their sleepy complacency.

Was this your consolation that you said: One does what one can? Was this not precisely the reason for your disquietude, that you did not know within yourself how much it is a man can do? . . . No earnest doubt, no really deep concern, is put to rest by saying that one does what one can. (Kierkegaard, 1843/1959, pp. 347–348; see also Moss, 1998b, pp. 223–224)

*Friedrich Nietzsche: Existentialism and the Superman*

Writing a generation later, Nietzsche (1844–1900) repeated Kierkegaard’s emphasis on the individual. However, he saw Western civilization as degraded to the core and castigated Christianity as a distortion in humanitv. He called for a “doctor of the soul” to tap his hammer and discover where the edifice of culture was rotten so that the wrecking process could begin. He called for a transformation of all values and created an image of a new individual, a “superman” (*Übermensch*) or “overman,” who would create authentic
values (Nietzsche, 1886/1966, 1892/1954). The superman would realize to a higher degree the human capacity to create the shape of one’s own life. “Such a person, one might say, lives courageously by overcoming illusions and taking responsibility for his or her life” (Halling & Carroll, 1998, pp. 96–97).

The 20th Century

The 20th century produced breakthroughs in philosophy, psychiatry, and psychology, providing many of the foundations for a humanistic understanding of human existence. This section introduces briefly the phenomenological philosophers Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; the phenomenological psychiatrists; and the unique dialogic theologian Martin Buber (Halling & Carroll, 1998). Then, it reviews the contributions of Freud and his many followers within the psychoanalytic movement, who in several specific ways anticipated humanistic psychology.

Phenomenology in Philosophy

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) created the new movement of phenomenology in philosophy and psychology with his battle cry of returning “to the things themselves” (Halling & Carroll, 1998; Husserl, 1900/1970b). He encouraged philosophers and scientists to set aside theoretical assumptions and describe their immediate experiences of phenomena. He emphasized the intentionality of human mental activity. Psychic acts are intentional because they are oriented or directed toward some specific situation or object beyond themselves and can be meaningfully understood only in that context. Ultimately, this means that consciousness is not merely internal; rather, it is an involvement of the perceiving human with the object perceived. Husserl (1936/1970a) emphasized the validity of the everyday “life world,” the world of immediate experience and life. He rejected the Cartesian scientific view that external reality consists only of internal mental representations. The human and the experiential world are interactive. Through intentionality, humans “cocreate” phenomena rather than just passively registering what is there. Husserl called for the development of a phenomenological psychology that would set aside the “naturalistic” modes of thinking used by medicine, biology, and physiology (Husserl, 1925/1977, p. 3; Kockelmans, 1967). Husserl’s work parallels in its focus and approach the “radical empiricism” of the American psychologist and philosopher William James, and Husserl acknowledged James’s work (Taylor, 1991).

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), a German philosopher, combined Husserl’s phenomenological method with existentialism. He turned from the study of mental acts to a detailed examination of the structure of human existence. In Heidegger’s (1927/1962) landmark work Being and Time, he described the human as a “being-in-the-world”—that is, an entity whose very fabric involves an immersion in and openness to the surrounding world. Humans always discover themselves already thrown into a specific factual situation that defines them in their historicity. Heidegger studied the temporal organization of human life and found that humans discover their wholeness in an awareness of their own deaths. Humans also are truly metaphysical beings; they are the only beings that take their own being as a question to be pondered.

The French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) drew on both Husserl and Heidegger and shifted the focus of phenomenological research to the structure of behavior. He understood behavior as intentionally directed toward a situation. Merleau-Ponty defined the “mental” as the organization or structure of behavior. In his principal works, The Structure of
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Behavior (Merleau-Ponty, 1942/1963) and the Phenomenology of Perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962), he used the evidence of the Gestalt psychologists, especially Kurt Goldstein’s investigations of neurologically damaged individuals, to explore the organization of normal human movement and the embodied organism’s relationship to the environment. For the phenomenologist, no human behavior and no neurophysiological process ultimately can be understood apart from its context and situation.

Phenomenology in Psychiatry and Psychology

Ludwig Binswanger (1881–1966) was a Swiss psychiatrist, as well as a lifelong friend of Freud, who drew on the philosophy of both Husserl and Heidegger to find an alternative manner of understanding human existence, especially the experiencing of the mentally ill. Binswanger (1942, 1963) applied Heidegger’s definition of the human as a “being-in-the-world” to psychiatry and mental illness. He emphasized the existential significance of the Mitwelt (the social world shared with others), the Umwelt (the physical and biological environment), and the Eigenwelt (literally, the “own world” of identity and personhood). Binswanger described fundamental existential a priori, or existential structures, that shape human experiencing. He studied the worldviews, or patterns of experiencing, of disturbed individuals. Binswanger’s case studies and essays on existential and phenomenological directions in psychology had a direct impact on humanistic psychology because of the publication in 1958 of Existence, a collection of translations from Binswanger and other European phenomenological psychiatrists (May, Angel, & Ellenberger, 1958).

Medard Boss (1903–1991), another Swiss psychiatrist, initially was trained in psychoanalysis. After World War II, he sought out the philosopher Heidegger and organized regular seminars with Heidegger and Swiss physicians, seeking to apply the phenomenological perspective to rethink the foundations of both medicine and psychology (Boss, 1971/1979). Boss defined health as the total “haleness and wholeness” of the human. Health is characterized by an openness and flexible responsiveness to the world. In turn, he defined unhealthiness in human existence as “nothing but the privation, blocking, impairment, or constriction of this original openness and freedom” (Boss, 1988). He investigated psychosomatic illness as a means of jamming or blocking one’s openness to the world and to specific threatening situations (Boss, 1971/1979; Moss, 1978).

A Philosophy of Dialogue

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was a Jewish German theologian. His classic monograph
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1 and Thou (Buber, 1923/1970) provided an appealing philosophy of the interpersonal that had a profound impact on the American humanistic psychologies of the 1950s and 1960s. Buber described reality as falling into two opposing realms. In the first, authentic realm, an “I” addresses a “thou” in dialogue or in relationship. Within this unfolding relationship of an I to a thou, the human person is born and unfolds to his or her full potential. For Buber (1965), the human self does not develop except in relationship or in dialogue: “It is from one man to another that the heavenly bread of self-being is passed” (p. 71). The opposing realm involves an “I” addressing an “it”—that is, an object of practical utility. When one human addresses another human as an it, both the other and oneself are diminished.3 This philosophy challenged and complemented the emphasis on self-actualization and the pursuit of self in much of American humanistic psychology. A classic 1957 dialogue between Buber and Carl Rogers highlighted the commonalities of Buber’s philosophy and humanistic views, especially the emphasis on healing through a meeting of two persons, as well as their differing emphases on dialogue and self-actualization.

Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis: A Naturalistic Humanism

Freud (1856–1939) has been criticized for interpreting human experiencing and behavior in terms of a biological instinct theory. In another sense, however, he laid down many of the foundations taken for granted by humanistic psychologists.4 He showed, by his initial research on hysteria, that psychiatric symptoms can be understood as a language expressing the secret emotional life of the patient (Freud, 1953–1974). He showed, by his research on dreams and the “psychopathology of everyday life” (e.g., slips of the tongue), that every human action, however trivial, is meaningful and expresses parts of the individual’s personal story not yet accessible to consciousness. He showed, by his research on the psychosexual stages of development, that the human personality is created and organized developmentally and is affected by troubled relationships and traumatic experiences at each critical juncture point in early development. Freud also showed that a “talking cure” can bring a disclosure and resolution of many of the conflicts within the person and within his or her intimate private life.

After Freud: A Gifted Cacophony of Quasi-Humanistic Approaches

Freud formulated his new science in biological terms and sought a rigid orthodoxy in theory among his followers. He attracted a collection of brilliant young physicians and laypersons to his movement and then proceeded to alienate many of the brightest. Many of the dissenters from Freudian orthodoxy contributed to the emerging humanistic understanding of human nature.

Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology

Adler (1870–1937) developed a psychology emphasizing that each individual creates a style of life reflecting the central “fiction” or goal around which the person organizes his or her life. Humans are socially embedded, and the development of a sense of social interest and community feeling is critical to human development. Human behavior is purposeful and future oriented, not merely driven by instinct and mechanism (Adler, 1969).

Carl Gustav Jung: A Forerunner of Transpersonal Psychology

Jung (1875–1961) insisted on the validity of spiritual experience and explored the symbols and archetypes of human experience
found in primitive peoples and the world’s religions. He described the human life as a lifelong, never completed process of psychological and spiritual individuation and integration (Jung, 1961). He described the self as a deeper and less rational structure than the ego and advocated that humans come to trust and accept the wisdom that emerges spontaneously from the self in dreams, images, and intuitions.

**Otto Rank: The Psychology of the Will**

Rank (1884–1939) formulated a psychology of the will that mirrored many of Nietzsche’s themes (Rank, 1936, 1941/1958). He studied the process of artistic creation and concluded that all of human life, including neurosis, is a process of self-creation. Rank defined human heroism in terms of the larger and riskier stage on which one risks creating oneself. The neurotic makes other persons into gods and creates an individual life guaranteed to please others. Most humans at times engage in such neurotic solutions to life, “tranquilizing” themselves with the trivial (Becker, 1973, pp. 178–179). The heroic human, on the other hand, reaches for the broadest horizon, however unfamiliar, and lives more boldly (Becker, 1973; Rank, 1941/1958). Like Jung, Rank affirmed spirituality as one of the broadest stages on which the human can unfold an existence. Rank affirmed that the human is a “theological being” (Becker, 1973).

**Wilhelm Reich: Character Analysis and the Body Armor**

Reich (1897–1957) was a gifted psychoanalyst who shifted the attention of psychotherapy toward an exploration of character and psychological defenses. Anna Freud’s work on the ego and the mechanisms of defense developed from Reich’s early research (Freud, 1936/1948). Later, Reich investigated the “body armor” or the muscular defenses against unacceptable feelings and impulses (Moss & Shane, 1998; Reich, 1949). Eventually, Reich and his student Alexander Lowen developed the bioenergetics approach, which applies a variety of techniques to facilitate a deep and systematic release of any muscular or bodily barriers against a full range of affective experiencing (Lowen, 1971). Bioenergetic therapy contributed to the humanistic emphasis on body therapies and the unity of body and mind.

**THE HISTORY OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY**

The years 1954 to 1973 can be seen as the golden years of the humanistic psychology movement. Those dates were selected as for the follows. In the year 1954, Maslow developed a mailing list for correspondence with persons interested in “the scientific study of creativity, love, higher values, growth, self-actualization, [and] basic needs gratification” (Misiak & Sexton, 1973, p. 111). In the year 1973, Misiak and Sexton wrote their systematic academic book describing humanistic psychology as a complete movement.

Of immediate importance for their crucial role in influencing the key concepts and images of the humanistic viewpoint are two European imports, Goldstein (1939) and Angyal (1941), and several American psychologists, especially Allport (1955), Murray (1938), and Murphy (1958). Their works commenced during the 1930s and 1940s and continued into the 1950s. They contributed a holistic understanding of the human personality, drawing on European Gestalt principles and giving attention to the human individual’s spontaneous movement toward self-actualization and mastery of the environment. Goldstein was a German, and Angyal was a Hungarian who was educated in Austria and Italy. Allport, Murray, and Murphy were
American but were influenced by the holistic psychologies of Europe during the 1930s.

Abraham Maslow and the Birth of Humanistic Psychology

Maslow (1908–1970) is the single person most responsible for creating humanistic psychology. He translated the widespread yearning for a different type of psychological theory and practice into a cohesive viewpoint on humanistic psychology, with journals, conferences, and formal organization. His theory of the self and of self-actualization served as a foundation for later humanistic psychologists. Rogers’s client-centered or person-centered therapy and Sidney Jourard’s psychology of self-disclosure are partly elaborations on the interpersonal conditions most helpful in awakening and actualizing the inner self.

Maslow envisioned humanistic psychology as a psychology of the whole person based on the study of healthy, fully functioning, creative individuals. He criticized the psychologists of his time for spending too much time studying mentally ill and maladjusted humans and for seeking to explain higher levels of human experience by means of neurotic mechanisms. Maslow (1950/1973) proposed an investigation of “superior specimens” as a pathway to understanding the highest potentials of human nature. Maslow turned empirically to the study of self-actualized persons and the patterns of their lives, selecting both living and dead individuals who had strained their human nature to its highest limits. Maslow concluded that the highest reaches of human nature include the capacity for self-transcending altruism and for what he later would call transpersonal experiencing. During the early 1960s, Maslow, along with colleagues such as Anthony Sutitch, founded the transpersonal psychology movement, a branch of humanistic psychology dedicated to the study of humans’ highest potentials.

Carl Rogers:
Client-Centered Therapy

Carl Rogers (1902–1987) provided the central clinical framework for the humanistic therapies. As a person, he provided leadership for three generations of humanistic clinicians. Rogers spent his early career identifying the “necessary and sufficient conditions” that enable humans to spontaneously grow and seek fulfillment. The conditions that define the core of his therapy are that (a) two persons are in emotional contact; (b) one of them, called the client, is troubled; (c) the other, called the therapist, shows genuineness and congruence in the relationship; (d) the therapist experiences and displays unconditional positive regard for the client; (e) the therapist achieves and expresses an empathic understanding of the client; and (f) the client perceives the genuineness, positive regard, and empathy of the therapist. Create these conditions, Rogers asserted, and the client will self-actualize in his or her own self-defined directions (Moss, 1998b, pp. 41–43; Rogers, 1957).

Frederick “Fritz” Perls:
Gestalt Therapy

Perls (1893–1970) was one of the many striking and memorable individuals of the humanistic movement. Trained as a psychoanalyst initially, Perls and his wife, Laura, who was also an analyst, fled Nazi Germany and practiced in South Africa throughout World War II, and then moved to the United States. His first book (Perls, 1947/1969) marked his migration away from Freud, and a subsequent fortuitous collaborative work, Gestalt Therapy (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951), raised the banner of the new therapy. As the title implied, Perls drew on the holistic understandings of the German Gestalt psychologists. However, the new approach was equally indebted to Perls’s past contacts with Wilhelm Reich and Karen
Horney as well as to Perls’s unique personality. Perls went “on the road” with the new therapy, conducting live demonstrations of bombastic, body-oriented confrontations of volunteers’ defenses (Shane, 1998). A classic video comparing Rogers, Ellis, and Perls served as the introduction to Gestalt therapy for several generations of graduate students.

The present history of humanistic psychology is all too brief. The roles of other major figures such as William James, James Bugental, Erich Fromm, Rollo May, George Kelly, Sidney Jourard, Amedeo Giorgi, Erwin Straus, and Ken Wilber are described in Moss (1998b).

CONCLUSION:
HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY DURING THE 21ST CENTURY

The original inspiration of humanistic psychology unfolded its great momentum during the 1950s and 1960s. Students of Maslow, Rogers, Jourard, Perls, and others continue to teach today, and the students of these students, in turn, occupy faculty positions and fill the schedules at meetings of the Society for Humanistic Psychology. Each day, humanistically oriented psychotherapists help troubled patients to discover their personhoods and renew paths of self-actualization. The recent movements of emancipatory, experiential, existential-integrative, transpersonal, and constructivist psychotherapy demonstrate the continued energies of humanism in psychotherapy (see Leitner & Epting, Chapter 34, “Constructivist Approaches to Therapy”; O’Hara, Chapter 37, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World”; Watson & Bohart, Chapter 38, “Humanistic-Experiential Therapies in the Era of Managed Care”; and Schneider, Chapter 39, “An Existential-Integrative Approach to Experiential Liberation”—this volume; Schneider, 1998). Psychologists and therapists of all orientations, even the most behavioral ones, are more aware today of the humanistic dimensions of personal change because of the lasting impact of humanistic psychology.

A challenge remains for all humanistically oriented psychologists: There is a continuing need to remind human society and the helping professions of the dignity and worth of humans (Moss, 1998b). The original humanistic vision must continue to be made relevant in each new generation. The world always will be in need of humanization. Psychology as a science and profession will need to be reminded in each generation of humanistic priorities and of the full breadth of human nature and human potential.

NOTES

1. Existential and phenomenological authors diverged considerably in this view of an unchanging essence in human existence, with Husserl showing that the human lifeworld always is sedimented with the stuff of contemporary culture and Jean-Paul Sartre declaring that the human’s essence is his or her existence (i.e., human nature is redefined historically).

2. Intentionality also may involve the individual in an internal intending toward his or her own mental states—in self-reflection.

3. Buber described the realm of “I and it,” self relating to object, as a universal dimension of human experience, not as something to be eradicated from life. On the other hand, he critiqued the more pervasive alienation during the modern era and other “sick ages.” He described healthy ages as ones in which inspiration flows
from “men of the spirit” to all people and there is an intermingling of the dimen-
sion of personal presence with the practical dimensions of life (Buber, 1923/1970,
p. 102). Buber believed that personal dialogue can be renewing for all persons and
all cultures.

4. Freud scholars have identified the complexity of Freud’s work, which tran-
scends his explicit instinctual, energetic, and hydraulic models of the mind. Sulloway
(1979) elaborated Freud’s intricate biological models. Fromm (1959) portrayed the
implicit humanism in Freud’s work. Rieff (1959) identified Freud as an ethical
thinker. Ricoeur (1970) highlighted the hermeneutic-interpretive aspect of Freud’s
psychoanalytic work.

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The Roots and Genealogy of Humanistic Psychology


sourcebook (pp. 49–65). Westport, CT: Greenwood.
Humanistic psychology today stands at a turning point in its history. The Society for Humanistic Psychology (Division 32 of the American Psychological Association [APA]) has produced six successful conferences offering a wide variety of programs to a diverse and growing constituency. Recently, the APA Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (2006) recognized the legitimacy of humanistic factors such as qualitative research, sound clinical judgment, and the “context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences” as key criteria for the delivery of evidence-based practice (p. 273). There have been a growing number of books and articles on humanistic theory, practice, and research in the APA’s arsenal of books and journals (see Introduction, this volume); and even the prestigious *American Psychologist* has published the existentialists’ call that we return to the romantic as a still missing piece of the puzzle of what it means to be human (Schneider, 1998). Indeed, mainstream academics who have launched their own form of positive psychology have invited humanistic thinkers to publicly debate the issue (Waterman, 2013). Is positive psychology, as many humanistic psychologists contend, a usurper of an already established venue? Or is positive psychology, as many cognitive psychologists would have it, a development superior to its humanistic forebears given that this newer form is more experimental?

One easily could interpret these developments as destiny at the crossroads. Or, to put the question in another way, 50 years after its heyday, will humanistic psychology finally, and quietly, slip into oblivion by being absorbed into the mainstream—gone with nothing more than a whimper instead of a bang, its votaries once having been full of sound and fury but now signifying nothing? Or is the long-awaited era of its maturity finally at hand, what has gone on in the past being but a prelude to what is to come?

We (Taylor, 1999a, 2011) are responding to the future of the humanistic movement with guarded optimism. Our only caveat is that humanistic psychology may be able to resurrect itself within the larger field of American academic psychology, but only under a set of specific conditions informed by its own history. Although the humanistic movement is generally
associated with the field of psychology per se, over the past 60 years, it has come to influence a variety of fields beyond the social sciences—medicine, law, dentistry, nursing, and business administration, to name but a few. Recent historical scholarship, however, reaffirms what the founders already knew but many today forget—namely, that humanistic psychology did not just appear out of nowhere. It originally was an outgrowth of personality, social, abnormal, and motivation psychology—those subfields of academic psychology long considered to be the so-called soft sciences (Taylor, 2000).

While reductionistic behaviorism had maintained an ideological stranglehold in academic departments of psychology, especially since the 1930s, psychoanalysis came to control clinical teaching in psychology and psychiatry during the same period. Within the academic arena, however, the more overtly reductionistic subfields—such as learning, sensation and perception, mathematical, and physiological psychology—that dominated the laboratory scene were challenged by the rise of the macropersonality theorists. Researchers such as Henry A. Murray, Gordon Allport, and Gardner Murphy rejected the reductionistic atomism of experimental psychologists, whose main focus was the study of the white rat. They argued instead for psychology as a person-centered science. These voices then became the grandfathers and grandmothers of the humanistic movement in psychology, which first appeared during the 1940s, when Carl Rogers articulated his client-centered therapy, and grew to a crescendo during the 1950s, when Rollo May and others introduced the existential and phenomenological viewpoint into psychology and psychiatry and Abraham Maslow defined the self-actualizing personality. After that, a period of institutionalization began.

The *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* was officially launched in 1961, followed by the founding of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology a year later. In November 1964, the historic First Old Saybrook Conference was held, at which Murray, Allport, Murphy, and Kelly passed the torch to Maslow, Rogers, and May, legitimizing the humanistic movement as a viable form of discourse within academic psychology. The Humanistic Psychology Institute, the first PhD program of the movement, began in 1971, and the Division of Humanistic Psychology was launched within the APA in 1973 (Taylor & Kelley, 1998). For all intents and purposes, it looked outwardly like the field was well launched, and the expectation of deans and college presidents was that it soon would usher in a new dialogue between science and the humanities, healing the historic rift between C. P. Snow’s two cultures.

It was a revolution within the academy whose time, however, had not yet come. Abraham Maslow and Anthony Sutich, two of the most influential founders of the movement, were emblematic of the currents at work during that period. With Sutich as founding editor and Maslow as contributor and national point man, the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* soon came to represent a new emphasis in psychology on the experience of the fully functioning person, on emotional maturity and interaction in relationships, and on values in science, especially the psychology of the science-making process. Its original home was Brandeis University, and its editorial board included influential figures in academic and clinical psychology as well as other disciplines. Furthermore, it was buttressed by the inclusion of the existential and phenomenological perspective, flourishing at the time as a growing cultural force but with no direct avenue into psychology until the humanistic movement came into being and remolded it as a form of psychotherapy. Along these lines, humanistic psychology became a force for cultural change by focusing on significant dimensions of personality left unexplored by the experimental reductionists’ methods.
Maslow and Sutich, however, quickly became dissatisfied with experiential and social transformation that left the spiritual quite out of the picture (Sutich, 1976). They conspired self-consciously to introduce this dimension back into psychology by bolting from the editorial and organizational positions they had made for themselves in the humanistic movement and founding, in 1969, the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* and its attendant organization, the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. The spiritual dimension of experience, the actualization of self and being, metavalues, meditation, and higher states of consciousness became the new foci of their efforts.

By making this abrupt transition, Maslow and Sutich effectively took most of the leaders of the humanistic movement at the time with them. One unintended consequence, however, was a dramatic shift in emphasis away from psychology in the academy to psychology in culture at large. The counterculture psychotherapeutic movement was fully under way by that time, fueled in part by the advances of humanistic psychology and also by the widespread experimentation with psychedelics, the rising interest in religious movements from Asian cultures, the antiwar movement, the rise of feminism and radical gender politics, a new, anti-intellectual culture of the body, and a period of sexual experimentation and new definitions of the family unprecedented in the modern era.

Humanistic psychology became transformed into something else overnight, virtually indistinguishable from its new, myriad, and more radical forms. The forms themselves, however, are readily identifiable. When humanistic psychology became absorbed into the psychotherapeutic counterculture, it effectively fractionated into three separate and unintegrated streams, none of which had any avenue into the academic university environment. The first was meditation and altered states of consciousness, the second was experiential body work and group dynamics, and the third was human science. Meditation and altered states of consciousness have persisted as transpersonal psychology. Experiential bodywork, still expanding in its old forms, also has evolved into therapeutic touch, Reiki healing, and shamanic journeying, whereas group dynamics has moved from the churches into the corporate boardrooms. Human science has come to encompass political psychology, gender studies, social criticism, and all forms of postmodernism, from constructivism to deconstructionism and contextualism.

Yet, while the influence of humanistic psychology suddenly became subterranean, its newly launched institutions remained visible within the dominant culture, proceeding along a relatively unchanging course that continues to be defined by issues and personalities from the 1960s and early 1970s. In these more visible forms, humanistic psychology today looks like a persistent throwback to that era. In its invisible form, however, it has evolved through a series of cultural phases, from sensitivity training, growth groups, and therapeutic massage to biofeedback and meditation, socially engaged spirituality, psychotherapy and shamanism, and now alternative and complementary therapies. It now has surfaced, reincarnated more pervasively after 60 years in the form of a shadow culture that is transforming the dominant culture at nearly every niche from the bottom up (Taylor, 1999b). The old humanistic psychologists still are there, but they now call themselves transpersonalists, Gestalt therapists, psychophysiologists, integral psychologists, mind–body practitioners, postmodernists, and human (as opposed to natural) scientists.

Psychology in the academy, meanwhile, became somewhat more humanistic, but not by that name. Behaviorism, which had dominated the laboratory science of psychology since the 1930s, gave way to cognitive...
psychology, which in turn was quickly absorbed into the newly developing disciplines of the cognitive neurosciences. Mainstream science, previously driven by physics and mathematics and their subordinate sciences, suddenly became more biological as well, leading to the present-day interdisciplinary emphasis at the nexus of fields such as molecular genetics, neurology, endocrinology, immunology, and psychiatry.

Psychology has participated significantly in these endeavors, primarily because the neuroscience revolution is all about the biology of consciousness. Artificial intelligence, parallel distributive processing models of cognition, and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanning of mental processes from abstract problem solving to mental imaging have come into vogue. As a result, clinical psychology has become more medicalized. Clinicians are called on to perform almost the same diagnostic functions as are psychiatrists when mental illness is the primary issue, prescription privileges for psychologists already have been instituted in the military on a limited scale, psychologists have almost totally colonized psychoanalysis (a field previously controlled exclusively by physicians), and psychologists and psychiatrists remain embroiled together in the fate of managed care.

At the same time as it has become more biological, however, mainstream psychology also has become more philosophical, commensurate with a similar expansion in disciplines associated with the neurosciences. Questions about the relation of the brain to our experience, long banned as unscientific, now are at the center of discussions about the nature of consciousness. The facts of science now are being discussed in terms of their context. The language of behaviorism has been transformed into the more cognitive language of mentalism. And the whole issue of values in science once again is on the table, as experimental psychologists tout the benefits of promoting what Seligman (1990, 1993) called a “positive psychology,” the study and application of science to positive, growth-oriented outcomes. Cloninger’s seven-factor theory of personality even has developed a transpersonal scale to measure religiosity as it emerges in later life (Cloninger, Bayon, & Svrakic, 1998).

The question now before us, however, is this: Where does humanistic psychology fit into this picture? Today, the Humanistic Psychology Institute has become Saybrook University, a fully accredited-at-a-distance PhD program, but dominated as much by human science as by humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Division 32 within the APA stands by itself as one of the smaller but still functioning (and in recent times, growing) divisions, except that its journal, The Humanistic Psychologist, never has been able to widen its subscription base enough to make it financially viable. The Association for Humanistic Psychology remains active but represents only a small core of the psychotherapeutic counterculture and, as such, has practically no avenue into academic psychology. Its main organ, the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, no longer is owned by the association but rather operates independently due to financial constraints. And although the majority of psychologists in the APA might consider themselves person centered, nondirective, and even growth oriented, only the smallest fraction would use the term humanistic to describe their orientation.

Mainstream psychologists, if they have any name recognition at all when asked about the movement, think of humanistic psychology as unscientific, guilty of promoting the cult of narcissism, and a thing of the past. Transpersonal psychologists are convinced that because humanistic psychologists study existential states and transpersonalists study spiritual ones, and because spiritual states are superior to existential ones, transpersonal psychology has superseded humanistic psychology (see, e.g., Walsh, Chapter 45,
“Authenticity, Conventionality, and Angst: Existential and Transpersonal Perspectives,” and Schneider, “A Reply to Roger Walsh,” this volume). Bodyworkers and those advocating group dynamics tend to remain distant from the intellectual milieu that connects the humanistic tradition to the disciplines of higher learning, whereas the votaries of human science have been swamped by a radical Marxist ideology that has managed to colonize every liberal niche created by the humanistic movement in psychology in the United States since the 1960s.

Humanistic psychologists, meanwhile, generally have bought into postmodernism and its ideology, believing human science to be a more general rubric that differentiates a mechanistic approach to science from a more person-centered one. This appears somewhat of a false dichotomy given that human science as a field of study has been completely overrun by radical trends in European social criticism that have little direct relevance to humanistic and transpersonal psychology and, in fact, represent forces hostile to it. At the same time, the humanistic movement has spread its meager resources out over a vast terrain, aiming at business, law, medicine, the arts, and culture in a way that has quite obscured its origins in psychology. Psychology, meanwhile, has become more humanistic, but its more liberal transformation has not gone by that name.

So we now are able to sharpen the question considerably by re-asking it in a different but more historically informed way: What is the potential future of humanistic psychology within psychology? Will it be absorbed into the mainstream? Or will it awaken psychologists to the construction of a new science that finally addresses the full spectrum of human experience, thus potentially transforming the other sciences through psychology and, at the same time, opening a new dialogue between science and the humanities?

If humanistic psychologists continue to proceed along their present course, dissipating their attention across too many subject areas and believing that their future lies in propounding the already outmoded theories of postmodernism while forgetting their basic roots in psychology, then their basic contributions are destined to be co-opted by mainstream psychologists, and their fate will be similar to that of the experimental Gestalt psychologists of the 1930s. Gestalt psychology was the first uniquely experimental laboratory challenge to the Wundtian atomism that has always dominated American experimental laboratories, because Gestalt was holistic at the same time as it remained scientific and experimental. American experimental psychologists effectively neutralized its epistemological challenge, however, by co-opting its major ideas of figure-ground, closure, contrast, continuity, and the like into the flow of general psychology textbooks without confronting the metaphysical questions it raised about the way in which basic science is conducted. American psychology then went on to being behavioral and reductionistic. Humanistic psychology now appears to be undergoing a similar assimilation.

If humanistic psychology decides to focus its attention back on the discipline of psychology, however, then an entirely different outcome might ensue that could place the humanistic movement at the forefront of not only a sea change in psychology but also a major transformation of the social and natural sciences. But certain new conditions would have to be established for a change of this magnitude to take place. We had already provided (Taylor, 1999a, 2010) the details of this proposal, so the present chapter is confined to just the bare outlines.

To regain its stature in the visible halls of academia, humanistic psychology would have to temporarily distance itself from its more radical offspring long enough to
reclaim its historical position among the soft sciences and to engage psychologists as scientists, clinicians, and administrators in terms useful to their own endeavors. It also would have to be led by voices of significant stature that self-consciously identify themselves with the movement.

To do this, humanistic psychology temporarily would have to become less transpersonal, less experiential, and less political and, in exchange, return to being more psychological. For example, it could constructively embrace Seligman’s positive psychology at the same time as it could promote Cloninger’s seven-factor theory over the five-factor theory now in vogue. It could prepare itself to become more of a viable interpreter of the humanistic implications of the neuroscience revolution, particularly regarding the problem of consciousness. It could bring psychologists to a renewed focus on the need for a more person-centered science—that is, a science of psychology that focuses on the person as its primary subject matter.

Our contention is that humanistic psychology, by claiming its legitimate place in the history of American psychology as the offspring of personality, social, abnormal, and clinical psychology, could resurrect the dialogue with psychologists about the growth-oriented dimension of personality, could reorient the training of clinicians toward education for transcendence instead of a psychology of the neurosis, and could reemphasize the existential nature of the psychotherapeutic hour as not only the crucible for personality transformation but also the laboratory for a new type of experimental psychology. Concretely, humanistic psychologists also could focus the precious resources of the movement on Division 32 in the APA, which needs a serious infusion of financial support, more members, and more subscribers to its journal.

By instituting such changes within their own ranks, humanistic psychologists might immediately garner the attention of mainstream psychologists. The next question, however, is more crucial: What will humanistic psychologists tell their mainstream counterparts if they actually could get their attention?

In our opinion, the single most important contribution that humanistic psychologists have to make to modern psychology is to bring the attention of the experimentalists to focus on the phenomenology of the science-making process and, once the attention of the discipline is focused on that point, to articulate a phenomenological (rather than a positivistic) epistemology as the basis for a new experimental science (Taylor, 2010, 2011).

Such a science is not new; we have heard a similar call in William James’s radical empiricism and from depth psychologists such as Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud and theologians such as Paul Tillich. Maslow (1966) pointed in that direction with his Psychology of Science, and it also was the basis for Giorgi’s (1970) interpretation of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in Psychology as a Human Science. It is also the foundation of Dignaga’s Buddhist theory of perception. At any rate, it is a scientific psychology that would address the full range of human experience while at the same time accommodating non-Western epistemologies, two key conditions not presently fulfilled by contemporary positivistic epistemology. What implications such a new science would have for the social and behavioral sciences, and even for physics and biology, would remain to be worked out. But even established in its most primitive form, it would more than adequately fulfill the original agenda of those who founded humanistic psychology in the first place.
REFERENCES


What does it mean to be a woman in humanistic psychology? Do women have a unique perspective on humanistic psychology? What is the relationship between women, power, and leadership in the field? What is the lineage of women in humanistic psychology? What is important to ask about women and humanistic psychology?

In the 12 years since the first publication of this chapter in The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology (2001), there have been significant changes in the roles and numbers of women in psychology. In addition, we have had a chance to reflect back on the chapter, which has produced new insights and conversations. In the spirit of Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, and Belenky (1996), who wrote their updated text on women’s ways of knowing as a collaborative maturation from their dialogue, we too have written this new chapter from our ongoing dialogue.

The new reflections from Ilene Serlin focus on her acknowledgment and appreciation of the women role models who most affected her work as a psychologist. By bringing them into the foreground, not only will she highlight their sometimes forgotten contributions and continue to be concerned about remembering their place in history, but she will also be demonstrating what she believes is actually one characteristic of women’s ways of knowing—seeing ourselves in context, in relation to others, recognizing our place in a lineage of mothers (and fathers), while also mentoring the younger generations. Eleanor Criswell will add her new understanding of gender roles from her recent immersion in the study of horses and the neurobiology of sex differences in the brain. Both of us observe that, for whatever biological or cultural reasons, women in general, and in the field of humanistic psychology in particular, tend to develop the experiential, applied, and relational dimensions of psychology, while the men tend to focus on the abstract, theoretical, analytical, and verbal dimensions of psychology. Both men and women humanistic psychologists have chosen to develop their work with a strong somatic component and the mind–body connection. However, we also both observe that the aforementioned gender differences may be related to the number of men in leadership positions in the Division and agree that this should change.
On the other hand, we wondered to what extent these differences are hardwired into our behaviors. Should women accept this and focus on our own projects and interests? Or should we challenge the status quo? Division 32 has passed more than one task force recommendation on a diversity commitment—including one under the leadership of Criswell—but is it happening? What are the resistances? Serlin found it important to find support and articulated sociological and political understanding through participation in Division 35 (Society for the Study of Women), Women’s Caucus in the Council of Representatives, and Women Psychologists for Legislative Action—all women’s forums modeling empowerment, clarity of purpose, and effective networking. What practices can be learned from the experiences of other associations and divisions? For example, women from the Women’s Caucus as well as the ethnic minority divisions initiated successful systems of mentorship and outreach that could be used in Division 32. Serlin also found it empowering to join Division 42—The Society for the Independent Practice of Psychology—finding Division 32 becoming more and more academic. Finally, she started a special-interest area under the auspices of the Division called Psychotherapy and the Arts that offered support to practitioners interested in learning more about the field. In this way, one response to gender role differences is to try and bridge the gap, bringing in trainings and alternatives. Here are Serlin’s comments about the new approach, based on a paper presented at the Fifth Annual Conference of the Society for Humanistic Psychology, Division 32 of the American Psychological Association, March 29 to April 1, 2012.

Ilene Serlin

What does it mean to be a woman in humanistic psychology? Do women have a unique perspective on humanistic psychology? What is the relationship between women, power, and leadership in the field? What is the lineage of women in humanistic psychology? What is important to ask about women and humanistic psychology?

In addition to the questions we asked at the beginning of our chapter, I also wonder about women and generativity in humanistic psychology (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). How many of us have had children? What is the ratio of women as members of the Division to women in leadership roles? Do women bring anything unique to leadership (Gilligan, 1982; Goldberger et al., 1996; Hare-Mustin, 1983)? Are existential/humanistic and transpersonal psychologies applicable to women and children (Serlin, 1995; Serlin & Criswell, 2001)?

To whom can we look as our foremothers of humanistic psychology? Who are our role models? I’ll speak a bit about two of the most important role models in my life and what I learned from them.

The first is Laura Perls. In contrast with Fritz Perls, Laura was quiet, artistic, Zen. From her, I learned about process and connection—how to stay with the gradual unfolding of experience. From Laura, I learned about Gestalt as an aesthetic philosophy, applicable to four-hands piano, dance, or dialogue (Perls, 1992; Serlin & Shane, 1999). Laura taught me to observe the dance of dialogue between an “I” and a “thou,” both verbal and nonverbal. Laura was prone to using organic metaphors of human growth, likening us to plants that are well-grounded in the earth, that sense their need of food, water, or sun and reach to fulfill that need, taking in and absorbing the new elements while eliminating used material. A plant, she would remind us as we stood sensing our balances, can reach only as far as it has the support; similarly, our lives are a balance between support and new growth. Her theories were organic, situating the human in a context of nature and natural cycles of growth and decay. Through Gestalt
psychology and psychotherapy, embodiment and experiential processes were contributed to humanistic psychology.

From Simone de Beauvoir, I learned about the status of women throughout history as a second sex and the need to keep striving for political as well as personal freedom. I learned that for most women the personal does need to be political (Cannon, 1995). I learned to throw off bourgeois shackles, enjoy the life of the mind and adventure, and consider marriage a bad deal for the woman (Berger, Serlin, & Siderits, 2007). I idealized the open relationship between Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Intoxicated by the taste of authenticity and freedom, I followed Simone de Beauvoir’s footsteps around Paris during the student uprisings of 1968 as I read about her favorite bars, lived with bohemian artists, and took part in the student demonstrations (Serlin, 2005). During one such demonstration, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir stood on the street talking with us students, and I was starstruck.

But how many courses on existentialism focus on Simone de Beauvoir? And Laura Perls wasn’t recognized in Ego, Hunger and Aggression, which Laura, Fritz, and Paul Goodman wrote while sitting around the kitchen table. In the spirit of the personal being political, I understood that restoring Laura’s rightful place in the history of psychology would need to be a project. I interviewed her in her home about the history of Gestalt therapy and was with her, her daughter, and her granddaughter when she died (Serlin, 1992b). So I am dedicated to bringing Laura Perls and Simone de Beauvoir into the pantheon for Division 32 (Serlin, Aanstoos, & Greening, 2000). I am a fellow of Division 35 and learned from strong women in the American Psychological Association (APA) how to cultivate women in the pipeline for leadership.

Both Laura Perls and Simone de Beauvoir were intellectuals. Laura was a student of Martin Buber and was one of the few women to get a doctorate in psychology at the University of Frankfort. She was a concert pianist, and we would play Bach’s four-hand inventions in our therapy session as a form of dialogue. Simone de Beauvoir did not have children, and she lived among writers, philosophers, and artists. I spent a day with her sister Helene de Beauvoir in Strasbourg one summer, where she showed me her paintings and portraits of Simone de Beauvoir (who had just died) and a catalogue of her paintings with an introduction by Sartre.

Laura Perls and Simone de Beauvoir were Athena types, warriors of the mind and soul. The Gestalt therapist Miriam Polster writes about these types and the feminine quest in Eve’s Daughters: The Forbidden Heroism of Women (1992), emphasizing the need for courage and risk taking (Woolf, 1929/1989). Still, it is the warrior image of women in humanistic psychology to which I feel close. Humanistic psychology emphasizes the heroic quest for knowledge and meaning. Yet this quest is associated with Abraham Maslow’s (1962) “peak experiences,” Ken Wilber (1986), and other male hierarchical models. I looked for images of women who lived that narrative. I created a course called “Women and Narrative” at Saybrook, where we explored the life narratives of Virginia Woolf, Anne Sexton (Serlin, 1992a, 1994), Colette, Georgia O’Keeffe, Diane di Prima, Mary Catherine Bateson, and Frida Kahlo. Those women held their own in circles of men, continued to be creative, and did not become victims. Some women who were wives or muses of famous men either self-destructed or were put in psychiatric hospitals. Others, like Georgia O’Keeffe, however, continued to produce their art and live their own lives. What can we learn from them?

At the same time, some women just found the struggle ultimately too costly. Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) left a tenured position as a professor of literature at Columbia at age
of Combs, a student of Rogers, I taught part-time at a number of universities before taking a tenure-track position at Sonoma State University (SSU). I was one of the three female faculty members in the psychology department at that time. During my early career, I was frequently surrounded in professional situations by male colleagues. As time went on, I was joined by more and more women. Now, SSU’s psychology department has a predominantly female faculty. In my career, I have worked to encourage female professionals both in the field of psychology and outside the field. I have encouraged and mentored many women in their career development, as I was encouraged by my mentors. For example, in 1970, I was the founding director of the Humanistic Psychology Institute (now Saybrook University), a graduate institution designed to provide a place where all students could develop as humanistic psychologists.

During most of my life, I have been an “outsider,” a term introduced by the British author Colin Wilson (1956/1967). There are great benefits to being an outsider. On the one hand, you are not part of the deep inner circle; on the other hand, you are free to develop with less of the societal shaping that is usually a part of group membership. I was always free; I am a great appreciator of personal freedom. I am happy to have been born female with all the qualities and challenges that being female represents. Being an outsider, I developed along an alternative path (alternative to mainstream psychology): I had the opportunity to study with humanistic psychologists as an undergraduate and then in graduate school at the University of Kentucky and the University of Florida. My educational path was always alternative, as is humanistic psychology even to this day. Over time, principles of humanistic psychology have received wide acceptance within APA and the world, but as a field, it remains an alternative path. I always focused on the educational, experiential, and

Eleanor Criswell

I began my appreciation for humanistic psychology in the late 1950s, before it had a name. My early influences were Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Sidney Jourard, Arthur Combs, Clark Moustakas, and others. I was inspired by the promise of humanistic psychology for the actualization of human potential for all people. After receiving my doctorate at the University of Florida under the direction of Combs, a student of Rogers, I taught part-time at a number of universities before taking a tenure-track position at Sonoma State University (SSU). I was one of the three female faculty members in the psychology department at that time. During my early career, I was frequently surrounded in professional situations by male colleagues. As time went on, I was joined by more and more women. Now, SSU’s psychology department has a predominantly female faculty. In my career, I have worked to encourage female professionals both in the field of psychology and outside the field. I have encouraged and mentored many women in their career development, as I was encouraged by my mentors. For example, in 1970, I was the founding director of the Humanistic Psychology Institute (now Saybrook University), a graduate institution designed to provide a place where all students could develop as humanistic psychologists.

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clinical—concerned with the development of the person. Being hired at SSU, in one of the first humanistic psychology departments in the world, enabled me to continue to study and practice the principles of humanistic psychology. Lifespan development, yoga, somatic psychology, and biofeedback are significant parts of my work, and I have always approached them from a humanistic perspective. I am currently an emeritus professor of psychology (at SSU). I continue my teaching and mentoring through the Novato Institute for Somatic Research and Training, Meridian University, and other institutions.

I have been very fortunate in my career to be a humanistic psychologist. In writing this chapter and in traveling throughout the world, I am poignantly aware of the global plight of women. As humanistic psychologists, we need to continue to do what we can to encourage the improvement of health and well-being for women and to develop opportunities for women of the world to develop their wonderful capabilities.

**Women and Humanistic Psychology**

The role of women in humanistic psychology is a complex one. On the one hand, much of humanistic thought, especially with regard to the centrality of personal experience and holistic and tacit ways of knowing (Polanyi, 1958), has much in common with feminist theories of intersubjectivity (Chodorow, 1978; Jordan, 1991), personal knowledge, and the importance of finding one's own voice (Gilligan, 1982; Heilbrun, 1988; Woolf, 1929/1989). On the other hand, existential, humanistic, and transpersonal psychologies have all been subject to feminist critiques that these perspectives privilege the self-evolving individual on a solitary and heroic journey of self-discovery (Crocker, 1999; Wright, 1995). This journey is characterized by subduing nature; overcoming matter; transcending the body (Wilber, 1986); and promoting individuation, differentiation, and abstraction and is filled with masculine terms of agency, control, and self-sufficiency (Crocker, 1999). Humanistic psychology, these critics charge, had forgotten the body and nature (Starhawk, 1988; Wright, 1995). In fact, existential humanism was based on the experience of the modern, alienated, urban white European male (Roszak, 1992), which left out relevant experiences of women, children, and indigenous peoples. Even the postmodern trend in humanistic psychology can be critiqued as sharing “modernity’s groundlessness” (Weil, 1999), being disembodied, and lacking a sense of place and body.

A truly radical feminist postmodernist humanistic psychology, therefore, would have to be grounded in an “ecosocial matrix” (Spretnak, 1997) that restores the elements of earth, body, and community. Finally, the feminist perspective on humanistic psychology can itself be critiqued as being insensitive to issues of power and social context. “Womanist” philosophy extends the themes of feminist psychology by focusing on the centrality of community, mutual caring, and family, and it challenges us to move beyond experience to liberation and transformation (Jacklin, 1987; Leslie, 1999). In addition, female contributions in women’s studies have been assessed with the following approaches: (a) compensatory—which name these contributions, (b) contributory, which describe in detail the female accomplishments, and (c) phenomenological descriptions that expand on women’s life experience, such as humanistic values. Although these criticisms are true for only a part of humanistic psychology, as challenges they are important reminders for the field.

While the “third force” or humanistic orientation to psychology was fathered by men such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, Sidney Jourard, and others, many women served as the mothers of humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychologists believed that all human beings are basically creative and
behave with intentionality and values. Their focus was on the experiencing person and the meaning of experience to the person; they emphasized the human qualities of choice and self-realization; they were concerned with problems that are meaningful to humans; and their ultimate concern was with the dignity and worth of humans and the development of the potential inherent in every person (Krippner & Murphy, 1973). During the late 1960s and 1970s, many women were attracted to humanistic psychology because of its philosophy, practices, and promises of self-fulfillment. At approximately the same time, parallel social movements were beginning. For example, in the late 1950s, the women's liberation movement led by Betty Freidan championed similar humanistic principles and rights. The world of humanistic psychology was a favorable environment for women. Many women attended workshops in growth centers throughout the country, which continue to be characterized by a great deal of exploration, experimentation, and creativity. The Humanistic Psychology Institute was founded by Criswell from the Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP) in 1970 as its academic arm, as a place for training humanistic psychologists, both men and women.

While the field of existential-humanistic (E-H) therapy has not traditionally included many female practitioners, this situation is changing. E-H therapy now embraces a range of female practitioners who influence its focus and tone (Brown, 2008; Comas-Díaz, 2010; Fosha, 2008; Monheit, 2008; Schneider & Krug, 2009; Serlin, 2008; Sterling, 2001; Pierson, Krug, Sharp, & Piwowarski, Chapter 41, “Cultivating Psychotherapist Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs,” this volume). New voices include Myrtle Heery’s International Institute for Humanistic Studies and Sarah Kass’s The New Existentialist Blog. Until recently, with the exception of one of its founders, Charlotte Bühlér, very few female voices had been heard expressing their interpretations of E-H therapy. The advent of this substantial group of female voices in itself has been a corrective by providing an intrinsically feminine perspective of E-H therapy as a counterpoint to the heretofore almost exclusively male one.

The humanistic psychology movement and the human potential movement were not identical, but they were mutually supportive. Many women answered the call to human potential events. Their spirit of coming closer with others, the hallmark of women’s ways of being and knowing, was therefore significant in the zeitgeist of humanistic psychology.

In the 1970s, the second contemporary wave of the women’s movement came in, led by Gloria Steinem and others. Women in AHP began to assert their feelings about not having enough of a voice and were encouraged to move into leadership positions in the organization; they were given more program time devoted to women’s issues. Up to 1976, there were 3 women AHP presidents: Charlotte Bühlér, Norma Lyman (the first organizational secretary of AHP), and Eleanor Criswell, in contrast to the 11 male presidents. After 1976, there were 13 female presidents and 12 male presidents. Twice there were male and female copresidents. Women presidents after 1976 include Jean Houston, Jacquelin L. Doyle, Virginia Satir, Peggy Taylor, Lonnie Barbach, Frances Vaughan, Elizabeth Campbell, Maureen O’Hara, Sandy Friedman, Ann Weiser Cornell, M. A. Bjarkman, Jocelyn Olivier, and Katy Brant. The AHP conventions were always highly experiential and featured women’s issues, community issues, relationship concerns, somatic practices, and environmental concerns. Both inside and outside AHP and APA, there have been other outstanding women humanistic psychologists and therapists. For example, Laura Perls, who with Fritz Perls “brought individual responsibility into an active experiential process” (Serlin, 1992b), and Virginia Satir, founder of conjoint family therapy, were
both well known in their day. Stella Resnick, Ilana Rubenfeld, and Natalie Rogers were active in AHP conventions. Bühler, a personality theorist, met with the others at Old Saybrook, Connecticut, in November 1964—a seminal gathering for the founding of the humanistic psychology field. Her theory of self-actualization predated Abraham Maslow (DeRobertis, 2006), and she pioneered methodologies involving developmental, biographical, and case study formats (Ragsdale, n.d.). Carol Guinn was the longtime editor of the *AHP Newsletter*, an important voice in the field. Some women were active in their humanistic institutions of higher education, such as Anne Richards (State University of West Georgia), Nina Menrath, Norma Lyman, and Eleanor Criswell (SSU). There have been many unsung women in humanistic psychology. Some of them are the wives of the founding fathers: for example, Helen Rogers, Bertha Maslow, and Antoinette Jourard. It is interesting that they are or were all artists. Helen Rogers was a painter, Bertha Maslow was a sculptor, and Antoinette (Toni) Jourard is a photographer. All were deeply self-actualizing persons, who were fully functioning, and inspiring to their husbands and to others. Strong female leaders for the AHP include its past presidents Charlotte Bühler, Norma Lyman, Eleanor Criswell, Virginia Satir, Peggy Taylor, Frances Vaughan, Ilene Serlin, Elizabeth Campbell, Maureen O’Hara, Sandra Freidman, Ann Weiser Cornell, M. A. Bjarkman, and Katy Elizabeth Brant. While the leadership of AHP had many women, the leadership of Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) of the APA did not. Division 32 was founded to bring humanistic psychology specifically into academic and professional psychology organizations:

A number of women participated in the founding of Division 32. Joyce Howard, Louise Riscalla, and Constance Moerman, for example, attended the founding meeting of Division 32, and Gloria Gottsegen was named its acting secretary. During the first Division 32 election, Elizabeth Mintz, Joen Fagen, and Janette Rainwater were elected members-at-large of the Executive Board. Karen Goodman and Marta Vargo helped run the hospitality suite during the APA conventions, which started the general APA tradition that hospitality suites should host the more experiential programs at the APA. Zaraleya Harari was named newsletter editor, and Nora Weckler, a California psychologist, was also active in the governance of Division 32. MaryAnne Siderits, from Marquette University, later became the editor of the newsletter. Past presidents include Gloria Gottsegen and Mary Jo Meadow. Past presidents of the division include Ruth Heber, Constance Fischer, Ilene Serlin, Louise Sundararajan, Sara Bridges, Eleanor Criswell, Maureen O’Hara, and others. Despite the active involvement of women members, however, the leadership has been predominantly male. As of 2011, APA membership involved 57% female versus 42% male full members, not including student, teacher, and international affiliates (APA, 2012). Compared with the 38.5% of women among all the members of the APA, Division 32, with approximately 187 members, is close to average with 54% women. Statistics on the percentage of women officers across divisions, however, show Division 32 to have 34% women officers, as compared with
42.8% (24) women officers of the Society of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology, 46.6% (29) in the Society of Psychotherapy, 33.3% (36) in the Society of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, and 38.8% (39) in the Society of Psychoanalysis (APA, 2012).

Women’s Ways of Knowing and Humanistic Psychology

Perhaps the differences between men and women are related to gender differences?

In a recent sequel to the now well-known Women’s Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986), this same group of women extended their epistemological analysis to Knowledge, Difference, and Power (Goldberger et al., 1996). The position that they lay out echoes the core values of humanistic psychology (Goldberger et al., 1996, p. 205). In the opening chapter of Knowledge, Difference, and Power, Goldberger et al. (1996) framed their argument with the statement that the discussion would be in terms of gender roles and the archetypally feminine, not in terms of real, complex women and men. In the same way, the distinctions we make here about women’s versus men’s ways of knowing, and experiential versus cognitive approaches to humanistic psychology, are simply helpful conceptual tools. Since society has always “genderized” knowledge, understanding women’s ways of knowing can raise our consciousness to include “the situational and cultural determinants of knowing” and “the relationship between power and knowledge” (p. 8), “standpoint epistemologies” (Harding, 1986; Jaggar, 1983), and “social positionality and situated knowledge” (Collins, 1990; De Laurentis, 1986; Haraway, 1991; hooks, 1983).

The key concepts of those women’s ways of knowing are as follows:

1. Connectedness: In contrast to the male way of knowing, which emphasizes separation and individuation, critical analysis, rational debate, and detachment, whose mode of discourse is the argument, and which is hostile to new ideas (Goldberger et al., 1996, p. 207), connected knowing draws on empathy and intuition, is receptive to new ideas, and seeks collaboration with others.

Women’s epistemology of connected knowing is supported by their physiology of connected knowing. Brain research shows that women tend to be less lateralized—that is, less biased in one cerebral hemisphere than men (Springer & Deutsch, 1993). Women have larger corpora callosa than most men, especially the posterior part of the corpus callosum, which connects the two occipital lobes. Since the corpus callosum is the bridge of neuron axons that connects the two brain hemispheres, women have more integrated cerebral functions as a biological condition.

Research shows that when processing language, males use only the left hemisphere; females, on the other hand, use both left and right hemispheres (Denckla, Geary, & Gur, 2005). This may be why humanistic psychology, dominated by males, tends to be highly verbal and theoretical. Women, on the other hand, tend to identify emotions faster and more accurately, and that might contribute to their appreciating the experiential side of humanistic psychology. MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) data have suggested that women have greater functional connectivity density (Tomasi & Volkow, 2012). Connected knowing is also closely related to the humanistic psychology concept of empathy. Rogers, the main theorist on empathy, described empathy as a way of knowing another through connection, through taking his or her frame of reference to fully experience him or her (Rogers, 1980). Humanistic psychotherapists sense their clients’ worlds by being open to them, being transparent to themselves, and laying “aside all perceptions from the external frame of reference” (Rogers, 1951, p. 29). Further support for the emphasis on empathy in humanistic
psychology is the research on mirror neurons. Magnetoencephalography, spinal reflex excitability, and electroencephalography show gender differences in the mirror neuron system. Female participants exhibit stronger motor resonance than male participants (Cheng, Decety, Hsieh, Hung, & Tzeng, 2007; Cheng, Decety, Yang, Lee, & Chen, 2008; Cheng, Lee, Yang, Lin, & Decety, 2008; Cheng, Tzeng, Decety, & Hsieh, 2006). Mirror neurons are neurons that respond when we observe others engaging in a motor activity, especially one that we have already experienced.

2. Social construction of methodologies: Whereas separate knowing is concerned with the discovery of truth, connected knowing is concerned with the discovery of meaning (Lather, 1991; Maguire, 1987; Reinharz, 1992). While separate knowing uses rational debate to validate truth, connected knowing, as it informs humanistic research methods, looks for validity in the empathetic resonance (Hare-Mustin, 1983; Howard, 1991) and the meaning it awakens in the other (Buber, quoted by Friedman, 1985, p. 4). Qualitative research is concerned with quality rather than numbers and is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Feminist research, as a form of qualitative research, is “passionate; it is communal rather than hierarchical” (Smith, 2000, p. 19). It seeks meaningful patterns in experience, not for prediction or control.

3. The self: In connected knowing, the self is not experienced in isolation but is known through interaction with others and “self-insertion” into experience (Elbow, 1973, p. 149). Feminist psychology shares, with humanistic psychology, a view that the self is not a solitary entity but is known only in relationship. The self, itself, is the instrument in psychotherapy and in research. It is used as an instrument of knowing both in the experience of everyday life and in participatory research methodologies. In contrast to the more rigid boundaries of separate knowing, its boundaries are flexible and sometimes permeable (Buber, 1985; Perls, 1992; Rogers, 1961; Serlin & Shane, 1999), demonstrating the “paradox of separateness within connection” (Jordan, 1991, p. 69).

Finally, the self is not a static object but a “self-in-process,” collaboratively created and re-created in the context of relationships (see Polkinghorne, Chapter 8, “The Self and Humanistic Psychology,” this volume).

4. Dialogical knowing: In connected knowing, the “I” transforms an “it” into a “thou” (Goldberger et al., 1996, p. 221). Meaning is found in the intersubjective space between the two, so that the act of interpretation is dialogical (Friedman, 1985, p. 4). Dialogical knowing characterizes humanistic theory, therapy, and research and happens between speaker and listener, reader and text (Ricoeur, 1976), and researcher and coresearcher (Polkinghorne, 1988).

5. Feeling: In connected knowing, thinking is inseparable from feeling. It is feeling that allows one to feel oneself into the world of the other (Goldberger et al., 1996, p. 224), to differentiate the particularities of his or her unique experience—in contrast to the abstract, categorical, and generalized thinking of separate knowing. Psychological research shows women to be emotionally expressive, while brain research shows that women have greater metabolic activity in the emotional areas of the brain than men (Gur et al., 1995), are more empathic, and are more concerned with communication and relationships. It could be said that there is a masculine version of humanistic psychology and a feminine version. The masculine version deals mainly with intellectual conceptions, perhaps explaining why Division 32 is male oriented. The feminine version is concerned with the experiential aspects of relationship and with nurturing the development of the person, which perhaps explains the
fact that the AHP is more female oriented. Both masculine and feminine approaches to humanistic psychology are important. The theoretical understandings are important for the foundations of the field; the experiential aspects are important for the implementation of humanistic perspectives in life.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand, categories of feminist epistemologies are close to humanistic values of holism, subjectivity, and the centrality of the experiencing human being (Bugental, 1976; Maslow, 1962; May, 1953; Yalom, 1980) and “experiential humanism” (Schneider, 1998). Feminist values can bring humanistic psychology back down to earth, to matter and flesh, to connection with other humans, other species, and nature. On the other hand, humanistic psychology can give women an opportunity to fully develop their potential and leadership skills. Their contributions to society need to be valued, such as their sense of relationship, communication, and nurturance. Humanistic psychologists have a concern for all persons and their basic human rights: their right to be treated as individuals with worth and dignity, the right to the primacy of their experiences, the right to the holistic development of their various talents and capacities, and the rights of society to receive the contributions of all individuals toward the cultural evolution of humankind. This is a fertile ground for the continued development of all toward global and environmental well-being.

REFERENCES


From its inception, humanistic psychology has maintained a deep appreciation for diversity; however, humanistic psychology has also failed at actualizing this appreciation for diversity in multiple ways. Little has changed since Jenkins (2001), in the first edition of this handbook, stated, “Psychologists of color have not flocked to humanistic psychology as a champion of their cause, and some have questioned the relevance of the humanistic position to the situation of people of color” (p. 37). Three interrelated criteria, in particular, are important for humanistic psychology to succeed in actualizing its appreciation for diversity.

First, it is important for humanistic psychology to attract individuals representing various forms of diversity. When considering the numbers, however, there is a danger in reducing diversity to tokenism, a rather superficial gesture that only considers the surface level of diversity. While representation is important, if this does not lead to the next two criteria we will discuss, it does not represent any true actualization of valuing diversity.

Second, the inclusion of diversity ought to represent a diversity of ideas and epistemologies. It is important that individuals representing multiculturalism feel welcome to bring their experiences, values, ways of knowing, and ways of communicating with them, and not be encouraged to abandon these in order to follow what is perceived as a more purist humanistic psychological approach.

Third, the inclusion of multiculturalism should challenge and change humanistic psychology. Quite often, it is at this point that strong resistance is encountered. We are not suggesting that to embrace diversity humanistic psychology needs to discard or change its core values; however, the way these values are understood and expressed are likely to change and evolve as the dialogues include individuals who understand and experience these values differently.
HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Although humanistic psychology emerged, in part, as a reaction against the dominant mainstream psychology approaches of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, it still was influenced by these perspectives and the Western culture from which it emerged. As such, it took on many of the values of the times, which included a valuing of diversity. Despite this, humanistic psychology was not as involved with the civil rights movement as one might expect, nor did it join with the later multicultural movement in psychology. As psychology as a field became more diverse, humanistic psychology continued to be led and represented primarily by white male voices. Additionally, important female voices, such as Charlotte Bühler and Eleanor Criswell, were often underacknowledged and neglected in the professional literature.

**Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: Parallel Streams**

Humanistic psychology, proclaimed as the *Third Force*, shifted the focus of psychology to fully appreciate the holistic lived experience of the person (individual) and its implications for practice, pushing back on more mechanistic, reductionistic, and dehumanizing approaches (Aanstoos, Serlin, & Greening, 2000). However, from the perspective of multicultural psychology, this heritage inadvertently continues to perpetuate individualism, focused on the uniqueness of the person, leading to cultural blinders, omission, and perpetual ethnocentrism. The field of multiculturalism has posited a richness of evidence for the importance of context, understanding the self within the multiplicity of culture, as well as an expansiveness of self. It has been informed by various cultural psychologies, like African-centered theory and perspectives, whose lineage in many ways parallels that of humanistic psychology in terms of denouncing reductionist thinking. Many would posit that if humanistic psychology were to hold itself accountable to its own tenets, then it should take a more proactive stance in engaging other theoretical ways of knowing that begin to answer what it means to be fully human from a cultural perspective or worldview—more specifically, what it means to be in the fullness of being within one’s relation to the other. Otherwise, humanistic psychology may inadvertently contribute to its own demise by failing to articulate itself across settings and theories, such as application to multistressed persons or families contending with the intersections of systematic oppression (individual, institutional, internalized), micro/macroaggressions, and/or cultural or historical trauma. The role of humanistic psychology in fostering collective-actualization, or what Hanks (2008) notes as universal actualization, needs to be considered.

It is time for a humanistic reformation that goes beyond a call for the opportunity to develop individual potentialities and self-actualization. It is time for a unifying psychology that recognizes cultural and societal potentialities and offers the opportunity for universal actualization. It is once again time to ask, “Why not?” (p. 118)

Multiculturalism has been considered the *Fourth Force* (Pederson, 1991) as it places the developing person within a context (e.g., a collectivistic perspective and an expansive conceptualization of self). Its essential contribution is that it provides the lens for which other theoretical lineages like humanistic psychology can self-evaluate and adapt accordingly. For example, using the tenets of self-awareness, increased knowledge, and culturally informed or culturally relevant interventions as starting points when applying Western psychological theories may minimize...
the potential for ethnocentrism (intention vs. impact). Multiculturalism accepts the existence of multiple worldviews and embodies social constructionism, the idea that people construct their worlds through social processes (Sue & Sue, 2003). It offers a “both/and” rather than an “either/or” conceptualization that extols a relational view of language rather than a representational one. Multiculturalism can be considered contextualistic in that behavior can only be understood within the context of its occurrence. It then follows that a multiculturally informed orientation or multicultural discourse (Sue & Sue, 2003) can afford humanistic psychology the necessary tools for meeting the needs of contemporary society. It is refreshing to note that there is increased attention to this matter emerging in the humanistic literature. MacDougall (2002), for instance, integrated the tenets of the multicultural discourse in locating a linkage between Carl Rogers’s work and contemporary patient-centered approaches. Similarly, Quinn (2013) recently wrote an important article applying client-centered principles to multicultural counseling competency. As many clinicians would concur, becoming more aware of the social influence and cultural trauma behind psychological distress cannot help but transform the clinician and the work through taking more of a social justice stance.

Cultural psychologies can be understood as the explication of multicultural tenets and as unexplored terrain for humanistic psychology. African-centered or Africentric psychology is one such cultural psychology that represents and reflects the life experiences, history, and traditions of people of African ancestry as the center of analysis (Myers, 1993). Guided by the principals of self-determination, African-centered psychology as a liberating psychology is preoccupied with actualizing optimal mental health from a culturally centered or culturally relative perspective. It is further postulated that as human beings, people of African ancestry have the right and responsibility to “center” themselves in their own subjective possibilities and potential and that through this recentering process they reproduce and refine the best of themselves. As descendants of Africans and American slave chattels, this unique group is African by nature and American by nurture (Nobles, 1990). Yet Western psychology was not conceived with certain cultural groups’ lived experiences in mind. More specifically, Western psychology has played—and in some ways continues to play—an overt and covert role in the oppression of this group (as well as others). In considering its historical roots, humanistic psychology is inherently limited and potentially culpable due to its lack of awareness of or attention to cultural/social context. As a point of interest, attention to self-actualization and transformation was conceptualized as a critique of American culture and consciousness during the height of the civil rights movement in America, yet this social context was not overtly represented, though it was probably implied, in the self-actualization and transformation literature. When considering the psychological implications of such complex social determinants in meeting the needs of diverse groups, it is imperative that humanistic psychology actively and continually cross diverse theoretical approaches and disciplinary boundaries (Richards, 2003) to co-construct more integrative healing practices serving diverse persons in diverse contexts.

Such a discourse between humanistic and African-centered theorists is long overdue given that each shares a historical critique of dominant psychology along with many other shared values, such as an emphasis on health/wholeness versus pathology. The Association of Black Psychologists was founded in San Francisco in 1968 by a number of black psychologists in direct opposition to the American Psychological Association’s inability and unwillingness to hear the needs of the
black community and its professionals during its national convention (Williams, 2008). In a parallel process with the Association of Black Psychologists, the Association of Humanistic Psychology, which evolved into the Society for Humanistic Psychology, was established in Philadelphia in 1963 (Aanstoos et al., 2000). Consider as evidence of their differing emphases the prominent journals for these respective organizations, the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (*JHP*) and *Journal of Black Psychology* (*JBP*).

A subject–title search dating from 1961 in *JHP* yielded 13 matches for multiculturalism (several being notes in its editor Kirk Schneider’s comments) and only 1 relevant to African-centered or Africentric psychology; however, there were 72 references to Africans (with 65 specific to African Americans). An analysis of the *JBP* in this same time period yielded 23 hits for multiculturalism and 24 for humanistic psychology. So when answering the question “Where are all the Black humanistic psychologists?” one might speculate that many African Americans or blacks trained in humanistic psychology may be focused on the application of humanistic tenets in culturally centered psychology—thus, publishing in *JBP*. As many humanistic psychologists never venture into this literature, this important scholarship is lost to a large part of humanistic psychology. This serves as further evidence that becoming more (multi)culturally responsive or diverse is more complex than a simple case of add diversity numbers and stir.

There are ways in which professionals of color, as well as other members of marginalized groups, cannot fully exhale in the bosom of humanistic psychology. It is somewhat hopeful that contemporary humanistic thinkers are beginning to accept this charge (Hanks, 2008). As with any family, this is a multigenerational discourse where “elder scholars” must not only trust but also learn from and with the next generation in the shaping of humanistic psychology, as the contemporary generation ensures that the heritage, lineage, and tenets of humanistic psychology are translated globally. It must be recognized that as humanistic psychology seeks to transform it too will be transformed, as it well should. O’Hara (2009) is more explicit in her conviction that humanistic psychology should change/adapt in meeting contemporary needs by holding itself accountable to its founding activist spirit through the application of humanistic principles at the social level. To do so may mean that humanistic psychology give up some of its cherished tenets as it embarks on this expanding multicultural journey or transformative process.

**The Beginning of Change**

In 1999, Eleanor Criswell (personal communication, March 2, 2013), during her term as president of the Society for Humanistic Psychology, drafted a statement on diversity and encouraged the Society for Humanistic Psychology to begin engaging multiculturalism. However, despite the valiant effort, the impact of this statement was minimal, although it likely served to prime the field of humanistic psychology in preparation for the more recent surges.

In 2001, in the original version of this handbook, three chapters focused on diversity. Jenkins (2001) contributed a chapter, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: A Review and Reflection,” that critiqued humanistic psychology for not being successful in drawing psychologists of color to it, while also providing a balanced critique on the problem of individualism. Serlin and Criswell (2001) contributed an important chapter on humanistic psychology and women, which criticized humanistic psychology for its lack of inclusion of women, particularly in regard to academic and leadership roles. Serlin and Criswell also provided
a critique of the epistemological biases of humanistic psychology, particularly as they pertain to the individualistic and intellectual modalities over the relational, body-centered, and feeling-centered approaches.

Vontress and Epp’s (2001) chapter in the first edition of this handbook focused on existential cross-cultural counseling. In the chapter, the authors highlighted a number of important issues in cross-cultural counseling, including individualism, disclosure, and cultural anxiety, and applied these critiques to existential counseling. Vontress and Epp, like the other contributors to diversity chapters in the first edition of this handbook, noted that there was much lacking in the development of existential and humanistic principles as they apply to diversity and multiculturalism.

While these aforementioned chapters signify an important beginning, they too seemingly had little direct impact on the field of humanistic psychology. Yet the past 10 years have borne witness to a gradual change in humanistic psychology with regard to multiculturalism. Increasingly, leaders in humanistic psychology have acknowledged the problematic lack of diversity in humanistic psychology and the need to become more inclusive of multicultural perspectives (Cleare-Hoffman & Hoffman, 2009; Hoffman, 2008a, 2011; Hoffman, Oumarou, Mejia, & Alcahé, 2008; Rubin, 2011; Schneider & Längle, 2012). Acknowledgment of the problem, however, is hardly sufficient.

The greatest marker of significant improvement has been the Annual Conference of the Society for Humanistic Psychology. At the first conference in 2007, the vast majority of presenters were white males, and there were no presentations that substantively dealt with diversity. By the second year, there were several presentations on these topics, though they were poorly attended (Hoffman, 2012b). By the third conference, the majority of presenters were not white males, and the presentations on diversity were among the best attended and received at the conference. Yet, as we have noted, increasing diversity in demographics only is not sufficient. Many of these presentations focused on raising awareness, justifying the need to address multicultural issues, and encouraging deeper engagement of diversity issues. Despite their success, however, a perusal of the academic search engines for humanistic or existential psychology as they pertain to diversity or multiculturalism quickly reveals the limited published scholarship in this area.

More recently, momentum has begun developing toward a “deep diversity in humanistic psychology” (Hoffman, 2012b) that integrates cultural values and epistemological diversity with humanistic psychology. Many of the early exemplars of a deep diversity were in Schneider’s edited volumes (Schneider, 2008; Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001). A number of articles, book chapters, and books are beginning to build a foundation for multicultural practice in humanistic and existential psychology (Alsup, 2008; Brown, 2008; Cleare-Hoffman, 2008; Comas-Diaz, 2008; Dias, Chan, Ungvarsky, Oraker, & Cleare-Hoffman, 2011; Galvin, 2008; Hannush, 2007; Hoffman, 2008b; Hoffman & Cleare-Hoffman, 2011; Hoffman, Stewart, Warren, & Meek, 2009; Hoffman, Yang, Kaklauskas, & Chan, 2009; Monheit, 2008; Perrin, 2012; Quinn, 2013; Rice, 2008; Serlin, 2008).

Other signs of progress are also noteworthy. Kirk Schneider and Shawn Rubin, in their roles as editors of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, have been intentional about increasing the representation of multicultural experts on the editorial board. Louise Sundararajan, during her year as president of the Society of Humanistic Psychology, began the Indigenous Psychology Task Force, which has substantially grown in number and influence, including numerous presentations at the Annual Convention of the American
forms of prejudice, such as homophobia and Islamophobia, are more frequently tolerated, more overt forms of oppression are commonly met with a strong negative reaction. This has led to some in the public sphere to claim that we have attained a “postracial society,” especially since the election of Barrack Obama as the first black president of the United States.

Strong social pressures not only discourage the expression of discriminatory statements but also discourage the acknowledgment of any prejudices within oneself. According to Sue and colleagues (2007), “most White Americans experience themselves as good, moral, and decent human beings who believe in equality and democracy. Thus, they find it difficult to believe that they possess biased racial attitudes and may engage in behaviors that are discriminatory” (p. 275). Because microaggressions are often unconscious or unintentional, they are easy for the perpetrator to not recognize. Additionally, as they are often ambiguous, they are easy to deny or discount.

In contemporary U.S. culture, when an organization of the increasingly diverse profession of psychology significantly lacks multicultural representation, it is important to examine the possible causes, including the potential presence of microaggressions. It has been our experience that many individuals representing various forms of diversity who initially were drawn to humanistic psychology have reported that they did not feel that humanistic psychology created a place for them or a space to discuss issues that are important to them. Although humanistic psychology voices an appreciation for diversity, it appears that there are concurrent messages, likely in the form of microaggressions, discouraging the actualization of becoming more diverse. We propose several microaggressions common to humanistic psychology that are important for it to address in order to advance on multicultural issues.
Diversity as an Unnecessary Conversation. When engaging in presentations and conversations about diversity with others in the field of humanistic psychology, it is common to hear people voice the opinion that humanistic psychology, because of its focus on the individual, does not need to discuss issues of diversity. This argument is based on the erroneous assumption that by focusing on the individual alone the therapist can understand the client and his or her experiences, and from this understanding assist the client. Yet it is much easier for the privileged group to declare that it is not necessary to discuss culture and diversity (Sue, 2010b). In our experience, while this perspective is common among individuals in the privileged group in humanistic psychology, it is extremely rare or nonexistent among people of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals; and people representing many other forms of diversity. Furthermore, it is sending a message to people who see multiculturalism as an important part of their identity that this part of themselves is not welcome in humanistic dialogue.

Individualism Bias. Most of the early attempts to introduce multiculturalism into the humanistic and existential psychology dialogues included a critique of individualism (Hoffman, 2012b; Hoffman et al., 2008; Jenkins, 2001; Serlin & Criswell, 2001; Vontress & Epp, 2001). Yet many have resisted this critique, pointing toward the relational focus of humanistic psychology. Serlin and Criswell (2001) illustrate that this is a nuanced issue. While they acknowledge that humanistic psychology, on the one hand, embraces intersubjectivity, empathy, and genuineness as central to the human experience, they also note that, “on the other hand, existential, humanistic, and transpersonal psychologies all have been subject to feminist critiques that these perspectives privilege the sole self-evolving individuals on a solitary and heroic journey of self-discovery” (p. 29). Similarly, Jenkins (2001) discusses that one’s self-identity often is rooted in the collective; thus, being relational does not necessarily indicate that the theory is not deeply rooted in individualism.

Moving beyond individualism is more than just being relational, even deeply relational; it entails a different way of perceiving, understanding, and experiencing the self and how the self is connected to the world. To discount or minimize the importance of this, or even to justify humanistic psychology’s individualistic focus too ardently, is to discount the individuals and groups who perceive, understand, and experience the world differently. As Sue (2010a) stated, “Overlooking one’s group membership not only minimizes and negates racial, gender, and sexual orientation differences, but it attacks the social group identities of individuals, and serves to allow Whites, in this case, to avoid guilt associated with White privilege” (p. 258).

Invitations, Patronization, and Embracing. Nathaniel Granger has been one of the important emergent voices advocating for multiculturalism in humanistic and existential psychology. What is particularly important in Granger’s contributions is his willingness to directly confront what is occurring in humanistic psychology that could be considered a microaggression. In his presentation at the Society for Humanistic Psychology’s 2012 annual conference, he noted that it is not sufficient to invite people of color to present at humanistic conferences; rather, it is necessary to invite people of color into “our homes.” Hoffman (2012a), referring to this address, states,

As is hopefully evident, Granger was not looking for dinner invitations, but he was also not speaking to a superficial metaphor of home being just where we come together.
He was using this metaphor to represent the type of interactions and, more importantly, the types of relationships we need to build in order to create a home for diversity in humanistic psychology. (para. 6)

Similarly, Granger (2013) addressed the problem of seeking to address racism through patronizing. Patronizing attempts to include individuals representing diversity often communicate, in subtle ways, that these individuals are less intelligent or less valuable yet are included because they are diverse. Granger states,

Despite the continuum of racial biases and marginalization of other disenfranchised groups, great strides are being taken by individuals and special interest groups to “fix” the problems associated with discrimination of marginalized groups. However, in attempting to ameliorate the problem, patronization is often the resulting bandage over an infected wound. (p. 10)

If humanistic psychology is going to become more diverse, the invitations to become part of humanistic psychology must be genuine and must recognize those who are invited as equals with equally important ideas to contribute. It cannot be an invitation to “join us, if you are willing to think and act like us,” and it should not be an invitation just to give the appearance of being diverse. It must be an invitation that is being made in full recognition that it may challenge and change who we are as humanistic psychology. It must be a bold, fully inclusive, genuine invitation.

**Values Challenges**

As the discussion of microaggressions demonstrates, humanistic psychology cannot become more diverse without being willing to change. While this does not necessarily mean sacrificing our core values, it does mean that we may need to reinterpret and adapt them. Furthermore, if engagement in deep dialogues around multiculturalism demonstrates inherent problems in our core values, then these too must change. We do not believe humanistic psychology will need to sacrifice any core values, but this depends on how humanistic psychology is defined. We recognize that there are different definitions of humanistic psychology. If, for instance, humanistic psychology is defined in such a way as to make individualism a core value, then a core value indeed must be sacrificed if humanistic psychology is to become more inclusive of many cultures. As some illustrations later in the chapter will demonstrate, the reinterpretation of some of these core values and principles is necessary.

**MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCY**

Cultural competency refers to a therapist’s ability to take the life experience and cultural values of the client into consideration in order to develop an effective and culturally sensitive treatment approach with clients from an array of different backgrounds. Quinn (2013) adds to this stating, “Multicultural counseling competence, in a broad sense, suggests a type of therapist skillfulness when helping a person, family, group, or community that struggles as a result of discriminatory and oppressive practices of the dominant group of a given culture” (p. 205). Sue and Sue (2003) outline three key aspects of the culturally competent therapist. First, culturally competent therapists demonstrate an “awareness of [their] own assumptions, values, and biases” (p. 18). Second, therapists are able to develop an understanding of the worldview of the client, which typically entails a combination of some cultural knowledge plus the therapist’s ability to hear and understand the individual stories of clients within their cultural context. Third,
drawing from these first two components of cultural competency, therapists are able to develop appropriate strategies, interventions, and approaches when working with clients.

Through developing their own self-awareness, particularly as it relates to their culture, therapists are better able to understand the need to respect and value the differences of their clients (Sue & Sue, 2003). Often, therapists may not be aware of their own biases until they come in contact with other cultures or develop sufficient knowledge of other cultures to recognize the differences and biases. For instance, Moats, Claypool, and Saxon (2011) discuss how experiences on trips to China focused on existential psychology pushed them to become more aware of their own biases and privileges. This is not an easy process, and those who view this as such often have not done the intense work necessary to truly become culturally competent. Therapists who have “done their own work” are readily aware that they have biases and that those biases can affect the therapeutic relationship.

Sue and Sue (2003) note that the knowledge of difference is often not the difficult part but rather the “attitudes, beliefs, and feelings associated with cultural differences” (p. 18). As therapists become more comfortable with the differences between themselves and their clients, they typically will become more effective as therapists. The differences are not then seen as abnormal.

For therapists to develop a deeper understanding of their clients’ worldview, it is necessary to develop specific knowledge about the clients’ beliefs and experiences as well as knowledge about the cultural group or groups to which they belong. This is often a point of resistance with some therapists, and in particular humanistic therapists, who may want to just focus on developing an understanding of what their clients report as their experience and beliefs. Concerns may even be raised that learning specific cultural knowledge may contribute to stereotyping, which may interfere with the ability to understand one’s clients. While this may be a risk in some situations, without some cultural knowledge, therapists may lack an understanding of the client’s cultural history and the sociopolitical influence on the client. Furthermore, when cultural differences exist between client and therapist, the clients may be more hesitant to bring certain aspects of their worldview or their cultural experiences into the therapy relationships.

Therapists often will object that it is not possible to develop sufficient knowledge of all cultures to be culturally competent; however, this is a misunderstanding of what is being advocated. Therapists do not need to become experts in all the cultures represented by their clientele; however, they should develop sufficient knowledge of a variety of different cultures to be able to recognize the differences they may encounter. For instance, Hoffman and Cleare-Hoffman (2011) discuss cultural variations in emotional expression. In Chinese and many other Asian cultures, the expression of strong emotions is discouraged. For a Western therapist, this could be easily misinterpreted as emotional repression. However, often it is not that the emotion is repressed but rather that it is expressed in subtler, more symbolic forms. Similarly, many cultures of African and southern European decent are more open to the expression of strong emotions as well as more comfortable with direct confrontation. These variations may be pathologized and labeled as repressive or aggressive without cultural knowledge to contextualize these differences.

Cultural knowledge when grasped too tightly and then generalized to everyone within a particular group encourages the reliance on stereotypes and often interferes with understanding one’s clients. However, cultural knowledge when held loosely and not assumed to generalize to all members of
a particular group can enhance one’s therapeutic vision and ability to accurately understand one’s client.

Building on the themes of self-awareness and cultural knowledge, Sue and Sue (2003) advocate that therapists learn to utilize appropriate intervention strategies and techniques. For the most part, the first two components of cultural competency (self-awareness and cultural knowledge) are similar across therapeutic orientations; however, the third component of cultural competency (developing appropriate strategies, interventions, and approaches) is more dependent on the particular approach to therapy. As previously indicated, humanistic therapists may advocate that because they are focusing on the individual client’s experience, they do not need to adjust their approach as it is already “built in” to the treatment modality. However, this is a dangerous assumption. For instance, what is considered good eye contact in the United States may be perceived as excessive, challenging, or intimidating in other cultures, such as many Asian cultures. In subtle and sometimes significant ways, humanistic and existential approaches to therapy do require adjustment to the individual and the cultural group.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY AND MULTICULTURALISM

As we have discussed, much of the history of humanistic psychology and diversity has been a struggle to recognize the need for a multicultural approach to humanistic psychology. We are now transitioning from the validation phase into a more constructive phase. Because of this, there is, as yet, limited published scholarship on humanistic multicultural psychology. The reader will note that many of the references in this chapter have been conference papers and newsletter articles, which is where much of the struggle for validation has taken place. What is now needed is the development of solid theory, research, and application rooted in good multicultural scholarship and good humanistic scholarship. This is beginning to emerge in the professional journals and books. In the following section, we discuss three important ways multiculturalism can advance humanistic psychology.

Convergence and Deepening Through International Dialogues

One of the promising areas of emergent humanistic scholarship is international dialogues. The biases inherent in a psychology developed within a specific cultural context, such as American or Western psychology, will be more evident when discussed or applied in a cultural context that embraces very different values and conceptions of the self.

Xuefu Wang (2011), who is the leading figure in indigenous Chinese existential psychology and who developed an approach to therapy called zhi mian therapy, begins by emphasizing the similarities and convergences between the Chinese and Western approaches:

“We have a common understanding that the term existence originated in the West, but it also belongs to China. Zhi Mian originated in China, but it also belongs to the West. Indeed, Zhi Mian and existence belong to the world.” (p. 242)

For Wang, this intersection highlights two important points. First, there is significant convergence on existential ideas that originated from Western and Eastern cultures. However, Wang is also highlighting that the particular cultural contexts belong to the world. In other words, through cultural exchange, we deepen our understanding of existential ideas. Existential psychology and zhi mian should be in dialogue with one another.

Similarly, Dallas, Georganda, Harisiadis, and Zymnis-Georgalos (2013) compare zhi
Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements

Humanistic psychology emphasizes that an individual should “be yourself,” individuate, and follow his or her own dreams. This emphasis, however, contradicts collectivist approaches to living that stress harmony (Chan, 2009; Dias et al., 2011). Harmony, in its more ideal forms, entails a conscious choice to live in harmony with the larger group and not create tension or dissent. In many cultures, harmony is extended to living in harmony with nature or God as well as with others. Of course, there are still differences between choosing to live in harmony and “forced harmony.” This is an example of where humanistic and existential psychology needs to evolve through cross-cultural dialogues. While there have always been exceptions to the excessive individualistic focus within humanistic psychology, this has always been the dominant perspective. Yet there are large segments of the world for which this does not fit. One can live focused on harmony and be authentic. In reality, for many, this is the only way they can live authentically.

Reclaiming the Emancipatory Roles of Psychotherapy

Rollo May (1981) stated, “The purpose of psychotherapy is to set people free” (p. 19). May was referring to psychological freedom, in which individuals are set free from various unconscious pressures impinging on one’s choices. He was not, however, focusing on the sociopolitical forces that limit one’s choices. Freedom is a key concept in humanistic and existential psychology, yet it is almost exclusively written about from the vantage of privilege. Freedom, however, is experienced very differently when choices are limited. For example, Cleare-Hoffman (2008) speaks of freedom through the experience of the slaves of African descent in the Bahamas. While they were still slaves and forced to work 362 days a year, on 2 of their

\[\text{mian} \] with the Greek concept of “Oistros of life.” \[\text{Zhi mian} \], according to Wang (2011), can be translated as “to face directly”; however, this does not capture the full meaning of the term, which encompasses authentically and honestly facing oneself, one’s life, and others. Dallas et al. (2013) discuss oistros as an evolving concept that combines an energizing, a directing, and a generative function. Through the metaphor of the “gadfly,” they emphasize that oistros “arouses and infuriates,” and so directs one to consider an important issue.

Existential psychology, zhi mian, and oistros all emphasize looking honestly and directly at life and oneself. Furthermore, each of these approaches has confidence that the anxiety or discomfort related to this process has a positive function associated with it. Individuals are not encouraged to do this difficult task of honestly facing life merely to experience the discomfort and suffering but rather because there is a belief that doing this helps an individual to heal wounds and live more authentically. While these different theories converge, they are not all merely stating the same things. Each comes at the topic from a slightly different angle, often incorporating different illustrative metaphors. Thus, through engaging in this dialogue, it is possible to deepen our understanding and experience of this convergent theme.

Challenging and Adapting Through Cultural Differences

Cross-cultural exchange does not always lead to convergence. For instance, the concepts of authenticity, conformity, and harmony can readily conflict in cross-cultural dialogues, particularly as related to the concepts of individualism and collectivism. In Western culture, in particular the United States, the word conformity comes with strong negative connotations. In humanistic and existential psychology, conformity is generally discussed in pathological terms. Instead, existential and humanistic psychology emphasizes that an individual should “be yourself,” individuate, and follow his or her own dreams.

This emphasis, however, contradicts collectivist approaches to living that stress harmony (Chan, 2009; Dias et al., 2011). Harmony, in its more ideal forms, entails a conscious choice to live in harmony with the larger group and not create tension or dissent. In many cultures, harmony is extended to living in harmony with nature or God as well as with others. Of course, there are still differences between choosing to live in harmony and “forced harmony.”

This is an example of where humanistic and existential psychology needs to evolve through cross-cultural dialogues. While there have always been exceptions to the excessive individualistic focus within humanistic psychology, this has always been the dominant perspective. Yet there are large segments of the world for which this does not fit. One can live focused on harmony and be authentic. In reality, for many, this is the only way they can live authentically.
3 days of rest they celebrated their freedom in the festival of Junkanoo. This is a powerful expression of freedom that is quite different from the freedom discussed by May. In humanistic psychotherapy, the concepts of freedom and emancipation need to be reclaimed and broadened.

Multicultural psychology recognizes that one cannot work with clients representing various forms of diversity without addressing the sociopolitical factors that affect these clients’ lives on a daily basis. It is less than a holistic approach to focus on an individual and his or her response to the environment while not doing anything to address the world surrounding the individual, which creates the context for his or her experience. Therapists are not expected to change the world to assist their clients; that would be unrealistic. Yet therapists ought not use this presumption as justification to skirt the sociopolitical issues.

CONCLUSION

To succeed in actualizing the valuing of diversity, humanistic psychology must take responsibility for its current lack of diversity. Paul Tillich (1957) stated,

The citizens of a city are not guilty of the crimes committed in their city; but they are guilty as participants in the destiny of [humanity] as a whole and in the destiny of their city in particular; for their acts in which freedom was united with destiny have contributed to the destiny in which they participate. (p. 58)

If we are not actively engaged in helping humanistic psychology become more multicultural sensitive or in challenging the status quo, then we are guilty of contributing to the perpetuation of a culturally insensitive psychology. Humanistic psychology has come a long way in regard to multiculturalism, and it appears that in the past couple of years the work in this regard has shifted to become much deeper. Now is not a time to be satisfied with the progress in humanistic psychology but rather a time to take advantage of the emergent energy and opportunities to help transform humanistic psychology into a mature multicultural approach to psychology.

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Part II

HUMANISTIC THEORY

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

Humanistic theory has one overriding mission: to unveil the “guts,” core, or essence of what it means to be vitally human. At the same time that it engages this mission, however, it also is cognizant of an irony—the mission’s futility. Although this qualification might sound odd, it is not particularly so for humanists. This is because, for humanists, the guts, core, and essence of anything is ever evolving, ever eluding our grasp, and ever transforming our assumptions. Yet it is all worth the effort, according to humanists—even, and perhaps especially because of, its puzzlement.

Each generation of humanists, then, returns to the Quixotic quest in full awareness of its incomplete and provisional nature yet also, at the same time, in full awareness of its compelling and edifying nature. This part of the volume explores 11 contemporary angles on what it means to be vitally human. Beginning with five broad “Meta-Themes,” this part then funnels into nine narrower domains that both dovetail with and draw on the aforementioned themes.

In Chapter 5 (“The Search for the Psyche: A Human Science Perspective”), an American pioneer of phenomenological psychology, Amedeo Giorgi, asks what happened to the psyche in psychology and how it can be restored to its rightful place. In response, he concludes that although the psyche is very much alive in humanity, in academic psychology it has been critically injured. “I am not arguing against interdisciplinary studies such as neuropsychology or psychopharmacological analyses,” he states. “What I am arguing is that there should be stronger psychological contributions to such studies and that psychology should not be riding on the coattails of the disciplines with which it is dialoging.”

Precisely at a time when medicalization and standardization are strengthening their grip, in Chapter 6 (“Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society”), Kirk Schneider proposes a broad new emphasis in existential-humanistic psychology—the “rediscovery of awe.” Updating his earlier writings about reviving romanticism, Schneider proposes that the sensibility of “awe” is a neo-romantic
imperative, not just for the field of psychology but for the realms of culture, politics, and daily human life.

In Chapter 7 (“The Person as Moral Agent”), the late social critic Thomas Szasz turns his attention to moral dimensions that are as relevant today as they were at the time of the first edition of this volume. Specifically, Szasz argues for a recognition of the authority of persons—as opposed to institutions—in the clarifying, formulating, and determining of their mental well-being. To the extent that this authority is endangered, humanity also is imperiled, he challenges.

Pursuing a separate but related line of inquiry in Chapter 8 (“The Self and Humanistic Psychology”), Professor Emeritus Donald Polkinghorne from the University of Southern California investigates contemporary conceptions of the self. In this updated commentary, he shows how contemporary perspectives on the self broaden but do not necessarily deepen psychological understanding. Despite the stereotypes about isolated individualism, Polkinghorne elaborates, humanistic psychology offers a dimension of intimacy and embodiment to the study of the self, with profound interdisciplinary implications.

In Chapter 9 (“Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self: An Existential Response to the Postmodern Condition”), Louis Hoffman, Sharon Stewart, Denise Warren, and Lisa Meek address what they call “a sustainable myth of self.” Drawing from contemporary existential-phenomenological theory, Hoffman et al. critique existing models of the self and tentatively find that an existential-integrative model may be most useful in addressing the challenges of the present age. They base their conclusion on several factors—the need for a model that acknowledges both the limiting and the freeing aspects of the self, that balances individuality with collectivism, and that explicitly incorporates multicultural diversity.

Marc Pilisuk leads off the “Contemporary Themes” section with two leading-edge presentations on humanistic psychology and ecology (with coauthor Melanie Joy) and humanistic psychology and peace. Pilisuk and Joy (Chapter 10, “Humanistic Psychology and Ecology”) and Pilisuk (Chapter 11, “Humanistic Psychology and Peace”) challenge the assumption not only that humanism has little to contribute to either the community or the environment but also, equally, that humanism can stand alone within these contexts. They suggest that whereas humanistic psychology offers a keen personal angle on peace and the environment, there are broader issues at play. For example, when many people think of humanistic applications to peace, they immediately flash on that poignant moment when President Jimmy Carter connected personally with Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat at the Camp David peace conference. When they think of humanizing the ecosystem, they envision beautifying a city housing project or pausing to marvel at a sunset. But the authors show that, in addition to these moving applications, humanistic psychology also must scrutinize the government policies that lead to the need for peace conferences and the corporate policies that eventuate in beautification projects. They conclude that only an amalgamated humanistic vision—personal, political, and spiritual—will humanize as intended.

In Chapter 12 (“Two Noble Insurgencies: Creativity and Humanistic Psychology”), Mike Arons and Ruth Richards plumb humanistic psychology’s “bread-and-butter” issue—creativity. The chapter opens dramatically with the story of two related “insurgencies”: humanistic psychology and creativity research. Conceived some 60 years ago, these parallel movements rocked the psychological world. In a personal and moving historical memoir, Arons and Richards animate the main inspirations for the humanistic-creativity insurgency: Abraham Maslow and J. P. Guilford. But they do not stop there. Shifting to the contemporary scene, Arons and Richards then focus on the relevance of the insurgency legacy for three emerging concerns:
(1) chaos theory and modern science, (2) health and healing, and (3) everyday or “ordinary” creativity (i.e., the mead of life).

In the subsequent special section chapters, Thomas Greening and Edward Mendelowitz illuminate the rich and underappreciated seedbed of humanistic inquiry—the literary arts. In his opening section, Greening (Chapter 13, “Becoming Authentic: An Existential-Humanistic Approach to Reading Literature”) taps the linchpin of humanistic literary appreciation—intentionality. The humanistic investigator concerns himself or herself not only with the dynamics of a character’s tragic past but also with the character’s unfolding present, Greening proposes. Above all, Greening stresses, literature reminds “us that we are in the midst of the most powerful drama we will ever know personally and for which we have responsibility—our own lives.” He then goes on to illustrate his thesis with analyses of three of Albert Camus’s parables: (1) *The Plague*, (2) *The Fall*, and (3) *The Stranger*.

Drawing on Federico Fellini’s cinematic masterwork *Ginger and Fred*, Mendelowitz (Chapter 14, “Fellini, Fred, and Ginger: Imagology and the Postmodern World”) also vivifies Greening’s axioms. Hope and despair, folly and arrogance, denial and responsibility—they all are there in the film, which is a mirror of our times. Through Fellini’s festival of life, Mendelowitz anatomizes culture, personality, and spirit. He leaves us with a caveat:

> The filmmaker has much to teach us about the world we inhabit and share and the incompleteness we mostly embody and still long to surpass, about the sheer madness and mystery of being in a new millennial landscape and terrain.

*Ginger and Fred*, Mendelowitz concludes evocatively, “is the artist’s peek behind the prosценium arch... It is psychology.”

Opening the “Emergent Trends” section, Brent Dean Robbins and Susan Gordon (Chapter 15, “Humanistic Neuropsychology: The Implications of Neurophenomenology for Psychology”) provide us with a trailblazing overview of the fledgling field of humanistic neuropsychology. Drawing from the latest thinking about “neurophenomenology,” the authors depict how phenomenology, and potentially the sciences as a whole, can inform and deepen findings about the brain.

In another visionary addition to this volume, Nader Shabahangi distills the decades of wisdom he has gained from owning and operating a series of humanistic eldercare facilities in a major U.S. city. In “Humanistic Eldercare: A New Conceptual Framework for Aging,” Shabahangi details both the poetry and the pathos, luminosity, and grit of growing old. In so doing, he also reveals the perversity of traditional approaches to aging in our culture and opens the way for an entirely new gerontological framework. This framework stresses a “whole-person” understanding, encounter, and appreciation of the aged.

In Chapter 17 (“Toward a Humanistic-Multicultural Model of Development”), Eugene DeRobertis graces us with a trailblazing humanistic perspective on psychological development. The field of psychological development has unfortunately been all too neglected until recently. In this crisp overview, DeRobertis shows how humanistic and multicultural psychologies can combine to provide a powerful and comprehensive understanding of the maturation process and, in turn, revolutionize psychology’s conventional view.

In Chapter 18 (“Humanistic Psychology in Dialogue With Cognitive Science and Technological Culture”), Chris Aanstoos rounds out this section with an updated reflection
on technology. Beginning with the challenges to humanistic psychology posed by cognitive science, he moves on to the more general concerns raised by technology. By tracing the historical and psychological roots of these movements, Aanstoos illuminates not only their appeal but also their perniciousness. In the balance of his commentary, he highlights humanistic psychology’s critical role, not just as an adversary of these burgeoning trends but also as a constructive respondent.
The purpose of this chapter is to confront an intrinsically difficult and often bypassed question: What is the meaning of the psyche? I approach the question with modest ambitions. I do not expect to give a full answer; rather, I hope to revive and restore its legitimacy and perhaps move the discussion of it forward a bit. After all, the founders of our discipline were forced to answer the question because they were claiming to have founded a new science, and one can hardly make that claim without articulating, to some degree, what the new science is all about. The only trouble was that the founders of our discipline did not always agree on the subject matter, the approach to it, the methods to be employed, or even the value of the knowledge gained.

I am aware, of course, that the psyche, as the phenomenon to be explored by psychology, has been denied. The claim is made that the name represents an anachronism. Nevertheless, I do believe that the term has staying power and connotes a uniqueness not contained in its competitors—consciousness, the unconscious, behavior, and experience. Better yet, one way of responding to the challenge is to show how the term psyche can incorporate each of the four competing terms. The deeper challenge is to be able to discern accurately and articulate well the specific unique connotations of the psyche.

BIOGRAPHICAL ROOTS OF THE “SEARCH FOR THE PSYCHE”

I was a graduate student during the 1950s, and I followed an experimental program. I was trained as a psychologist, specializing in the field of visual perception. However, I would say that the guiding idea of my training was how to be scientific. Indeed, how to become a scientist was enforced more vigorously than was sensitivity to psychological manifestations. This fact, in and of itself, could have been of great benefit if the balance between scientific emphasis and psychological sensitivity was proportional or if the sense of science being pursued was more in tune with the nature of psychological reality. However, neither desideratum actually was experienced by me. To be excellently scientific was the alpha and omega of all of my psychological education.
Now, I have to state another personal fact. The reason that I chose psychology as a career was because I read William James. I read the Principles of Psychology (James, 1890/1950) primarily, and I was especially attracted to the chapters that described the major characteristics of consciousness—that it was like a stream with substantive and “fringelike” parts, that it always was personal and selective, that consciousness is changing constantly even though organized, and that it deals with objects that are independent of it. These were the issues that I was interested in exploring, and this was why I chose psychology as a profession; and I was keenly interested in knowing how knowledge about such themes had developed during the roughly half a century since James had penned those words.

Needless to say, none of those themes were touched on during my entire psychological training, nor were there specialists where I studied who could guide readings in those areas. However, that disappointment is only part of the story. After all, I was only a student, and there was much about humans that I did not know, so I tried to appropriate as much knowledge as I could, arguing to myself that it never hurts to have general background knowledge about humans. However, I was curious about how the understanding of psychology evolved. I did not know what the psyche was, and I was hoping that somebody would tell me so that I would have a better understanding of my own field.

Perhaps it was because I had this expectancy that I noticed something else about my education: It was dispersed and not unified. By this assertion, I mean something specific and concrete. If I wanted to know something more detailed about the stimulus that triggered off vision, then I went to the physics section of the library and read articles about the characteristics of light. If I wanted to know more about the receptor for vision, then I went to the biology or physiology section of the library to read about the anatomy of the eye or the retina. If I wanted some more nitty-gritty understanding of the visual process, then I also went to the chemistry section of the library to learn about the characteristics of rhodopsin or iodopsin. If I wanted to become methodologically sophisticated and learn about statistics and probability theory, then I found myself in the mathematics section of the library. Finally, if I reverted to my original interest in consciousness, then I read philosophers because psychologists had basically ceased talking about it. The ultimate irony for me, then, was that I was preparing for a career in psychology but rarely was in the psychology section of the library. It seemed to me that I was confronting a certain void. Where was psychology? Why did it seem so hidden? It was imaginable, of course, that psychology could be spread across all of these disciplines, but should it not at least contribute a unifying perspective? There was none that I could see.

Now, one could argue that perhaps my experiences were due to the subject matter that I had chosen to study—vision, a sensorial process heavily dependent on physical stimuli and the body. There is some truth to this, but it cannot be the whole story. That is because it never was made clear just how psychology unified the various perspectives. It seemed redundant. It was as though the visual experience could be explained by an amalgamation of all of the other disciplines. I kept wondering why the subject of consciousness, which had originally motivated me to become a psychologist, was so assiduously avoided.

BENTLEY’S LAMENT

I tried to share my concerns about the gap in the center of the field with my peers, as well as with the few professors I knew well enough, but none of them seemed to share
my concerns. Nevertheless, I carried these concerns with me throughout my studies and during my whole professional career. I read rather thoroughly in the history of psychology, and one day I came across a psychologist who saw exactly the same problem and, mirabile dictu, was even worried about it!

The psychologist was Madison Bentley, a student of Titchener, who also taught at Cornell University. It is not surprising, perhaps, that he was sensitive to this issue given that his teacher was one of the psychologists most responsible for attempting to give psychology a unified definition, even in terms of consciousness. Bentley wrote an article titled “A Psychology for Psychologists” in 1930.

So we add one more photographic presentation of our common array of psychological facts and objects, leaving the unfortunate reader to create his own clear perspective out of many limited and divergent views.

Our main and underlying contention will be that the present confusion of tongues, now widely deplored, is chiefly due to the fact that outside concerns and foreign interests have played too great a part in shaping and defining our field. The result is that we tend artificially to maintain our identity by virtue of the common label “psychology.” Really psychological points of view and interests have been made secondary to evolutionism, the doctrine of heredity, zoological hypotheses, clinical medicine, psychiatry, theory of knowledge, the training of infants, educational doctrines, sociology, ethnology, propaganda for “efficiency,” and amateurish conceptions about “human nature.” Were you to hold to the light any one of the many proposals for a “new psychology” and to look steadily through it, you would almost certainly see the obscurating shadow of one or another of the extra-psychological subjects named in this long list. And the main reason why so many persons are now ambitious to wear the badge and to speak a dialect of psychology is that practically all men can thereby serve some extraneous interest. A few terms borrowed from one of these outside sources—such terms as conditioning, instinct and habit, mental evolution, original nature, reflexes, learning, the unconscious, introversion, inferiority, intelligence, social responses, primitive man, and achievement tests—are enough to give [an] air of scientific sophistication and to suggest the epithet “psychology.” But practically all such terms are imports from without. Insofar as they are assimilated at all, they are assimilated not to psychology but to that particular brand of the subject which has derived from, and has been fashioned to serve, the context which the given term implies. It is inevitable, therefore, that we should now possess multiple psychologies reducible to no common denominator; psychologies pluralized not in the sense of many envisagements of one and the same universe of facts and principles but in the sense of a common name for many diverse and divergent undertakings. (pp. 95–96)

After this long description about the external influences on psychology, Bentley (1930) reduced the number of primary determiners to three: (1) biology, (2) medicine, and (3) education (p. 96). I would say that psychology still is being largely determined by outside factors, but the top three today would be medicine, neurology, and the cognitive sciences. Of course, with practitioners, managed care also has emerged as a determining factor. But none of this would be possible, of course, if we had a clearer idea of what we meant by psyche, clearly demarcating its essence and variations and establishing a good sense of its boundaries. Until we do that, we really can only expect more of the same external influences.
Another manifestation of the fragmentation of psychology can be seen in the number and types of divisions that the American Psychological Association sponsors. There are now 52 divisions reflecting psychological interests, but the relationship among the divisions is totally a “chance” one. It is a type of relationship that Gestalt psychologists called und-verbindungen, or a mere side-by-side manner. It reflects the fact that psychology has grown more by proliferation and extensiveness than by depth of knowledge in terms of the reduction of multifarious facts to basic principles or theoretical organization.

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF BENTLEY’S LAMENT

I now demonstrate that Bentley’s perspicacious point about how psychology is driven by external factors still persists today. Many books concerning the mind and/or therapy were published during the 1990s that have stirred the popular imagination to some extent, and I use these more popular books to indicate the cultural expectations that currently exist, although psychologists’ works are heavily referenced in all of these publications. The three books I have chosen as examples, all of which were reviewed in prestigious sources, are as follows: The User Illusion: Cutting Consciousness Down to Size, by Tor Norretranders (1991), a Danish science journalist; How the Mind Works, by Steven Pinker (1997), a cognitive scientist; and The Talking Cure: The Science Behind Psychotherapy, by Susan Vaughan (1997), a psychiatrist. First, I cite some of the claims and statements made by these authors, and then I comment on them.

Pinker’s (1997) book was written in such a way that one could easily believe that it was written to exemplify Bentley’s point. Pinker states that he believes that the problems of the mind can be solved through the twin perspectives of cognitive science and evolutionary psychology. His strategy is to use “reverse engineering, i.e., the attempt to discover the functions of organs,” arguing that this “is what one should be doing to the human mind” (p. 165). Natural selection is used as a basic metaphysical principle; it explains “the appearance of design without a designer, using ordinary forward causation as it applies to replication” (p. 157). However,

the original molecule was not a product of natural selection (for that would lead to an infinite regress) but [rather] of the laws of physics and chemistry. Nevertheless, these replicators are wont to multiply, and over time, changes that are for the better will be accumulated. (p. 158)

Pinker admits that “natural selection is not the only process that changes organisms over time, but it is the only process that seemingly designs organisms over time” (p. 158). An organism, for Pinker, is a “replicator with a well-engineered body” (p. 158). Indeed, Pinker writes that “organisms are not just cohesive blobs or pretty spirals or orderly grids. They are machines, and their ‘complexity’ is functional adaptive design: complexity in the service of accomplishing some interesting outcome” (pp. 161–162). Pinker asserts that the study of the modern mind is being accomplished by cognitive science. “What makes humans unusual, in addition to upright posture and precision manipulation, is our behavior and our mental programs that organize it” (p. 187).

As Bentley stated, the external interests are dominant here. Mind will be understood by cognitive science, and psychology will be understood in terms of the principles of evolution. In this scenario, does psychology have the right to make a discovery that might challenge its framework? Will the framework allow it?
Vaughan’s (1997) approach is different, but the consequences for psychology are similar. She is a practicing psychoanalyst, but she feels compelled to ground psychoanalysis scientifically through neurology:

In this book, I present evidence that shows how psychotherapy literally changes the structure of your brain. It actually can alter the web of interconnecting neural cells found in the gray matter of the cerebral cortex. Taken together over time, these physical changes in how neurons are connected help us to produce new internal representations of self and other, changing the ingrained neural patterns about relationships that were laid down during early childhood development. The techniques of psychodynamic psychotherapy—from the use of free association and the exploration of dreams to the probing of the evolving patient-therapist relationship itself—make sense in neuronal terms. I believe that the new evidence explains how and why the “talking cure” works at the cellular level. I hope to put neuron back into neurosis. (pp. 4–5)

Throughout the book, Vaughan (1997) first describes her relationship to a client and presents some of the dialogue, and then she departs from the level of experience and behavior to give interpretations of brain activity that could account for why the client was experiencing things or behaving the way in which he or she was behaving. It is as though understanding the experience or behavior itself was not sufficient and that only understanding pathologies in terms of neural activity could truly matter. Indeed, the talking cure is not reliable in and of itself; the scientific basis for its workability has to be established and that comes from the activity of the brain.

Norretranders’s (1991) perspective is that of science and technology, and by taking an objective perspective toward persons, he argues that the reality that consciousness gives us is much less than what the body as a whole receives. He places great stock in unconscious processing and believes that it is a source of richness that too often is discarded in contemporary culture. Thus, he speaks of our consciousness as a user illusion, the term coming from computer design technology, whereby the user of a computer is led to believe that the computer functions in terms of the symbols on the screen, whereas the engineer knows that a sequence of binary choices are being processed. In Norretranders’s own words,

The user illusion, then, is the picture the user has of the machine. [The computer designers] realized that it does not really matter whether this picture is accurate or complete, just as long as it is coherent and appropriate. So, what matters is not explaining to the user how the computer works but [rather] the creation of a myth that is consistent and appropriate—and is based on the user, not the computer. (p. 291)

From this understanding, Norretranders (1991) goes on to make a series of significant statements:

- “The I experiences that it is the I that acts; that it is the I that senses; that it is the I that thinks. But it is the ME that does so. I am my user illusion of myself” (p. 292).
- “Just as the computer contains loads of bits that a user is not interested in, the ME contains loads of bits [that] the I is not interested in” (p. 292).
- “But it is not only the I experienced as our personal identity and active subject that is an illusion. Even what we actually experience is a user illusion. The world we see, mark, feel, and experience is an illusion” (p. 293).
- “There are no colors, sounds, or smells out there in the world. They are things we experience. This does not mean that there is no world, for indeed there is. The world just is. It has no properties until it is experienced. At any rate, not properties like color, smell, and sound” (p. 293).
• “I see a panorama, a field of vision, but it is not identical with what arrives at my senses. It is a reconstruction, a simulation, a presentation of what my senses receive. An interpretation, a hypothesis!” (p. 293).

As one commentator put it,

Seizing on the importance of discarded information as his reigning metaphor, [Norretranders] moves from physics to psychology, steadily whittling down consciousness. It is estimated that of the millions of bits of information flooding through the senses at any moment, most [are] thrown away, and only a tiny fraction enter into human awareness. From this thin stream of data (engineers call it a low-bandwidth signal), the brain creates a picture—a simulation that we mistake for reality. (Johnson, 1998, p. 35)

Note how all three authors share a common theme, that which is the basis of Bentley’s lament. Norretranders (1991) approaches the understanding of persons from the perspective of the physical sciences, computer design, and technology. He grants that there is consciousness but it is simply brain activity and is not even as good as brain activity given that the brain receives so much more than consciousness apparently can appropriate. Vaughan (1997) practices psychoanalysis but, as a psychiatrist, believes that experiential-behavioral pathologies can be scientifically understood only in terms of neural processes. Because neural activity apparently participates in some of the dynamics of our experiential, meaningful world, one can use it to explain why we experience what we do. Finally, Pinker (1997) is a cognitive scientist who believes that principles of software design, plus principles of evolution, can totally account for human behavior. He grants that this total understanding is a long way off, but comprehension eventually will yield to those principles. So physical science, neurology, evolutionary theory, and cognitive science can basically do the job that psychology was called to do. My argument is that this is not possible. But as Bentley said, there are psychologists who lend their labels to such external views. However, they are looking for the psyche in all the wrong places. Do they not realize that they are in the process of undermining their own field?

Now, specifically with respect to the point that Norretranders (1991) makes about consciousness, it is in a way ironic that he tries to diminish consciousness and sees it as illusory and its narrowness as a limitation. After all, it is this so-called illusory consciousness that has established the effectiveness of the unconscious achievements. All science, after all, is performed with the waking consciousness. Second, there is a strong metaphysical assumption that the world is organized according to our understanding of physical nature, that the “really real” is all that information that arrives in bits. Yet when Norretranders calls our consciousness illusory, he really is acknowledging that conscious awareness does not follow the bits in any literal way. As Gestalt psychology showed long ago, consciousness organizes and thematizes what it receives and makes a contribution to awareness. Thus, the assumption that consciousness should follow the inputs of bits in a passive way is not at all in accord with our experience of the world. Finally, Norretranders seems not to take seriously the fact that the unconscious is a mode of consciousness and, therefore, may well begin the transformation processes that he calls illusory and that we would call phenomenal.

With respect to Vaughan (1997), it is not at all clear why a demonstration that neurons can do what the organization of experience or behavior already does is an advantage for understanding neuroses or even more severe pathologies. It is not at all clear why remaining at the level of experience or behavior is
So let us ask the key question: Why is psychology so prone to be externally driven? For one thing, because there is a lack of clarity with respect to the meaning of the psyche, many pretenders are quite eager to rush in. The “void” invites all sorts of analogical speculation. In addition, psychology’s desire to be and look scientific is a big factor. One way in which a person can demonstrate that he or she is scientific is by using the language of science or terms that are in harmony with it. (Of course, when I use the term science without qualifiers, I mean natural science.) This motivates a type of languaging that could be detrimental to the clarification of psychological reality. Here, I need to make an additional point regarding psychological perspectives. We have heard that the cognitive perspective brought about a revolution in psychology from its behavioral past. However, from my perspective, the shift to the cognitive perspective is only a shift in content and not a true revolution. Indeed, I would argue that cognitive psychology is doing precisely what it is necessary to do to preserve the natural science paradigm in psychology and study cognitive processes. Moreover, its advance undoubtedly was aided by the development of the computer and various software programs.

This leads me to another critical point. Psychology seems to be fascinated by technology and pragmatism. Roback (1952) noted long ago that psychology in the United States, as opposed to that in Germany, was practical and technical. This certainly was true of the behavioristic era. Skinner admitted not only that he did not know what behavior was but also that he did not care. What he wanted to do was shape it. Much of cognitive psychology seems to be inspired along the same lines. Questions about cognition often are couched in terms that make certain practical functions possible, rather than being intrinsic questions about the
phenomena as such. All of these factors tend to keep our languaging of the psyche away from essential description.

WHAT IS NOT MEANT BY MY COMMENTS

I have been making some strong assertions, and precisely because they are strong, I want to be sure that I am clearly understood. First, I am not saying that neurology, cognitive science, and evolutionary biology are not legitimate sciences. They are. I am only saying that they are not psychology. Second, I am not arguing against interdisciplinary studies such as neuropsychology and psychopharmacological analyses. What I am arguing is that there should be stronger psychological contributions to such studies and that psychology should not be riding on the coattails of the disciplines with which it is dialoguing. Third, I am not saying that a person who was trained as a psychologist cannot change interests and begin to function as another type of scientist. Clearly, one can, but then the psychological training may be incidental to the new effort, and that should be made clear. Fourth, I am not saying that there cannot be an applied psychology. I am only saying that the clearer we are about what is unique about the psychological approach, the better the applications will be. Fifth, I am not saying that analogical models for psychological phenomena cannot be used. I am only saying that we should remember the fact that they are analogical and not take them literally. Every analogy has unlike characteristics as well as like ones. Finally, to argue for a unique perspective for psychology is not to make it unique science in any special sense but only in the ordinary sense that every science has an irreducible perspective. Otherwise, it should not exist as a separate science.

TOWARD THE MEANING OF THE PSYCHE

I do not pretend to have solved all of the problems surrounding the discrimination of psychical processes (Giorgi, 1982, 1986), but I would like to see in psychology types of thinking other than the type that I have been criticizing. My own perspective depends on the phenomenological approach, and the few things I say here depend on scholars writing within that approach (Giorgi, 1981).

The first thing that one can say is that the psyche does offer special problems for investigators because our subject matter is not clearly and noncontroversially delineated. This fact immediately forces the issue of perspective. One cannot say that the perspective of the whole person—or the whole organism—purely and simply is what psychology seeks, for one can adopt many perspectives toward persons. Moreover, neither can one say that it is the person as such that is the subject matter of psychology (i.e., from the skin inward), because the person must relate to the environment or to his or her situation. And of course, this interaction is dialectical. That is, what is important for whatever we call psychology is the fact that the environment impinges on a person and the human person initiates actions toward the world. Again, however, many disciplines take into account this double interaction, so the issue of perspective comes up again. How do we delineate the content to be called psychology? What phenomenon presents itself to the consciousness of the psychologist when he or she looks for psychological reality?

One way in which to look at this issue is to see what the quality of entities is like. We know that there are physical things without consciousness, and we also know that there are entities with the dimension of life. The latter are the subject matter of biology. What quality is added to “bios” for the psyche to appear? Following Straus (1956/1963), I would say worlds. Worlds are correlated
The level of integration of consciousness–body. Not every relation between consciousness and body would be psychological, and this thought again implies perspective. That is, there are certain levels of conscious functioning that would not be of interest to psychology, such as logical and mathematical thinking. Similarly, there would be aspects of the body that would not be of direct interest to psychology, such as anatomy and neurology. Rather, psychology would be directed toward the integrated functioning of consciousness–body that we could call subjectivity. This calls for a little elaboration. It is important to bear in mind that in the phenomenological tradition, the essence of consciousness is intentionality, not awareness. Intentionality means that consciousness always is directed to an object that transcends the act in which it appears. Basically, this means that consciousness is a principle of openness. By means of it, we are open to a world. The body shares the intentionality of consciousness. It partakes of the directedness toward the world, and so does the unconscious, only awareness often does not accompany this directedness. Nevertheless, all those achievements that Norretranders (1991) speaks about that he assigned to a “ME” still are achievements of what we call consciousness, but they are not accompanied by awareness. However, reflection on such unaware achievements also belongs to consciousness, so some access to them is possible. The point here is that the body as a subjectivity directed toward the world is in the sense of the psychological body. But in this sense, the body shares subjectivity with a series of conscious acts that are not necessarily acted out bodily.

Psychology, then, is interested in a subjectivity engaged with a world in an individualistic way and with the interpreted sense makings of the world as constituted by individuals. Because the body acts, behavior is involved, and because of impingements with entities—or organisms—that have sensoriness and motility. That is, psychology emerges with beings that are capable of receiving impingement from the world and move about in it. So far, then, the psyche would refer to a functioning that would include worlds, and here I would add a further restriction: Psychology has to do with individuated worlds, although these could be generalized into types, such as the world of the rat, the world of the pigeon, and the differentiated worlds of humans (e.g., entertainment, finance).

If there is a psyche, then it always is attached to an entity that has bios or an organism. Psyches never appear isolatedly, nor do they attach themselves to physical things. That is why a mechanistic approach to a human or to psychological reality, understood literally, always falsifies. Mechanistic thought can be applied to the human psyche only analogically. That is why a computer model of mind can, at best, be only an analogy. The basic practical proof is the fact that any machine made by humans can be taken apart, the parts all can be laid down side by side, they then can be put back together, and the machine can function again. No attempt to keep the entity alive is necessary, as with organisms. This is because a machine is grounded by the principle of partes extra partes, that is, by external relations. Entities manifesting life have different organizing principles, and so would entities capable of bearing psychological life.

I have argued that the psyche extends bios by establishing relationships with a world within which it can act and react, against which it can resist, or with which it can harmonize. But how does it do this? We have to answer, through consciousness and bodies. I offer the suggestion that the psyche refers to a level of integration of mind and body with horizontal relations to the world and vertical relations with itself. However, psychology would be interested in only a certain
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from and openness to the world, experience is included. Because of bodily engagements with the world and others without awareness, the unconscious is included, and because of spontaneity and acts of deliberate initiative, consciousness is included. The psyche then would be a certain perspective on the integrated functioning of all of them. But psychology does not exhaust those four topics. There always is some remainder that belongs to each of them that offers itself for analysis in other disciplines.

So far as the scientific study of the psyche is concerned, another degree of complexity enters, a complexity articulated best by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty (1942/1963) pointed out that Western scholarly traditions have been very good with two types of objects: Philosophers developed expertise in dealing with ideas, and scientists developed expertise in dealing with things. Merleau-Ponty made the point that behavior (and I would say the psyche) is neither thing nor idea, and that is one reason why we have problems delineating and comprehending it. Moreover, behavior and the psyche present themselves primarily to perceptual consciousness, which is a level of consciousness that is nontransparent. So the opacity of the psyche is offered to non-transparent perceptual consciousness, and this relationship does not fall neatly into the traditional categories of knowledge. That is another reason why psychological reality has eluded sharp analysis and why progress within psychology has been slow.

Certain other characteristics of the psyche need to be mentioned, even though the context does not allow sufficient time for me to provide arguments. An argument can be made that the psyche is guided primarily by interests rather than truths or, in other words, by “truths for me.” Its structures are primarily para-rational or para-logical. The norms it produces are contingent norms (Giorgi, 1993). That is, they could be other than what they are. The objects constituted by the psyche are para-objective, and this also implies that a level of intentional functioning has to be discerned other than that of the objective intentionality articulated by Husserl. Indeed, psychic life is a contingent life. It is a life of making sense of many situations that are not of our making, which is why access to the psychological should be through the meanings lived by engaged embodied subjectivities.

If what I am saying about the psyche is at least partially true, then what is called for—what these phenomena demand—are genuinely new rigorous approaches to study them. We are encountering qualities and types of phenomena that are not directly confronted by other disciplines. We certainly can benefit from past scientific achievements, but we also must learn how to discern and respect the uniqueness of our own phenomena. However, an original approach can emerge only if psychology dares to break from the natural scientific tradition and its technological offshoots. Rather, philosophers of science concerned about psychological science should be asking what framework is required for psychological science given its ambivalent phenomena. We should be asking what would do for psychology that technology does for natural science, instead of seeking technological solutions to problems of psychology. Let us not be afraid to depart from the known realities of physical nature or things to deal with the psyche, for the psyche offers scientific consciousness peculiar characteristics not found in nature or ideas, such as intentionality and meanings. Let us not be afraid to pursue phenomena and modes of understanding that might upset the status quo. I do not mean anything exotic by the latter statement. I simply mean the pursuit of “psycho-logic” to wherever it leads. Let us seek the psyche where it lives, with the human—or other—organism in its lived relationship with others and the world.
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Rediscovering Awe

A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society¹

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER

I do remember moments that I have been awe awakened; there have been times that I have been carried out of myself by something greater than myself and to that something I gave myself.

—Martin Luther King Jr. (1998, p. 28; from a paper submitted at Crozer Seminary, March 28, 1951)

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this chapter is to describe an emerging psychospiritual paradigm that veers between dogmatic fundamentalism and postmodern nihilism. This “depth” spirituality is based on a rediscovery of our native capacity for awe and addresses the very fulcrum of our contemporary lives. It is a spirituality informed by the existential-theological tradition of great political leaders such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi and by great philosophers such as Soren Kierkegaard, Paul Tillich, Ernest Becker, and Rollo May. This “awe-based” psychology, moreover, welds the zeal and exaltation of religion with the scrupulosity and skepticism of science. Drawing from my recent books Rediscovery of Awe: Splendor, Mystery, and the Fluid Center of Life (2004) and Awakening to Awe: Personal Stories of Profound Transformation (2009), as well as both film and literature, I explore the nature, power, and therapeutic implications of the spiritual capacity for awe.

INTRODUCTION

What if I told you that you are about to embark on a great adventure, that “you, are about to experience the awe and mystery that stretches from the inner mind to The Outer Limits,” à la the science fiction television show from the early 1960s (Stefano, 1963)? But, seriously,
Yet once that protective bubble is broken, which it invariably is through natural or human-created trauma, we need some means of navigating ourselves, some means of reconnecting ourselves to the *awe* (vs. terror) of being broken open, to find our way through it. The way through it is to embrace the bigger picture of life, which reconnects us to our humility and wonder.

Yet there are too few spaces for such reconnecting today, too few places to embrace the bigger picture of life. Although depth-experiential psychotherapy is one such place—one staging ground for the cultivation of awe—how many people are aware of it, let alone fund and support it?

We have a culture that increasingly represses mystery, and a culture that increasingly represses mystery inhibits freedom (Schneider, 2013). Think about it: In a culture that prizes sensationalism over sustained and reflective inquiry, easy answers—be they military, religious, or commercial—over discernment and struggle, and certitude over mindfulness and wonder, how can substantive freedom flourish (Fromm, 1965; May, 1981)? Whereas there is freedom in our culture, as many of our politicians are only too eager to proclaim, this freedom is focused on buying products, solving immediate problems, and acquiring material goods. There is little freedom (time, support) to consider the implications of those attainments for a rewarding and meaningful life. There is little freedom, in other words, to suspend our resolution mania and dwell in the doubts, tangles, and uncertainties that lead to growth (May, 1981; Schneider, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). Are these not the same growthful processes we promote in therapy yet find under increasing threat?

Consider, for example, how substantive depth therapy proceeds. The client is supported to shift from abject terror toward mystery to incremental intrigue and even boldness. The client moves from avoidance...
of crisis to gradual risk taking and from anguish to wonder about what could be. After enough of these therapeutic movements, the client becomes immersed in an awe-based paradigm. He or she (re)experiences firsthand what it means to be both humiliated/crushed and emboldened/empowered. He or she cultivates the capacity to experience the fuller ranges of his or her thoughts, feelings, and sensations and thereby discovers a more fully developed life. This is a life that acknowledges the poignancy and tragedy of existence as well as its exhilaration and majesty. For such a client, the success of therapy is not so much measured by goal attainment—although that certainly can figure in—but by the formation of a new attitude toward living. I call this new attitude “awe based” because, like therapy itself, it embraces both the fragility and the possibilities of living—and thereby the vivacity of living.

THE QUICK FIX VERSUS THE SLOW SIMMER: SUPPRESSIONS OF AWE

Regrettably there is little in our society today that echoes successful depth therapy. On the contrary, today, we mask over precisely the mystery and crisis that are confronted in depth therapy—and we do this in two basic ways: (1) through amoral free-market consumerism and (2) moralizing extremist religiosity. Amoral free-market consumerism accentuates three factors: speed, instant results, and neatness and packaging (or the efficiency model for living). (This model is also reflected by amoral scientistism—or the religion-like faith in science—as well as strident postmodernism.)

Moralizing extremist religiosity, on the other hand, gives us strict guidelines for our lives; it dictates what we can think, say, and do. And yet, in a curious way, moralizing extremist religiosity and amoral free-market consumerism converge on one of the greatest social seductions in history: the “quick-fix” model for living. The quick-fix model for living, whether consumerist or authoritarian, gives us instant answers and pat resolutions to our dilemmas, while the dilemmas themselves, whether personal or collective, barely get touched.

The “dry drunk” syndrome, a pattern that seemed prevalent in certain influential quarters of the United States in recent times (Bisbort, 2003; van Wormer, 2002), fits exquisitely into this quick-fix, “cut-and-dried” mentality. The dry drunk is someone who addresses the symptoms of his or her problem (e.g., through drugs or shopping or the elimination of alcohol) but who fails utterly to encounter the anxieties that underlie his or her symptomatology. The result is that although a person may look functional on the outside, internally the person is a wreck—and it is this internal upheaval that gets displaced in the world. Life becomes black or white for many of these people, good or bad, while all the while, the opportunity for introspection, deep deliberation, and mindful action is spurned. Put another way, one of the cardinal features of the dry drunk is the capacity to solve problems simply, expeditiously, and militantly but without much forethought or depth—and hence, many of the challenges we face today, from warfare to zealotry and from scapegoating to barefaced commercialism. Could all this lead to yet another pattern, the “Nero syndrome,” where our leaders and many of the people fiddle while Rome burns?

THE HAPPINESS CRAZE/HOAX

Happiness and well-being, as they are currently defined (by scales and surveys, particularly within positive psychology and cognitive-Behavioral Therapy circles), show some odd linkages (e.g., Alloy & Abramson,
1988; Keys & Lopez, 2002; Kiersky, 1998; Wallis, 2005). For example, emerging studies suggest that (a) people who score high on such scales may well harbor more positive illusions about life (e.g., less accuracy regarding reality) (Alloy & Abramson, 1988; Kiersky, 1998) and (b) may possess lower levels of psychological growth than people who are (mild to moderately) depressed or have recovered from depression. This latter point has been underscored by what has been termed the depressive realism effect (Alloy & Abramson, 1988; Tedeschi & Calhoon, 1995, 1996). Similar correlations have been found linking happiness with increases in racial prejudice (simplistic thinking) and selfishness and decreases in the ability to self-reflect (Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Susser, 1994; Esfahani Smith, 2013; Stambor, 2005, p. 13).

Correspondingly, approximately 60% to 80% of the U.S. population calls itself happy (Esfahani Smith, 2013; Wallis, 2005), and presumably a good percentage of those people score high (or would score high) on the well-being scales of positive psychologists. And yet,

1. nearly one quarter of that U.S. population “believe[s] that using violence to get what they want is acceptable” (Rifkin, 2005, p. 32);
2. nearly half “are more likely to believe that human nature is basically evil, and that one must belong to the one, true religion to lead the best, most meaningful life” (Galek, Flannelly, Weaver, & Vane, 2005, p. 27);
3. 59% of the U.S. population believe that the prophecies in the Book of Revelations (e.g., the Rapture and a war with Islam in the final reckoning) are going to come true, and nearly a quarter believe that the Bible predicted the 9/11 attacks (Moyers, 2005);
4. Americans now spend more on gambling than on movies, DVDs, music, and books combined (Rifkin, 2005, p. 28); and
5. 67% of U.S. men and 57% of U.S. women are overweight or obese (Payne, 2005).

In short, if scoring high on positive psychology scales, which often means enjoying lots of friends and family and frequently going to church, encompasses the oblivious couch potato as well as the fanatical ideologue, something is amiss.2

We need a new definition of happiness that takes into account the nuances and openings of being depressed, vulnerable, and willing to question life versus the jaded, canned, and self-deceiving way that aspects of cognitive psychology and much of our culture suggest as normal. Isn’t this what our classic literature and depth studies impart to us? Consider Rollo May’s (1981) distinction between happiness and the more invigorating (in his view) “joy”:

Happiness depends generally on one’s outer state; joy is an overflowing of inner energies and leads to awe and wonderment . . . Happiness is the absence of discord; joy is the welcoming of discord as the basis of higher harmonies. Happiness is finding a system of rules which solve our problems; joy is taking the risk that is necessary to break new frontiers. (pp. 241–242)

Or consider James Hillman’s remarkable statement: “The true revolution begins with the individual who can be true to his or her depression” (Hillman & Ventura, 1992, p. 98). How different these views are from recent positive psychology writing, which defines mental health as the “absence” of pathology (Keys & Lopez, 2002, p. 48). What does that really mean: a quietly adjusted functionary?

FROM GIMMICKRY TO AWE

It’s not a question of disavowing faith or happiness, it’s a question of disavowing the
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This statement, which is Zen-like in its paradoxes, needs to be meditated on to be unraveled. I think what Kierkegaard is saying is highly akin to what we practice in depth-experiential psychotherapy—namely, that it takes a whole-bodied (not merely intellectual) immersion in all the possible sides of a given dilemma (e.g., the personal, the social, the cosmic, etc.) to find the “truth” in one’s response to the dilemma. Furthermore, I think he’s saying that even after we find this so-called truth, we must still realize that it is partial, a “leap,” because no person can stand completely outside of himself or herself and perceive with absolute certainty. And yet, it is this very comprehensiveness in our decision-making process—this leap, as Kierkegaard elaborates—that makes it “the highest truth attainable to the existing individual.”

In Rediscovery of Awe, I (Schneider, 2004) detail some possible features of a Kierkegaardian notion of truth in the form of what I call an “awe-based ethics.” These ethics reflect the depth-experiential process of optimal psychotherapy and stress the following:

1. Appreciation and immersion in a given dilemma (or mystery)
2. Struggle with the rivaling sides of the dilemma (e.g., Kierkegaard’s “objective uncertainty”)
3. Responsibility or ability to respond to the salient features of the dilemma (e.g., Kierkegaard’s “held fast in the most personal passionate, experience”)
4. Being prepared to relinquish or “give over” one’s truth at the point of its threshold for viability (e.g., Kierkegaard’s “leap of faith”)

By opening to such vistas, psychology would provide a model not just for optimal psychotherapy but also potentially for worldwide social reform. In Rediscovery of

hype and gimmickry, as Rollo May (2007) would put it, that attend and denigrate these virtues in our culture. Hence, giving up on the quick fix is possible but exceedingly difficult. It requires abiding presence—life in all its complexity.

A philosophy that respects life in all its complexity and, at the same time, glory is what I call an awe-based life philosophy. An awe-based life philosophy is distinguished by what I call enchanted agnosticism (taking mystery seriously), the fluid center (recognizing our place between our “creatureliness” and our godliness), and faith in the inscrutable (finding hope, trust in the vast unknown) (Schneider, 2004, 2009, 2013). To summarize, our task is to come to terms with and find faith in the inscrutable, trust in “the tremendous creative energies of the cosmos” (Becker, 1974, p. 78) despite the attendant uncertainty—and to know that there’s no highway to heaven, no preset path. Such a realization, then, leads to an acute awareness of personal responsibility—a fluid center where we can hold life’s majesty but also realize that it is up to us to find meaning and direction within that majesty. This entire view can be further synopsized by quoting the great cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker (1974), who in his dying hour gave up when there was “nothing left to the tremendous creative energies of the cosmos” (p. 78) and, by doing so, found one of the greatest forms of solace that a person could attain—the “solace of amazement,” in contrast to the “solace of certainty” (Schneider, 2004, p. 154).

Another awe-based life philosophy and “answer” to the meaning of life, according to Tillich (1963), is provided by Kierkegaard. Here’s Tillich’s (1963) translation of that life philosophy from Kierkegaard’s book-length essay “Concluding Unscientific Postscript”: “Truth is . . . objective uncertainty, held fast, in the most personal, passionate experience. This is the truth, the highest truth attainable for the existing individual.”
Awe and Awakening to Awe, I (Schneider, 2004, 2009) detail some possible features of such a reform, but let me highlight a few of those here: awe-based education, awe-based vocation, and awe-based democracy.

Awe-Based Work

This reform proposes a one-hour-a-week group dialogue designed to foster a sense of discovery and meaning at one’s job. The dialogue would be voluntary and administered by both management and employees, with a clear understanding that what gets communicated in the dialogue—short of the threat of personal harm—cannot be used against any of the participants in the dialogue. The program could begin as a pilot project and entail a variety of holistic offerings: from group explorations of the meaning and impact of work for employees’ lives to topical seminars on stress, holistic healing, spirituality, and multiculturalism. Facilitators could include psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, and holistic health practitioners; their collective concern, however, would be experiential depth—the extent to which employees are assisted to immerse in and not just “report about” the topics that matter to them.

While the coordination of such an operation, and the obstacles it would face, would of necessity be formidable, its potential fruits, in my view, would be inestimable. Among these would be a salutary impact on just about every major sector of society, from the motivation, engagement, and even productivity of the work setting to the cascade effect these enhancements would bring to employees’ home lives, relations with the community, and outlook on life. Just a few paltry hours, in other words, could help spark a “whole-person” reform!

Awe-Based Democracy

Our legislative process is disabled. It seems that “voting one’s conscience,” a core
of the democratic spirit of deliberation, has too often given way to voting to stay elected, to appease vested interests, or to attain the “quick fix”—and the results have been all too apparent.

As a psychologist schooled in interpersonal mediation, it was this recognition that spurred me to translate existential-humanistic psychology’s principles of awe—humility and wonder, or sense of adventure toward living—to the legislative arena (see also Martin Buber’s, 1970, “I–thou” dialogue and Tillich’s, 1967, “listening love”). The core idea of “awe based” or, more formally, “experiential” deliberation is to supplement the bureaucratically heavy legislative system with a personal component that should, in theory, provide a counterbalance to what is now a very one-sided and, too often, one-dimensional process.

Here’s a brief overview of how an experiential legislative proceeding as a pilot project might work.

Two diversely opinionated legislators who are members of the same legislative committee would agree to participate in four facilitated confidential meetings over a 1-month period, possibly accompanied by one or two legislator-observers from the same panel. In this media-free meeting, the facilitator would present the legislators with one or two morally significant, currently active agenda items that have been agreed to in advance.

The meeting would provide a forum for mindful turn taking, in which each legislator briefly offers his or her personal and heartfelt perspective on the selected agenda item (i.e., “my side of the story”). The opposing legislator would then be asked to reflect back on what she or he had just heard, and the counterpart would have a chance to correct any misunderstanding (after which the roles would be reversed). The interaction would then proceed to a deepening or elaboration of the thoughts and feelings that emerged from this process of mutual disclosure. In particular, each party would be asked to declare the important meanings or understandings that the dialogue has produced and how or whether their opinions of the legislation have changed as a result.

Finally, each legislator would consider whether an identifiable consensus had been achieved or what steps would be needed to achieve consensus. A recording secretary or observer would then summarize the deliberations and prepare a written report that focuses solely on conclusions about the specific agenda item and that strictly excludes the disclosure of any personal information about the thoughts or emotions expressed by either party. This report would then be brought to the entire legislative committee for general discussion and integration into further deliberative proceedings. In addition, a brief assessment at the end of the four sessions could be used to help determine the utility and viability of the proposed procedure.

Would adding an experiential deliberation component to legislative proceedings have a salutary impact on the body politic as a whole? Would the world’s thorniest problems, such as war, environmental devastation, and terrorism, get substantively addressed? We won’t know until we try such a proceeding, of course, but if the wealth of data we already have about personal, in-depth deliberation has any sway, then the answer should be a resounding yes!

These then are some glimmerings of a new, “awe-based” pathway for psychology. They do not preclude standardized or conventional elements—in fact, each of the reforms elucidated are likely to draw on those elements (Schneider, 2008). But the point here is that they do not end with those elements. They encompass more, far more, and they draw on a far more vitalizing science.
NOTES

1. This chapter is adapted from an article that was published in the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, Volume 41, Issue 2, pp. 67–73, 2008, and is reproduced here with permission. Copyright for this chapter remains with the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, and all rights and restrictions associated with the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* remain in effect.

2. In fairness, positive psychology is beginning to recognize these discrepancies and place more emphasis on a “meaningful” versus strictly “happy” life (see Esfahani Smith, 2013). However, there are still many divergences between positive and existential-humanistic perspectives on well-being that cannot be overlooked (e.g., see Schneider, 2011, 2014; Waterman, 2013, for overviews).

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It seems likely that once prehumans became “human,” they began to observe and form an understanding of themselves. Intuitively, we regard this effort at self-observation and self-understanding as intrinsic to what we mean by being human. Less obviously, the effort to understand ourselves merges into the effort to understand human nature or the mind.

Before long, the tendency toward role specialization, inherent in the social nature of human life, led to certain persons becoming accredited as experts in understanding humans (e.g., the psyche, soul, mind). The first authorities, called priests, soon were followed by philosophers and playwrights. From antiquity until the end of the 18th century, the members of these three groups were the acknowledged experts on human nature. Attributed to divine sources, the authority of the priesthood was unquestioned and unquestionable and was inseparable from the authority of the “state” (as the executive arm of the “church”).

With the advent of modernity, the authority of religion to legitimize the state in general, and social sanctions in particular, gradually declined and was replaced by the authority of reason. We call the result of this metamorphosis the Enlightenment and attribute its authority to science. By the end of the 19th century, moral-philosophical explanations of personal conduct were replaced by psychological and sociological explanations of it. Today, the familiar psychoanalytic “psychobabble,” parading as psychological science, is being refurbished with so-called neurophilosophical accounts of mind-as-brain. As a result, the study of the human as a moral agent became “unscientific” and unfashionable and was replaced by the “scientific” study of the human as a (mental) patient, whose behavior is determined by the chemicals in the person’s brain and the genes in his or her body. Moral philosophers, therefore, ceded their mandate to the experts in neuroscience; respect, justice, and the rule of law were replaced by compassion, tort litigation, and medical ethics; and the welfare state was absorbed into the therapeutic state.

Not surprisingly, the results still fall short of utopia. It is one thing to understand the structure of DNA or control a dog in a kennel. It is a very different thing to understand human behavior, much less to control a person possessing rights in a society ostensibly committed to respecting “human rights.” As I will show, modern experts’ inability or unwillingness to concede this difference is regularly accompanied by their inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the conceptual primacy of the person as moral agent, that is, the cognitive absurdity and
moral impropriety of reducing a person to his or her body, mind, or soul.

I daresay that there is something bizarre about the materialist-reductionist’s denial of persons. To be sure, brains in craniums exist, and so do persons in societies. The material substrates of a human—a person—are organs, tissues, cells, molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles. The material substrates of a human artifact—say a wedding ring—are crystals, atoms, electrons in orbits, and so forth. Scientists do not claim to be able to explain the economic or emotional value of a wedding ring by identifying its material composition, nor do they insist that a physicalistic account of its structure is superior to a cultural and personal account of its meaning. Yet many scientists, from physicists to neurophysiologists, claim that they can explain choice and responsibility by identifying their material substrates—that “life can be explained in terms of ordinary physics and chemistry” (Stent, 1974, p. 780). Indeed, during recent decades, the canons of respectable scholarship and journalism alike have virtually mandated that we view only biological-reductionistic explanations of human behavior as scientific. The following statement by Steven Weinberg (1995), a Nobel laureate and professor of physics at the University of Texas, is typical:

There are no principles of psychology that are free-standing, in the sense that they do not need ultimately to be understood through the study of the human brain, which in turn must ultimately be understood on the basis of physics and chemistry. . . . Of course, everything is ultimately quantum-mechanical; the question is whether quantum mechanics will appear directly in the theory of the mind and not just in the deeper-level theories like chemistry on which the theory of the mind will be based. (pp. 40–41)

Socrates’s dialogues—called elenctic (from the Greek elenchus, meaning “to refute”)—epitomize rational skepticism aimed at questioning a widely held misconception. The inexcusable conceit of the contemporary debate about the mind is that, a priori, it illegitimates such skepticism. Dismissively, Weinberg (1995) wrote, “Many of our fellow citizens still think that George [a hypothetical actor] behaves the way he does because he has a soul that is governed by laws quite unrelated to those that govern particles or thunderstorms. But let that pass” (p. 40). My aim in this chapter is to prevent such reductionism from passing as self-evident.

In view of the postwar popularity of “atheistic” existentialism, it is surprising that many scientists continue to maintain that viewing a person as a responsible agent is tantamount to believing that the person has a soul (which, moreover, governs his or her behavior). Nevertheless, the acceptance of this canard—illustrated by Weinberg’s (1995) remark, which could easily be multiplied—has become de rigueur in current debates about the mind.

Neither Camus nor Sartre can be accused of believing in the existence of souls (in the same sense as medieval churchmen believed in them or, for that matter, in any other sense). In fact, both fought tirelessly—albeit in very different ways—to restore agency, liberty, and responsibility to the human as person. “The aim of a life,” declared Camus (1957/1961), “can only be to increase the sum of freedom and responsibility to be found in every man and in the world. It cannot, under any circumstances, be to reduce or suppress that freedom, even temporarily” (p. 240). Sartre was equally emphatic that we must view the person as a responsible agent. Apropos of the situation of the draftee conscripted into fighting a war that he considers evil, Sartre (1956) wrote, “I deserve it [my fate] because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion. . . . For lack of getting out of it, I have chosen it” (p. 554). Sartre dismissed the objection that “I did not
ask to be born” with the following rejoinder: “I am responsible for everything, in fact, except for my very responsibility, for I am not the foundation of my being” (p. 555).

It is ironic that the atheists Camus and Sartre adhered to the classic Judeo-Christian view of the human as a morally responsible being more faithfully than do the representatives of modern Judaism and Christianity. I believe that they could do so with relative ease because Camus and Sartre, unlike the Jewish and Christian clergy, rejected the modern medicalized abhorrence of suicide and its attribution to mental illness (Szasz, 1996). In fact, Sartre explicitly spurned the metaphors of psychiatry and psychoanalysis as semantic tricks for lifting the burden of freedom-as-responsibility from our shoulders. In one of the pitiest and most incisive criticisms of Freud, Sartre (1956) wrote, “Thus psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar” (p. 51). “Bad faith” is Sartre’s term for self-deception, the “I” lying to the “me.” Sartre continued, “If we reject the language and the materialist mythology of psychoanalysis, . . . we are compelled to admit that the censor must choose and in order to choose must be aware of so doing” (p. 52).

Fundamental to Sartre’s perceptive analysis is the twinned idea of truth-lie. But what is truth? The word has two different uses and meanings. One is pragmatic (truth is what works best), and the other is social (truth is what convention legitimizes as factual). As human history (especially the history of religion) tells us, the word truth is a dangerously intolerant term. It allows no disagreement. Who can be against the truth? The word understanding is more hospitable and tolerant. It implies a dialectic and the possibility of misunderstanding. “Understanding,” Oakeshott (1933/1985) observed, “is not such that we either enjoy it or lack it altogether. . . . To be human and to be aware is to encounter only what is in some manner understood” (p. 1).

In other words, everyone, at all times, has some understanding of everything in his or her life. At the same time, just as every person’s fingerprint is different from that of every other person, so too is every person’s understanding of himself or herself and the world different from that of every other person. This virtually limitless variety of personal insights and outlooks is why society rightly values agreement and harmony more highly than it does accuracy and disputation. “An ounce of loyalty,” Arthur Koestler once aptly remarked, “is worth a pound of brains.”

The proverb “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” reminds us that social cooperation requires compliance with custom. In real life—the scientific enterprise included—only the legitimate can be right. Illegitimate behavior, by definition, is behavior that society deems wrong and stigmatizes as either crime or mental illness. An illegitimate idea—spoken or written—is a type of behavior that society treats similarly.¹ For illegitimate ideas—be they delusions or discoveries—the only safe domain is the mind as the dialogue within.

NOTE

1. I believe that this is why some creative persons—Mark Twain and Franz Kafka, for example—have withheld some or all of their works from publication during their lifetimes (and instructed their executors to destroy their unpublished works). These considerations also help dispel the seemingly mysterious, but actually socially constructed, connections between genius and madness.
REFERENCES

One significant contribution of the founders of humanistic psychology was reintroducing the self into the conversation of psychology. Since the time when the founders wrote, significant changes have taken place in psychological and philosophical theory. Just as the founders of humanistic psychology engaged the behavioral and psychoanalytic views of their day, current humanistic psychologists need to engage present-day academic psychology and philosophy. The insights of the founders need to be reformulated in light of the absence of the self in contemporary academic psychology. This chapter presents the rudiments of such an engagement and reformulation. The introductory section presents a brief formulation of the founders’ understanding of the self. The subsequent section describes the absence of the self in current academic psychological research and in current philosophical theory. The concluding section introduces several contemporary theorists whose ideas can be helpful in the development of a present-day formulation of the founders’ view of the self.

THE FOUNDERS’ VIEW OF THE SELF

The self was an important topic during the early period of the history of psychology, and it held a central position for writers such as James (1890) and Baldwin (1916). However, with the advent of behaviorism during the 1920s, the discipline abandoned its concern with the self (Epstein, 1980). Thereafter, American academic psychology left further development of the notion of self to sociologists such as Cooley, Mead, and Goffman (Danziger, 1997). Thus, when the humanistic psychologist Allport (1955) made his call for readmitting the self into psychology, it was not a call for a continuation of work on the self that had been under way in psychology but rather a call to introduce a new concern with the self back into psychology. Allport wrote,

Until about 1890, certain American writers, including Dewey, Royce, [and] James, continued to regard self as a necessary concept. They felt that the analytical concepts of the New Psychology lost the manifest unity of mental functioning. But for the ensuing fifty years, very few American psychologists made use of it . . . and none employed “soul.” (p. 36)
Other founders of humanistic psychology, such as Maslow, Rogers, May, and Bugental, also held that it was necessary to reintroduce the idea of self into psychological theory so as to understand people’s lives. The self became a cornerstone in their view of the development of the inherent possibilities of human existence and of the process through which positive changes occurred in their psychotherapeutic work with clients.

**The Self as the Tendency for Growth**

The founders’ view of the self is that it is a pattern of change. Rogers held that all living things have an essential pattern of dynamic change that serves to move them toward their full and mature development. In a human, this innate pattern of growth toward full development includes not only the physical growth of the body but also the psychological growth to the full unique potential inherent in the person. The self is this natural tendency or force to actualize the fullness of an individual’s personhood. Rogers (1986) gave the following description of this actualizing tendency:

> The person-centered approach depends on the actualizing tendency present in every living organism—the tendency to grow, to develop, to realize its full potential. This way of being trusts the constructive directional flow of the human being toward a more complex and complete development. (p. 200)

The founders varied in their understanding of the role of personal will in actualizing the self or the tendency toward growth. On the one hand, Rogers viewed the actualization of one’s human potential as a natural process that would culminate in a fully functioning person unless thwarted by environmental constraints, such as lack of positive regard from one’s parents. On the other hand, more existentially influenced humanistic psychologists stressed the idea that actualization of one’s potential required personal courage and will. Maslow (1968) suggested that Rogers had “perhaps understressed the factors of will, of decision, and of the ways in which we do make ourselves by our choices” (p. 17).

The founders regarded the self not as mind or a thing but rather as a propensity. It is a “pure process, pure subject I [self]” (Bugental, 1965, p. 213), or a becoming (Allport, 1955), not a static and unchanging structure. One’s self is the urge to develop the fullness inherent in one’s existence, in other words, the drive (not in Freud’s sense) to become the person one truly and authentically can be. The revolutionary impact of the humanistic idea of the self reflected in the writings of the founders can be seen against the background of the other operating views of their time of the self. The founders differentiated their view of the self from that of the psychoanalytic ego. May (1958) wrote, “The ‘I-am’ experience must not be identified with what is called in various circles the ‘functioning of the ego’” (pp. 45–46). Freud conceived the ego as a relatively weak, passive, and derived agent that was an epiphenomenon of id drives. It functioned to negotiate between internalized societal restraints (superego) and the need to reduce the tensions built up from unreleased id forces. May acknowledged that developments in psychoanalytic theory, such as ego psychology by Anna Freud, gave an increased importance to the ego in personality. However, Anna Freud’s emphasis was primarily on an expanded understanding of the role of the ego in developing and maintaining defense mechanisms, not on the positive tendency toward growth, which was the central characteristic of the self.

The founders’ idea of the self also differed from a Cartesian-like notion that the self is a type of mental or immaterial substance whose function is simply to serve as a person’s executive, taking in information and initiating bodily actions to affect the
environment. In its executive function, the self was held to be the seat of reason and thought of as an observer of representations of objects produced by the body’s senses. In this view, the self was held to be a nonmaterial psyche or mindlike homunculus, residing inside the bodily person and with the power to direct the body’s movements. In addition, the founders’ notion of the self as innate did not concur with Mead’s (1934) view that the self is something that needs to be constructed by society after birth out of an essentially receptive and formless organism.

Allport (1955), recognizing that the term self had so many confusing meanings, suggested that humanistic psychology select another term (his proposal was proprium) to emphasize the uniqueness of the humanistic understanding of the self as a tendency rather than a thing. “Psychologists who allow for the proprium use both the term[s] ‘self’ and ‘ego’—often interchangeably—and both terms are defined with varying degrees of narrowness or comprehensiveness” (p. 40).

**The Self Versus the Self-Concept**

In their view of the self, the founders made a crucial distinction between the actual self and the understandings that people have about their self. People’s understanding of who and what they are is called self-concept. The significance of the distinction between self and self-concept derives from the founders’ position that people act and respond on the basis of their understandings of how things are rather than how things actually are. They held that people are guided in their behavior by their implicit understandings and theories of reality (Gopnik & Meltzoff, 1997). Rogers (1959) said that people act out of their “internal frame of reference” (p. 213): “I do not react to some absolute reality but [rather] to my perception of this reality. It is this perception which for me is reality” (Rogers, 1951, p. 484).

The conceptual understandings that people have of the world, others, and the self serve not only to highlight and give meaning to some experiences but also to cover over and make inaccessible other experiences. The voice of one’s actual self as a force or growth and actualization of positive possibilities can be drowned out by conceptual schemes imposed by society and enforced by significant people in one’s life. These schemes often can lead people to understand their selves as static and unchangeable things that do not measure up to social expectations; they appear as being stuck in their present conditions and without possibilities. However, the realization that the socially imposed notions of their selves do not represent who and what people really are frees them to turn their attention to the submerged voices of their selves. If one’s conceptual schemes are open enough, then they can allow the real self beneath the distorting understandings to be directly felt. Stagner (1961) stated that the experience of the self is a kind of primitive experience about which communication is virtually impossible. . . . One can experience self, but this experience must be uniquely personal. . . . “I am what I am” is the succinct biblical assertion that selfhood cannot be further defined but must be experienced. (p. 185)

May (1958) described the coming to experience the real self as an “I am” experience or “a sense of being” (p. 43).

People often are aware of a tension between the felt experience of their selves and the conflicting conceptual understandings they have of the self. The awareness of a division between the experienced self and the self-concept was described by Laing (1960) as a “divided self.” Rogers (1961), in discussing this experience, wrote,

When there is no relationship in which we are able to communicate both aspects of our divided self—our conscious facade and
our deeper level of experiencing—then we feel the loneliness of not being in real touch with any human being (p. 94).

The unmediated experience of the self can serve to correct a person’s understanding of who and what he or she is. The experience can re-form the imposed concept of self into one that displays self as a basic tendency to fully actualize the possibilities inherent in being a person. When the self-concept accurately depicts the self, it is said to be congruent. When it inaccurately depicts the self, it is said to be incongruent.

**Actualization of the Self**

For the founders, the goal of human existence is to fully actualize the potential inherent in one’s humanness. The means to achieving this goal is to gain access to the inherent force that impels growth to full humanness. One gains access to this force when the self-concept allows its presence to develop into awareness. The founders emphasized that the real self has to appear or be accurately depicted in conscious awareness if it is to affect behavior. When conscious thought displays the real self, a person is most free to become fully functioning. The person is able to make choices that express his or her authentic values and to have available the undistorted full range of his or her life possibilities. The ideal, fully functioning person is in a state of congruence—that is, no disharmony exists between the self-concept and the actualizing tendency.

The concept of the actualized or fully functioning person is an ideal that represents the ultimate actualization of the human organism. In life, a person does not achieve this absolute state. Actualization is not a static and stable condition that one becomes. In life as lived, fullness is seen in relative terms—some more so, some less so. Self-actualization is a process in which a person grows toward the ideal. Thus, Maslow preferred to use a verb form—self-actualizing. Authentically, being human involves the movement toward, not the achievement of, the full actualization of the potential that is inherent in humans. As a process on the way, one experiences the self as a story of the temporal movements toward and retreats from realization of one’s full potential. May (1958) captured the dynamic nature of the self in his description of a “human being”:

The full meaning of the term “human being” will be clearer if the reader will keep in mind that “being” is a participle, a verb form implying that someone is in the process of being something. It is unfortunate that, when used as a general noun in English, the term “being” connotes a static substance, and when used as a particular noun such as a being, it is usually assumed to refer to an entity. . . . Rather, “being” should be understood, when used as a general noun, to mean potentia, the source of potentiality; “being” is the potentiality by which the acorn becomes the oak or each of us becomes what he truly is. And when used in a particular sense, such as a human being, it always has the dynamic connotation of someone in process, the person being something. Perhaps, therefore, becoming connotes more accurately the meaning of the term in this country. We can understand another human being only as we see what he is moving toward, what he will be in the immediate future. (p. 41)

In summary, the founders of humanistic psychology held that the move to authenticity involved the development of concepts about the self that truly reflect people’s tendency to actualize their human potential. The need for acceptance by others and the press
of social conformity produce self-concepts that distort and hide aspects of people’s true selves. Because it is the concepts about the self that guide people’s actions and interactions, when they are incongruent with people’s real selves, people are not able to actualize who they really are; rather, they are directed by socially presented distortions of who they are. When people’s self-concepts are in tune with their real selves, they are free to let their human potential manifest itself. The move toward congruence is a move to a more fully functioning and psychologically healthy person.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

In the six decades since the founders of humanistic psychology introduced their ideas of the self, academic psychology has turned its attention to mental functioning and cognition, and philosophy has taken up postmodern themes. There is a need to translate the humanistic ideas about the self and actualization into contemporary idioms and to reshape arguments that address the concerns of current audiences.

In the main, contemporary academic psychology and philosophy are as indifferent to the humanistic notion of the self as were the psychology and philosophy of the founders’ time. Cognitive psychology avoids the idea of self, although it is concerned with the self-concept. Postmodern philosophy dismisses the idea of self, although it has much to say about what is wrong with the idea. However, if humanistic psychology is to launch a renaissance (Taylor, 1999), then it will need to confront these current psychological and philosophical views. As the founders had turned to the ideas of existential and phenomenological writers for support in their clash with behaviorism and psychoanalysis, there are ideas of present-day theorists that can offer support for the humanistic psychology idea of the self. Four of these ideas are Neisser’s sources of knowledge of self, Gendlin’s understanding of self as intricacy, Lakoff’s philosophy of the flesh, and Ricoeur’s narrative conception of self.

This section first describes the absence of the self in current approaches in psychology and philosophy and then discusses the ideas that can serve as contemporary vehicles for the expression of a renewed humanistic account of the self.

Absence of the Self in Current Academic Psychology

Focus on the self continues to remain central to the practice of some psychotherapies, such as the humanistic psychotherapies (May, 1958; Rogers, 1959), self psychology (Kohut, 1977), and narrative-informed psychotherapy (White & Epston, 1990). However, attention to the self per se has been absent in academically based psychology, and the more recently academically derived psychotherapies focus on changing behavior through altering environment stimuli or altering thoughts; these include behavioral therapy (Spiegler & Guevremont, 1998) and cognitive-behavioral therapy (Beck, 1967).

Current academic psychology does not include inquiries about the character or function of the self, nor does it explore the self’s role in people’s psychological lives. Its interest is limited to the ideas or beliefs that people have about their selves—that is, their self-concepts. During its cognitive turn, academic psychology came to accept data about people’s subjective experiences and beliefs into its studies. The move to include people’s beliefs had been one advocated by the founders of humanistic psychology (e.g., Combs & Syngg, 1959). The founders’ understandings of the functions of the subjective realm were based on an organic metaphor and included growth, change, and purposive
action. However, mainstream academic psychology has based its understanding of the subjective realm on a computer metaphor. Mental operations are seen as analogous to, or isomorphic of, computer operations, and the notion of self has been replaced by the idea of a mental executive or synthesizing function.

Viewing the operation of the mental realm as computer-like has allowed psychology to continue to rely on research designs left over from logical positivism. Thus, studies of the subjective realm are limited to correlations between people’s self-reported beliefs and their behavior. Among these studies are those that focus on people’s beliefs about their selves (rather than on concepts about the world or others). Osborne (1996), who reviewed the recent psychological research on the self-concept, identified more than 400 such studies. These studies were of three types: (1) those that investigated the type of information that the self-concept includes, (2) those that examined the stages of development of the self-concept during childhood (an area previously investigated by Rogers, 1951, and Sullivan, 1953), and (3) those that studied how variations in people’s self-concepts correlate with variations in their behavior.

The majority of studies are of the third type. They include studies of self-esteem, in which the focus is on the aspect of people’s self-concepts that is related to the evaluation or esteem of their selves. They attempt to show that the more positive evaluations people’s self-concepts have of their selves, the better they will perform on various tasks. These studies have given impetus to a misplaced fascination with programs designed to increase self-esteem so as to increase performance, especially school performance (Hewitt, 1998). Another focus of this third type of studies has been to investigate variations in self-efficacy—that is, beliefs about how well one can perform a task and how well one actually performs it. Studies have focused on the effect of various other aspects of people’s concepts about the self on performance, perception, and interpretation of new information (see, e.g., Klein & Loftus, 1988).

The founders distinguished between the ideas or concepts people have about their selves and their actual selves. A concept about the self is a mental representation of one’s self. One’s self-concept can be an accurate representation (congruent) or a misrepresentation (incongruent). The founders’ concern was with the relationship between people’s ideas and the referent of those ideas—the actual self. The attention of current academic psychology has focused on the relationship between variations in people’s thoughts about their selves and variations in their behaviors. The founders’ attention was focused on the relationship between people’s thoughts about their selves and their actual selves. The absence of the actual self in academic psychology is implied by the neglect of it in its research programs. However, the absence of the self is explicitly declared by postmodernist philosophy.

**The Absence of the Self in Postmodern Philosophy**

Prior to postmodernism, the self had a central place in the theological and philosophical views of the West. Postmodernist writers have attacked the idea of self and hold that the notion of the existence of self was a philosophical mistake. The mistake came from erroneously assuming that because in the grammar of Western languages, verbs (action words) require nouns or agents as the subjects that perform the actions, there must be a self or subject that is the causal author of these actions. The postmodernist view is that although a person has a concept of self, there is nothing to which the concept refers—that is, the self is an empty concept.
The idea of self assaulted by postmodern writers had been worked out by Descartes during the early 1600s. Descartes had translated the medieval theological notion of the soul into the modern philosophical notion of mind or self. Western religious thought held that a human was made up of two parts: (1) the soul and (2) the physical body. The essence of a person was his or her soul, and the soul was one’s true self. The physical body was but a temporary vehicle in which the soul resided until the body perished. Once created, the soul existed eternally, and after its sojourn in a physical body, it ascended to heaven or descended to hell, where it remained until the Second Coming. The soul had a spiritual (not physical) existence, and it was invested with freedom so that its bearer had personal responsibility for choosing good or evil.

The emerging scientific view challenged, and eventually overthrew, the medieval view of the world. Aided by the breakup of the unified church by the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent disruptions of the Thirty Years’ War (Toulmin, 1990), the hegemony of the medieval view of the world was fractured. Whereas the medieval view saw the world as a stage for God’s activities and held that events in the world were mysterious expressions of God’s interventions, the scientific view saw the world as ordered and lawful and without mystery. That is, they saw the world as disenchanted.

It was Descartes’s task to reformulate the medieval view into one that retained the spiritual dimension while, at the same time, accepting the scientific view of an ordered and lawful world. The new formulation developed by Descartes has, in the main, held sway in philosophy for more than three centuries. It has served as the framework for what is termed the modern period. Descartes began by depicting the physical world (which included people’s bodies) as consisting of causally ordered mechanical relationships among objects (whose basic property was extension in space). These relationships could be known through scientific investigation, and this knowledge could be used to achieve power over nature. However, this view of the world left out the knower, that aspect of reality that knows about and directs the body’s actions in the world. Descartes called this aspect mind or self. Its basic property had to be other than what held for physical reality. Thus, he described it as lacking extension in space.

The precontemporary philosophical view of the self continued to rely on Descartes’s original formulation. The mind comes to know in two ways: (1) through the information it receives from the body’s senses and (2) through its use of reason. The mind learns about the world through the body but learns about eternal truths, such as the truths of mathematics and geometry, through the exercise of its reasoning capacity. It is only through this second way of knowing that the mind can come to certain knowledge. In Descartes’s famous description of methodical doubt, he described how all that he thinks he knows can be doubted except his existence as mind or self. On this certainty of his existence as mind, he could rebuild his faith in the rest of his mind’s knowledge.

It is this modern view of mind or self (a nonphysical thing that knows, thinks, and directs the body’s motion) that postmodernism rejects. Postmodern writers follow in the skeptical steps of Hume, who said that when he examined his thoughts, he could not find a thinker who thought them. The postmodernists do not accept Descartes’s rationally derived proof that if there are doubts (or thoughts), then there must be something that is doing the doubting (or thinking). Postmodern phrases such as decentering the self and the death of the subject are slogans aimed against Descartes’s modernistic formulation of a self or subject as that aspect of a person that knows. Postmodern writers
agree with Ryle’s (1949) statement that there is no “ghost in the machine”; they have abandoned the notion of self (Anderson, 1997).

A central theme of postmodern thought is that thoughts are not simple mirrored representations of worldly objects (Rorty, 1979). Rather, thinking is done in words, and because there is an arbitrary relation between words (signifiers) and the things to which they refer (the signified), thoughts are reflections of one’s language, not the objects of an independent world. Because different languages divide up the world differently, people of different cultures and languages think about the world differently. Also, because thought is mediated by language and because there is no universal reason, one cannot know for certain whether one’s thoughts accurately correspond to what is thought about.

Thus, just because there is a word self (a signifier) in our language does not imply that there is such a thing as a self. Postmodern theory, in its position on the existence of a self, neglects its general skeptical position and takes the stand that there is no such thing as a self that is the referent of the word self. The concept of self is held to be a fictional creation of Western grammar and cognitive schemes. There is no self, so the concept is not informed by a real referent, nor is it susceptible to correction. The humanistic idea that the concept of self can be congruent or incongruent with one’s actual self is dismissed because there is no actual self. In arguing for the cultural creation of the concept of self, some postmodern writers have pointed out that not all cultures include a belief in the self—for example, Buddhists believe in a nonself (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991).

With no actual self to inquire about, postmodern writers, like contemporary academic psychologists, have limited their concern to the function of people’s concepts about the self. Because self-concepts are a cultural product, they vary according to the historical period and local culture in which people live. German philosophers of the 19th century developed the notion that people living during different historical periods had dissimilar cognitive frames, and anthropologists reported that the cognitive frames of different cultures also were dissimilar. From these findings, postmodernists propose that concepts about the self share no universal characteristics but are completely relative. People’s understandings of the world, others, and themselves are a function of their different culturally given interpretative schemes, and their thoughts and actions always are mediated and constructed through the lens of these schemes. The modernist idea that we could progressively come to a more truthful understanding of the world and self was wrong. Instead, the diverse understandings of people are simply different, and one conceptual framework is not more truthfully revealing than are others.

The heyday of postmodernism is drawing to a close. Its relativistic skepticism appears now as an overreaction to the recognition that science does not produce absolutely certain truths (Anderson, 1990). Philosophical efforts have moved on to investigate how people can pragmatically guide their lives and solve the problems they encounter. Rather than accepting a dichotomy between certain truth and no truth, philosophers have turned to the idea of “good enough” knowledge. Even without the assurance that understanding is totally true, one can know enough to accomplish daily tasks and live a meaningful life. Within this context, theorists are beginning to reconsider the postmodernists’ rejection of the self and to look again at its role in human existence.

CONTEMPORARY VEHICLES FOR HUMANISTIC VIEWS OF THE SELF

Renewed interest in humanistic psychology followed the introduction of positive psychology (Seligamn & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).
Although positive psychology revisited certain themes developed by the founders, it did not incorporate the idea of the self as a potential or drive toward actualization. Positive psychology brought a correction to contemporary psychology’s almost exclusive focus on mental disorder and dysfunction by bringing a focus on achieving happiness and higher-level functioning. However, there are other current psychological and philosophical theories that take account of the postmodernists’ critique of modernist assumptions but move beyond them and open space for the self. These theories reach conclusions about knowledge of the self that differ from the skeptical deductions of some postmodern writers. Some of these theories are compatible with the ideas and values of the humanistic founders and offer possible frameworks for communicating humanistic ideas to contemporary audiences. The rest of the chapter is devoted to a brief exposition of Neisser’s self-knowledge, Lakoff’s philosophy of the flesh, Gendlin’s experiencing, and a narrative conception of the self.

**Neisser’s Self-Knowledge**

Neisser’s theory (Neisser, 1988, 1993a; Neisser & Fivush, 1994; Neisser & Jopling, 1997) agrees with postmodernism in rejecting the idea that there is “an inner self of some kind, a ‘real me’ who is (or should be) ultimately responsible for behavior” (Neisser, 1993b, p. 3). Neisser said that he is in full agreement with contemporary philosophy, as well as with neuroscience, that “the brain is not organized by any Cartesian flow toward and from some inmost center” (p. 4). However, this position did not lead Neisser to reject the idea of a self. Instead, he viewed the self not as a special part of a person but rather as the whole person considered from a particular point of view. I think that the position of humanistic psychology’s founders that the self is a developmental tendency or inclination, and not a core homunculus, could accommodate Neisser’s proposition by regarding the self as a tendency affecting the whole person. Maslow’s (1954, 1968) idea of the accomplishment of multiple needs implies that the self is directed to the development of all aspects of a person.

Neisser’s work understands the self as a more general notion than the founders’ view that the self is the actualizing tendency. He employed the term *self* in a way that is similar to Allport’s (1937, 1955) use, that is, referring to all of the various aspects of one’s personhood or personality that an individual would identify as his or her own. The focus of Neisser’s work is the different forms of information that contribute to the experience of one’s self. He identified five aspects of the self that are informed by five types of self-specifying information: (1) the ecological self, (2) the interpersonal self, (3) the extended self, (4) the private self, and (5) the conceptual self. The first two types of information are directly perceived, not mediated through conceptual frameworks (the postmodern position). The *ecological self* is experienced as the perceiver of the environment in the sense of Gibson’s (1979) visual kinesthesia theory. According to Gibson, changing perceptions of worldly objects include perceptions of one’s own needs and bodily movements. The ecological self is the self perceived in relation to the physical environment and the effect that one has on this environment. “I am the person here in this place, engaged in this particular activity” (Neisser, 1988, p. 36). Knowledge of the *interpersonal self* is informed by the directly experienced emotional rapport and face-to-face communicative interaction with others.

Neisser drew on recent research on early childhood as the basis for his assertion that a person’s experience of being located in and acting on the world and the experience of being in relation to other people are directly perceived. Neisser (1993b) said, “We can see
and hear and feel what we are doing, both ecologically and interpersonally” (p. 4). His view provides an opening for the founders’ notion that aspects of the self, in particular the self as tendency, are not simply an illusionary projection of self-concept but rather are directly available to experience. Thus, these direct experiences of the self can serve as corrections to beliefs about one’s self that are produced by culturally imposed distortions. The ecological and interpersonal experiences continue to inform people throughout their lives. They are not discarded and replaced by conceptually interpreted experience when children learn to use the mediating conceptual categories that come with language acquisition (McIntosh, 1995).

The remaining three types of information used to specify one’s self differ from that directly experienced by the ecological and the interpersonal self. They are available only through reflective thinking about one’s self. The extended self is based on personal memories and imagined futures. It is a reconstruction derived from remembered ecological and interpersonal experiences. The private self represents the conclusion that some of one person’s experiences are not directly shared by other people and that this person is the only person who feels, for example, a particular pain. Neisser’s fifth self, the conceptual self or self-concept, is similar to the founders’ view of the self-concept and consists of people’s beliefs about themselves. Neisser (1988) said, “There is a remarkable variety in what people believe about themselves, and not all of it is true” (p. 36). Thus, like the founders, Neisser holds that one’s self-concept can distort and hide aspects of who one “really is.”

Lakoff and Johnson’s Philosophy of the Flesh

Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1981, 1999) distinguish two generations in the development of cognitive science. The first generation, which evolved during the 1950s and 1960s, was begun, like humanistic psychology, as a movement to correct psychology’s overdependence on behavioristic understanding of humans. However, it changed direction when its approach took up the newly available computer as its model of mental functioning (Gardner, 1985). The computer model fit well with the view of Anglo-American analytic philosophy that mental reasoning, like computers, functioned by logically manipulating symbols. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) say the following of the first generation of cognitive scientists: “It seemed natural [to them] that the mind could be studied in terms of its cognitive functions, ignoring any ways in which those functions arise from the body and brain” (p. 75).

The second generation of cognitive scientists, who arose during the late 1970s, called into question the notion that thought was unaffected by the body and was ordered according to the patterns of formal logic. The second-generation view was derived from research findings showing that (a) there is a strong dependence of concepts and reasoning on the body and (b) “imaginative processes, especially metaphor, imagery, metonymy, prototypes, frames, mental spaces, and radical categories” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 77) were central to conceptualization and reason.

The focus of Lakoff and Johnson’s work is on the source of concepts that people use to interpret and make sense of the world, others, and the self. The traditional view was that the source of the concepts that we use to organize experience is the world itself—that is, our concepts are simply representations of the natural types of things in the world. As stated previously, postmodernism argued against this view and held, in its place, the notion that the world lacked a permanent order. It held that any order of sense that
was made of the world was a human construction. The types of sense that one made of the world were a function of the conceptual furniture supplied by one’s particular culture, not a reflection of an actual order. Against this postmodern position, Lakoff and Johnson propose that the type of conceptual order that humans make is based on basic-level bodily experiences. These bodily experiences are metaphorically extended to supply structural models of higher-level experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) hold that the conceptual metaphor is one of our central intellectual tools: “[Conceptual metaphor] is the principal instrument of abstract reason, the means by which inferential structures of concrete domains are employed in abstract domains” (p. 155). For example, time is understood through the metaphor of “motion of objects past an observer” (p. 141).

In concert with the proposition that abstract concepts are largely metaphorical, Lakoff and Johnson hold that the mind is inherently embodied and that thought is mostly unconscious. They hold that thought does not take place in a disembodied realm of reason (an idea left over from Descartes’s notion of mental substance); rather, it is an activity of the body itself. The idea of embodiment, including the idea that the self is embodied, was not foreign to humanistic psychology’s founders. They did not conceive of the actualizing tendency as located in a disembodied realm of thought; rather, it was a tendency toward growth and maturity that was present in all living things. Rogers explicitly held an organic understanding of the self. Allport included in his list of the aspects of one’s own personhood the notion of the bodily sense. Neisser also recognized the embodied nature of the ecological self. Thus, Lakoff and Johnson’s theories, along with Merleau-Ponty’s (1968) idea of the body-subject and “the flesh” and Varela and colleagues’ (1991) notion of an embodied mind, can provide humanistic psychology support in emphasizing the bodily character of the self.

Lakoff and Johnson’s view that thought occurs mostly out of awareness is aligned with Rogers’s view that the operation of the tendency for growth is not under conscious control. Instead, its operation depends on clearing away distorted blocking beliefs about one’s self by providing an environment of positive regard. Existential humanists, although emphasizing the conscious responsibility to choose to act in ways consistent with the actualizing tendency, locate the experience of self below the level of conscious awareness.

**Gendlin’s Intricacy and Self**

Gendlin (1962, 1997; see also Levin, 1997) is a psychotherapist and philosopher. He worked with Rogers when the latter was at the University of Chicago, and his theories have special relevance for humanistic psychology. Like Neisser and Lakoff and Johnson, Gendlin’s work concerns the relationship between experience and the concepts we use to order experience. Against this postmodern position, Lakoff and Johnson propose that the type of conceptual order that humans make is based on basic-level bodily experiences. These bodily experiences are metaphorically extended to supply structural models of higher-level experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) hold that the conceptual metaphor is one of our central intellectual tools: “[Conceptual metaphor] is the principal instrument of abstract reason, the means by which inferential structures of concrete domains are employed in abstract domains” (p. 155). For example, time is understood through the metaphor of “motion of objects past an observer” (p. 141).

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Words become meaningful as they are used to communicate and reflect on an aspect of one’s felt experience. Gendlin’s theory of felt meaning reverses the notion that conceptual distinctions and structures are the determinants of speech and actions. Instead, he holds that words and phrases are reflections of experiencing and that words retain flexibility in use to express new meanings and concepts. He lends support to the view held by Lakoff and Johnson that conscious deliberation does not decide most human activity; rather, it flows directly from felt meaning.

In his *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, Gendlin (1962), like the founders, argues that his theory of felt meaning was an alternative to the logical positivists’ view of the workings of language. During the nearly four decades since its publication, the philosophical landscape has changed. Postmodernists, in addition to discarding the self, dismantled positivism’s epistemological claims to produce certain knowledge. Levin (1985) writes that Gendlin’s more recent position regarding language takes a middle road between the empiricist-rationalist tradition and the structural and poststructural traditions. The empiricist-rational tradition, which maintained Descartes’s mind/body distinction, held that representations of objects in the world were created in the mind by the association of sense data and/or clear and distinct ideas. Inherent in this position was the question of how one can be certain that the mental representations are accurate reflections of objects in the “external” world. Language was either understood to be a simple tool to communicate one’s mental representations or understood to consist of a series of propositions representing the state of affairs in the world. Structuralism changed the focus of philosophy from a subject’s mental representations to the language system in which he or she spoke and wrote. The conceptual network of a particular language was held to determine the forms and categories through which one experienced the world. Poststructuralists and postmodernists attacked the sign–signified connection and posed that one cannot use language to think outside language and, therefore, one cannot guarantee the meanings of words. They held that there is no such thing as objective meanings and that attaching particular meanings to words always is arbitrary and dictated by politics or power and not by the words themselves. The notion that there is a disconnect between words and objects has gained further support from a relativistic reading of hermeneutics. Nietzsche held that *all is interpretation* (i.e., there is no epistemological foundation for the conceptual network exhibited in a language), and Heidegger (1962) proposed that how one understood the world was a function of the historical and cultural tradition in which one stood. Thus, there is no direct access to the things in themselves. The postmodernists extended this implication of the word/world disconnect into this extreme skepticism and relativism.

Gendlin provides a viable alternative to the empiricist-rationalist philosophies based on the discredited subject/object dichotomy and to the relativism of postmodernism. He turns his attention to what had been neglected by these positions—the bodily felt meaning. Because felt meaning is more intricate than can be expressed through the concepts and formations of language, Gendlin uses the sign “. . .” to refer to felt meaning. The “. . .” is the source of the creation of meaning. Felt meaning is not an inner representation of outside objects; instead, it consists of people’s responsive interplay with the situated thickness in which they live.

Gendlin opens up the space in which the experiencing of the self takes place. Knowledge of the self is, first, a bodily felt knowing, not a conceptual construction. The self is complexly interwoven within a person’s experiencing of the situational interactions that exist between
The Self and Humanistic Psychology

his investigation of narrative identity, had rejected Husserl’s assumption that reflection on one’s own consciousness was the privileged way to truth. In his explorations in *The Symbolism of Evil* (Ricoeur, 1969) and *Freud and Philosophy* (Ricoeur, 1970), he came to appreciate that some aspects of experiencing cannot be brought directly to awareness. Merleau-Ponty (1962) said that reflecting on one’s experience is like looking down a well; the light only reaches so far, and beyond that is the darkness. Thus, Ricoeur supported Lakoff and Johnson’s position that much of experiencing and responding happens outside awareness and that literal language is unable to describe life’s deepest experiences.

Ricoeur proposed that although language neither describes reality nor is severed from reality, it does serve to redescribe reality. In his “Intellectual Autobiography,” Ricoeur (1995a) said that he remembered having raised the questions “Was the distinction between sense and reference still valid in the case of metaphorical statements?” and “Could one say of metaphor that it uncovered aspects [or] dimensions of the real world that direct discourse left hidden?” (p. 28). He reaches the conclusion that “it is the language freest of all prosaic constraints . . . that is most available to express the secret of things” (p. 28). Thus, for Ricoeur, aspects of the experiential complex are best displayed through the figural functioning of concepts rather than the literal functioning. It is the configural operations of metaphors and narratives (stories) that allow the complex of experience to show itself.

Ricoeur pointed out that different types of concepts account for their referents in different ways. The two major types of concepts are paradigmatic and narrative (Bruner, 1986). Paradigmatic concepts depict their referents as a type of something, for example, the conceptual understanding of one’s self as male or female, tall or short, good or bad, and so on. Paradigmatic concepts limit the display of what is referred to as an instance of...
Ricoeur proposed that narrative or story is the linguistic form that least distorts temporal experience. From the perspective of humanistic psychology, the basic plot of people’s life stories is about their struggles to actualize their inherent potentials. He believed that a dynamic relation holds between life as narratively emplotted and life as lived. He held that our primordial experiences of ourselves and others have a “pre-narrative quality” and are inchoate or incipient narratives. His position was that this characteristic of our pre-narrative awareness of human conduct, on reflection, appears as unfinished and “constitutes a demand for narrative” (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 74). Our prefigured experiencing calls for a reflective review that can consider the unintentional (as well as intentional) effects of our actions, the consequences of which we could not be aware of at the time of the actions. The reflective review integrates the pre-narrative understandings we had at the time of the actions and happenings with understandings that we have gained from the perspective of hindsight.

By configuring lived actions into meaningful wholes, an order and coherence is achieved that did not previously appear in life as lived. The construction of a narrative story consists of more than simply gathering the discordant elements uncovered in the first stage and placing them in chronological order. Merleau-Ponty (1962) wrote that we are not “a succession of ‘psychic’ acts, . . . but [rather] one single experience inseparable from itself, one single ‘living cohesion’” (p. 407). Narrative structuring serves to accomplish the move to a unified identity that is inherent, but not yet accomplished, in our pre-narrative existence. Ricoeur’s formulation of the relationship among experiencing, the narrative configuration of experiencing, and changes in actions provides a format for describing the operation of the humanistic notion of the actualizing tendency. The self becomes
manifest in a person’s actions as the person evolves his or her life stories toward one in which the experienced inherent potential is displayed in the person’s actions.

In recent decades, literature incorporating a narrative understanding of the self has increased. Terms such as self-story and life story are used to signify that the self is expressed in a narrative form (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995; Linde, 1993; McAdams, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1991; Randall, 1995). These authors agree with the founders that self is a process rather than a core, unchanging substance. They hold that the dominating and controlling self-stories adopted from one’s culture are inadequate to integrate into a unified story the various actions, life events, thoughts, and feelings through which one has lived. Instead, many of the cultural plots taken on leave out courageous and resistive acts because the story passed on is only about being a failed person. The therapist assists clients in recalling their life events that do not fit the accepted life plot and thereby opens up clients to a more inclusive and authentic story of themselves. Narrative therapy continues the founders’ distinction between the self and the self-concept. Self-concept is the idea a person holds about what he or she is. Self-concepts can be congruent or incongruent—that is, they can reflect the openness of possibilities to be actualized or can conceal them. Like the founders, these authors conceptualize therapy as an engagement to match the story of the self-concept with the authentic story.

At the time when the founders of humanistic psychology were writing, academic psychology had no place for the self in its stimulus–response paradigm, and mainstream philosophy had not yet moved beyond a Cartesian view of the self as an immaterial, soul-like substance. In their clinical experiences, the founders encountered in their clients a propensity to actualize their potential to become fully developed humans. From this encounter, the founders developed the innovative and insightful notion that this propensity was the core of humanness—that is, it is the self. During the six decades since the founders wrote, their understanding of the self has become integral to many approaches to psychotherapy. However, neither academic psychology nor philosophy has, as yet, incorporated the founders’ perceptive understanding of the self. Since the time of the founders, the philosophical context has undergone changes—the most important being the realization that language is not a clear reflection of reality but a construction of thought. This change has led to abandonment of the idea of self, leaving only the self-concepts. Recovery of the idea of self requires a restatement in a contemporary idiom. I have described four contemporary theories—Neisser’s self-knowledge, Lakoff’s philosophy of the flesh, Gendlin’s experiencing, and the narrative conception of the self—that capture the view of self as an embodied tendency to become what is inherently intended for authentic human existence. These authors agree that the authentic self is a corrective to the culturally imposed view of the self. These theories can permit reentry of the founders’ view of the self into contemporary psychology and philosophy.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 9

Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self
An Existential Response to the Postmodern Condition¹

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The self has maintained a secure, even sacred, place throughout the history of Western thought. Despite widespread disagreement about what constituted the self and the essential nature of the self, few questioned its existence. Contemporary times have challenged this privileged place of the self. Behaviorism and its offshoots replaced the focus on self with a focus on behavior (Polkinghorne, Chapter 8, “The Self and Humanistic Psychology,” this volume). Technology and pluralism brought metaphors of multiple selves (Gergen, 1991, 1996). Postmodern analyses quickly followed, questioning whether a singular, essential self was a healthy construct (Zweig, 1995). The influence of Eastern thought, particularly Buddhist philosophy, introduced recognition of no-self as an ideal (Mosig, 2006). Cultural analyses provided examples of cultures that did not have a traditional conception of self but rather understood what is referred to as the self in Western thought in terms of roles that are much more fluid over time (Cross & Gore, 2005; Sue & Sue, 2003). In the end, the necessity of a self-conception, so basic to Western psychology, is now in question.

It is hard to imagine Western psychology without a conception of the self. The self is intertwined with diagnosis, personality, assessment, and treatment. So implicit is it in psychological language that it would appear to require a significant restructuring of psychology to remove the idea of the self. Yet history and convenience should not be the sole argument for retaining the concept of the self.

This chapter uses a broad array of resources to elucidate the challenges to the concept of self in postmodern times. This analysis concludes by developing an existential-integrative perspective on the self. Several assumptions are worth noting at the outset. First, consistent with
postmodern theory, we assert that the self is best understood as socially constructed. Second, different constructions of the self may be more appropriate and psychologically healthier for some cultures and individuals than for others. In particular, we are focusing on the self in Western culture in this chapter. It would be inappropriate to turn any conception of the self into a metanarrative forcefully applied across cultures and individuals indiscriminately. Third, we maintain the position that myths of self are valuable, particularly for those individuals living in Western societies.

LANGUAGE ISSUES

Language is a principle element of psychological well-being as well as certain approaches to postmodernism. At the same time, language is devoid of an absolute meaning; instead, it is more important to understand the local meaning of words and how they are used differently. Murphy (1996) highlights multiple ways by which language is used in modern and postmodern paradigms. Modern paradigms assume that language is describing something real, with an absolute meaning. In this paradigm, accurate definitions of words are essential. Postmodern linguistic theory views language as expressive or related to internal perceptions and feelings. Language is socially constructed and therefore not used in a consistent manner over time or across people. In this paradigm, it makes little sense to debate definitional issues; however, it remains important to clarify how terms are being used.

Given this assumption, it is important to clarify how certain terms, such as self and its relation to personality, are defined in this chapter. We understand the self as the social and/or personal construction that implicitly assumes some level of boundaries and distinctions between the self and the world, including other beings. Self boundaries remain intact despite the possibility of shared aspects/qualities (spiritual, collective unconscious) or the ability to transcend these boundaries (transpersonal, transcendent, or prepersonal experiences). Personality is defined as patterns of internal experiences (thoughts, beliefs, and emotions) and behaviors that tend to maintain consistency over time. Personality is secondary to the self and often flows from it. Changes in personality tend to occur gradually.

The myth of self is a phrase relied on regularly in this chapter. The use of myth relies on the ancient Greek understanding of myth, revitalized by Rollo May (1991) in The Cry for Myth. According to May, myth is not something that is false, but rather, it is something that cannot be proven true. Myths provide deep, sustaining meaning and help provide direction in life; they are healthy, growth facilitating, and necessary. In referring to myths of self, we are not making a metaphysical statement about the existence of the self; rather, we are referring to various social constructions of the self that can provide the aforementioned type of sustained meaning.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SELF

Zedek (1998) states, “Any effort to summarize a 4,000-year history and tradition cannot help but prove inadequate” (p. 255). Certainly this is true of the history of the self, along with descriptions of how the self was dominantly understood in various periods and theories. Any such attempt in a chapter of this length requires significant oversimplification. We acknowledge the limitation of not being able to address many nuances of the self across history; however, it is still necessary to highlight historical developments in how the self has been understood.
The Premodern Self

The premodern self was intricately tied to the development of dualism. Originating in Platonism, dualism distinguished between the material self, or the body, and the soul, which is understood as a purer or more essential aspect of the self. The soul, as understood in Platonic thought, has a nonmaterial, metaphysical basis. In this conception, the physical body is denigrated, and the soul is idealized. Religion, primarily Christianity, served as the gatekeeper and carrier for many philosophical ideas, such as the conception of the self, throughout the premodern period. As such, this distinction between the soul and the material self is deeply embedded in much Christian theology, which took an increasingly negative view of the material body. Self-denial was a common theme and often encouraged. Some religious individuals took this to the extreme, stating that self-esteem or any self-focus is sinful and should be discouraged. Conversely, the soul, or the immaterial and immortal aspect of the self, should be embraced.

In contemporary interfaith dialogues, it is interesting to note that the concept of emptiness has been pointed to as a central concept of convergence in the Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist dialogues (Abe, 1990; Altizer, 1990; Borowitz, 1990). Within each of these religions, various traditions have an emptying or self-emptying religious process. In Christianity, the idea of kenosis was also applied to Christ as his self-emptying through the crucifixion (Abe, 1990). In Buddhism, the sunyata, which literally means emptiness, is seen as the ultimate reality, including the reality of the self (i.e., no-self). In Jewish mysticism, the idea of emptying is less direct, but nonetheless, it is still present (Borowitz, 1990). Each of these very different religious traditions share a concept of emptying that is applied to God or Ultimate reality and the self.

The Modern Self

The modern period questioned many of the assumptions of premodernism, which, in turn, questioned premodern assumptions about the nature of persons. Two broad approaches to understanding the self were important in the modern period; however, it should be noted that it is not possible to cover all the modernist notions on the self in this chapter. Instead, we focus on two of the more influential views that typified the central tenets of the modernist self. The dominant view of the self was one of reductionistic materialism or physicalism. It assumed that the self is contained within the biology of the individual, calling into question metaphysical aspects of the self. Within this purview, many variations occurred, such as behaviorism and cognitive theory. Freud developed an alternative biological position. Often misrepresented, Freud’s theory is a biological or drive model in which the self is contained within the biology of the individual, calling into question metaphysical aspects of the self. Within this purview, many variations occurred, such as behaviorism and cognitive theory. Freud developed an alternative biological position. Often misrepresented, Freud’s theory is a biological or drive model in which the self is contained within the biology. The unconscious, although often conjuring metaphysical associations, is located within the body for Freud. Freud’s theory expanded the conceptualization of the self to include the unconscious, along with behavior and the conscious aspects of the individual.

A second modern perspective of the self attempted to rectify modern assumptions with religious values. The idea of a soul understood metaphysically was important for most Western religions. Modern reductionism and materialism challenged this position. There were a variety of attempts to rectify this discrepancy, many of which emphasized some type of parallelism between the metaphysical and the biological aspects of the self. Psychophysical parallelism, which maintains that there is a parallel between what occurs in the mind and the brain, is a common way to save the idea of the soul (Brennan, 2003). Several different forms of psychophysical parallelism developed from the 17th through the 19th centuries.
of these approaches adhered to a position that there was no interaction between the physical and the metaphysical aspects of the person; they simply were parallel to each other. Others, such as Descartes, advocated for an interaction between the physical and the metaphysical aspects of the person.

Although not a modernist viewpoint, Wilber (2000b) adds a more complex, contemporary alternative to psychological parallelism. In describing aspects of the self, he states that they cannot be reduced to material dimensions (because, unlike matter, they do not possess simple location). Nonetheless, feelings, mental ideas, and spiritual illuminations all have physical correlates that can be measured by various scientific means, from EER machines to blood chemistry to PET scans to galvanic skin response. (p. 75)

For Wilber (2000b), this alternative is not claiming a metaphysical parallel to the brain and physiological functioning; rather, the relationship is more complex. Functions of the self cannot be reduced to a singular place in the brain; rather, they are the result of a complex interaction of various parts of the brain beyond its mere material makeup.

A recent alternative way to reconcile materialism and religion is elucidated in the concept of nonreductive physicalism (see Brown, Murphy, & Malony, 1998). The basis of this argument is to develop a physicalism that does not necessitate a metaphysical mind or soul to explain our higher functions, without reducing these same higher functions through reductionism (Murphy, 1998). Murphy (1996) states,

Science has provided a massive amount of evidence suggesting that we need not postulate the existence of an entity such as a soul or mind to explain life and consciousness. Furthermore, philosophers have argued cogently that the belief in a substantial mind or soul is the result of confusion arising from how we talk. We have been misled by the fact that “mind” and “soul” are nouns into thinking that there must be an object to which these terms correspond ... when we say a person has a mind, we might better understand this to mean that the person displays a broad set of actions, capacities, and dispositions. (pp. 18–19)

Emergent properties, often associated with that which makes people human, have typically been characterized as part of a metaphysical mind or soul. Nonreductive physicalism states that these properties emerge from complex actions and interactions arising within the physical makeup. The whole, through complex interaction, becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

Modernism maintained a consistent view of the self as a material reality. Increasingly, this was understood in physical terms, leading to metaphors of machines, and later computers, to illustrate human functioning. The essential nature of the self, although understood differently, was largely unquestioned. The late-modern period, however, reflected a shift away from the focus on the self. Polkinghorne (this volume, Chapter 8) notes that academic psychology shifted to focus on behavior instead of the self. This deemphasized the necessity of the self in psychology and of understanding what it means to be human, paving the way for the postmodern rejection of the self.

**CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF THE SELF IN POSTMODERN TIMES**

**Postmodern Themes**

There is nothing that is written about periods, places, or cultures that cannot be discredited. One can always find strong emanations of the past in what is “new.”

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*Technology and the Self*
Modernism represented a period of history when cultures remained fairly isolated. There was little doubt that this played a role in the narrowness of the modernist epistemology and worldview. The height of modernism brought with it great confidence in human potential, confidence in the role of humanity (particularly white humanity) in the order of all living things, and a belief that science and technology would save the world from wars, sickness, and even death. Myths of the fountain of youth, manifest destiny, utopia, and other grandiose themes abounded. Modernism made attractive promises, but in the end, modernism failed. Postmodernism emerged with the flurry of anger that so often accompanies the disillusionment of fallen heroes and broken ideals. In response to the idealism of modernism, postmodernism began with a reactionary pessimism that, over time, opened the door to a theory that was able to integrate hopeful optimism with tempered pessimism. The myriad postmodern theories today reflect everything from exuberant sanguinity to dreadful cynicism while, at their best, bringing together modulated versions of both dispositions.

Danger often ensues when individuals take on a modern or postmodern outlook without critical examination of the potential consequences. It is assumed that modernism and postmodernism reflect different ends of a continuum; however, these theories are paradigmatically different, not opposite extremes. Extremes such as absolute relativity, scientific materialism, and logical positivism can all be located in broader conceptions of modernism and postmodernism, but focusing on these more extreme examples prevents people from grasping the diversity within each paradigm. This is a difficult distinction for many. Western thought wants to place things in opposites or dualities. Continuums demonstrate this difference in polar extremes. However, opposites can also be seen as categorically different or the complete negation of the other. In this view, there is no gradual transition between extremes but the choice of one option that is implicitly assumed to be the opposite of the other. The difference between modernism and postmodernism cannot be conceptualized as merely being opposites. Instead, they are paradigmatically different but not necessarily to such an extreme as to fully negate the other viewpoint. Postmodernism embraces many aspects of modernism, such as modernist epistemology, by placing it in a different context and changing its deeper significance (i.e., placing it as one of many ways of knowing instead of the way of knowing). To understand the distinctions and similarities between these theories, alternative ways of conceptualizing and categorizing difference are needed.

Anderson (1995) states that the transition from modernism to postmodernism “has to do with a change not so much in what we believe as in how we believe” (p. 2). It is the nature of knowledge and truth (i.e., epistemology) that is changing. Modernism believes that there is a knowable absolute truth that can be known through science and reason (see Hoffman & Kurzenberger, 2008). Postmodernists disagree about whether some forms of ultimate truth may exist but agree that this truth cannot be definitively known. This reflects a radical and important shift. Throughout the premodern and modern periods, there was agreement by the majority of authorities that truth, even ultimate truth, existed and could be definitively known. The postmodern shift represents the first major change in the history of Western thought that called the assumption of knowable truth into question on a large scale.

Modernism utilized a foundational theory of knowledge, which begins with knowable ultimate truth (Hoffman & Kurzenberger, 2008; Murphy, 1996). From this perspective, all knowledge is built from that which can be certainly known. The well-known
example of Descartes demonstrates the epistemology and methodology of this perspective. Descartes began questioning everything he could question and came to the conclusion that he could not question that he was thinking, which means he exists (i.e., “I think, therefore I am.”). This statement, often cited as the beginning of modernism, asserts that all knowledge must be built from this basic foundation of knowledge. Descartes began with rationalism, but his theory evolved into a more scientific approach that combined rationalism and a form of empiricism (i.e., knowing through the senses). These two ways of knowing were the privileged epistemologies of the modernist period. The primary methodologies of logic (a rationalistic method) and science (application of reason to empiricism) were elucidated from these ways of knowing.

Postmodernism began as a reaction against privileging modernist epistemologies and methodologies. The early phase of postmodernism deconstructed modernism, and the second phase began developing alternative epistemologies and methodologies (Hoffman & Kurzenberger, 2008). The primary epistemological position demonstrates an epistemological pluralism (Hoffman & Kurzenberger, 2008) and a metaphysical holism (Murphy, 1996), which does not privilege any one way of knowing. As an alternative, postmodernism suggests that multiple epistemologies and methodologies should be utilized regardless of the assumption of whether or not ultimate truth exists.

Quine and Ullian (1978) developed a web theory providing the basis for a postmodern theory of knowledge. Although their formulations are important, their approach remained limited in that it privileged modernist ways of knowing (Murphy, 1996). Quine and Ullian’s (1978) theory conceptualized knowledge as being similar to a large web of knowledge. Each point of connection represents a piece of knowledge, which is not an ultimate truth but, rather, the current understanding that is subject to reformulation. Knowledge, like a spider web, is interconnected and most dependent on the connection points closest to it. If any connection point is changed, it affects all the other points in the web. The closest points are affected more than the distal points. In this view, points of knowledge should continually be reexamined and reconsidered.

The common critique of postmodernism and the web theory of knowledge is that it appears to relegate all ways of knowing as equal (i.e., absolute relativism). However, this represents an oversimplification and misunderstanding of postmodernism rather than being a valid critique. Although some postmodern approaches embrace extreme relativism, this is not essential to postmodernist thought. Postmodernism is pluralistic, embracing many different viewpoints and approaches, but it is not necessarily relativistic, stating that all viewpoints are equal. Furthermore, absolute relativism is based in a personal constructivism, whereas postmodern thought is rooted in social constructivism. The social or cultural factors limit relativism by locating truth in a complex relational matrix.

In summary, at least five major themes emerge in a postmodern theory of knowledge. First, truth, regardless of whether there is ultimate truth, can only be understood locally or to a limited degree, often portrayed in postmodern theory as bound by language. Second, truth, if and where it exists, is best approximated using multiple epistemologies and multiple methodologies. Third, if ultimate truth exists, there is less of it than the modernists would portray. Fourth, truth should continually be reexamined in light of new information. Fifth, truth is interconnected and interdependent. It could be noted that this is a broader and more inclusive definition of postmodernism than the typical one. This is intentional; we
maintain that postmodernism is best understood as a variety of approaches that share many common values, instead of narrowly focusing on particular requirements to be considered postmodern.

**General Postmodern Themes in Relation to the Self**

It has been argued that a coherent self in the postmodern era is under unprecedented attack and in danger of annihilation (Zweig, 1995). Adjectives applied to the postmodern self include empty, multiple, and saturated (Messer & Warren, as cited in Bracken, 2003). These descriptors stand in contrast to the modern view of an autonomous, boundary, stable self. Postmodern thought encompasses a variety of ideas about the self that generally center on the idea that the self is socially mediated. The individual self is situated in culture, providing a framework for understanding personal experience and guiding behavior.

Threats to the self are inherent in the extremes of postmodernist theory. The more moderate positions argue for a plurality of selves appropriate to the context and environment (e.g., Martin & Sugarman, 2001; Neimeyer, 1998). The real postmodern challenge may be to a modern conceptualization of a permanent, autonomous self. The postmodernist self is a more holistic, complex, nuanced, and adaptive self that is actively engaged in the world.

**Challenges to the Self**

**The Self and Pluralism**

Culture provides a lens through which experience, behavior, and the self are interpreted. It involves, among other things, shared language, symbols, and values. Therein lies another threat to the postmodern self. To the extent that a culture becomes less coherent or weakened through input from other cultures that are integrated by its members, the culture becomes less functional as an interpretive and evaluative lens. May (1991) believes that experience and the self are evaluated, directed, and interpreted by shared aspects of a culture's myths. The loss or weakening of that culture may leave the self rudderless and without structure.

Exposure to other belief systems is also viewed as potentially undermining to the self in the postmodern era because other belief systems may challenge the values that contribute to the framework through which the self and experience are interpreted and given meaning (e.g., Gergen, 1991). Challenges to values may result in the perception of truth as relative and fluid. Exposure to varied cultures offers parallel belief systems that may cause questioning of those values integrated into the self-concept by way of our personal myths (May, 1991).

**The Self as a Social Construction**

One broad theoretical orientation in psychology allied with postmodern thinking is called, variously, constructivism, constructionism, and constructive (Raskin, 2002). Radical constructivism holds that human reality is created by the interpretation of objective reality and that there is no actual objective reality. Social constructivists argue that an individual's identity is constructed by social interaction but the person actively constructs that identity. Nonetheless, according to Raskin (2002), social constructivists aver that there is no internal self. What is perceived as the self is actually a configuration of positions taken within a social network. Another form of constructivism is critical constructivism. Critical constructivists believe that there exists an independent first-order reality that constrains, but does not create, the individual, or second-order, reality. Second-order reality is created by an individual's active
interpretation of and influence on experience in the context of social interaction (Mahoney, 1991). Language holds a critical place in constructivist theory in that selfhood and reality are said to be co-constructed through shared language (Gergen, 1991).

One line of thought is that, because a sense of the self is culturally constructed, a homogenous social environment is required for its existence. Proponents of this view see personal identity as intrinsically social and founded on relations with others (Greenlaw, 1994). These theorists believe that the requisite cultural homogeneity is eroded by technologically facilitated exposure to other cultures and contexts. For these writers, language and its consensual meaning are critically important for the development of a self-concept. According to Gergen (1996), “to the extent that there is homogeneity in context of expression . . . the underlying psychological source is enhanced” (para. 10). The expanded vocabulary of the self, both from other cultures and from the mainstreaming of terminology in the field of psychology, is thought to create a potential for confusion in the culturally based meaning of words used defining the self.

**The Self and Fluidity**

Lifton (1995), drawing on Greek mythology, introduces the protean self in the following way:

We know from Greek mythology that Proteus was able to change his shape with relative ease from wild boar to lion to dragon to fire to flood. What he found difficult, and would not do unless seized and chained, was to commit himself to a single form, a form most his own, and carry out his function of prophecy. We can say the same of Protean man, but we must keep in mind his possibilities as well as his difficulties. (p. 130)

Proteus is not the typical mythic figure. In the West, it is more common to see myths of stability, as can be easily illustrated in movies and literature. People in the United States have been inundated with images of the unwavering cowboy or hero who perseveres by sticking to his values and commitments. Although this is admirable in many situations, there is also the image of the tragic hero who loses everything because he is unwilling to adapt or change.

This second side of the protean myth is as dangerous as the first. May (1991) illustrates this as follows:

But this addiction to change can lead to superficiality and psychological emptiness, and like Peer Gynt, we never pause long enough to listen to our own deeper insights. Lifton uses the myth of Proteus to describe the chameleon tendencies, the ease with which many modern Americans play any role the situation requires of them. Consequently, we not only do not speak from our inner integrity, but often have a conviction of never having lived as our “true selves.” (p. 105)

The tragedy is in the inability to balance the stability and fluidity of the self, as illustrated in constrictive and expansive potentialities (Schneider, 1999). Proteus and the lonely hero are equally tragic.

In mainstream psychology, theorists across different domains fall prey to both tragedies. Many view the self as a dynamic, adaptive structure that is naturally in a constant state of change (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986). At the same time, research from a number of theoretical orientations inquiring into the nature of the self concluded that adults direct more attention toward and more quickly process information that is self-relevant and congruent with internal representations of the self. Individuals tend to interpret ambiguous information or fill in missing information in a manner consistent with their internal representations (e.g., Bowlby, 1973; Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004). In other words, they construct the self in a consistent manner. Results from studies such
as these suggest that people have some stability of self-representations that are likely to be resistant to change or dissolution. However, self-representations are not equivalent to the self and could refer to a perceived self instead of a real self. Additionally, although some self-representations remain stable and resistant to change, others readily change. As Gergen (1972/1995) states, “We have paid too much attention to such central tendencies, and have ignored the range and complexity of being. The individual has many potential selves” (p. 142).

Another challenge to the self represented by postmodernist thought is the question of whether the self can change or grow in any real or purposeful way. Social constructivism argues for a nonagentic self constructed by culture and social discourse with language as a “matrix of meaning making” (Neimeyer, 1998, p. 135). One could argue, as does Lyddon (1998), that accepting this to be true is tantamount to an abdication of any personal responsibility because the individual is at the mercy of social currents and circumstances as well as the extent of his or her facility with language. This begs the question of what this means for adherence to culturally accepted norms of behavior or legal systems that infer agency and confer responsibility (Neimeyer, 1998). The constitution of the self through social discourse also begs the question of how current technologies, which may replace or minimize person-to-person discourse, influence the self (see Gergen, 1991). The advent of television, voice mail, e-mail, the Internet, and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, allows exchanges of language without any live discourse. How social must the discourse be to have meaning in the construction of the self?

The Self and Masks

Gergen (1972/1995), in his early writing, challenged the conception that a stable, coherent self is necessary for psychological health. As Gergen points out, nearly all psychological research and assessment is based on the assumption that it is normative for individuals to develop a “firm and consistent sense of identity” (p. 137). If this is normative and healthy, then inconsistency is seen as bad. Gergen states,

My research over the past few years has led me to question both of these assumptions very seriously. I doubt that a person normally develops a coherent sense of identity, and to the extent that he does, he may experience severe emotional distress. The long-term intimate relationship, so cherished in our society, is an unsuspected cause of this distress because it freezes and constricts identity. (p. 138)

This statement not only calls into question prominent psychological assumptions but also many cultural and religious values. For instance, this could be interpreted to mean that the constrictive nature of marriage may interfere with optimal psychological health. Furthermore, could it be that multiple marriages or relationships over a lifespan, each fitting the current conception of the self, may be healthier? This protean idea of the self challenges many religious views of marriage and young children’s need for stability and consistency.

Gergen is not necessarily advocating for this extreme position, and neither are we. However, Gergen’s view has some important implications. For example, in premarital counseling, the assumption of a stable, coherent sense of identity pervades. The supposition is that if the couple are currently a good fit, they will remain a good fit. This works for couples where both individuals are less likely to undergo personal change and development, given that external influences do not change this propensity. However, for many couples, a greater risk is inherent. Premarital counseling should
attempt to explore the likely trajectory of growth and change in the individuals. To do this, a different approach to psychological assessment is needed, as well as interventions designed to promote sharing in the growth process and, perhaps, to moderate growth in divergent directions.

In the marriage example, Gergen’s (1972/1995) concern centers on three interrelated issues. First, he believes that many couples focus on their spouse for fulfillment of their needs. Second, the inability to appreciate or tolerate differences in each other causes spouses to pressure each other for consistency. Finally, the idealization process naturally brings about several extreme states of emotion that do not last and are difficult to tolerate. The conception of the self and the spouse in their relationship often develops during periods of intense passion and idealization. When these ideals break, there is the natural tendency to shift to extremes of anger and sadness. If the couple is not prepared to withstand these challenges, it may lead to the dissolution of the relationship.

For Gergen (1972/1995), the healthy resolution of this problem is to become more comfortable with different experiences and different masks. If individuals can seek out and learn to appreciate a broad range of experiences and emotions, they will be better able to tolerate differences with their spouse or others with whom they choose to maintain long-term relationships. Additionally, they will learn to adjust and appreciate different sides of themselves. Their appreciation for diversity within themselves and others replaces the need for a stable self.

This self, who is more prone to adjusting within the context, is comfortable playing many different roles. The stable self is replaced by an intersubjective self, which is created anew in different contexts. According to Gergen (1972/1995), this does not threaten the depth of being, but rather, it creates it in a more pluralistic, diverse context. Stated differently, “The mask may be not the symbol of superficiality that we have thought it was, but the means of realizing our potential” (Gergen, 1972/1995, p. 144).

Gergen’s Saturated Self

Gergen’s (1991) most significant contribution to the literature on the self is The Saturated Self. In this book, he develops an important postmodern thesis, stating that social saturation threatens the self. Social saturation means that the technology of this age facilitates interpersonal interaction so that people may engage in more relationships than before. Pluralism is one part of this new matrix. The potential threat is predicated on the belief that personal essence is based on social context, and a multiplicity of relationships means that the self is under constant construction and reconstruction without opportunity for introspection.

It is not necessarily the exposure, in itself, that is dangerous but, rather, the rapid rate of exposure, not allowing time for introspection and integration. In The Saturated Self, Gergen (1991) takes a more cautionary agenda than in his previous article advocating for multiple masks (Gergen, 1972/1995; the original version of this article was published in 1972, almost 20 years prior to The Saturated Self). Although he recognizes that this progression into multiplicity of experience is inevitable at this point, he appears more reticent about the consequences of these changes.

Regardless of how an individual feels about the modern self, it is not likely that this construction can exist in a meaningful way for most people in contemporary life. Modern stability is quickly overwhelmed by the postmodern plurality. Although a rigid defensive position is possible, it may not be able to maintain psychological health. This does not necessitate a discarding of the self or moving to the extreme of a no-self or
many selves, but it does call for some necessary reconstruction.

**Buddhism’s No-Self and the Middle Path**

A central concept in Buddhist philosophy is that of no-self, or *anatta*. Buddhism teaches that personal identities are the individual’s creation and the source of suffering. Gaskins (1999) writes, “The Buddha taught that what we recognize as a self of permanent essence is actually an ever-changing configuration of physical or mental energies or processes that is only meaningful because of . . . [particular contexts]” (p. 206). Here, the distinction between the self and personality is illuminating. In Buddhist perspectives on reincarnation, what continues on into the next life is an enduring pattern, not the self, which is an illusion. Comparing this with the definitions above, it is more consistent with the idea of personality. Most Western interpretations of reincarnation assume that it is the self, not the personality, that endures.

The creation of a self divorces people not only from their natural state but also from the reality of the moment because the meaning-making self filters and interprets experience rather than being in experience. Part of the meaning-making function of the self is evaluative. This evaluative quality leads individuals to desire (crave) those things, qualities, and characteristics that are valued more highly, resulting in unending craving and discontentment.

Gaskins (1999) states that enlightenment and freedom from suffering in Buddhist philosophy are achieved by the dissolution of the false structures that encumber the natural human state, accepting and returning to the original state of impermanence. Dissolving the distorted boundaries between the individual and existence—a return to *anatta*—is the path to freedom from suffering, to happiness and contentment. *Anatta* frees people from craving and the expectations, wants, and evaluations that form as a result of creating an independent self.

The Buddhist conception of the self is often misinterpreted in Western culture (Hoffman, 2008a). These misconceptions arise out of misunderstanding the current state and the Buddhist ideal. In the Buddhist view of the self, the ultimate goal is to reach an understanding that the self is an illusion or empty. This often is viewed as a cognitive understanding or assent to the idea that the self is not real. The Buddhist conception, however, goes much deeper than the cognitive realm. A better analogy is that the Buddhist seeks to achieve a letting go of the illusions of the self at an experiential level. It is the experience of no-self.

Additionally, many Buddhist perspectives do not advocate that the no-self ideal is something that individuals should directly seek to accomplish. In other words, denying oneself will not yield the experience of no-self. It is helpful, if not necessary, to maintain a conception of the self along the way (Epstein, 1995; Hoffman, 2008a). Using the analogy of the middle path, the journey to no-self avoids the extreme of excessively holding on to conceptions of the self and the extreme of denying oneself. According to Epstein (1995),

> when asked the ultimate narcissistic question by another follower—“What is the nature of the self?”—the Buddha responded that there is neither self nor no-self. The question, itself, was flawed, the Buddha implied, for it was being asked from a place that already assumed that the self was an entity. (p. 65)

The middle path, for the Buddha, attempted to avoid the extreme of narcissistic or grandiose conceptions of the self that held firmly to the idea of a real self and the opposite extreme of a self-depreciating,
empty self (Epstein, 1995). Epstein (1995) continued, stating,

If Buddha had answered that there was a Self, he would have reinforced his questioner’s grandiosity, that is, the idealized notions of possessing something lasting, unchanging, and special. If he had answered that there was truthfully no Self, he would have reinforced his questioner’s sense of alienation and hollowness, a despairing belief in personal nothingness. (p. 65)

There is an inherent sense of paradox in much of Buddhist thought, which parallels Schneider’s (1999) paradoxical self. Both see the dangers apparent in the extremes, along with the wisdom of a middle path. Another way of conceptualizing the no-self is through the idea of impermanence (Eckel, 2002). Eckel (2002) states, “To be wise...is to see that the self changes at every moment and has no permanent identity” (p. 60). In this conception, the idea of no-self emphasizes that the self is in a constant process of changing or becoming, so there is no permanent self but instead a fluid, ever-changing self.

Zweig’s No-Self

Zweig’s (1995) idea of no-self integrates the Buddhist viewpoint into a psychological perspective. Similar to Gergen, Zweig focuses on pluralism to argue for a social construction of the self that appears to be moving in the direction of no-self. However, Zweig focuses more on psychological pluralism than on cultural pluralism in her discussion:

This relativizing of beliefs about the Self in our time goes far beyond a mere nod of the head to cultural pluralism: Many theorists are calling into question any idea of a Self as a stable, continuing entity apart from its own descriptions of being. (p. 149)

Here, Zweig (1995) provides an important distinction about the stability of the self. Although self-descriptions may remain stable, as demonstrated by psychological tests, the actual self or construction thereof is more fluid. The apparent stability of the self may be due to limitations of language and conceptualization rather than a reality.

As Zweig (1995) illustrates, this development can be seen across several psychological orientations toward an understanding that the self is socially constructed. Within these constructions, trends toward a more relational understanding of the self along with views of a less essential self or no-self are appearing with greater frequency in psychological theory.

EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF

Existential and humanistic perspectives on the self share with postmodern thought the basic premise of inherent impermanence in our existence, or nothingness. The ancestral existentialist philosophers, such as Lao Tzu and Pascal, foreshadow the postmodern view of the self as mutable, fluid, and endlessly constructed and reconstructed. The self is seen as a process rather than a stable entity and as a product of consciousness (Bugental, 1978). Lao Tzu and Pascal both spoke of the infiniteness of existence (Schneider & May, 1995). Pascal also spoke of the paradox of infinite possibilities inherent in nothingness (Friedman, as cited in Schneider & May, 1995), which confers on people the freedom to transform or create who they are in any moment, unconstrained by the moment before (Schneider & May, 1995). Existential thought allies this freedom with responsibility for the individual’s creation. Existential theorists believe that the terror and awe of both infiniteness and nothingness—both states of nonbeing—fuel the striving to be
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and, often, the form that being takes (Schneider, 1999; Schneider & May, 1995). Paul Tillich’s (1952) *The Courage to Be* is a classic example of this paradox in existential thought. Although he focuses more on the courage to be in the face of nonbeing, he also points toward the connection with the ground of being, or infiniteness. For many existentialists, the allure of the being/nonbeing paradox is the foundation for striving to be (see Sartre, 1943/1956; Schneider, 2004; Tillich, 1952).

At this point in the chapter, we begin building an argument for an existential answer to the problem of the self. This project begins with an overview of humanistic psychology, of which existential psychology is often considered a subset. However, the distinction between the existential and the humanistic viewpoint is also necessary. In agreement with May, we believe that the humanistic view of the self has severely neglected the potential for evil, or the daimonic. Although humanistic and existential psychology agree on much regarding the nature of the self, this distinction makes it important to speak of an existential perspective on the self.

**Humanistic Psychology and the Self**

**Foundations of the Self in Humanistic Psychology**

Early humanistic psychology developed three important conceptualizations of the self that are important for our conversation. First, beginning with Maslow and Rogers, it emphasized the self as being, or becoming (Polkinghorne, this volume, Chapter 8). The self is always in process or in flux, ever changing rather than stable. This point is shared with many of the postmodern viewpoints; however, postmodernism tends to describe the changes in terms of a fractured or divided self or in terms of multiple selves interacting with each other. Humanistic and existential perspectives favor the idea of a fluid and changing but integrated self. The integration of the self, as should be evident, is necessarily an ongoing process that adjusts to the fluid nature of the self. Although this difference may be viewed as a semantic one, we disagree. This distinction influences the way one experiences oneself and what the individual does with that experience. Fragmented and multiple selves are more chaotic, less integrated, and less centered. For most, this self-experience can be chaotic and often incoherent. Furthermore, the assent to the idea of multiple selves does not encourage one to make sense of the interrelationships between the selves or how the multiple selves share responsibility.

Second, the self is experienced; it is not merely a cognitive construct (Polkinghorne, this volume, Chapter 8). In contemporary psychology, the focus is typically on self-concept (i.e., how a person understands or defines himself or herself) or self-esteem (i.e., how one feels about or appraises oneself). Neither of these constructs approaches the deeper conception of how a person experiences oneself. Gendlin (1962/1997) discusses this in terms of one’s felt sense of self. The felt sense is often a preverbal and presymbolic experience recognized within one’s body. Contrary to many postmodern theories that emphasize the necessity of language in self-understanding, this suggests another realm of experiencing oneself beyond words. Furthermore, it suggests that there is a real self and that this real self can be experienced directly. Gendlin (2003) understands this as contradicting postmodernism; however, we would disagree and even purport that it could be understood as postmodern. In our view, postmodernism does not deny the possibility of a direct form of knowledge or experience, but rather, it views this as always incomplete and lacking in definitiveness. Gendlin approaches this through what he refers to as focusing. If focusing is understood as an ultimate truth, then it would conflict with the
understanding of postmodernism presented in this chapter. However, we believe that the rather ambiguous, incomplete, and subjective nature of the truth obtained through focusing is quite postmodern.

Third, the self is an agent, or has the ability to act. This, according to Frie (2003) and Frederickson (2003), is the biggest challenge to integrating postmodern perspectives on the self with psychotherapy approaches, such as humanistic and existential, that emphasize personal responsibility. Without a clear, boundaryless self, there appears to be no base from which to act. However, as we will discuss shortly, there is the possibility of a centered self that does not necessitate clear boundaries.

Contemporary Developments

Polkinghorne (this volume, Chapter 8) uses four theories to develop possibilities for a contemporary humanistic view of the self that takes into consideration the challenges of postmodernism. This development adds several themes to the humanistic view. First, consistent with postmodernism, it does not necessitate a “real me” or an essential self and recognizes that what is viewed as the self depends on a point of view or perspective. Second, it advocates for a whole-person understanding of the self that includes emotions as well as cognitions and ideas about the self. In other words, it integrates the conceived self, the interpersonal self, and the experienced self as part of a larger whole self. The language of multiple selves in humanistic psychology is more metaphorical than the language used in postmodernism. Third, the humanistic view implies integration, centeredness, or connectedness that is not part of the postmodern viewpoint: Postmodernism sees these selves as more distinct. Each self is part of the larger, whole self. Similarly, Polkinghorne discusses Gendlin’s advocacy for a real self beyond the cultural constructs that is able to experience the self in connection with the world. Fourth, building on Ricoeur, Polkinghorne maintains that humanistic psychology can be blended with a narrative understanding of the self in which the self is redefined and understood in process.

Sleeth (2006, 2007a, 2007b), in a series of articles, develops a perspective on the self, or the self-system, that incorporates transpersonal psychology into a humanistic perspective. Although there is debate in the field about whether transpersonal psychology is distinct from humanistic psychology, it appears evident in these articles that Sleeth’s theory extends beyond typical humanistic understandings of the self through seeking to incorporate spiritual aspects of the self. Krippner (as cited in Sleeth, 2007b) stated that an “individual’s sense of identity appears to extend beyond its ordinary limits to encompass wider, broader, or deeper aspects of life or the cosmos—including elements of the divine” (p. 47). In referencing this to the self, Sleeth confuses identity, which is more akin to what we have referred to as a self-concept, with the self, which is rooted in experience and agency. Feeling connected with something beyond oneself, even to the degree of understanding it as part of one’s identity, does not necessarily make it part of the self.

In general, Sleeth’s perspective highlights the distinctiveness of humanistic and transpersonal theories through accenting different aspects of the self more than by developing a convincing humanistic perspective. Although humanistic psychology, in general, opens itself to the incorporation of spiritual ideas, it does not necessitate them as in transpersonal psychology. Therefore, humanistic psychology remains more adaptable in working with multiple religious and nonreligious views, whereas transpersonal psychology privileges perspectives with certain spiritual beliefs. Nonetheless, two aspects of Sleeth’s discussion are consistent with contemporary
May’s distinction of the self as “centered integration” lacks the clear boundaries of the self that is typical of most portrayals of the modernist self, allowing for a real self while at the same time leaving room for the self to be socially constructed. This allows for a distinction between the conceived self (i.e., self-concept) and self-experience, while recognizing that they are also indelibly related.

There is also a social aspect to the personal myth derived not only from relationships with others but also from the cultural context. May believed that myths provide a sense of belongingness and imbue existence with meaning while allowing the individual to make sense of his or her experience. Without myths, people are restricted in their capacity to exercise their inherent freedom to choose the form and nature of their existence and are more vulnerable to neurotic guilt and anxiety. May (1969) wrote,

> Psychotherapy reveals...the immediate situation of the individual’s “sickness” and the archetypal qualities and characteristics which constitute the human being as human. ... It is the latter characteristics which have gone awry. ... The interpretation of a patient’s problems ... is also a partial interpretation of man’s self-interpretation of himself through history in the archetypal forms in literature. (pp. 19–20)

Archetypes in the Jungian tradition are principles that make sense of experience (Storr, 1983). The literary expression of archetypes in myth is, according to May, the expression of themes shared by humankind of struggles for identity and affirmation. The loss of myth for individuals means a loss of the ability to organize experience, with a corresponding diminution in meaning-making ability as well as the loss of sustenance and comfort as people confront universal struggles of human existence.

Myths of self provide important meaning for individuals that helps them survive...
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first and second degree. First-degree acts of consciousness are the awareness of objects excluding the self and are, in Sartre’s language, nonreflective. A second-degree act of consciousness reflects on the self, and through reflective activity, it gives form to the self that is reflected on. An unending series of second-degree acts of consciousness form the ego or the “me.” Despite the human experience of a constant “me” across time, Sartre believed that each reflective act gave birth to a new self different from that created by the previous act. Thus, in Sartre’s view, the self is impermanent because it is unendingly changing, a constant project (Schneider & May, 1995).

Sartre also acknowledged the social nature of the self. He believed that the self that is created truly exists only to the extent that others acknowledge its existence. Accordingly, individuals are aware of a self only in the instant that others are aware of them (Danto, 1975). In Sartre’s (1946/1948) thinking, however, for consciousness to be directly aware of itself, it transforms consciousness into an object, which is an affront to the dignity of people and is never the case. He states, instead, that in the Cartesian phrase “I think, therefore I am,” the “I think” (the cogito) refers to not only the immediate sense of self but that of others as well, and it is in the other’s recognition of the self that the self is attained.

The Shadow, the Daimonic, and the Self

Jung’s idea of the shadow, along with May’s conception of the daimonic, adds a vital dimension to discussions of the self (Diamond, 1996). Too often, these discussions build idealistic pictures of inner beauty and potential without considering the potential for evil. This does not heed Whitmont’s (1991) warning, “The shadow cannot be eliminated. . . . When we cannot see it, it is
time to beware!... It becomes pathological only when we assume we do not have it; because then it has us” (pp. 18–19).

The shadow has been defined as “that part of the personality which has been repressed for the sake of the ego ideal” (Whitmont, 1991, pp. 18–19). For most theorists, the shadow remains largely or entirely in the unconscious. According to Jung, there is both a personal shadow and a collective shadow (Jacobi, 1942/1973; Zweig & Abrams, 1991). The collective shadow connects with the potential for evil inherent in the human condition (Zweig & Abrams, 1991). Although May felt that Jung’s contribution of the shadow was an important development, he believed its definition was too constraining (Diamond, 1996). Instead of attempting to broaden Jung’s terminology, he introduced a new term, the daimonic, which was borrowed from ancient Greek thought. The daimonic is “any natural function which has the power to take over the whole person” (May, 1969, p. 65).

Both Jung and May believed that the shadow or daimonic could be destructive or instructive, a force of evil or a force of creativity (Diamond, 1996). Consistent with psychoanalytic thought, they believed that which is repressed will find expression. When these forces, which represent the individual’s dark side or disavowed aspects of the self, are not dealt with, they will find another way to exert themselves. For both Jung and May, it is better to integrate them into our self-conceptions, utilizing their energy constructively as a creative force. Diamond, however, identified an important distinction in that May was concerned that the shadow or daimonic not be used to avert responsibility. May emphasized that the roles of choice and responsibility, no matter how small, were always present; the daimonic could not be used to abdicate responsibility or claim that one was merely possessed by external or unconscious forces.

One danger in moving toward a conception of multiple selves or no-self is the difficulty of dealing with evil. If there is no self, then it is easy to disregard the potential for evil inherent in every person. If multiple selves are conceived of, it becomes easy to relegate evil to particular selves, of aspects of the self, to avoid taking full responsibility for evil acts. Furthermore, when the potential for evil is not owned, it becomes easier for it to be projected onto other people or groups. Keen (1991) states,

In the beginning we create the enemy. Before the weapon comes the image. We think others to death and then invent the battle-axe or the ballistic missiles with which to actually kill them. Propaganda precedes technology. . . . Instead of being hypnotized by the enemy we need to begin looking at the eyes with which we see the enemy. . . . We need to become conscious of . . . “the shadow.” The heroes and leaders toward peace in our time will be those men and women who have the courage to plunge into the darkness at the bottom of the personal and corporate psyche and face the enemy within. Depth psychology has presented us with the undeniable wisdom that the enemy is constructed from denied aspects of the self. (pp. 198–199)

When the self is no longer a container for individuals to own their potential for evil, the temptation to project evil onto the other increases. This situation is particularly hideous when connected with racism, sexism, and homophobia. For many, hate begins with the inability to tolerate aspects of the self and ends with the projection of this intolerance onto others who represent difference. The problem of evil therefore becomes one of the stronger arguments to maintain a myth of self.

**Schneider’s Paradoxical Self**

The paradoxical self, according to Schneider (1999, 2013), is a function of positions on
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a continuum between contradictory polarities of constricting and expanding capacities across six spheres of consciousness. A constricted consciousness is narrow in expression and experience. An expansive consciousness is enlarging of experience and expression.

The paradoxical principle conceives of the psyche as a constrictive/expansive continuum (Schneider, 1999). In other words, the self paradoxically encompasses the capacity for expansion and the capacity for constriction. Positions on the continuum reflect the individual’s capacity to expand or constrict his or her experience. The (fluid) center (or centric) position reflects integration of the polarities, which means enhanced conscious experience, self-awareness, and the ability to flexibly shift from one polarity to the other. Only part of the continuum is available to consciousness. The extremes of the polarities represent potential annihilation, through either constriction into nothingness or expansion into chaos.

In Schneider’s (1999, 2008) model, six spheres of consciousness form a hierarchy of depth, with physiological consciousness at the surface level followed, successively, by environmental, cognitive, psychosexual, interpersonal, and (deepest) experiential consciousness. The spheres of consciousness also reflect the degree to which one is free to choose. Freedom of choice increases with depth. Thus, experiential consciousness at the core of the spectrum relates to the “being level or ontological freedom” (Schneider, 2008, p. 38). Different configurations of positioning along the continuum within each sphere of consciousness are associated in Schneider’s model with a specific psychological dysfunction. Optimal, adaptive functioning is the extent to which an individual can integrate the polarities and admit into consciousness the previously denied part of the self. Integration of the polarities, or centering, refers to the capacity to fluidly and adaptively experience the poles of the continuum that have been denied (Schneider, 1999). This development frees the individual to exercise experiential freedom in the creation of self and meaning.

The paradoxical self, as a myth of self, offers the most promise of those we have explored through its ability to adapt while maintaining a coherent view of the self. It is able to balance the polarities of an absolute, stationary self with the opposite extreme of no-self without relegating the final, ontological reality to the metaphysical realm. It can balance the tension between the potential for good and the potential for evil; stability, fluidity, and adaptability; individualistic needs and collectivist needs; the innate, the personally constructed, and the socially constructed; and the subjective and the intersubjective. Although adaptable enough to pull in many of the various perspectives discussed above, it should not be turned into an oppressive metanarrative or ideal that is forced on all people.

TOWARD AN INTEGRATION

Implications of Whitehead’s Process Philosophy

Alfred Whitehead, the founder of process philosophy, delineated a new way to understand reality. Cobb and Griffin (1976) provide a summary of process thought:

Process thought by definition affirms that process is fundamental. It does not assert that everything is in process; for that would mean that even the fact that things are in process is subject to change. There are unchanging principles of process and abstract forms. But to be actual is to be a process. Anything which is not a process is an abstraction from a process, not a full-fledged actuality. (p. 14)

Whitehead (1929/1978) believed that most philosophers erred in focusing on
either the substance or the flow/flux; however, “in truth, the two lines cannot be torn apart in this way” (p. 209). Substance and change are connected; however, most measurements of a material or substance assume stability. Similarly, most abstract concepts and processes assume stability. It is easier to understand, discuss, and study entities that are stable. Because of this, the human tendency is to reify abstractions of process by turning them into objects.

This process mentality can be applied broadly to a variety of realities, including the self. The tendency is to conceptualize the self in a reified manner that focuses more on stability than on flux. The idea of the self in process does not negate the possibility of aspects of stability; instead, it negates the necessity of stability. Consistency in measures of psychological inventories identify that, for many, aspects of the self or personality remain fairly consistent over time. But, again, this tendency is not a necessity.

Existential thinkers such as Becker (1973) identify the need for defenses against some of the realities of life. For example, to live in constant awareness of the fragility of life causes many people to retreat from life into a form of living death. Similarly, the awareness of the constant flux of the self and the surrounding world can create overwhelming anxiety. The myth of the stable self provides security that helps people cope with the world. When overly reified, this becomes a constricting force, preventing people from engaging in free, responsible living.

Quantum Physics Applications

At first glance, quantum physics appears to have little to do with the self. However, two themes are relevant for the current discussion. First, Newtonian physics, which represented the utopia of science’s promise, was the dominant mode of thought in the modernist period. Physics was the quintessential modernist science, maintaining that some things are stable over time and are definitively known. Quantum physics called these assumptions of Newtonian science into question (Ford, 2004; Wolf, 1981). This played a major role in the transition from modernism to postmodernism. Quantum physics demonstrated that truth is more complicated than it appears. Geertz (1973), the influential anthropologist, points out that the Newtonian view of people emphasized simplicity and laws that governed human behavior. The world of quantum physics, in contrast, calls into question the simplicity as well as many of the laws thought to govern human behavior and selfhood.

A second, more direct implication pertains to the interrelatedness of all things. According to some perspectives in quantum physics, things are not as separate as they appear; all things are related (Wheatley, 2001; Wolf, 1981). The boundaries placed between different objects are more arbitrary than once was believed. These quantum physics approaches focus on the world or universe as a holistic, interdependent system in which distinctions between the self and the world are not as absolute as previously believed. This calls into question even the materialist distinction between the self, others, and the world. Although it does not deny the possibility of the self as a distinct agent acting in the world, it emphasizes, as did the Gestalt psychologists, that the distinct is a part of the whole; boundaries are not so absolute as in the modernist or Newtonian views.

Jung and the Collective Unconscious

In contrast to Freud, Jung identified the ego as the conscious personality and then developed a more complex understanding of the self that incorporated the ego, archetypes, and the collective unconscious as aspects of the self (Hall & Nordby, 1973; Jung, 1964). According to Jung, the unconscious, which
is made up of personal and collective levels, was in existence far before the conscious, and it remains more primary (Jacobi, 1942/1973). Jacobi (1942/1973) asserts that it is difficult to distinguish between the realms of the unconscious; however, regardless of their realm, they exert their influence. Although consciousness is also important in Jung’s theory, to view it as primary is a mistake.

The collective unconscious presents challenges to previous conceptions of the self. According to Jacobi (1942/1973),

the collective unconscious consists entirely of elements characteristic of the human species. . . . The contents assigned to the collective unconscious represent the supra-personal foundation both of the personal unconscious and of consciousness; it is neutral in every respect; the value and position of its contents are defined only when they come into contact with consciousness. (p. 35)

Accordingly, the collective level of the unconscious plays a primary role in the self’s composition and organization. The self, in this view, cannot be contained within the material makeup of the body. Instead, the collective or universal aspect of the self is foundational to the self; there is an interconnected quality in human beings. It is also important to note that Jung believed in the wisdom of the unconscious, in contrast to Freud, who viewed the unconscious with greater suspicion.

Transpersonal Psychology, the Spirit, and the Self

Transpersonal psychology focuses on the role of the spirit or the spiritual in the self (Cortright, 1997; Sleeth, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). It is interested in a variety of transpersonal experiences, or experiences that transcend the boundaries of the self or the personal (Daniels, 2005). Similar to Jung’s view, this calls into question the distinct boundaries of the self. Although going beyond the self or beyond the personal suggests that there is a self, it concurrently suggests that elements of the self extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the self. The spirit, which is neither individual nor contained within the material self, is yet part of the self.

Wilber (2000b), whose integral studies influenced transpersonal psychology, conceptualizes the soul as “the great intermediate conveyor between pure Spirit and individual self” (p. 106). This suggests a spiritual realm beyond the self, in contrast to a personal self that is more contained. Elsewhere, Wilber (1998) questions the traditional idea of the real self, as the real self assumes some essential boundaries. The self is more of a witness (active voice) than an entity—a witness not contained within boundaries but in a state of no boundaries. Wilber (2000a) also speaks of a spiritual self, which is one with God or Brahma. Wilber (1998) states,

The Self is “not this, not that” . . . . The Self is not this, not that, precisely because it is the pure Witness of this or that, and thus in all cases transcends any this and any that. The Self cannot even be said to be “one,” for that is just another quality, another object that is perceived or witnessed. The Self is not “Spirit”; rather, it is that which, right now, is witnessing that concept. The Self is not the “Witness”—that is just another word or concept, and the Self is that which is witnessing that concept. The Self is not Emptiness, the Self is not a pure self—and so on. (p. 276)

In response to these seemingly inconsistent ideas of the self, Wilber (1998) states, “Because the real self resides neither within nor without, because the subject and object are actually not-two, the mystics can speak of reality in many different but only apparently [italics added] contradictory ways” (p. 25).
Cultural and Gender Issues

Western psychology emerged during a period in which individualism was largely assumed. For much of Western history, collectivist ideas were given very little consideration. Psychologists today, however, are remiss if they do not take into consideration collectivist ideas, particularly when working with or considering individuals from collectivist cultures (Sue & Sue, 2003). Sue and Sue (2003) state,

In many non-Western cultures, identity is not seen apart from the group orientation (collectivism). The Japanese language does not seem to have a distinct personal pronoun I. The notion of the atman in India defines itself as participating in unity with all things and not being limited by the temporal work. (p. 108)

Cultural competency and sensitivity in therapy and psychological theory mandate that therapists develop the flexibility to work with clients with a variety of conceptions of the self. The practice of therapy often assumes a particular view of the self. As therapists often are unfamiliar with the diverse conceptions of the self, they may assume a certain understanding of the self and impose it on clients without recognizing that they are doing so.

AN EXISTENTIAL-INTEGRATIVE ENDING

The Need for a Myth of Self

As a practicing psychoanalyst I find that contemporary therapy is almost entirely concerned . . . with the problems of the individual’s search for myths. The fact that Western society has all but lost its myths was the main reason for the birth and development of psychoanalysis. . . . I speak of the Cry for myths because I believe there is an urgency in the need for myth in our day. Many of the problems of our society . . . can be traced to the lack of myths which will give us as individuals the inner security we need in order to live adequately in our day. (May, 1991, p. 9)

A myth is a way of making sense in a senseless world. Myths are narrative patterns that give significance to our existence . . . myths are our way of finding this meaning and significance. (May, 1991, p. 15)

May’s (1991) The Cry for Myth demonstrates the dangers inherent in trying to live in a world without myth. He blames the lack of myth for many of the personal and social problems in contemporary society. Postmodernism, although bringing many benefits, has played a devastating role in the destruction of myths. The early phase of postmodernism focused on deconstructing destructive modern myths and metanarratives, but only recently has it begun attempting to build new mythologies that can replace the meaning systems it deconstructed (Hoffman & Kurzenberger, 2008). Premodern and modern myths of self were fraught with problems in addressing pluralism and the postmodern world. Consistent with other early postmodern deconstructions and reconstructions, the initial reformulations of the self were extremist, often calling for getting rid of the idea of the self altogether. However, more tempered alternatives, such as Schneider’s paradoxical self, provide alternatives to the radical deconstruction of the self.

The self is too integral a myth in Western society to be completely abandoned. Even if a psychologically healthy alternative of no-self exists, it remains dangerous to move toward this ideal too quickly. The loss of this myth and the resulting impact of meaninglessness for many is too risky. The myth of self sustains many people, helping them survive what would otherwise be an unlivable life.
An Existential-Integrative Perspective

We have suggested that Schneider’s (1999) paradoxical self, although not the only healthy alternative, is a strong myth of self for postmodern times. As illustrated in the review of conceptions of the self, the paradoxical self is sufficiently broad to integrate diverse perspectives, from religious to quantum physics, and sufficiently flexible to allow for different cultural viewpoints. In this section, we develop several points of integration across theories of the self.

Whitehead’s process philosophy emphasizes the idea of realities in process. Applied to the self, process philosophy suggests that the self and what influences it are fluid. Although bringing a different understanding to the idea of fluidity, Schneider (2004) integrates this idea into an existential perspective:

The fluid center is any sphere of human consciousness which has as its concern the widest possible relationships to existence; or to put it another way, it is structured inclusiveness—the richest possible range of experience within the most suitable parameters of support. The fluid center begins and unfolds through awe, the humility and wonder of living. (p. 10)

Both conceptions of fluidity reflect a potential for expansion, growth, and development. Although existential psychology has often been associated with the search for an essential self, it has been frequently misperceived as advocating that this essential self is a stable self. As illustrated in the writings of Sartre, May, and Schneider, the existential view of the self is one of fluidity.

Schneider’s conception of awe points toward what is beyond the self. Existential thought has maintained a tenuous relationship with religion—sometimes collaborative while at other times antagonistic (Helminiak, Hoffman, & Dodson, 2012; Hoffman, 2008b). In essence, existentialism is definitively neutral in its stance on religion. By using the concepts of awe and mystery as the basis for spirituality in existential thought, a broader framework is established for working with a variety of belief systems. However, it is important for existential thought to engage with the religious and spiritual dimensions in a manner respectful of the client’s beliefs.

Jungian and transpersonal psychology, along with religion, suggest that there is a metaphysical reality that is not only beyond the self but also a part of the self. Similarly, quantum physics emphasizes the interrelated or intersubjective nature of the self. This forms another potential paradox within the existential-integrative framework. The self is independent and boundaried while also being interrelated or interconnected (Tillich, 1957).

Finally, cultural and gender issues are an important but largely uncharted territory in existential thought (Hoffman, Cleare-Hoffman, & Jackson, Chapter 4, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements,” this volume). Despite the breadth and comprehensiveness of existential-integrative psychology, it remains weak in its engagement with issues of diversity. Although partially rectified in Schneider’s (2008) Existential-Integrative Psychotherapy, which incorporates several perspectives on cultural diversity, sexual orientation, and gender issues, it is imperative that existential-integrative psychology continue to address this issue.

As primarily an illustration of the need for discussions about diversity, existential philosophy and psychology have been overly individualistic in their focus throughout much of their history. Although, as discussed earlier, there has been a tipping of the hat to relational, social, and cultural influences, this lacked the necessary depth to be a force in a postmodern, pluralistic world. The individualist focus provides a challenge in applying existential psychology to diverse individuals, particularly those from collectivist cultures.
As Serlin (2008) indicates, this is also a limitation when working with women.

The paradoxical self, if developed and applied appropriately, has the potential to address this weakness in existential thought. The individualist and collectivist tendencies can be understood as polarities within the paradoxical self. The tendency in Western culture is to err toward the extreme of the individualist, whereas the tendency in Eastern culture is to err on the side of the collectivist impulse. Balance can be, and often is, achieved by Western and Eastern individuals. The optimal balance or integration for psychological health, however, may be culturally determined.

Krippner and Achterberg (2000), in their review of the research literature, demonstrate that there is a strong foundation for the assertion that what is healing, in both physical and psychological realms, is at least partially determined by culture. Hoffman and Kurzenberger (2008) further develop this conception, maintaining that mental illness, psychological suffering, and various forms of healing vary across culture and historical epochs. For example, perceptions of depression as a mental illness change the way in which an individual experiences depression, as opposed to when it is experienced as a normal aspect of human experience. From an existential perspective, a major aspect of the epidemic of depression and antidepressants in Western culture is directly tied to the resistance to existential depression (i.e., normal depression), therefore creating a neurotic depression.

The nature of the self entails various existential givens (Hoffman, 2009b; Yalom, 1980). In introducing the idea of paradox, these givens often are in the form of a paradox, such as the polarity between the individualist and collectivist pulls. Although the paradoxical self warns against the dangers of the extremes, it does not necessitate a specific answer to this paradox. Hoffman (2009a) states, “Myths represent the universality of the existential givens and the particularity of cultural responses to those givens” (p. 264). In other words, existential psychology does not necessitate a certain stance in relationship to the individualist–collectivist paradox, but rather, it recognizes the importance of the cultural and personal contexts. Finally, integrating the cultural understanding suggests that different stances, as long as they avoid the extremes, may represent psychological health for different individuals, and which stance represents optimal health may be partially, or primarily, culturally determined. We are not suggesting that individualist cultures emphasize a boundary and collectivist societies emphasize a no-self; it is much more complicated than that. There are many types of individualism and collectivism, and there is no pure form of either of these. However, there are important differences reflected within the various individualistic and collectivist approaches to understanding the boundaries of the self and how the self is related to culture.

The paradoxical self, from an existential perspective, can also address the challenges that postmodernism often refers to as multiple selves. Another way of conceiving experience labeled as different selves is to construe this process as encompassing different aspects of the self that are activated in particular interpersonal settings; the self and these aspects of the self are also fluid or changing over time. Although this conception may be more a way of labeling experience than describing an ultimate reality, we have maintained throughout this chapter that such ideas and language do matter. The assumption that language and conceptions of reality have no real impact on one’s experience is naive and serves to cut off aspects of experience. Additionally, this perspective fits better with May’s conception of the self as centered integration. Centered integration does not necessitate clear or specific boundaries; it allows for the self to be
conceived in different ways. It allows for different and permeable boundaries. Yet it does so without removing the fulcrum from which one could have an impact on the world—or agency.

The integrated center, which incorporates the various aspects of the paradoxical self and its relation to the existential givens, is the root or source of agency. Rationally, many theorists want to place clear boundaries around this agent, but it is not necessary. The self can remain somewhat ambiguous, with permeable boundaries, without discarding the will and intentionality, or even a conception of a centered self. However, it is more doubtful whether we can retain the will and the accompanying responsibility without any conception of the self.

Last, it is necessary to address the paradoxical tension between self and no-self. In many ways, these are symbolically represented in the extremes of individualism and collectivism. Individualism often focuses excessively on the self; conversely, collectivism de-emphasizes the self. Pertaining to individualism, all of the major world religions include some warnings against excessive self, or excessive self-focus. This excess can also be understood as being represented in extreme personality styles, such as antisocial and narcissistic personalities. Although collectivism and the de-emphasis on the self do not necessitate the conception of no-self, they do move in this direction. At the least, some conceptions or experiences of no-self can be seen as an extreme of the self lost in the collectivist system. The dangers of no-self are easily illustrated in representations in religion and psychological health. The major world religions all stress levels of personal accountability and development, even if the goal in mind is to eventually achieve the recognition of no-self. The lack of self, similarly, can be seen in the extremes of dependent personality patterns, in which the sense of self is attained through others.

Partially represented through the collectivist–individualist tension, the extremes of self and no-self both carry psychological and emotional liabilities. This is not to say that the Buddhist goal of no-self is a pathological end; however, consistent with Buddhist thought, it does suggest that shortcuts to no-self have high costs and may be dangerous.

CONCLUSION

To me, the reality of life is paradox. When we are doing what’s most important, being our most honest, working at healing ourselves, it’s paradoxical. No one falls into the neat categories we like to place them in to make navigating our world easy. (Baker-Fletcher, 1998, p. 91)

What is the ideal for mental health, then? A lived, compelling illusion that does not lie about life, death, and reality; one honest enough to follow its own commandments: I mean, not to kill, not to take the lives of others to justify itself. (Becker, 1973, p. 204)

The self is not an easy thing to locate, define, or describe. Maybe this is why after more than 100 years psychologists still intensely debate its existence. We hold no delusions of grandeur that we have solved the problems of the self; however, we hope that we have provided a solid argument to not throw away the concept of a coherent or integrated self too quickly.

We have maintained that the self is a social construction that can be conceived of in many different ways. No one view of the self, or myth of self, is best for all people. Myths of self should be evaluated in terms of their pragmatic benefit and their fit with individuals’ specific culture, beliefs, and value systems. Healthier myths of self are adaptable and are able to facilitate growth and development. In this manner, healthy myths of self balance the constrictive and
expansive, individualist and collectivist, and other needs of the individual. Additionally, we have advocated for Schneider’s (1999) paradoxical self as an important myth of self because of its adaptability and ability to reconcile many of the different tensions inherent in the human condition.

Referring to the self as socially constructed and as a myth is in no way intended to suggest that there is no real self or that this real self cannot be experienced. Rather, it indicates that the self is something that cannot be definitively known; it cannot be isolated from its surroundings and studied in a reductionistic manner. The self may be at one time distinct and yet indistinguishable; this may be the ultimate paradox of the self. But even the extremes of no-self cannot abdicate some responsible agent even if that agent is part of an impermanent, larger whole. Indeed, the self is so complex that it is unknowable in the ultimate sense, which is partly why different cultures and individuals experience the self so differently. Even if it is our life mission to study the self, in the end we will fall short of a complete understanding. The self comprises us and yet is undeniably beyond us.

NOTE

1. This chapter is adapted and updated from an article by the same name in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 49, 135–173, April, 2009. Reprinted by permission of SAGE.

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CHAPTER 10

Humanistic Psychology and Ecology

MARC PILISUK
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The whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly and represents it better than any single creature whatever.

—Thomas Aquinas

In the deep recesses of our minds, we are aware that the threats to our environment are serious. The rays of the sun passing through gaps in the ozone layer are dangerous. The food chain is contaminated with pesticides, additives, and wastes. Water sufficiently pure to safely drink often is not available. Climate change has begun to wreak havoc with weather patterns as a small warning of what is in store for a planet overheated by greenhouse gases. The air we breathe, both indoors and outdoors, is saturated with harmful chemicals (Lappe, 1991). Even as these chemicals affect individual fertility, we continue to overproduce humans by offering no security and no hope for poor women other than the allegiance of their offspring. In the 12 years since the first publication of the Handbook of Humanistic Psychology, we have witnessed changes of a magnitude that threaten the human potential for its most fundamental promise, that is, the right to continue life in the natural world as we have known it. The genetic engineering of food and the patenting of seeds are removing accessibility of natural foods while obliterating the means of subsistence for much of the world’s population (Hauter, 2012). Moreover, the speed with which global warming has accelerated has brought the world to a point where predictable flooding, food and freshwater shortages, more rapid dislocation of people, and violent struggles for resources will all become irreversible (Parenti, 2011).

We continue to kill 9 billion animals per year for domestic consumption in the United States and to diminish and extinguish countless rare species in wild habitats. We do this while conveniently ignoring that this practice probably is our single greatest cause of water pollution, waste accumulation, deforestation, and ozone depletion (Stepaniak, 1998). Rainforests and coral reefs, the remaining sources of protection for the diverse species that have made complex forms of life possible, are rapidly being contaminated and destroyed. We know that we have too many people for the resources of this planet to support in a way deemed the model for a successful style of life. We know that our inability to manage the wastes of our appetites and
our greed are being borne disproportionately by people of color and people who are poor (Bullard, 1995). Yet the cancer prevalence rates tell us that even wealth cannot protect us. We also know that the settings of beauty that are a source of our spiritual renewal are being lost. We are able to move mountains and change the course of rivers, to venture into space, to turn the genetic blueprints of living things into salable commodities, and to unleash the power of the nuclear genie in ways that can end all of civilization and all of life. We can incarcerate millions and control the behavior of large segments of our population. However, none of these products of our ingenuity and our avarice has made us feel safe or made us accepting and appreciative of our place in the universe (Gottlieb, 1999).

That place is offered by Gaia theory, a model of how the planet works. Lovelock (1979) hypothesized that the earth’s highly reactive mix of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and oxygen could be retained only through the continuing activity of living organisms. Life, in fundamental ways, influences its own environment. With this hypothesis, we may examine the “vital signs” of the planet, note the imbalances, and act as stewards in its restitution. That role of steward is honored more in the breach than in the observance.

Deep down, we are aware that the social constructions we have created to tell us what is real and what is of worth describe a world that holds little promise to nurture either human or nonhuman well-being. This is so precisely because the constructed patterns of thought permit abuse of the settings that should be cherished if they are to remain a source of renewal.

PERSON AS PRIORITY OR AS INSEPARABLE

Humanistic psychology has had an unclear relation to ecological psychology. On the one hand, humanistic psychology places a predominant value on the potential for individual development. It values the diverse human experience and the ability of the human mind to transcend its mundane surroundings in creative and profound ways. So deep is the regard in humanistic psychology for human experience and development that it has sounded the call for new methods of study distinct from those considered acceptable to study all nonhuman forms. So constraining has the earlier scientific effort been on the study of human behavior that the humanists have called for distinct methods (i.e., human sciences) to capture experience in all of its subjective splendor. This has led to an emphasis on a variety of phenomenological methods aimed at getting, as closely as possible, inside the shoes of other humans. Humanistic psychology has, by default, left the study of all nonhuman forms under the rubric of objective science.

Ecological psychology, on the other hand, looks on the separation of humans from other plants, animals, and the material world as artificial, misleading, and not prudent. From the ecological view, the most universal and highly valued symbols and images of the human mind derive from our capacity to glean, in small measure, the marvels and beauty of a sustaining universe and of our own particular niche within it. If these symbolic representations are an essential aspect of human fulfillment, then it is useful to consider an “ecological self” that embraces all forms of life, and the feelings of unity that accompany such a self (Naess, 1986, 1989). Currently, psychologists’ offices are flooded with anxious, depressed, confused, and lonely individuals who are seeking some explanation for their sense of isolation and despondency. The contemporary workplace, with its emphasis on incessant technological development, fierce competition, and individualism, has created countless victims. Such victims present a loss of existential
meaning as well as physical health concerns due to the dramatic increase in toxic occupational environments (Edelstein, 1988). Traditionally, these people have been treated by well-intentioned yet uninformed psychotherapists. Therapists often exacerbate their clients' suffering by addressing only individual and personal concerns. They fail to focus on ways in which clients may be reconnected to the broader human community and the natural environment so as to effect more sustaining and fulfilling ways of life. A few therapists have found the reintegration of clients into natural settings to be a powerful force, diminishing the emptiness provided by the popular culture and enabling them to rediscover an abundant resource for health (Kanner & Gomes, 1995).

To the ecopsychologist, there is a hubris or arrogance in the assumption that humans stand on a separate and raised pedestal. The posture of being separate and superior presents, at best, an incomplete picture, concealing the interdependence of humans with the environment. Such separation also continues to help individuals relate to their environment, as if the problems we bring to it do not require a dramatically different way of conducting our transactions with the natural order. If we are to learn to live with significantly less consumption of meat, plastics, or fossil fuels, if we are to be accountable for toxic radioactive or chemical wastes before we are permitted to produce them, and if we are to ensure that every person or community has the means to sustain itself before others are allowed to accumulate great wealth by exploiting matter and labor from distant sources, then we are envisioning more than a passive change in beliefs. We are envisioning a recovery from our addiction to modern society. Chellis Glendinning (1994) noted this well in her book *My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery From Western Civilization*. Humanistic psychology needs a significant greening if it is to carry its weight in this transformation.

**ECOLOGICAL SEEDS IN THE HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY TRADITIONS**

The seeds of this shift have been present in the vision of the founding figures of humanistic psychology. Buber identified the “I-thou” relationship, in which the recognition of the genuine value of the other contributes to the authenticity of the self (Friedman, 1983). For Buber, such encounters extend beyond human interaction. Buber’s animism held that, ideally, one would relate to all of nature as though it were animated in a personal and sacred manner (Anderson, 1973).

The link between involvement with the outside world and optimal development of the self was hinted at in Maslow’s (1971) description of the self-actualizing person: “Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside of their own skin, in something outside of themselves” (p. 43). Deep respect for what is natural also was noted in Maslow’s (1976) work:

> One finds what is right for oneself by listening. Similarly, one finds out what is right to do with the world by the same kind of listening to its nature and voices; by being sensitive to its requiredness and suggestions; by hushing so that its voices may be heard; by being receptive, noninterfering, nondemanding, and letting be. (p. 119)

Moustakas (1985) carried this theme further by describing his meaning of *humanistic* to include “an authentic relationship to myself, to other human beings, to nature and the universe” (p. 5). This direction is carried further still in ecological psychology. Metzner (1999) described an ecopsychological worldview that values sustainability “of all forms of life and habitats, not just those of humans or one group of humans” (p. 3).

One stream of humanistic psychology has focused less on the separateness of human
thoughts and feelings and more on the artificiality of the link between mind and body. Bodily functions now are clearly understood to be inextricably linked to mental ones. The healing power of potions, postures, and rituals now contributes to holistic health in the practices of even the more traditional deliverers of medical services. The popularity of such beliefs about healing also may contribute, in some collective way, to undermine the concerns of ecological psychology. Poverty, chemical carcinogens in the air and water, and patterns of work that induce excessive stress and preclude renewing experience with the natural environment all are matters that are not curable solely by the mental powers of the individual. Such phenomena are products of our collective activity and may be addressed only by our collective efforts.

THE SHARED CRITIQUE OF OBJECTIFICATION

There are, however, important places in which humanistic and ecological psychologies have found common ground. One is in the critique of the ways in which science and technology have evolved. Whatever marvels they have created, science and technology have been used primarily to extend our mastery of an objectified nature. Every atom, cell, molecule, neuron, person, life form, acre of ground, and portion of the infinite universe is, for science, an object to be isolated, named, and harnessed for the purposes of those who sponsor the scientific enterprise. The enterprise has done well to establish the veracity of specific and invariant relationships among specific bounded things. It has done less well with the intricate interdependencies by which all things are interrelated to each other across time and space. Appreciation of such complexities more commonly lies in the world of the spirit. Such intricate systems still are matters for reverence more than for immediate dissection, cataloguing, and control. The reverence is more readily recognized in cultures other than our own.

When Chief Seattle reluctantly accepted the Port Elliot treaty moving the Duwamish of Puget Sound to a reservation, he affirmed a spiritual conviction:

Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem dumb and dead as they swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memory of stirring events connected with the lives of my people. (as cited in Vanderworth, 1971, p. 21)

Contemporary psychology has made little room to accommodate sacred experience. But Metzner’s (1999) Green Psychology takes all the license afforded by humanistic and transpersonal inquiry to reweave a psychology that is consonant with the human relationship to the earth. Winter (1996) took on the more daunting task of rewriting the existing field of psychology to embed it in an environmental context. But these are exceptions. Psychology has, for the most part, reflected and contributed to the self-centered and objectified view of people that exists in the dominant culture.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

For the mainstream of contemporary culture, the purpose of life is development, growth, and mastery. The contribution of such attainments to individual fulfillment is not frequently questioned but surely is questionable. Those who have acquired great affluence do, in general, enjoy an advantage in better health and better control of their lives compared with others (Adler et al., 1994; Marmot et al., 1991). However, the advantage is not ensured
and, in fact, comes with a cost of denying how one’s advantages contribute to the devastation of other persons and the planet. The advantage of well-being also requires a continued dedication to maintaining the dominant goals. They must be persistently pursued because no degree of attainment or acquisition is sufficient to ensure one’s position among potential competitors. The goals are maintained not only for oneself but also for all others who cannot attain these goals and feel only the intense pressure to strive for them and the dissatisfaction with their own attainments. For the poor, this often is accompanied by the scorn of others and the internalized scorn of oneself for failure to achieve the goals of consumption promoted constantly within the larger culture (Plisuk, McAllister, & Rothman, 1996).

A competing worldview has persisted not only in indigenous regions but also among dissidents, who find the dominant course to estrange them from their communities (both human and natural). Those special connections have, throughout history, been considered more a part of the sacred world than of the secular world, for outside of the dominating addictive pressures to consume and compete, humans find a need to contemplate what is magnificent in the universe and in the miracle of life. For many, the purpose of human life has less to do with achieving higher productivity and consumption than with the contemplative wonder, love, and joy in the presence of what feels sacred (Cummings, 1991; see also Chapter 44, “Beyond Religion: Toward a Humanistic Spirituality” by Elkins, this volume).

THE DEPTH OF OUR CONNECTIONS

We have evolved from living and nonliving materials. We know that our bodies bear the imprints of a material universe older and more dispersed than we are able to experience directly. This understanding has grown to include the minute components of the atom, the workings of the cell, and the effects of microbes, neurotransmitters, background radiation, and geologic formations, and beyond our solar system, it has extended to the understanding of quasars and pulsars and the recent discoveries of stars in other galaxies with planets surrounding them. Although our comprehension of this universe is increasing, our understanding remains modest. Cognitive comprehension is a rather recent arrival in the scheme of an evolving universe. Our more sensory, more affective, and more instinctual attributes, however, contribute to a capacity for the appreciation of the grandeur of the natural design. Seasons bring rains and harvests, and sunlight brings warmth and nurturance. Members of living species reproduce themselves, consume resources, and provide resources for other forms of life. Injuries heal. The sounds of the oceans and wild rivers, of wolves and songbirds touch us deeply. Clouds, flowers, and the setting sun, in all their beauty, are recognized as gifts that rejuvenate the human spirit. It is perhaps paradoxical that the increasing complexities of modern life call on ever greater development of our capacities to categorize and to use our rational capacities to understand, master, and control our environment. At the same time, major segments of our life experience are further removed from their primordial roots. Freud (1962) noted this clearly:

Originally, the ego includes everything, [and] later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present ego-feeling is, therefore, a shrunken residue of a more inclusive, indeed all-embracing, feeling which corresponded to a once intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. (pp. 15–16)

Whereas Freud saw this limitation as the necessary price for sanity in a civilized world,
Jung (1971) observed this same phenomenon more positively:

The more civilized, the more unconscious and complicated a man is, the less he is able to follow his instincts. His complicated living conditions and the influence of his environment are so strong that they drown out the quiet voice of nature. (Cited in Campbell, 1971, p. 160)

HARMONY AND DESTRUCTIVENESS

Whereas our symbolic and often unconscious images provide an avenue to appreciation of our connection to nature, Jung made another important contribution to our understanding of what the psyche brings to the environmental problem. What was and is natural in human nature is not entirely benign. The psyche includes attributes other than those that might cause us to live more harmoniously with our fellow humans or our environs. The concept of the shadow that Jung described represents a potential for destructive or selfish activity that is as fundamental a part of the human condition as is the capacity to care (Jung, 1969). The theme is elaborated in May’s concept of the “daimonic,” which is seen to underlie the human potential both for creativity and for evil. We are indeed better able to deal with our knowing destruction of our ecology if we recognize that the roots of our destructiveness lie not only in our ignorance of what is required to survive but also in our penchant to thwart what we understand to be moral constraints.

In his dialogue with Rogers, May (1984) confronted the Rogerian image of a better world. For Rogers (1984), the increasing unfolding of self-awareness went hand in hand with progress in building a more life-enhancing world. For May (1984), awareness included acknowledgment of our daimonic selves and the necessity to deal with such potentials rather than hoping for a utopian world in which only the potential for goodwill flourishes. The implication for eco-psychology is that the survival of our species will take more than a realization, even more than an appreciation, of our great interconnection with our ecology. Surely, more of us will have to develop ecological selves in which the pain of the contaminated world is our own pain and the preservation of life in general gives meaning to our own lives. Even if we were able to reconnect to the joys and wonders of the natural world, the daimonic potential still would be part of us. Hence, we still are likely to always need institutions that hold us accountable for the damage we do to our world and to each other, just as we always will need institutional practices to heal and forgive those who have contributed so strongly to the devastation of the planet.

TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIETY

The issue of what social changes are necessary for survival needs integration into the mainstream of humanistic psychology. It is too easy to join in the belief that we—our selves and our communities—are a part of nature in the most profound way. It is immediately rewarding to touch the natural world and be touched by it. It is satisfying to engage in the effort to preserve one species of bear or one shoreline or to recycle one’s newspapers and believe that our awareness is saving the environment. Such awareness may be necessary but not sufficient to avoid the horrors we would hope to avoid. Marien (1984) likened much of New Age awareness to a sandbox for adults, serving to remove them effectively from the need to engage in a political process. The lure of the sandbox is particularly great when the systems that perpetuate the destruction of our environment are entrenched,
ubiquitous, and powerful. They include not only a global corporate decision-making process but also individual decisions to follow the daimonic and do less than we might do as actualized individuals.

The transition in consciousness and action to be bridged is at a point where humanistic and ecological psychologies converge. It is in the challenge to the basic assumptions about the world order that we have created. We still live in the shadow of the 17th-century philosopher Francis Bacon, who asserted, “The world is made for man, not man for the world” (as cited in Dumanoski, 1999, p. 7).

Our counterforce has derived from the Romantic tradition, preserved by poets and artists who loved the redemptive power of nature but disdained the struggle to plan for the future. But the bomb, the domination of synthetic chemicals, and the degraded global environment are signs of an accelerating treadmill leading to dire consequences. Something more is required. The nature we have left to preserve is something different from the pristine world of the Romantics. It is a nature that must find a way in which to survive with an already gross overpopulation. The debates between anthropocentrism and biocentrism do not engage the full social and political realities. We lack a coherent and compelling vision of a sustainable world order. We surely are in need of a vision of what science, technology, and business would look like. We also are in need of an ethic to replace rampant individualism. The pursuit of happiness needs to be replaced by the pursuit of compassion. Surely, the protection of individual freedoms has been wrongly applied to the protection of the right of massive corporations to engage in free trade even as it prevents cultural preservation and environmental protection. We face the impact of global forces that curtail diversity and produce a “monoculture of the mind” (Shiva, 1994). If the machinery designed for the accumulation of wealth and subjugation of nature also is the fiscal monitor of political succession and public information, then the task of creating a new vision is large. If the self, wonderful and imperfect as we know it to be, is to have an actualized future, then it will have to be found in the effort to bring about this new vision.

The efforts of contemporary civilization have modified the face of this planet more during the past 200 years than all the forces of nature have done during the past 2 million years. Indigenous peoples have lived in barely changing environments, and their lifestyles both required and reflected a more harmonious accommodation to the forces of nature. The Miwok clan along the northern California coast lived with primitive tools to grind acorns into flour and to catch the abundant shellfish. They shared their temperate region with the giant redwoods, the salmon, the shorebirds, the gray fox, the grizzly bear, and the field mouse. Like these other residents with whom they shared the hospitality of the earth, they used it sparingly and peaceably, with neither a word nor a concept of what later civilization has called warfare. And like the stunted pygmy forests just north of them, their successive generations came and went with a measured stability.

Civilizations came into being in Sumer, Babylon, and all other ancient places of the earth, only to recede into dust and forgotten decay. Troy, Mycenea, Athens, and Rome rose, flourished, and collapsed. Still the people along the shores of California lived out the measured, undisturbed course of their days. (Crouch, 1973, p. 16)

This extended stability reflected the inability to accumulate surplus and, thereby, to permit differences in wealth. It likely owed much to the benefits of cooperation in a hunting-and-gathering society, to the ritual reaffirmations of the bonds of people to their kin, and to their special niche in the ecology. Whatever its advantages or lessons
The great forests of Europe and North America have been destroyed. The remaining rainforests are the lungs of our planet and, along with the dwindling coral reefs, provide a home to the diverse life forms that are part of the miracle of continuing evolution. Although our scientists can—and some do—tell us of the importance of rainforests (and of their jeopardy), our ability to comprehend the urgency appears to require a willingness to hear the voices of others who live with a different cosmology.

For thousands of years, the indigenous communities of Borneo have cared for their homes in the world’s oldest rainforest. The forest has, in turn, provided them with the resources needed to survive. The complex relationships of this fragile ecosystem are endangered. Logging and oil palm plantations, ignoring the traditional land claims of native peoples, are clear-cutting the forest at an unprecedented rate. The costs in depletion of the earth’s oxygen and extinction of medicinal plant species are impossible to estimate. The costs to the inhabitants are apparent. Contaminated river systems and degraded forests have eroded the abundant resource base on which a resourceful people have depended for the past millennium. The local people of Uma Bawang have combined forces with an organization in Berkeley, California, to form the all-volunteer Borneo Project. It is using citizen diplomacy, outreach, direct assistance, and cultural exchange to monitor violations of human rights and land rights by networking with other international associations (Pilisuk, 1998). Mutang Urad, a leader of the Kelabit tribe in Sarawak, explained the importance of the approach:

In our race to modernize, we must respect the ancient cultures and traditions of our peoples. We must not blindly follow the model of progress invented by European wealth; we must not forget that this wealth
was bought at a very high price. The rich world suffers from so much stress, pollution, violence, poverty, and spiritual emptiness. The wealth of the indigenous communities lies not in money or commodities but [rather] in community, tradition, and a sense of belonging to a special place. (Earth Island Institute, 1997)

The model provided by this and other projects focuses on the preservation and rediscovery of what is sacred in the relation between the person and the planet. It should be seen as a current and appropriate model for meaningful self- and community actualization. It provides an opportunity both for saving our planet and for finding our souls through a reconnection to the vast unfolding world, in which our special gifts of understanding and compassion are needed (see also Chapter 46, “Humanistic Psychology and Social Action” by Rice, this volume). Interestingly, community, tradition, and belonging to a special place offer opportunities for humanistic psychology to highlight an inherent link to the personal fulfillment experienced in the myriad communities focused on transforming into locally viable entities, some growing abroad through microfinance and eco-tourism, many providing better food than supermarkets, and some experimenting with alternative currencies (Hawken, 2011).

CANCER: THE CASE OF GREENING THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH

The case of breast cancer offers a metaphor for understanding the overlapping terrains of humanistic and ecological psychologies. Breast cancer afflicted approximately 230,000 women in the United States in 2011 and was expected to kill approximately 40,000 (http://www.breastcancer.org/symptoms/understand_bc/statistics). The rates have been rising rapidly. Women born between 1947 and 1958 are three times more likely to get breast cancer than were their great-grandmothers at the same age (Batt & Gross, 1999). Humanistic psychology has provided a freedom to look at the nature of lived experiences that affect the maintenance or the breakdown of human health. It has contributed to a type of treatment that makes some women better able to confront this awful disease and retain a decent quality of life while pursuing treatment. The images we hold apparently affect the workings of our bodies and our capacities to cope. They can be directed to healing and humanistically oriented programs, and they have become a critical part of cancer treatment (Robbins, 1998). Humanistic psychology has contributed to the compassion. But something is missing. This missing element is a subject of ecopsychology that is less present in humanistic psychology. The rates continue to increase.

The reasons clearly are linked to the presence of pollution, estrogenic medications, toxins in consumer products, and carcinogens in the workplace. Breast cancer mortality in New Jersey was associated with closeness of residence to one of the state’s 111 superfund sites. Breast cancer mortality rates in Israel increased every year for 25 years until 1978, when the government banned DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane), benzene hexachloride, and lindane. By 1986, the rate had dropped by a third for women in the 25- to 34-year age range. The first warnings of the current environmental disaster appeared in Rachel Carson’s (1962) Silent Spring during the early 1960s. Carson died of breast cancer 18 months after its publication, and others are carrying her message.

General Electric, which manufactures X-ray machinery, supports early detection and mammography. The company also has been a major polluter. When it administered the Hanford nuclear weapons facility, General Electric released large amounts of radioactive wastes into the atmosphere and
into the Columbia River. The company also was responsible for the massive release of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) into the Hudson River. The paradox of a company profiting both from activities that cause cancer and from the treatment of cancer is a repeated pattern. Breast Cancer Awareness Month was created by AstraZeneca in 1985. AstraZeneca is the world’s third largest drug corporation. Its message is “Get a mammogram.” The British-owned multinational corporation is the producer of Tomaxafin, widely used in breast cancer treatment, and is the owner of the Salick chain of cancer treatment centers. AstraZeneca also produces herbicides and fungicides, including the carcinogen acetochlor. Its subsidiary chemical plant in Ohio is the third largest source of potential carcinogenic pollution in the United States. At the time when Breast Cancer Awareness Month was created, AstraZeneca was owned by Imperial Chemical Industries, a multibillion-dollar producer of pesticides and plastics, which was charged by state and federal authorities with the dumping of DDT and PCBs into California harbors long after both substances had been banned.

Samuel Epstein (1979, 1998), of the University of Illinois School of Public Health, noted the conflict of interest when a company that is a spin-off of one of the largest manufacturers of cancer-causing chemicals is in control of the treatment centers and the funding of cancer research. Ranking officials of the National Cancer Institute often accept lucrative posts from the cancer drug industry. The American Cancer Society has among its trustees the president of a major drug company. It also has on its board of directors the vice president of American Cyanamid, and others on the board have ties with Dupont, CBS, Disney, and Boeing. In 1990, Armand Hammer served as chair of a presidential cancer advisory committee that advocated a drive to add $1 billion to the National Cancer Institute budget to help find a cure for cancer within 10 years. At the time, he also was the chair of Occidental Petroleum, which had to pay millions of dollars to the federal government and to New York State for its culpability in the environmental disaster at Love Canal (Epstein, 1979, 1998; Proctor, 1996). The highly respected New England Journal of Medicine ran a position paper by the toxicologist Stephan Safe (1997) belittling the evidence linking chemical residues to cancer, without noting that Safe recently had received research funds from the Chemical Manufacturers Association. The journal subsequently reviewed Sandra Steingraber’s (1997) book Living Downstream (Berke, 1997). This book by a cancer survivor and scientist was labeled “an obsessive concern with environmental causes of cancer.” The article did not note that the reviewer was a senior official of the chemical giant W. R. Grace, which was forced by the Environmental Protection Agency to pay millions of dollars for the cleanup of contaminated wells in Woburn, Massachusetts. The attention to Woburn, as to Love Canal, came only after the cries and organizing efforts in the local communities were sufficient to overcome the denials of both the authorities and the corporate polluters (Brown, 1989). The struggle has been, as it has been for much of humanist psychology, how to contest a prevailing standard of scientific, technical, and corporate reality and expand it to include one reflecting the human experience. Kanner and Gomes (1995) took this issue one step further to challenge the role of psychologists in an increasingly consumerist society:

When psychologists offer their services to corporations, their statistical skills and therapeutic insights are used to manipulate people for economic gain rather than to foster well-being. Yet, consumerism is so ingrained in American society that this
outright abuse of psychological expertise receives no mention in the ethical code of the American Psychological Association. (pp. 82–83)

For ecopsychology, the reflection of human experience includes the fears for our children, the observations of bad air, the ability to see links between the odor of our water and our ailing pets and children, and the willingness to decide that assurances of acceptable risk should come with the question “Acceptable to whom?” Steingraber, now a mother as well as a biologist and cancer survivor, advises women to breast-feed their infants. Nonetheless, she notes that this magical holy water filled with antibodies has more PCBs and more DDT and fat-soluble pesticides than would be allowed in other foods (Gross, 1999).

Terry Tempest Williams is a “down-winder,” that is, a person who lived downwind from the site of nuclear weapons tests and, therefore, was subjected to radiation exposure. She is a cancer survivor in Utah, where nuclear weapons tests at the Nevada site have left a trail of illness and deformities. Her writing on the clan of the one-breasted women confronted the official assurances with the reality of the experience of people who have been affected (Williams, 1998). She described the inner reality of her own surgery to remove a cancer of the breast. Her dreams compare the clear-cut forests with the breasts removed by the knives of surgeons:

Where do the trees go? Where do the clear-cut breasts of women go? . . . Frozen sections are placed under a microscope while frightened humans await the word—malignant or benign. We emerge from close calls with mortality with an acute awareness of how much we want to live, to love, and to have more time on earth. But what disappears or dies, whether trees or breasts, is part of our story. . . . What do I do now with the open space in front of my heart? (Williams, 1999, p. 43)

The breast, a symbol across cultures of fertility and nurturance, provides the infant’s starting relationship with its environs. That we have contaminated this fountain should provide a symbolic warning of what we must do to reaffirm our place in the larger ecology. There is no way in which to protect this milk, or our air, water, and food chain, by individual changes of diet or by placing filters on our water taps and heat ducts. There is no way in which to prevent the environmental harm we cause to ourselves and other species by individual actions alone. However, it is not from fear alone that we must take part in a cooperative transformation of the destructive institutions of society. It is also to find joy in the actualization of our potential to survive and thrive for generations to come. The mission taps our spiritual needs (Warner, 1988–1989). Ecological psychology reminds us that our participation in this effort can provide the experience of awe, reverence, and connection to the surroundings of which we are a part.

REFERENCES


Peace is surely more than just the absence of war. It is a state of the community and of the world in which healthy human development can take place. Humanistic psychology has something vital to say about the transformation to peace. However, because both humanistic psychology and peace psychology have weighed in most strongly with their concerns about war (White, 1986), this is a good place to start. War is but one of the ways by which we inflict violence on one another. Among all the forms of destructiveness, war is special mainly in the ways in which it is justified. A declaration of war gives a state the recognized right to order people to conquer, destroy, and kill. Why do we do it?

The answer begins with an observation on war that is well documented in Tuchman’s (1984) *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. Tuchman’s book details a history of the human propensity to engage in violent wars, including numerous cases in which the potential gains for any of the participants were small compared with the costs. Examples of societies that have been relatively free of violent wars for long periods of time are few and lie mostly outside of the dominant societies modernized in the Western image. The exceptions, although rare, are important given that they bear on critical questions debated within humanistic psychology. What does such recurrent violence have to say about human nature? Are the cruel, selfish, and violent activities as fundamental a part of human nature as the creative, caring, and cooperative actions? If so, do such instinctive aggressive inclinations mean that wars are inevitable?

Humanistic psychology was begun by persons whose appreciation for the richness of human experience and for its value convinced them that the psychology of their day gave too little opportunity for the human potential to thrive. It should be of no surprise that many of these same people were equally concerned about the threat posed by war to diminish not only the hopes of humankind but also the possibilities for its survival, for what does it mean to cherish the individual human while ignoring the human-created cloud that might bring all life to an end?

Many of the legendary figures of humanistic psychology have spoken about the issues of war and peace. Before the advent of the two world wars and the development of nuclear
Also be applied to other politically explosive zones of the world” (p. 38).

Although both Rogers and Maslow recognized that society needed to be more inviting to the development of caring and concerned individuals, both placed the major emphasis on the unfolding of the individual potential for caring engagement with the world beyond the ego (Rogers, 1984). In partial contrast, May saw a darker side to human nature that made the unfolding of the human potential for caring more difficult. He believed that the movement toward freedom, toward participation and caring, was most realistic when it recognized the constraints of destiny (see Bohart, Held, Mendelowitz, & Schneider, 2013). For May (1984), these included a “daimonic” human quality that was the source of both creativity and destructiveness. May’s recognition of the destructive potential is a major contribution to the debate on what is needed for peace. Indeed, it is this juxtaposition between the commitment to fulfillment of the human potential and the realization of the human capacity for violence and destruction that has led to one of the most important dialogues about human nature. If people cannot always be counted on to restrict their own belligerent inclinations, then the unfolding of human potential will have to be accompanied by the creation of human institutions that hold us accountable to some greater good.

WHY WAR?

There are many psychological explanations for why humans engage in organized mass killing of each other with such apparent frequency and with approval and even acclaim by others. These surely include the psychological contributions of Freud (1962), Fromm (1964), and Frank (1982), as well as James’s (1910/1995) essay on the moral equivalent
of war. Recent comments of the Dalai Lama on warfare capture the basic concern:

The unfortunate truth is that we are conditioned to regard warfare as something exciting and even glamorous: the soldiers in smart uniforms (so attractive to children) with their military bands playing alongside them. We see murder as dreadful, but there is no association of war with criminality. On the contrary, it is seen as an opportunity for people to prove their competence and courage. We speak of the heroes it produces, almost as if the greater the number killed, the more heroic the individual. And we talk about this or that weapon as a marvelous piece of technology, forgetting that when it is used it will actually maim and murder living people. Your friend, my friend, our mothers, our fathers, our sisters and brothers, you and me.

What is even worse is the fact that in modern warfare, the roles of those who instigate it are often far removed from the conflict on the ground. At the same time, its impact on noncombatants grows even greater. Those who suffer most in today’s armed conflicts are the innocent—not only the families of those fighting but, in far greater numbers, civilians who often do not play a direct role. Even after the war is over, there continues to be enormous suffering due to land mines and poisoning from the use of chemical weapons. (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dalai Lama XIV, 1999, pp. 204–205)

The Dalai Lama also noted the effects on the dispersion of destruction. War brings a destruction of infrastructure—roads, bridges, housing, farmlands, electricity, and medical facilities—as well as general economic hardship. This means that, with increasing frequency, women, children, and the elderly are among its prime victims. The history of the sacrifice and sexual abuse of women in war is well documented (Elshattain, 1987; Nikolic-Ristanovic, 1996). Similarly, the Graca Machel report to the United Nations on the effects of war on children documents its

disastrous effects on young people. These include the loss of young lives clearly not at fault, the mutilations, the separation from one’s family, the forced recruitment of child soldiers and child sex slaves, the fear, the trauma, and the unresolved anger, which later will influence the survivors’ own propensity to be perpetrators or victims of violence (Wessells, 1998). The Dalai Lama also addressed the impersonality of destruction:

The reality of modern warfare is that the whole enterprise has become almost like a computer game. The ever-increasing sophistication of weaponry has outrun the imaginative capacity of the average layperson. [Its] destructive capacity is so astonishing that whatever arguments there may be in favor of war, they must be vastly inferior to those against. We could almost be forgiven for feeling nostalgia for the way in which battles were fought in ancient times. At least then, people fought one another face-to-face. There was no denying the suffering involved. And in those days, it was usual for rulers to lead their troops in battle. If the ruler was killed, that was generally the end of the matter. But as technology improved, the generals began to stay farther behind. Today they can be thousands of miles away in their bunkers underground. (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho XIV, Dalai Lama, 1999, p. 205)

War, however destructive, always is justified by its protagonists and typically is honored. James (1910/1995) noted, however, that the sentiments tapped by war are not all bad: “Indeed, they represent the more virtuous dimensions of human existence: conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, of unstinted exertion, and of universal responsibility” (p. 26).

More recently, Ehrenreich (1997) placed mystical experience at the core of her theory of war. Her claim was that war is a sacrament, a blood ritual that draws on humankind’s oldest and deepest impulses. In the Seville
because they were drafted. They served in combat duty only for as long as their assignments required. Studies show that they were fighting more for their loyalty to their immediate squadrons than for their country (Stouffer, 1965). The morale needed to bear the sacrifices involved—for the soldiers and for the nation—had to be promoted. This war, like most, was sustained by propaganda, demonizing the enemy and extolling the virtues of “our” effort.

The image of a hostile enemy is a precursor to war (Reiber, 1991). The period of the Cold War demonstrated the continuing power of a military and economic elite, on both sides, to create so awesome an enemy (Bronfenbrenner, 1961) that its containment could justify great sacrifices to freedom and well-being at home. In the proxy wars fought in Angola, Korea, Vietnam, Panama, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Iran, the public typically was treated to televised vilifications of individuals and displays of war that concealed its atrocities and costs. Even then, extended war has been unpopular.

Humanists are people who value all human life. But even for ordinary people both in and out of uniform, for people whose information comes from a mass media relying mainly on reports from the press rooms of government agencies and large corporations, war still is a horror. The images of dedication, purpose, and belonging that it brings forth are often short-lived. This fact alone should be somewhat heartening to those who seek to build a less violent and more caring society. That task is shared by humanistic psychology and peace psychology.

BUILDING PEACE

To appreciate the many ways in which peace can be approached, it is necessary to start with a positive definition of peace, one that goes well beyond the absence of war. A world...
at peace is one in which people use means other than violence or the threat of violence to achieve objectives. It is a world in which conflicts are settled peaceably and where the conditions of gross inequality of power and privilege that underlie much of mass violence are changed to conditions of equal opportunity. It is a society that ensures the requisites of a positive identity for all people. It is a world in which the security of one’s surroundings allows for attention to other levels of development. Peace means an environment in which the fulfillment of the human potential of some does not come at the expense of others. Harmon (1984) noted,

The goal of sustained world peace is the goal of a global commonwealth in which war has no legitimacy anywhere; in which every planetary citizen has a reasonable chance to create through his or her own efforts a decent life for self and family; in which men and women live in harmony with the earth and its creatures, cooperating to create a wholesome environment for all; in which there is an ecology of different cultures, the diversity of which is appreciated and supported; in which there is a deep and shared sense of meaning in life it-self—meaning that does not have to be sought in mindless acquisition and consumption. (p. 79)

Peace psychology and humanistic psychology have spoken with similar voices on the contribution of the human psyche to violent behavior and participation in war. However, humanistic psychology has adhered closely to understandings and solutions that involve individual attributes and has, by and large, left the political and societal contributions to war to others. The gap is important. Those who now plan and justify excessive efforts for military preparedness, and those whose work depends on this effort, are not rabid militarists, nationalists, or religious crusaders. Some who work most directly within the classified and secret subculture of nuclear weapons, with their godlike power to destroy, show clear signs of addictive attachment and cultlike ritual in their work (Gusterson, 1991; Pilisuk, 1999). A similar case for the addictive attachment to cultural scapegoating has been used to explain the tolerance for the Gulf War and for the devastating effects of the postwar embargo on civilians (Harak, 1992). Surely, war and its preparation do contain addictive aspects. However, most of the people employed in the defense sector are indistinguishable from others working in large competitive corporations. The madness of mass killing lies in the system.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

The broader definition of peace requires us to examine aspects of violence that go beyond overt warfare. Ramphal (1982) reminded the United Nations of the following:

It does the cause of human rights no good to inveigh against civil and political rights deviations while helping to perpetuate illiteracy, malnutrition, disease, infant mortality, and a low life expectancy among millions of human beings. All the dictators and all the aggressors throughout history, however ruthless, have not succeeded in creating as much misery and suffering as the disparities between the world’s rich and poor sustain today. (p. 1)

Humanistic psychology has always looked on the development of individuals whose respect for others would not permit them to engage directly in unwarranted acts of violence. This is essential in the promotion of peace. It also is not enough. The concept of structural violence helps define the broader domain of peace psychology. Violence is present when an individual or a group of people die or suffer from the preventable actions of others. In structural violence, these actions are
not direct but rather lie in the institutionalized behaviors that make violent outcomes inevitable (Christie, 1997; Galtung, 1996; Pilisuk, 1998). The perpetrator clearly is identifiable in incidents of premeditated murder or rape, in certain hate crimes, and in the shootings of high school children. In acts of war, the sources often are more complex, but we still think that we can attribute responsibility.

In the most frequent forms of violence, the sources are more difficult to identify. Between 1950 and 1997, the world economy grew sixfold, to a total of $29 trillion. But each year, 12 million children under 5 years of age die—33,000 per day—the overwhelming majority from preventable conditions. An equal number survive with permanent disabilities that could have been prevented.

In 1997, 250 million children were working. That year, 110 million did not attend primary school, and 275 million failed to attend secondary school. In all, 2 million girls become prostitutes each year. Approximately 585,000 women died during pregnancy or childbirth in 1996. A total of 1.33 billion people live in absolute poverty, receiving less than $1 per day (Bellamy, 1997). This violence is attributable to the ways in which many people, often distant from the victims, conduct their daily lives.

Particularly when we consider structural violence, the distinction between perpetrators and bystanders is diminished. The corporations that buy the land and resources that once sustained viable communities are perpetrators. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have loaned money for projects that exploited poor countries and left them with enormous debt, are perpetrators. The economic arrangement that leaves some people too impoverished to secure food or inoculations for their children is a perpetrator of structural violence. The government leaders who have not required that a living wage be paid and a safe environment be maintained by companies permitted to locate anywhere are also to blame. Responsibility falls on those who exploit indigenous workers and their environments. It extends to those who maintain such exploitation by providing arms to national rulers who suppress efforts to obtain a living wage. The net of culpability is even greater. What of the stockholders and those people whose pension plans support the exploiting companies? What of the people whose standard of living is elevated by a global economy, the people who purchase the food, clothing, sound systems, and computers at “competitive” prices that have been lowered by the exploitation of child workers and their teenage parents? Are we, ordinary people, however self-actualized, also perpetrators of this structural violence that kills and maims in numbers greater by far than all the identified wars in all time? (Pilisuk, 2008).

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

To build peace, as opposed to merely wishing for it, profound changes will be required of many, including those who are already aware of the need for transformation. Even those who believe that transformation to a peaceful world is essential but is beyond their own efforts are part of a system whose properties must be changed. Humanistic psychology offers an optimistic view of the capacities for human transformation that begins with awareness. The awareness must include present realities. Peace psychology tries to enlarge the view of what must be transformed and how it must be transformed to create a world that sustains life and enriches the human experience. It confronts us repeatedly with facts that, if not faced, will return to haunt us:

- More resources now are committed to the development and testing of nuclear weapons than were spent (using constant-dollar
comparisons) at the height of the Cold War (Schwartz, 1998). The dangers of this activity are protected by a culture of secrecy at the weapons laboratories (Gusterson, 1991).

- The professional activities of those who develop and rationalize weapons of mass destruction provide extensive financial rewards. These, in turn, ensure an inordinate influence on policy. The vocations also provide gratification for masculine identities that play with a godlike power sufficient to destroy the planet. Such activities often are pursued without conscious awareness of an underlying preoccupation with subjugation of the weak and the feminine (Cohn, 1987; Pilisuk, 1999).

- Military production is associated with the largest and most powerful of the world’s corporate giants, including exorbitant amounts spent on lobbying and political campaigns (Buzueva, 1985).

- Nuclear weapons are proliferating. The number of nations that now have, or are capable of developing, nuclear weapons makes the risk of their use quite high (Renner, 1990). Despite a general inclination to view the threat as past, failures to curtail the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons and to move toward nuclear disarmament leave humanity vulnerable to its own rapid extinction (Wessells, 1995).

- The world market in weapons trade is extensive and provides the means by which ethnopolitical wars are being fought (Greider, 1998; Renner, 1998).

- The global economy is creating populations with no measure of control over the local material and human resources they need to survive (Korten, 1998).

- World Bank and International Monetary Fund policies have left the poorer countries so deep in debt that they have no choice but to allow international commerce to exploit their natural resources, pay their workers at poverty levels, and accept the toxic wastes of the developed world (Bello, 1994).

- The capacity to wage biological warfare is widespread, and clandestine forms of transmission can protect its users from detection (Barnaby, 1999; Wright, 1990).

- The information technologies so central to the command and control of dangerous weapons often are penetrated by unauthorized sources (Center for Defense Information, 1996).

- Violence by ever younger individuals and groups indicates disconnection and alienation (National Adolescent Health Information Center, 1995; Osofsky, 1995). These conditions provide rich soil both for hate groups and for mobilization of support for militaristic activity by the scapegoating of enemies (Lamy, 1996).

- Military force is considered appropriate for the protection of national interests. Such interests typically are identified as the right to exploit the resources of other countries (Chomsky, 1988, 1991).

- In the decade since the first edition of this handbook, the destruction of the World Trade Center began a new chapter in the evolution of war. A history of U.S. and Western European colonial exploitation and arrogance toward and exploitation of peoples unlike “ourselves” had become more visible to dissenters worldwide. Years of wars, small and large, and of forced indebtedness have created a world of disparate opposition to American hegemony and to the governments that support it. Resistance includes some nongovernmental groups that strike back as they are able and have been labeled terrorists. They have become an enemy without national boundaries and an excuse for unending war. Such war has obliterated the poor tribal nation of Afghanistan. There, as in the war based on deception in
Iraq, with the inability to distinguish combatants from civilians or ally from opponent, the standard tools of war have been expanded. The arsenal has come to include coercive interrogation, torture, and the secret abducting of people not charged with any crime, to be sent to other countries where they can be tortured. A secret kill list allows the government to assassinate suspected militants, including U.S. citizens, without charges or trial and without accountability for the killing of innocent family members or bystanders. Whistle-blowers who provide knowledge of the horrors inflicted secretly are jailed. Moreover, efforts to target suspected individuals have come to rely on unmanned drones, sent from afar, with capacities for extensive surveillance and often with capacities to kill as well. Privacy has been sacrificed, and the increased capacity to kill from remote distances poses a new challenge to humanistic psychology. How does our profession react not only to harm inflicted on individuals in particular wars but also to the evolution of an enduring-warfare state (Benjamin, 2012; Pilisuk, 2012; Replogle, 2012; Richmond, 2012)?

LIGHTING A HUMANISTIC PATH TO PEACE

Brewster Smith (1992) suggested a war to preserve nature as an appropriate cause that might become the new moral equivalent to war. Smith noted the political problem in this goal as

how to advance the objectives of obtaining a sustainable ecology while enlisting the support of the have-not blue-collar workers (and the increasing underclass) in our own nation and of the have-not nations so crucially involved. Real sacrifice must eventually be expected on the part of us affluent [people and countries]. The kind of discipline that William James wrote of may be required of us. (p. 89)

Smith (1992) saw the common enemy as our own unsustainable economic practices. The political agenda, he noted, is far beyond the competence of psychology, but psychology knows much about changing behavior. There has been a strong and justifiable caution among humanistic psychologists to applying all that we psychologists know to monitoring people's behavior. It smacks of the Skinnerian worldview, in which some informed elements of society intentionally control the behavior and development of others. Rogers, whose life work focused on allowing the potential of the individual to unfold, persistently raised the question of whose values would define the goals of such intervention. Moreover, psychology, as both a profession and a science, has tried to avoid most political agendas (except perhaps the self-serving agenda of getting more funds for psychological research and services). An ethical issue is raised here. Do we overstep our boundaries by political advocacy, even if such advocacy is intended to influence the behavior of others in ways that we perceive are vital for survival? This issue is not fully resolved in either humanistic psychology or peace psychology.

There are two profound messages prominent in humanistic psychology that appear essential for peace. The first is an ethical view promulgating the value of all people. There no longer is any meaningful ethic of self-interest, and there no longer is any meaningful nationalism. Our collective survival requires the appreciation of a “community of otherness” in which acceptance and willingness to dialogue comes without regard to our perceived differences (Friedman, 1983, 1984). Peace psychology has brought forward the means for such dialogue in forms of dispute resolution that can be applied even under conditions of deadlocked distrust and ideological intransigence (Deutch, 1994; Kelman, 1999; Osgood, 1962; Pilisuk, 1997; Pilisuk, Kiritz, & Clampitt, 1971; Rapoport, 1960; Sherif & Sherif, 1969).

A second essential teaching from humanistic psychology is with regard to the capacity
To reconceptualize our role in society, . . . we must start with conscious self-evaluation and learn to take responsibility for the effects of our actions. I believe our major challenge, our business, is to apply the skills and resources accumulated in humanistic psychology in the broad arena of social change. (p. 202)

Activities to address the transition to a peaceful world can appear demanding and draining. Here, Macy (1984) offered a mindset that could help sustain such activity:

The action is not a burden that we nobly assume: “I am going to go out and save the world.” That’s very boring, very tedious. But when you experience it as being liberated into your true nature, which is inextricably interwoven with that of every other being, then your conceptual structure of reality and your response to it are inseparable. Each act then becomes a way of affirming and knowing afresh the reality to which the doctrine gives form. (p. 118)

In the final analysis, we have no way of knowing whether we will be able to increase our involvement sufficiently to bring about a transformation to a world at peace. We do not know whether our practices to find deeper awareness or inner peace will help us attain this end. Nor do we know whether we will be able to build institutions within which the potential for both direct and structural cruelty will be seriously lessened and the potential for goodness will be markedly enhanced. But we do know that if we love and honor life, then we must try.

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Creativity as a discipline and humanistic psychology as the “third force” both emerged just over half a century ago as two insurgencies. They emerged along with a resurgent interest in the classical subjects challenging a psychology preoccupied more with its method than with its subject. This preoccupation was associated with an American postwar social climate characterized as conformist, depersonalized, compartmentalized, and materialistic (Arons, 1994). Starting independently, both insurgencies inquired into what is most unique and valued in being human, heedless of whether it was the most easily standardizable or measurable and not limited by the then dominant “homeostatic” model of psychological health. Although both insurgencies at first focused on special individuals (i.e., the creatively gifted and the self-actualizing), their crossing and merging paths, as well as their massive impact on the culture, led to important implications for all persons and a profound intimation of what is essentially human.

To gain a historical focus on the merging of these insurgencies, this chapter spotlights two leaders: J. P. Guilford and A. H. Maslow. Both Guilford and Maslow were consummate insiders whose influence spread so “far out” of the confines of their field as to significantly energize a cultural, institutional, and spiritual revolution. The emerging vision reveals creativity in the texture of everyday experience while also bringing everyday experience to its fullest spiritual purpose: The vision is a holistic, dynamic, and integrative picture of psychological health and development that, through content more than method, shows promise of bringing psychology and the other sciences closer to a long sought unity. We begin with history and then look at a few points of contemporary impact relative to three areas: (1) chaos theory and modern science, (2) health and healing, and (3) issues of spirituality in a troubled world.

**CREATIVITY AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: WORKING DEFINITIONS**

Leaning on Barron (1969), we define creativity broadly and yet, in our dual-insurgency context, with pointed relevance. Creativity involves both originality and meaningfulness. In the simplest
Dual Insurgencies

The resurgence of interest in the subject of creativity in psychology dates back half a century, and in that time frame, it roughly coincides with the emergence of the third force that came to be called humanistic psychology. Although the two insurgencies began independently, they progressively have merged. Little wonder. In the tradition of William James, both viewed one's inner subjective reality as essential to the fullest understanding of human possibility, looking where necessary beyond those “outside” objective variables that could be laboratory quantified. Both insurgencies bridged logical dichotomies, revealing that these were transcended in the subjects they were studying, including convergent/divergent, mind/body, conscious/unconscious, masculine/feminine, and personal/transpersonal polarities. Both viewed humans in holistic terms—as growing, changing, and (for some theorists) unfolding toward a higher spiritual purpose—rather than as predictable organisms geared toward a stable and homeostatic quiescence (i.e., a Freudian dynamic of psychological “health”). Both not only spoke to the serious lacks but also added new hope, feeding a social hunger in their day—not for bread during those prosperous times but rather for self-understanding, spiritual connection, and full and empowered humanness. Both were expressions of and a sustaining force for the cultural, consciousness, and spiritual revolutions that would erupt during the 1960s and the aftershock convulsions that would continue to transform the cultural landscape.

GUILFORD AND MASLOW: FAR-OUT INSIDERS

Guilford’s (1968) works crossed the areas of psychometrics, cognitive psychology, and nonintellective factors in creativity, overlapping in many ways with Maslow’s interests despite very different approaches. Both Guilford and Maslow were consummate insiders who had been elected presidents of the American Psychological Association (APA). The works of each had an immediate and enduring impact both within and outside the field. Prior to Guilford’s famous 1950 APA presidential address, only 186 psychology studies referring to creativity were recorded. By contrast, during just the decade that followed, 800 such publications had piled their way into that literature (Arons,
1965). For his part, Maslow’s (1962) *Toward a Psychology of Being* had sold more than 200,000 copies before the trade edition had even come out (Hoffman, 1996).

Both men helped spark insurgencies that to this day put to the ultimate test psychology’s methods and paradigm. These insurgencies have transformed institutions with insights that reach so deeply into the humanities that they tap the core of the perennial wisdom and yet have so ingrained themselves in the public consciousness as to have inspired the most popular motto the U.S. Army has ever employed: “Be all that you can be . . . in the army.”

Guilford’s (1950) presidential address pointed to how midcentury psychology had largely reduced the creative capacity to a score on a standardized IQ test or to a learned response or defense mechanism—sublimation. For his part, Maslow, reflecting on the sterilized model of the human at midcentury, pointed to “a huge gaping hole in psychology.” “Where,” he asked, “was goodness, nobility, reason, loyalty, courage, and (even) science?” (as cited in Bennis, 1969). In its push to become a behavioral science, psychology had deleted consciousness, after having expunged much of the rest of the “psyche” along with the creative source and value ends of science itself. The discarding of all that was not measurable was accomplished by psychology in its attempt to join the hard sciences. That is, under the rubric of scientific monism, there historically has existed the presumption that, ultimately through the same methods, the subject matter of psychology could be reduced to that of physics.

Yet how ironic it is that this attempt to unify psychology is now taking place, albeit not as a physical science, thanks to the humanistic psychology and creativity insurgencies, but as a reaffirmation of consciousness and creativity at the level of the human participant. As we will indicate later, the psychology of consciousness and creativity and the physics of quantum and, particularly, chaos theory currently are in a heated heuristic dialogue. Moreover, the issues that these insurgencies tapped in exploring the “farther reaches of human nature” (Maslow, 1971) also join psychology with fields such as philosophy and theology, touching as they do the core of eternal questions such as the one and the many, chaos and order, and mind and body. All of these are classical questions now, in our day centrally preoccupying psychology, philosophy, theology, and the physical and biological sciences through terms such as chaos theory and holistic or alternative medicine.

**J. P. Guilford**

Guilford’s (1950) midcentury presidential address to the APA, bemoaning the paucity of research on creativity, proposed a three-dimensional, 120-ability, structure-of-intellect model, a true tribute to the diversity of human potential. Included among five options within his “operations” dimension was “divergent production.” Unlike “convergent production,” Guilford’s divergent production implied that a question need not have only one answer. Indeed, the most divergent and unanticipated answer (or even a different question) can turn out to have the greatest value. Such originality is the hallmark of creativity. By contrast, the IQ tests of Guilford’s day—indeed, the whole standardized testing format with its one correct answer structure—gave the greatest credence to convergent thinking. High scores on such IQ tests had come to be judged as the mark of genius. Against this limited and discriminatory view, in academia and elsewhere, Guilford’s contribution opened consideration of the human capacity for everything and anything—whatever is creatively possible. Reciprocally, he also opened the notion of intelligence to include non- and supra-intellectual capacities (Gardner, 1995)—heralding what would come to be called
emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). All of this drew closer the link between creative output and a fuller and more ongoing view of human development.

Gulford’s opening of the creativity–human potential link roughly corresponds to the early writings of Maslow, Rogers, May, and Moustakas, among those credited with founding humanistic psychology, who, starting from the human potentials end, came in time to appreciate the essential role of creativity. For Maslow (1968, 1971), creativity was important for all persons as an enabling process for growth. As further interpreted by Rhodes (1990), creativity became integrally involved in Maslow’s needs hierarchy, especially for self-actualization and beyond (Maslow, 1968, 1971).

Creativity research, overlapping and merging with humanistic psychology insights, entered into the bloodstream of the 1960s cultural revolution, with its stress on creative empowerment. It helped inspire the civil rights movements while challenging, at their core, institutions such as education (Getzels & Jackson, 1962; Torrance, 1995) and the industrial-organizational infrastructure (Maslow, 1965; McGregor, 1960). This creativity–humanistic psychology conjunction, in its radical questioning of the models and methods used in understanding humans, also helped support a poststructuralist cultural critique. This has transformed the humanities and, even more radically, has questioned the underpinning of the modern epoch in toto, including the modernistic scientific metaphysics. It also has been critical of the autonomous self that, interestingly, some (e.g., Gergen, 1985) associate with humanistic psychology. Yet one can appreciate the depth of human experience while also attending well to the contextual forces and constructions that help shape it. Similar to the insights of the dual insurrections, those of this postmodern inquiry owe much to a range of human science research methods such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and narrative research approaches—little wonder given the indigenous familiarity with the creative and self-actualizing process of the divergent-convergent, deconstructive-reconstructive, and intellective-nonintellective interplay (Anderson, 1998; Kelly, 1955).

A. H. Maslow

In formulating his psychology of self-actualization, Maslow covered a broad range, joining empirical observation to literature, animal studies to human studies, and the personal to the transpersonal. He synthesized these observations with writings that traversed the humanities, the social and biological sciences, the esoteric wisdom literature, and a potpourri of trends from psychology itself. He drew from ancient philosophy, 19th- and 20th-century European existentialism and phenomenology, and other philosophical sources such as Bergson, Buber, and Hartman. He also drew from anthropology (Benedict, 1970; Lee, 1959) and general semantics (Hayakawa, 1942), as well as from the Jungians and neo-and post-Freudians such as Rank, Adler, and Horney. He discerned unifying themes from apparently disparate sources such as Goldstein’s (1939) organismic physiology, which helped inspire his notion of holistic psychology, and he gleaned key insights from the esoteric wisdom literature of both the East and the West (Laski, 1961) that led him to the threshold of a transpersonal psychology.

Maslow found intellectual kinship with contemporaries such as Allport, Rogers, May, Moustakas, Kelly, and Klee. Their emerging-converging vision(s) formed the third force in psychology, an orientation radically distinguishing itself from behaviorism and psychoanalysis while subsuming their limited premises (Wertz, 1994). Like others at the time, Maslow started with animal subjects, but these for him ironically
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not as superhuman but rather as more fully human, being on a path toward realizing their own talents and unique and species-best potentials. If these were “elite” persons, then their self-actualizing destiny was possible for any human.

In his needs hierarchy, Maslow (1968, 1971) noted that humans are drawn by this “wise” instinctoid calling to care for their needs in hierarchical order, from the most “basic” or deficiency needs (e.g., thirst, hunger, and safety needs) to the “being” needs (e.g., self-actualization and self-transcendence). Much of the psychology of his day had presumed the basic needs as the prime, if not the only, motivator. Each need level satisfied, then, opened a different set of insights, possibilities, and interests and led to a different value outlook. Maslow (1968) would describe his self-actualizers as open to experience, transcending polarities, being centered on ends (what is valued) rather than on means (what is instrumental to that valued end), and being problem centered rather than self-centered. They identified with species interests and beyond. Yet even here was a paradox, for both ends of each of these polarities were necessarily implicated, albeit in new ways, at the next step. For example, in species interests, we ultimately also find self-interests (Maslow, 1968).

Unlike other species, whose behavior is largely determined by instinct and conditioning, the humanly instinctoid could be easily intimidated and overridden, socially or otherwise, or could be repressed or denied. This made self-actualization an existential choice requiring the courage to be—the courage to authentically realize one’s creative nature (May, 1975) and one’s unique and species being. This stress on authenticity and the courage to be, among other points of convergence, brought Maslow’s biologically based theory into partial alignment with the writings of European existentialists, such as Sartre, who saw the biological and social (and even one’s inevitable death) not as prime determinants suggested, by both their limits and their implications, further inquiry into the healthy human personality. This inquiry, in turn, led him to a “fourth force,” transpersonal psychology, that engendered its own multiple paths of exploration, subsequently trekked by a growing number of thinkers, including Wilber, Grof, Tart, Huston Smith, Capra, and Bohm (Walsh & Vaughan, 1998); Metzner (1994); and Deikman (1982). These paths have wended their way through the thickets and clearings of consciousness, to the singular origin of all, elucidated by art, science, and everyday creativity.

WISDOM OF THE BODY: THE INSTINCTOID

One example of Maslow’s (1933) early animal research involved a “cafeteria-feeding” experiment. Maslow noted that a minority of his animal subjects had given priority to nutrition over the taste of food, and he called these animals “good choosers.” Based on such studies, he formed the notion of the “wisdom of the body,” an instinctual wisdom he also identified in humans. However, human wisdom was far from reducible to this. For humans, he evolved the word instinctoid (Maslow, 1970). Instincts were an inner “calling” both to survival and to the fullest species identity. Unlike animal instincts, those of humans were fragile and easily overcome by counterpulls.

Reversing the dominant trend in psychology to concentrate on the methodologically quantifiable, or on pathology, Maslow began to study the complexity of human participants by focusing on the best of humanity, selecting individuals who shared qualities, capacities, and virtues that had been classically recognized as noble and even saintlike. He called these persons self-actualizers (e.g., Albert Schweitzer, Eleanor Roosevelt). He came to see these individuals...
but rather as coexistent “givens”—marks and resources of the existential condition—with, by, and through which one’s authentic engagement could be realized. Consequently, human meanings, problems, pathologies, and possibilities were not adequately understandable without systematic descriptions of experiences of the lived world. Description of the lived world is the central focus of phenomenology (Giorgi, 1970) and most other human sciences that have evolved together with existential, humanistic, and poststructuralist inquiries (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Such descriptions have more access to the fuller range of experience that scientific psychology had abandoned.

Maslow also found that his self-actualizing individuals manifested in their ongoing lives an everyday creativeness. This was not necessarily associated with talent or an acclaimed product but rather involved a way of being. These individuals also reported peak or unitary and transcendent experiences more frequently than did the average person. As a consequence, they lived their everyday lives more creatively and more frequently at a higher plateau than did the average person (Maslow, 1968).

**SELF-ACTUALIZING, EMINENT, AND EVERYDAY CREATIVITY**

Maslow (1962, 1971) saw similarities between the reported experiences of eminent creative geniuses across time and culture—at the heart and in the heat of their creative process—and those of his self-actualizing individuals. His self-actualizers were creatively engaged in the tasks of daily life rather than in monumental works in the arts, sciences, or technology, but with passionate involvement, full use of their capacities, and aliveness in the moment. Maslow’s descriptions also were strikingly familiar to the experiences reported across the literature intimating “flow” or optimal functioning. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and others would expand on this theme in the context of the creativity literature. Of this genre of experience, Maslow (1971) wrote,

One is in the moment, fully in the present, in the NOW. There is a loss of self, or ego, or sometimes a transcendence of self. . . . Actually the two, self and selfless, become a single unity. . . . A formerly hidden truth, a revelation, is stripped of its veils and finally, almost always, there is the experience of bliss, ecstasy, rapture, [and] exhilaration. (p. 62)

Such experiences were often for Maslow gateways to what he called “being cognition” (later developed by Rhodes, 1990, as “being creativity”).

The creative experiences of self-actualizers and the plateaus at which they lived had a striking resemblance to the reported creative moments of genius. But these experiences also were familiar to nearly everybody at certain peak moments, such as those involved in love, in witnessing sunsets, or in undergoing religious and spiritual transformations. The sense of absorption in the now, spontaneity, playfulness, and exhilaration also were marks of the child’s experience. However, these self-actualizers were not children or childish; rather, they were “childlike.” They had very strong egos, but having taken care of their ego needs, they were capable of experiencing a deuxième naïveté (a newly innocent look), a concept also central to phenomenology and other human sciences. They could operate intrinsically rather than defensively, manipulatively, or stereotypically (Maslow, 1971).

Little wonder that Maslow would find his own insights comingling with a range of others. One comparable notion would appear in the creativity literature as “regression in the service of ego” (Kris, 1952), where ego strength, as with a martial arts master, in which all situations are manageable, allows for a suspension of everyday reality in the interest of a glimpse of a fuller possibility.
That fuller possibility now experienced intrinsically, for its own sake, with childlike wonder, shows the unity—even a variety of possible unities—of what the instrumental, defensive, or overrational mind had compartmentalized.

Moreover, such ego-transcending and naive openness to the object—being with “it” spontaneously, experiencing it freshly, and being absorbed with it fully and on its own terms—also is an experience inherent to Buber’s (1958) “I-thou,” as it is to the client-centered therapy of Rogers (1961) under his term unconditional positive regard. And again, this experience of openness to the object is foundational to Husserl’s (1962) phenomenology, the prime dictum of which is “Let the object speak,” in all its inherent richness and complexity, holistically, on its own terms and in its own way—a quite different understanding of objectivity. Nor is this experience completely alien to the philosophical axioms underpinning empirical science. After all, we are speaking, in James’s terms, of a radical empiricism. Or, on another plane, as the existentialists put it, “Existence precedes essence,” or more radically, as Heidegger meant it, “Being precedes the world of beings.” Such ego “surrender” and childlike experiences also are mindful of the most profound insights gleaned from the heart of religious traditions worldwide (e.g., “be as a child,” the “beginner’s mind”) and at the beginnings of paradigm shifts (e.g., the big picture seen freshly).

Of the premier (or child’s) naïveté, the phenomenologist-existentialist Merleau-Ponty coined the notion le monde d’ultra-choses (i.e., the world of ultra things) in taking issue with the rationalist Piaget, who conceived of the child’s experience as a blooming state of chaos and disorder. The child’s world, Merleau-Ponty insisted, is open-ended. It is a lived world in which things are not boxed in by a given definition or function but rather have horizons, with each horizon open to others and all open to intriguing, exhilarating, and endless possibilities.

Should we be surprised, then, that the adult who is just that, in the fullest sense of having a strong ego (having mastered the basic needs) and confident in handling instrumental and definable reality, should naturally (instinctoidly) suspend or “bracket” that premapped conventional reality? And seeing it freshly as a child, be able then to draw new insights from the experience? And from that second naïveté, with the skills, talents, or disposition of the adult, be able to creatively incarnate the insights drawn from the childlike experience into the flesh of that adult consensual reality—this in the form of, say, a novel product, a personal or social achievement, a lifestyle, or even a personal transformation? Given such “excursions” into the fresh and undefined—their blending of child and adult—should we be surprised that creative individuals, like Maslow’s self-actualizers, are in person and in process characterized by their “tolerance for ambiguity” and “chaos,” their “trust of intuition,” and their “fascination with apparent opposites, anomalies, paradoxes, and contradictions” (Barron, 1968, p. 224)? Should we be surprised at Barron’s (1968) following description?

Thus, the creative genius is at once naive and knowledgeable, being at home equally to primitive symbolism and to rigorous logic. He is both more primitive and more cultured, more destructive and more constructive, occasionally crazier and, yet, adamantly saner than the average person. (p. 224)

In describing genius, Barron (1968) carefully used the phrasing more than, as opposed to distinct from, the average person. He knew that there are creative child’s doodles as there is playful scientific research. Maslow would more fully reopen the path followed by Dewey from eminent creativity to the everyday. In the next section, let us move to today and consider how the tandem creativity–humanistic psychology insurgencies of
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the midcentury might be leading us closer to a unity of some apparent opposites that have particularly compartmentalized our Western consciousness. These apparent opposites include the everyday, the creative, the spiritual, health, and the cutting edges of science.

CHAOS, COCREATION, AND EVERYDAY CREATIVITY: A CONTEMPORARY LOOK

What are some modern outcomes of the humanistic psychology–creativity insurgency? In what follows, we discuss three areas that carry the legacy of humanistic psychology and the earliest studies of creativity: (1) modern science (and chaos theory), (2) new visions of health and healing, and (3) issues of spirituality in a troubled world.

Modern Science

For years, the creativity of everyday life has been formally studied by theorists as diverse as Dewey (see Richards, 1999), Guilford (1950), and Maslow (1968). Creative accomplishment can be formally assessed within virtually any activity of daily life, at work or at leisure (Kinney, Richards, & Southam, 2012; Richards, 1998). For example, the dual criteria of originality and meaningfulness (Barron, 1969) can be perceived in one's teaching or counseling activities, in doing landscaping, in singing in a church choir, in making home repairs, or in planning an organizational campaign (Kinney et al., in press; Richards, 1998). Our everyday creativity is anything but a frill or an extra. It helps us adapt to changing conditions, may keep us alive, and shows us just what we are living for (Maslow, 1971; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000; Richards, 1999).

Now enter modern mathematics and hard science, which often appear much closer to humanistic psychology than to mainstream psychological science. Krippner (1994) noted that nonlinear dynamical systems (chaos) theory (Briggs & Peat, 1989) has a rather natural affinity with humanistic psychology. This affinity includes its holistic, complex, evolving, and often unpredictable nature. Chaos theory helps us see the world, and ourselves in it (metaphorically at the very least), in terms of an ongoing flux and “far from equilibrium” conditions that, at key moments, can change in a heartbeat (and dramatically). In the fabled “butterfly effect” (Briggs & Peat, 1989), a butterfly flapping its wings in Moscow could, under the right conditions, cause a storm system to erupt over New York City. Here, the weather (a complex, evolving whole) has reached a critical juncture, and the butterfly (or its puff of air) merely pushes things over the edge. The nonlinear response exceeds all expectations.

Little wonder that the weather can be so hard to predict. Yet this is not just about the weather. Such sudden reconfigurations have been linked to human phenomena, notably those including creative insight (Abraham, 1996; Richards, 1996). A potential role arises for quantum mechanics as well in collapsing the uncertainty of multiple possibilities prior to a creative breakthrough and in opening the creator to transpersonal sources of inspiration (Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000). Such events may be linked to findings in physics consistent with non-locality (Goswami, 1999; see also Bohm & Peat, 1987), which might help explain other, more anomalous phenomena as well (Laszlo, 2000). Over longer periods, even months or years, chaos theory also has helped us understand individuals’ artistic career patterns, including changes during times of illness or strife, and has illuminated certain group processes (Schulderg, 1999; Tarlow-Marks, 1995).

There also is the holistic issue of self in culture. Using a chaos theory model, we
can appreciate our “selves” as open evolving systems in ongoing interchange with a profoundly interconnected environment. We are not the same in this setting as we would be in that one, and in either place, we are constantly changing. This “metabolism of the new” (Richards, 1996) constantly calls on the everyday creativity of each one of us. We all continue to improvise in our ongoing re-creation. We change the instant we see others smile or hear others speak; our brains and our totality as humans never will be the same again (Richards, 1996).

Gone is the myth of the “lone genius,” the autonomous self, or indeed the fixed identity (Arons, 1999; Richards, 1996). We live in the ever-evolving realm of interbeing (Nhat Hanh, 1998) and the ongoing flux of cocreation (Bohm & Peat, 1987). None of us is a static thing, a picture, or even a noun. Each of us is a process in motion, with his or her own characteristic signature to be sure yet always in a flurry of change. One surely cannot step into this river twice.

New awareness of our dynamic and coevolving creativity is reaching the mainstream, along with a celebration of our roles. For example, a 1999 art show called “What Is Art For? William T. Wiley and Mary Hull Webster and 100 Artists,” at the Oakland Museum of California, brought together artists, community-based groups, and collaborative teams presenting a series of artworks and installations, live performances, and special events celebrating the art we all make and share. The second author of this chapter, Ruth Richards, along with a talented multidisciplinary team, presented “Creating in Spite of Ourselves: Evolving at the Edge of Chaos”—a talk, continuous slides, an ongoing dance improvisation, and periodic demonstrations of everyday creation from humorists, persons who had coped with adversity through the arts, experts in child creativity, and others, including the remarkable artists of the National Institute of Art and Disabilities in Richmond, California. These developmentally disabled artists show us that we might be the ones who are disabled—who have lost the freshness of wonder and forgotten how to see.

Reproduced in Figure 12.1 is a 140-word “answer” by Richards to What Good Is Art?—a book edited by Nissen (1999)—which accompanied the show. This statement never would have taken its present form, however, without the collaboration of Richards’s then 8-year-old daughter, Lauren Richards-Ruby, who inspired the bold-lettered supertext and parts of the fractal drawing and whose picture adorns the lower right corner (clearly in touch with all of infinity). How continually we draw from those around us, in our ongoing webwork of innovation. Let us not lock away our human birthright of creativity, assigning its exercise to elite professionals and its products to special viewing rooms. Let us see its wonders everywhere. Does this sound like the humanistic psychology of the 1950s and 1960s? Of course, it does.

New Visions of Health and Healing

Some persons still doubt the unity of mind and body but are brought up short by results such as those of Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, and Glaser (1988). Imagine writing privately and creatively about a traumatic incident that you had kept secret, writing for 20 minutes a day for only 4 consecutive days. Meanwhile, a control group writes about something bland. Can such cathartic creative writing be good for you? The answer is a resounding yes. Cathartic writers not only showed greater well-being (at 6 weeks’ follow-up, if not immediately) but also had fewer health center visits and stronger quantitative indexes on two types of T-cell function. These are indeed hard data; even their white blood cells—their immune systems—knew the difference.
At the other extreme, if we keep psychological conflict from our conscious minds (as Wickramasekera, 1995, and others have shown), then we can put our physical and psychological health at risk. Barron (1969), Richards (1998), and others (see Runco & Richards, 1997) have indicated the healing qualities of creative openness. Achterberg,
discovering that what is abnormal is not necessarily pathological. Conformists beware. Converging evidence indicates that creativity is enhanced in individuals carrying both familial and individual risk for bipolar mood disorders. This even affects certain normal relatives and many more individuals with “spectrum” disorders involving pure unipolar depressions or dysthymias as well as bipolar patterns (Richards, 1997, 1998; see also others in Runco & Richards, 1997). This finding does not concern only the occasional person. As much as 4% to 5% of the population may have bipolar spectrum disorders, and if each has one normal relative, then we might be talking as much as 10% of the population. Why, one might ask, are the rates so high, and have these disorders not been selected against down through evolution? Some have proposed evolutionary effects consistent with a model of “compensatory advantage” (Richards, 1997). Beyond this, we all can learn from such findings. Similar but more muted patterns of mood swings are found in all of us (Richards, 1997). Among the many lessons here is to avoid pathologizing something just because it is different and to broaden our acceptable limits of normality to encompass all the healthy diversity that we, as unique individuals, are able to bring (Richards, 1996, 1998).

**What the World Needs Now**

Many agree that we live in a period of environmental degradation, overpopulation, and escalating conflict, with little time remaining to turn the tide (Laszlo, 2000; Richards, 1997). According to the philosopher and futurist Peter Russell,

> The root of the problem lies in our thinking, our attitudes, and our values... We continue to consume and despoil the planet in the vain hope that if only we had
enough of the right things, we would find fulfillment. Today it is our collective survival that is at stake. And it is our inner, spiritual well-being that most urgently needs our care and attention. This is the challenge of the early 21st century. It is the exploration of inner space—the development of human consciousness. (as cited in Laszlo, 2000, p. 115)

In fact, humanistic psychologists have fearlessly been forging this path for several decades through the so-called third and fourth forces of psychology. Consider, for example, Maslow’s (1971) Theory Z people, those self-actualizers with transcendent and mystical understandings who move beyond basic and deficiency needs to the generation of being values. They bring their creativity along on the self-same voyage, where it blossoms into being creativity (Gruber, 1997; Rhodes, 1990; Richards, 1997) and “creative altruism,” with an expanding wish to help others as the modern Bodhisattvas they are becoming (Kotler, 1996). These individuals show us a different set of priorities focused on the sacred, on beauty, on the fullness of the moment, and on a helping and holistic synergic involvement with a greater whole and with a greater transcendence of ego (Maslow, 1971).

As they continue their development, these people do not deny the unique individual but rather see him or her as a process in motion, in interdependent and dynamically evolving connection with a whole that needs reverence and care (Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000; Nhat Hanh, 1998; Richards, 1996). Their concerns are spiritual rather than materialistic, and they resonate with a Taoist flow and a dynamic participation in life that, in turn, furthers their fullest creativity (Maslow, 1971; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000; Richards, 1999). They tread a path toward transforming “end experiences (of suchness)” (Maslow, 1971, p. 282) and see the needed voyage within (Goswami, 1999). Yet, at the same time, they bring skillful means and socially engaged spirituality to the pain of the world (Kotler, 1996). In their greater purpose, they readily “go beyond self-actualization” and, at the same time, very much “know who they are” (Maslow, 1971, p. 282).

A NEWLY GLIMPSED HUMAN SUBJECT WAITING FOR ITS PSYCHOLOGY TO CATCH UP

For more than 50 years, humanistic psychology, as the third or fourth force in psychology, has led boldly to the fullest realization of our human potential, and our healthiest development, hand in hand with the psychological study of creativity. As per Taylor (1994), the field of humanistic psychology—and also, we would say, the psychology of creativity—has introduced to psychology and the mainstream multiple qualitative methods, a revised value base for science, and a need to stress interdisciplinary inquiry. These two insurgencies have further united or reunited psychology with modern physical and biological science and with both ancient Eastern wisdom traditions and modern socially engaged spirituality. They have produced new models of health, of human development, and of spiritual transformation and participation. These insurgencies have helped spark mainstream movements (e.g., positive psychology) while rejoining the interests of psychology and the humanities. Indeed, one may think of creativity as the dominant life force in the universe and the source of all being, growth, and transformation (Barron, 1969; Wilber, 1995). Creativity joins humanistic psychology in its greater mission, and in its expansive methods (Arons, 1994, 1999), at a time in human history when the challenges have never been greater.
REFERENCES


Becoming Authentic

An Existential-Humanistic Approach to Reading Literature

THOMAS GREENING

This chapter offers an existential-humanistic view of the writing and reading of fiction and illustrates this view with a discussion of three novels by Albert Camus, especially *The Fall* (Camus, 1956).

Freudian analyses of literature typically focus on writers’ unresolved unconscious needs, conflicts, and defenses, which manifest themselves in disguised forms containing symbols and the return of the repressed. Writing from such motivation (and reading the resulting writing) may benefit the writer (and the reader) by sublimating drives and conflicts and by vicariously reducing defenses, resulting in greater awareness (Lesser, 1957). But Freudian analyses have become notorious for their reductionism. Freud repeatedly focused on psychopathology as manifested in creative expressions and insisted that literature (as well as art) is the product of blocked libido being sublimated. Note the absence of an affirmative view of the artist’s journey in the following quotations:

An artist is . . . an introvert, not far removed from neurosis. He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honor, power, wealth, fame, and the love of women, but he lacks the means for achieving these satisfactions. Consequently, like any other unsatisfied man, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy, whence the path might lead to neurosis. (Freud, 1917/1958b, p. 376)

An artist is originally a man who turns away from reality because he cannot come to terms with the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction which it at first demands, and who allows his erotic and ambitious wishes full play in the life of phantasy. (Freud, 1911/1958a, p. 224)

In response to such pathologizing, Jung (1966) wrote, “The reductive method of Freud is a purely medical one. . . . The golden gleam of artistic creation is extinguished” (pp. 68–69). In addition, Hillman (1994) introduced the contrasting concept of “psychopoiesis,” or soul making.
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Sackett (1995) also offered an alternative humanistic approach focused on authenticity and growth in an article titled “The Application of Rogerian Theory to Literary Study.” His study of literary characters proceeded “by recognizing incongruence between the character’s internally experienced reactions and those the character feels obligated to have because of pressures from the environment” (p. 141). He also argued that, in addition to unconscious conflicts, “a literary work contains a system of values that can be apprehended by the reader through his or her emotional responses to the work” (p. 140). This focus on values and growth is more in line with humanistic psychology; struggle and redemption in the face of the absurd and tragic add an existential theme.

Sackett (1995) stressed that reading benefits the reader because it “increases awareness of the reader’s own organismic experience” (p. 141). Thus, to values he has added the reward of heightened awareness, not just a cognitive or verbal awareness but rather an “organismic experience,” and awareness not just of negative psychological forces but rather of positive, life-affirming, growth-seeking ones.

Rogers (1961) described the creative process as “the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual, on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life, on the other” (p. 350). Note the reference to context and the “relational.” Although some writers work in isolation from deep personal suffering, the act of writing, and certainly of publishing, is a relational outreach. And although the sources may grow “out of the uniqueness of the individual,” Rogers insisted that the most personal also is the most universal.

Rogers (1961) emphasized “man’s tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities” (p. 351). From this vantage point, we can ask not only what are a literary character’s conflicts and defenses but also what are his or her growth strivings, visions of the good life, courageous ventures, and explorations into self-actualization. Rogers wrote about a person who is open to experience. “Instead of perceiving in predetermined categories . . . , the individual is aware of this existential moment as it is, thus being alive to many experiences which fall outside the usual categories” (p. 353). In this view, writing, and potentially the reader’s response, expresses health and openness rather than pathology, sublimation, and defense. “In the depths of winter,” Camus once stated, “I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”

Rogers, as well as Sackett in his article, discusses artistic creation as playing, toying, exploring, juggling, and experimenting with ingredients, some of them “explosive” or “tainted,” with the eventual goal of producing a product with communal value. One thinks of how the street entertainer juggling chain saws proceeds from what a psychoanalyst might interpret reductionistically as a defensive managing of castration anxiety through repetition compulsion to entertainment of others, a source of income, and even a sort of balletic art.

In a humanistic approach to literature, therefore, the focus is on intentionality, a process not only leading to present results but also evolving into the future, in contrast to a static retrospective analysis of past problems leading up to present character and drama. We ask not only “Where have this character and his or her actions come from, and what pathology do they manifest?” but also “What strengths and self-actualizing vision and drive do this character and his or her actions reveal in spite of all the internal and external obstacles?” What grounds for hope and guidance may we find in this story, even if it contains flawed characters and tragic events? King Lear is broken and humbled,
but he emerges from illusions and nightmares that were not livable.

As Rogers has emphasized repeatedly, full, honest experiencing often is costly and painful, but the alternative is a life of accumulating inauthenticity, leading to partial, and in some cases total, deadness. Rogers’s (1980) analysis of the case of Ellen West and her suicide is one of his most existential pieces of writing and can be interpreted as warning us to “grow or die.”

Fiction, then, can serve as a goading and facilitating therapist, stirring up feelings, confronting us with our blind spots, warning us of consequences, showing us paths, offering us values and identification models, highlighting choices, and (above all) reminding us that we are in the midst of the most powerful drama we will ever know personally and for which we have responsibility—our own lives.

The life of Camus and the lives of the fictional characters he created in The Stranger (Camus, 1954), The Plague (Camus, 1948), and The Fall (Camus, 1956) vividly portray deep inner conflicts between emotional relatedness and despairing isolation at the interpersonal level and between personal authenticity and deluded self-alienation at the intrapsychic level. These same conflicts have been addressed in the writings of existential-humanistic psychologists. For example, Bugental (1965) has written eloquently about our inner authenticity and outward relatedness from an existential-analytic viewpoint. The fourth ontological fact, according to Bugental, is that we are separate from and yet related to others. He spoke of “the deep satisfactions of intimacy with another and the continuing frustration of being always caught within the envelope of our own individuality” (p. 39). Buber (1937) and Jourard (1964) are other examples of theorists who have been especially concerned with our efforts to know ourselves and to build relationships on authentic sharing of those selves in spite of the barriers within and around us.

Nonfiction studies can do part of the job of helping us confront our human condition. However, fiction such as that of Camus reaches us at another level (Lesser, 1957) and, therefore, is an indispensable partner in this enterprise.

Psychological exploration of literature can catalyze the partnership of psychology and literature into yielding its fullest measure of insight. Humanistic psychology needs studies of great literature and its authors to enrich our perspective on the human experience—on what it really feels like to live a human life in this century—and to try to actualize our positive potentials in the face of much negativity. Our own phenomenological experience can give us an individual vision of the human venture, but it may be limited by our external circumstances and internal repressions. Great writers can distill and express core themes of life in ways that reflect clearer light back on our own dim and provincial musings. In this chapter, I suggest that Camus can teach us much about ourselves if we can see that all of us have walked the streets of Algiers, Oran, and Amsterdam with Meursault, Dr. Rieux, and Clamence (respectively) and that our footsteps have traced a pattern that unites us as humans in our flawed and faltering struggle to live authentically.

Camus as a political man of action, essayist, and fiction writer captured the public imagination and became a hero. Or, if our age is too jaded for heroes, at least he has become a central figure in our modern drama, symbolizing through his life and writings basic themes in the lives of us, who now survive him. Camus confronted physical illness, fascism, helplessness, contingency, absurdity, chaos, anomie, and estrangement. In spite of these forces, he struggled to live a life of action, creation, commitment, involvement, and relatedness.
During his youth, he was an athlete. At 17 years of age, he began a lifelong battle with tuberculosis (a disease that also had a formative impact on Rollo May). He opposed the Germans as editor of the underground newspaper *Combat*, and he worked to rebuild his country during the chaos, rancor, and frustration of postwar French politics. He was noted for his personal charm. In addition to his career as a novelist, he was active as a journalist, political spokesman, playwright, producer, and theater director. Nevertheless, Camus was tormented by a sense of passivity, estrangement, and “unbearable solitude.” “Only by a continual effort can I create. My tendency is to drift toward immobility. My deepest, surest inclination lies in silence and the daily routine” (Camus, 1965b, p. 120).

The same duality predominates in his fictional characters. Meursault, in *The Stranger* (Camus, 1954), is the ultimate of passivity, boredom, detachment, and emotional flatness. He is overtly unmoved by his mother’s death, his boss’s offer of a promotion to a job in Paris, his mistress Marie’s love, and his own violent murder of an Arab. Meursault, his mother, Marie, Raymond (a friend), Salamano (a neighbor), and Salamano’s dog all drift about seeking and, at the same time, repelling intimacy. As discussed later in this chapter, similar ambivalent approach–avoidance feelings about closeness pervade *The Plague* (Camus, 1948), *The Fall* (Camus, 1956), and his personal notebooks (Camus, 1965a, 1965b). But given that Meursault could be considered an anti-hero, why focus on him?

The anti-hero of modern times seems to relate very directly to the negative and reductionist Freudian and behaviorist images of man… The anti-hero of the intensely ironic, absurd, modern tragic vision is a victim in a meaningless reality in which no catharsis is possible to relieve the polarized tensions. (Heitner, 1978, pp. 7–8)

As we will see, however, there is more to Meursault and Camus than the antihero. Meursault’s slow awakening begins, ironically, in response to a dog. Salamano’s dog in *The Stranger* (Camus, 1954) is perhaps one of the most pathetically expressive symbols in Camus’s work. The intensely ambivalent attachment of Salamano to his “wretched spaniel” is one of the few examples in this novel of any lasting, deep relationship between two creatures. Salamano got the dog soon after his wife’s death to help fill the gap in his life. “For eight years the two had been inseparable” in spite of constant battling. Meursault’s mother had been fond of the dog, and the implication seems to be that the dog, Salamano, the mother, and Meursault are variations on the same theme of ambivalent relatedness and bedraggled loneliness, with the dog having a slight edge in its capacity to provide emotional involvement and win loyalty. In Camus’s world, all closeness ends in loss, so Salamano loses his dog, too, and weeps. Meursault, who was unable to experience grief at the death of his mother, makes the following comment after hearing Salamano weep for his lost dog: “For some reason, I don’t know what, I began thinking of mother” (Camus, 1954, p. 50). He does not pursue this thought and quickly goes to sleep. He cannot consciously acknowledge that he needs Salamano to do his weeping for him or that he is losing his hold on life just as Salamano has lost his dog. Authenticity still eludes him until further events unfold.

In *The Plague* (Camus, 1948) and *The Fall* (Camus, 1956), Camus also introduces dogs at critical points to dramatize loss and alienation and to provide poignant reminders of our flawed and often disguised, displaced, or even betrayed search for authentic relatedness. In *The Fall*, Clamence describes a critical encounter with a dog on a subway platform during the German occupation:
One weekend at the beach, Meursault and Marie become emotionally close, swimming happily together in the sea and embracing. Meursault seriously thinks that he will marry Marie and actually feels “pleasant,” but he withdraws into sleep. Then, he eats and takes a walk with Raymond in the hot sun. “It was just the same sort of heat as at my mother’s funeral, and I had the same disagreeable sensations” (Camus, 1954, p. 75). Moments later, Meursault—confused and tense—impulsively kills an Arab and, thereby, unconsciously ensures his separation from the blessings as well as challenges of intimacy with Marie.

This is a vivid description of inauthenticity. Can Meursault move beyond it? He is by no means a simple and uncomplicated person, free from unconscious motivation and intense affect, even though Camus presents him as such in the beginning of the novel. Instead, Meursault must be regarded as the most dangerous and blind type of inauthentic and unrelated man, the type who claims to know himself and to be content with his relationships. He is, therefore, unaware of the self-alienation and loneliness that really drive him, and when his defenses finally crumble, his pent-up rage and frustration explode with lethal force:

Then everything began to reel before my eyes; a fiery gust came in from the sea, while the sky cracked in two, from end to end, and a great sheet of flame poured down through the rift. Every nerve in my body was a steel spring, and my grip closed on the revolver. The trigger gave. . . . And so, with that crisp, whip crack sound, it all began. . . . I fired four more shots into the inert body. . . . And each successive shot was a loud, fateful rap on the door of my undoing. (Camus, 1954, p. 76)

This concludes the first half of The Stranger (Camus, 1954). The second half of the novel is devoted to Meursault as a prisoner. He
begins to change, but within terribly finite limits. At first, he still does not really face the fact that he is in prison and probably will be condemned to death—until his one and only visit from Marie. “I was hardly conscious of being in prison. I had always a vague hope that something would turn up, some agreeable surprise” (Camus, 1954, p. 89). Marie comes to see him, and the scene is an epitome of blocked communication and frustrated attempts at closeness. Marie and Meursault face each other across a space of 30 feet, separated by iron grills. A dozen other prisoners are in Meursault’s compartment. Meursault and Marie shout to each other, fall silent, shout inanities again, and are drowned out. Finally, the jailer takes Meursault away. Soon after, he receives a letter from Marie saying that she is not allowed to visit him again. “It was from that day that I realized that this cell was my last home, a dead end, so to speak” (Camus, 1954, p. 89). Meursault now begins to experience intense feelings about the very life from which he has cut himself off. He moves from his apathetic detachment toward an open avowal of emotion, an assertive commitment to action, and a direct search for contact with the human race. His transition from passive confusion to active engagement parallels the development of his French ancestor, Candide (Greening, 1965). He hopes that the lawyer will like him, he becomes enraged at a meddlesome priest, he experiences a welling up of nostalgic feelings for Marie, he takes pleasure in the realization that his mother had found some happiness in a love affair just before her death, and he experiences deep happiness on the eve of his execution.

Meursault has lost his mother, his mistress, and his friends. He is alone at last. He sleeps and awakens. In his final hours, he allows himself to experience a wish for the only form of doomsday relatedness he dares trust. The closing lines of the novel are as follows: “All that remained to hope was that on the day of my execution there should be a huge crowd of spectators and that they should greet me with howls of execration” (Camus, 1954, p. 154). For this lonely, confused, and distrustful man, execution holds out the one hope for reunion and contact with the human race. Joseph K, in Kafka’s (1956) The Trial, also finds some ironic solace for his confusion and loneliness in the final scene of execution, where he at last establishes contact with his persecutors and receives a “reassuring pat on the back” (p. 284).

Both the fictional character Meursault and the author Camus exemplify a dangerous inauthenticity and isolation. There is evidence that Camus did not understand the unconscious self-alienation of the character he had created in The Stranger and that only later, in writing The Fall, did he demonstrate insight into the self-deluding capacity of an “honest” man. Camus wrote the following in a preface for a new edition of The Stranger:

We will have a better idea of, or at least one in conformity with, the intentions of the author if we ask ourselves in what way Meursault refuses to play the game. The answer is simple: He refuses to lie. Now, lying is not only saying what is not. It’s also saying more than is and, in matters of the human heart, more than we feel. (Camus, 1957, p. 355)

Camus (1957) describes Meursault as having “a passion for the absolute and the truth . . . the truth of being and feeling” (p. 356). In my perspective, while Meursault may have had a passion for honesty, he has lost contact with his true feelings. Thus, in spite of Meursault’s and Camus’s well-intentioned attempts at authenticity, a psychological analysis of Meursault’s supposed “truth of being and feeling” inevitably leads us to the same conclusion as that voiced by the profound pre-existentialist philosopher W. C. Fields, who warned, “Never trust an honest man.”
Several of the characters in Camus’s (1948) The Plague also act out variations on the themes of separation and reunion, despair and hope, and detachment and involvement. In this novel, as in The Stranger, the source of human distress is seen by the characters as external, not self-imposed. Just as Meursault blinded himself to his own inner disease of emotional isolation by focusing on his mother, the sun, an Arab, and a priest as causes of his aggravation, so do the characters in The Plague experience the plague as causing the frustration of their inner happiness and their isolation from loved ones who are outside the city. Dr. Rieux uses work to avoid confronting his loneliness. He achieves a high degree of existential commitment to involvement and action in the face of estrangement and contingency. He retains his belief in the fundamental importance of personal relationships (Greening, 1963b). At the end, however, his wife and his friend Tarrou are dead, Rambert and his mistress are reunited, and Rieux is alone except for his mother.

In The Fall (Camus, 1956), a haunting novel published at the peak of Camus’s career and 3 years before his death, he finally presents us with a protagonist, Clamence, who openly epitomizes the inauthenticity and loneliness that Meursault denied through repression and that Rieux tried to surmount through hard work. It takes no psychological analysis of Clamence or debunking of a Camus preface for the reader to see the dishonesty and isolation of Clamence’s life because the book is a monologue by Clamence describing his life in just those terms. Camus clearly has gained insight into the darker regions of himself and the rest of us and has undertaken to create a protagonist far more complex than a simple, honest Algerian clerk mistreated by society or a dedicated doctor fighting the plague.

Elsewhere (Greening, 1963a), I presented the theory that, in creating Clamence, Camus’s longstanding pessimism and bitterness were emerging from beneath a lifetime of attempted repression and that, as a result of this emergence, Camus may have committed a “subintentioned suicide” (Shneidman, 1963; Tabachnick & Litman, 1966). Despite our admiration for Camus, we would not enhance his value or the value he placed on honesty if we allowed our admiration of him to blind us to the strong indication that he may have fallen victim to the inauthenticity that he fought against for so long.

In The Fall, his final novel, Camus (1956) reveals an awesome insight into the entanglements of self-deception, false relatedness, and the desperate cry for contact and authenticity. From the first paragraph, the reader is assaulted by Clamence’s gracious, intrusive, wheedling, deferent, insistent attempt to reach out and establish a bond. Clamence, weighted down with his albatross of guilt, has wandered like a modern mariner to a seaman’s bar in the port of Amsterdam and is driven to pour out his tale to a stranger. Why? Clamence is lonely and devious. Only as his tale unfolds does his goal gradually become apparent.

In Clamence, Camus presents a thorough portrayal of a phony humanist. Clamence was all things good—at least in his conscious mind and his public image. He was a successful attorney, the champion of innocent victims, and a gracious and beloved social companion.

I had a specialty: noble cases. Widows and orphans. . . . My heart was on my sleeve. You would really have thought that justice slept with me every night. I am sure you would have admired the rightness of my tone, the appropriateness of my emotions, the persuasion and warmth, the restrained indignation of my speeches before the court. (Camus, 1956, p. 17)

But in contrast to The Stranger, where Camus and his creation, Meursault, both
remain unaware of Meursault’s inner dishonesty and see society as the source of evil and absurdity, and in contrast to The Plague, where Rieux fights against an external enemy (the plague), in The Fall, Camus seems at last to have evolved a protagonist who directly confronts himself as the prime source of the evil in his world (Thody, 1957). At a crucial moment in The Fall, Clamence betrayed himself and all that he thought he stood for. His sin is the same as Meursault’s in The Stranger—indifference and inaction in response to a woman’s death.

Clamence is forced by his sudden unexpected treachery against himself and humanity to admit painfully and inescapably that he is not what he seemed to be. He speaks of how he learned “to see clearly within me and to discover at last that I was not simple” (Camus, 1956, p. 84). He finally confronts the full extent of his inauthenticity and concludes, “After profound research on myself, I brought out the fundamental duplicity of the human being” (Camus, 1956, p. 84). “I was absent at the moment when I took up the most space” (Camus, 1956, p. 87).

Two decades earlier, Camus (1965a) struggled against this pressure toward role-playing and wrote despairingly in his journal, “I waste my time all day long, while other people say that I do a great deal” (p. 9). In the same vein, at the time his first marriage ended, Camus wrote, “One goes back into the game. And, without believing in them, everyone smiles at appearances and pretends to accept them” (p. 17). Through Clamence, Camus pursues this conflict to an attempted resolution. Clamence decides to confess:

A ridiculous fear pursued me, in fact: One could not die without having confessed all one’s lies. Not to God or to one of his representatives; I was above all that, as you well imagine. No, it was a matter of confessing to man, to a friend, to a beloved woman, for example. (Camus, 1956, pp. 89–90) . . .

I wanted to upset the game and above all to destroy that flattering reputation, the thought of which threw me into a rage. (p. 93) . . . In order to reveal to all eyes what I was made of, I wanted to break open the handsome wax figure I presented everywhere. (p. 94)

Clamence was embarked on his “search for authenticity” (Bugental, 1965). But he is not content to admit his guilt to himself, to confess to others, and to seek forgiveness or punishment. His goal is relatedness, not absolution. He prefers fraternity in hell to honor in life or forgiveness in heaven. Clamence wants to rejoin the human race. He is so obsessed with his own inauthenticity and guilt, however, that he believes the only true fraternity is that of the condemned. He points to himself and, in effect, says, “There, without the grace of God, go all men.” Here is a Raskalnikov, an ancient mariner, or a Joseph K, who will not suffer alone and who insists on drawing his accusers and even indifferent spectators into complicity.

When we are all guilty, that will be democracy. . . . Death is solitary, whereas slavery is collective. The others get theirs, too, and at the same time as we—that’s what counts. All together at last, but on our knees and heads bowed. (Camus, 1956, p. 136)

Clamence chooses a bar in Amsterdam as the setting for his confession and his reunion with humanity. The nearby Zuider Zee is “a soggy hell. . . . Space is colorless, and life [is] dead” (Camus, 1956, p. 72). “For we are at the heart of things here. Have you noticed that Amsterdam’s concentric canals resemble the circles of hell?” (Camus, 1956, p. 14). He believes that all of us sometime must pass through this disreputable seaport bar. He strikes up a conversation with us, his readers. As he nears the end of his tale, he tells us,
Covered with ashes, tearing my hair, my face scored by clawing, but with piercing eyes, I stand before all humanity recapitulating my shames without losing sight of the effect I am producing, and saying: “I was the lowest of the low.” Then imperceptibly I pass from the “I” to the “we.”... Ah, mon cher, we are odd, wretched creatures, and if we merely look back over our lives, there’s no lack of occasions to amaze and horrify ourselves. Just try. I shall listen, you may be sure, to your own confession with a great feeling of fraternity. (p. 140)

Now it is our turn, if Camus and Clamence have succeeded. We may put down the book, turn away from this raving barfly, and even wonder whether perhaps Camus had sunk into some private pathology. But the voice of Clamence pursues us: “Admit, however, that today you feel less pleased with yourself than you felt five days ago? Now I shall wait for you to write me or come back. For you will come back, I am sure!” (Camus, 1956, p. 141).

And we do come back to Camus, for, as does the penitent Clamence, he shows us what we fear, deny, and then reluctantly confront in ourselves so as to grow. We must acknowledge our self-alienation and isolation so as to begin our search for authenticity and relatedness. Let us hope that we do not wait, as did Meursault, until the eve of our execution or, as did Rieux, until solitary work amid separations and deaths caused by a plague has worn us down or, as did Clamence, to incur still more existential guilt in an Amsterdam fog. In these three novels, Camus showed us some varieties of alienation in vivid stories and characters. In his own life, he sketched some visions of authenticity, and then he died young in a senseless car accident. It becomes our task to learn from him and his fictional characters and to create our own paths to authenticity.

REFERENCES


Our danger is that, invaded by the external, we may be driven out of ourselves, left with our inner selves empty, and thus become transformed into gateways on the highway through which a throng of objects come and go.

—J. Ortega y Gasset (Meditations on Quixote, 1961)

The British playwright George Bernard Shaw once quipped that all professions were conspiracies against the laity. A bit of hyperbole perhaps, the remark is nonetheless instructive. Our own guild suffers the same commercial pressures and varieties of professional demarcation as do the others, with insiders very often being the last to find out. In this chapter, I offer a corrective and recompense in the consideration of one example of would-be “being-in-the-world” using the filmmaker Federico Fellini’s (1985) astonishing Ginger and Fred as text and gospel. Fellini’s interest in psychology was prodigious, as was his fascination with humanity’s success and failure at finding itself in a disjointed location in time. For him, life inhered in neither ideology nor the empirical but rather in wonder and transience, humor and poignancy, sadness and love. The filmmaker has much to teach us about the world we inhabit and share and the incompleteness we mostly embody and still long to surpass, about the sheer madness and mystery of being in a new millennial landscape and terrain. It is the artist’s peek behind the proscenium arch. In other words, it is psychology.

Amid a proliferation of strategies of psychotherapeutic endeavor and an ever-increasing influx of information bits, the psychologist today stands in Kafkaesque perplexity before a deafening surfeit. It is not so different, really, from the way in which the rest of the world feels—deluged, jaded, confused. Consider the following: The overwrought layperson consults an overwrought psychologist to secure a bit of respite in an overwrought world. What that person finds, inexorably, are leveling reductions, formulaic responses, and specious techniques—all masquerading as truth. Take our professional curricula or, for example, our annual pageants and conventions. Which door to choose, which lecture hall, which rally cry? By all means, we must stay current. Truth is fashion, and fashion is what sells in the marketplace of
commerce and experience. The Czech writer Milan Kundera (1991)—the very same one who has coined our word *imagology* and whose novels are psychologically stunning—has stated the problem with grave precision: In the age of speed and expedience, it is requisite, as Rimbaud had already admonished, that we remain “absolutely modern” (p. 141). But just what does it mean to be absolutely modern, and what, God help us, is the price tag? It is a strange world out there and, I sometimes think, even stranger here within our professional divisions and cliques, with our comforting shibboleths and statutes and theoretical watering holes. It is stranger perhaps for the very lack of correspondence between so much that goes on in our offices and heads and what it means to be alive on a teetering planet in the dawning moments of a postmodern millennium. “To be absolutely modern,” Kundera (1991) laments with all the solemnity of an eulogy, “means to be the ally of one’s gravediggers” (p. 141).

We psychologists are the worse for our overspecializations and frantic routines, accoutrements that too rarely let in the greater light. We have detached ourselves from the source and do not know how it is that we have become so threadbare. Rollo May (1991) said it was because we had lost touch with what it might mean to be fully human, with wonder, and with what Goethe called “the All.” Having cut our cords with the motherland, we no longer are able to hear the music of the spheres (a very different type of chord) or the reverberations of our own heartstrings. We have become purveyors of flatness and representation, system and certainty, rotation and sham. Cords versus chords? This is our question.

Lately, I have been watching the films of Federico Fellini, many viewings apiece, for they are fathomless in their scrutiny and depth. An amazing psychologist and brilliant articulator of the complexities of the self and the vagaries of postmodern existence, the Italian maestro is almost too shrewd for us. The general practitioner is quite baffled by the subtlety and scope of the artistry and insight and so bids a crude and hasty retreat into the safe havens of diagnosis and dismissal. But how to diagnose genius? See how we retreat from the vastness of our subject. One film in particular interests me for its very depiction of a world gone wrong and the near impossibility of finding oneself amid a morass of sound bites, information streams, and video monitors, where all is simulation, packaging, and artifice. *Ginger and Fred* (Fellini, 1985) is an unflinching depiction of an uncanny time, one in which image is everything. Reflected here is a world of superfluity and void, a static drama of boredom and titillation, a fascination with the odd and grotesque so as to conceal perpetual inner emptiness and outer vacuity.

From the opening scenes and thereafter, we are besieged with advertising and stridency and commercials, with the television monitor never far from view. “YOU’LL BE BETTER-LOOKING, STRONGER, AND RICHER WHEN YOU USE . . .” reads the billboard ad at the train station in downtown Rome, where the story begins. We know psychologists and pharmaceutical houses that use more or less the same line. And the crowds! Who are these multitudes, and just where do they think they are going? They scurry back and forth in search of vocation and author, all waiting to play bit parts in a holiday gala to be aired on television. The world has become a tentacular broadcasting station whose insidious reach now ensnares all, an electronic shopping mall of hype and Hollywood, an Internet of the inane. Mediocrity tops the postmodern hegemony; you will not find an individual in sight.

The protagonists are, in fact, not Ginger and Fred but Amelia and Pippo, dancers from a bygone era who once had made a name for themselves (and a living as well)
impersonating the more famous couple. And just whom have they copied but Hollywood stars who themselves were not what they seemed and had, in fact, changed their own names even further back so as to pander to audiences wanting only to be entertained and thereby let off the cross of self-consciousness for a spell? Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, icons of flash selling American dreams with their tiresomely happy endings. And indeed, the United States, with our incessant ebullience and our penchant for packaging, hovers ominously over Fellini’s film like a dark and foreboding postmodern cloud. “It’s important,” observes Amelia, “to have an American name.”

Amelia and Pippo have come out of retirement to dance once more for old time’s sake. They are to be the nostalgia act in the incessantly promoted television extravaganza. Amelia has been coaxed by family and friends. Pippo seems to need the money and will confess, in a moment of weakness, that he has been reduced to selling encyclopedias on the sly. They have not seen each other for 30 years and are by no means the only copyists. There will be a part of the show given to look-alikes, and doubles are seen flitting about everywhere—Clark Gable, Marcel Proust, Sitting Bull, Brigitte Bardot, Ronald Reagan (“Where is your cowboy suit?” we hear somebody shout), and Woody Allen (who has, of course, been copying himself for years). “Kafka has arrived!” says the gum-chewing chauffeur. The situation is Kafkaesque indeed. Clark Gable mistakes Amelia for Bette Davis while introducing her to Proust. “He’s a big French writer,” he points out. “I’m not anyone’s look-alike,” protests the Italian dancer with the American name.

Let us take a closer look at postmodernity’s lineup, for we find, unremittingly, the counterparts filling up the ranks of our own profession as well. There is the transvestite Evelina Pollina, a quintessential exhibitionist who offers herself as a Madonna-like pinup to all of Italy’s prison inmates. It is a ball pitched, according to Kundera (1991), “to the lowest ontological floor” (p. 111). “I’m in such agony over those poor boys,” the transvestite sighs. “Shouldn’t somebody care?” Amelia thinks for a moment that she has met some “over-coifed” acolyte of Mother Teresa who has taken a wrong turn somewhere and wound up in Bloomingdales or the boutiques of Milan. “I felt a calling, a true vocation,” Evelina proclaims. It is more likely that this calling has been preceded by dread and impoverishment, by the harrowing prospect of having to survive in a world now defined by image and chip and by a populace weaned on the commonplace.

We next observe a most touching character, a retired admiral, a military hero said to have once saved a ship and perhaps a city with his valorous exploits, although all details are lacking in an ambiguous age. The admiral is now old and bent, the event for which he will be remembered having occurred half a century ago, whatever it was, a hazy story about a faded snapshot taken long ago. “I love artists,” says the admiral with all graciousness and dignity on meeting Amelia. “They are the benefactors of humanity.” Rilke and Proust, of course, had said it as well, and I suggest that we write it down on our organizational shirtsleeves before it is lost forever beneath a deluge of sophomoric techniques and humorless technicians, who look too much like foot soldiers but lack the admiral’s blossoming quietude and consciousness even as the body declines. With senility comes release from conformity and spectacle, from the oppressive need to keep up and hang on and in. The admiral is less a serviceman than the teeming imagologists who surround him and many psychologists as well.

But wisdom is fleeting in the new-millennial landscape, and we proceed straightaway to an oddball mother-and-son
Italians know how to dress, and the hit man should score high. And now, perhaps, the ultimate in postmodern feminism—a woman who has abandoned her family and home and has married an alien. “He understands me!” she muses in the obligatory television interview, this contrived format having long since eclipsed human encounter in import and valence. This woman is beyond men, beyond women, and yet (in her inability to get beyond staging and self-interest and stratagem) fails like the rest in glimpsing the mystery, is not small enough to embrace the beyond. The camera-ready plastic surgeon, with his entourage of testimonials, is all but predictable, one more instance of postmodern fundamentals: “YOU’LL BE BETTER-LOOKING, STRONGER, AND RICHER.” And we move quickly along (for slowness is postmodern heresy) to a housewife who, driven like the rest by the transfixing spotlight, has agreed to the ultimate in sacrifice in forgoing television for a godforsaken month. She is tearful and shaken after her ordeal, the quintessence of suffering in an age without interiority or substance. Postmodern posttraumatic stress disorder! “Never again! Never again!” cries our postmodern saint. Words once uttered in prayer before the ashes of millions of gypsies and Jews and Proustian inverts and the few individuals they managed to find who went up in flames in the death camps of Europe now express the misery of the unplugged! But God forbid that we who sit back and laugh give up our own currencies and jargons, our degrees and positions and fine opinions of ourselves, and throw ourselves back on ourselves. Try finding yourself in the world where we live. It’s important to have an American name.

Next comes a mafioso, resplendent with Italian tailoring and youthful good looks, one whose style and story will make equally good press. But despite the Mediterranean machismo, the apprehended gangster is, in the end, one more copyist. We can trace his vintage back to Godard’s Breathless (where Belmondo copies Bogart) or Brando’s Don Corleone. Indeed, the gangster is no better or worse than anyone else in a world that exists now in a zone far beyond good and evil. The laws of the marketplace dictate the postmodern ethos and guideposts. Those Italians know how to dress, and the hit man should score high.

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There are two participants in this televisual chaos and bedlam who are real: two bona fide vagrants, although Pippo mistakes them for look-alikes. The vagabonds are real! Lei capisce? This is what we all are when we crack the code and cut to the chase.
The charade lies in mistaking ourselves for the images projected. Beckett (1954) gained fame for his depictions of bums who reminded us uncomfortably of ourselves, wrote an essay on Proust, and spent a lifetime pondering “the suffering of being” and the problem of “accursed time” (p. 57). He could have dissected each act on our list with more skill than a surgeon, exposing the hobo at the existential core. “We’re incapable of [silence],” says Estragon. “We’re inexhaustible,” agrees Vladimir. The punch line is Estragon’s: “It’s so we don’t think.”

It is all, gasps Amelia, a “spectacle” and “circus”—the doubles, the monk, “and, of course, the admiral.” In the background, a line from Dante markets alkaline batteries. Backstage, Pippo laughs it up with a chimpanzee. “Boy, you’re a mess,” he thinks he hears the chimp say. It is one of the more perceptive appraisals that we have, in fact, heard. More copies of copies, such as Belmondo and Bogart, and copyist audiences too. All the world is a stage. We all are understudies awaiting our 15 minutes of fame and perhaps fortune, a Proustian moment in the postmodern sun.

Mimicry and commerce, simulacra and gimmick. Reality manufactured by God knows who and fed back to us in cathode ray tubes and billboard ads, professional lexicons and manuals tested by experts, no tampering—“an obsession, we may say, with flimflam.” “I am Pippo Botticelli, stage name Fred. I imitate anything!” says Marcello Mastroianni, who indeed could and did, although nothing so flawlessly as human-kind’s puzzlement at finding itself here in the first place. “Bravissimo!” is Amelia’s adoring response. But really, it is the (genuinely) inimitable Giulietta Masina who also could and did. Hard to talk of self and encounter and the old “I–thou” and still keep a straight face in this wasteland of assemblage and glitter. There is no figure-ground here, no touchstone for our valuations. Only imitations of imitations, and psychologists would do well to take note. It is a madhouse, no doubt, yet more accurate by far than our organizational platitudes and technical truths, our protocols of “treatment” with their childish mathematics, our templates and theories with their bizarre reductions and symmetrical cures.

Appearances though they may be, Ginger and Fred yearn nonetheless for the real. “We’re professionals, you know,” complains Amelia. “We’re surrounded by dilettantes,” echoes Pippo, who also takes his craft seriously in the end. And it is in this foundering relationship between two worn-out souls that we find a shimmering of postmodern redemption. Pippo is forever the clown but intent and earnest in guiding Amelia on the fine points of nuance and dance: “You always got this part wrong. It should be much more subtle. Here the melody ends, embracing, oblivious, like a dream. Do you understand?” And do you, you psychologists? For we also have got it all wrong. That is what William James had said. I am only the reminder and gadfly, epitaph to genius and history.

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voices of reason and soul call out to man and woman once more. We see for just an instant the motionless broadcasting tower, that postmodern cross of the New. And now quickly follows the epiphany of dancers:

Amelia: What did we come here for? We must be completely out of our minds!

Pippo: A giant with feet of clay. It’s like a dream, far from reality. You have no idea where you are... We’re phantoms, Amelia. We arise from the darkness and vanish into darkness.

Amelia: I was looking forward to seeing you again.

Pippo: Molto romantico! I was looking forward to seeing you too.

Pippo urges Amelia to flee with him into the darkness, escape to something more solid than the ephemera of airwaves and anonymous praise. But power is restored at this very instant, and Ginger and Fred complete their routine—a final waltz for the crowd, a wireless telegraph, a two-step and shadow dance of love and death. “Pippo, we made it!” exclaims Amelia at the end. And who among us could say more? For here the melody ends, embracing, oblivious, a spiritual flash in the postmodern sky.

The parting at the station where it all began is poignant enough, the two old copyists ever at a loss for what to do in real life. Some youths ask for their autographs: They have seen a nostalgia act on television. Amelia loans Pippo some money, and the couple bid farewell through the hackneyed reenactment of a scene from their Astaire–Rogers routine. It is moving—because so empty—in the extreme. As Amelia’s train departs, Pippo disappears into a cafe. He has decided to stay in Rome for a while and try his hand at the television game. Before a monitor on the platform, a solitary figure dances a few desolate, schizophrenic steps with himself, one more shiftless creature mesmerized by the artificial light and chasing after postmodern dreams.

Long before making Ginger and Fred, Fellini (1974/1976) wrote,

Our trouble, as moderns, is loneliness... No public celebration or political symphony can hope to be rid of it. Only... through individual people can a kind of message be passed, making [us] understand—almost discover—the profound link between one person and the next. (p. 61)

There are, no doubt, other voices with something important to say:

We stumble from one false perspective into another, the bewildered victims of false prophets and charlatans whose recipes for happiness only close one’s eyes and ears, so that we fall through the mirrors, like trap doors, from one disaster to another. (Kafka, cited in Janouch, 1985, p. 73)

Our vanity, our passions, our spirit of imitation, our abstract intelligence, our habits have long been at work, and it is the task of art to undo this work of theirs, making us travel back in the direction from which we have come to the depths where what has really existed lies unknown within us. (Proust, cited in de Botton, 1997, p. 103)

You have taken our land and made us outcasts. (Tatanka Iyotake [Sitting Bull], cited in Brown, 1970, p. 426)

And here the melody ends, embracing, oblivious. Fragmentation and chaos, memory and speed. Sheep without a shepherd, pretense and travesty. Dance and embrace. Time lost and never recovered. As for paradise, it is irreparably the same. Dance and embrace. Anxiety. Acceptance. Reality. Awe. A postmodern nightmare and love story, a tap dance of sublimity and prescience has been captured on celluloid and tape.
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For many, the notion of a humanistic neuroscience may seem to be an oxymoron. Neuroscience and physiological psychology emerged during the 18th century within the climate of a staunch materialistic worldview, which aimed to reduce all subjective qualities to objective qualities. Humanistic psychology, on the other hand, has always been grounded within a phenomenological worldview, in which the assumptions of empiricism, including the dichotomy of a subject versus an object, are questioned radically and in which experience is given priority in the investigation of reality (Bugental, 1964; Giorgi, 2005; Rogers, 1964). At first glance, these projects seem opposed. However, alongside reductionistic and mechanistic approaches to neuroscience, there have always existed alternative, nonreductive and holistic approaches to biology, which have sought to preserve the integrity of experience.

Rather than standing in opposition to biology, humanistic psychology, from the beginning, was strongly influenced by thinkers who were attempting to develop holistic approaches to biology and the mind—for example, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, William James, John Dewey, Jakob Von Uexkull, Kurt Goldstein, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, among others. Today, an integration and culmination of these approaches can be identified as neurophenomenology, which we identify as the basis for a genuinely humanistic neuroscience.

In his 1996 paper, “Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem,” Francisco Varela pioneered the link between cognitive neuroscience and phenomenology. The aim of this project was to address what David Chalmers (1995) identified as the “hard problem” of consciousness. Chalmers first identified the “easy problems” of consciousness, such as how the brain can discriminate, categorize, and react to stimuli in the environment; integrate information within a cognitive system; report mental states; access its own internal states; focus attention; control behavior deliberately; and distinguish between wakefulness and sleep. Chalmers thought that it would only be a matter of time before
neuroscience answers these questions. The truly “hard problems” of consciousness, in contrast, have to do with why we experience anything in the first place. Hard-problem questions include the following: Why are some organisms subjects of experience? Why does awareness of sensory information exist at all? Why do qualia (i.e., a general property, such as “redness”) exist? Why is there a subjective component to experience? Note that these hard questions refuse to merely explain away consciousness by reducing it to simple mechanistic problems. The hard problem demands that consciousness be addressed on its own terms.

Consciousness itself is a problem that cannot be solved by explaining it away. Consciousness is in need of a functional explanation for why it exists in the first place. Neurophenomenology, as a science of experience grounded in phenomenological philosophy, is uniquely equipped to handle this very problem that neuroscience alone seems incapable of contending with. To this extent, neurophenomenology represents, today, the most well-developed philosophy for a humanistic neuroscience.

NEUROSCIENCE AND THE EXPERIENTIAL REVOLUTION IN PSYCHOLOGY

At least since Galileo (1623/2008) made the distinction between the primary and secondary characteristics of objects, Western culture has had a tendency to conflate reality (what is ontologically and epistemologically valid) with mind independence (properties of objects believed to exist apart from a perceiver) (Robbins, 2006). Thus, the so-called primary characteristics of objects, such as the presumed qualities of extension and movement, have remained the domain of the sciences, whereas, the secondary characteristics, which are dependent on the observer, such as color and value, have been understood to acquire scientific interest only to the extent that such qualities can be reduced to primary qualities, such as physiological events in the brain. A reduction of the psychological to biology and biology to chemistry and physics is the inevitable consequence of the Galilean worldview, which came to its fruition most explicitly in the philosophy of Locke (Zaw, 1976). This reductionism of psychology to biology and biology to chemistry and physics is, however, untenable.

When it comes to the problem of consciousness, reductionism is an inappropriate, internally incoherent strategy of resolution. The problem is a rather simple one. When we reduce consciousness to biology and then biology to chemistry and then physics, the explanation in terms of the primary qualities of physiological extension and movement in anatomical space still presupposes the existence of consciousness. Biology, chemistry and physics, and even the science of psychology and other social sciences, always already presuppose an individual and a collective consciousness within which knowledge and motivation for the study of physiology have meaning and being (Robbins, 2013; Thompson, 2007). Rather than arriving at given facts that are mind independent, science produces social artifacts that, over time, inspire our confidence because they have intersubjective validity. In other words, we ourselves and other people within the community can report over time that discoveries can be predicted and repeated through systematic methodological approaches to clearly stated and empirical questions. But without conscious individuals living within scientific communities, such discoveries would not be possible. Therefore, consciousness has ontological primacy within philosophy and science as the always already presupposed appearance of a world that matters and for which we have care and concern. A completely indifferent science alien to human
concerns would never get started. Therefore, a science that rejects the ontological primacy of consciousness will consequently undermine its own foundation—its very reason for being. Clearly, this is a major problem for biological reductionism within neuroscience.

Phenomenology within the tradition of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and others provides a potential answer to the problem of consciousness and is a possible antidote to the quagmire of reductionism in the sciences. Phenomenology introduces an approach to philosophy and to human science that is able to articulate, in ways impossible to the conventional empirical sciences, the ontological ground on which science operates. Doing so, phenomenology is able to preserve both consciousness and science. Neurophenomenology is the integration of phenomenology and neuroscience in such a way that the science of the brain can help clarify questions about consciousness and experience without reducing consciousness or experience to the brain or the living organism to mere (cause and effect) mechanical causation. The upshot is a neuroscience, within the context of phenomenology, that attempts to transcend the faulty subject/object, fact/value, and feeling/thinking dichotomies that have plagued philosophy and the sciences for centuries. This is an ambitious project, and so humility is important. These problems have not been solved, but new kinds of questions provide the hope of better answers to them.

Psychology has much to benefit from this conception of neurophenomenology. Psychology has notoriously been subject to criticism for its failure to live up to the rigors of the so-called STEM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines. On the other hand, psychology identifies itself as a science to distinguish itself from philosophy and other humanities, and for this reason, it places a strong emphasis on empirical research as a central and defining activity of the field. Neurophenomenology and phenomenology, more generally, hold a promise of clarifying psychology’s relationship to philosophy and the STEM disciplines. Psychology, within this perspective, would be distinguished from the transcendental phenomenology that is central to phenomenological philosophy, because psychology’s activity in contrast would be empirical. However, neither would psychology be capable of being reduced to biology, because psychology’s domain is human consciousness—experience, thinking, and feeling—which must be described, understood, and explained empirically on its own terms prior to any question of biological correlation to these events of consciousness. Psychology, therefore, would be preserved as the descriptive and empirical examination of human experience and correlated behavior. This articulation of psychology would be the fruition of an experiential revolution in psychology, which does not stop at cognition and emotion as the domain of psychology but understands cognition and emotion to have their ontological basis within human experience (Robbins, 2013). The language of thinking and emotion has its roots in human experience, from which our language has emerged. By returning to the everyday consciousness within which everyday language about thinking, emotion, and experience has meaning, psychology may clarify its identity as a science in its own right, as clearly distinguished from yet integrally related to philosophy and biology.

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF NEUROPHENOMENOLOGY

Goethean Science Versus Newtonian-Galilean Science

While the dawning Galilean-Newtonian “scientistic” worldview painted a picture of a universe devoid of qualities other than
extension and movement, and while, as John Keats lamented, this new science reduced the rainbow and other awe-inspiring spectacles of nature to objects within a “dull catalog” of common things, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was hard at work developing a serious alternative scientific worldview. Goethe, who is now primarily remembered as a poet, dramatist, and novelist, fancied his primary occupation to be that of a scientist; yet as a critic of the cultural hero Newton, he was seen mainly as a failed scientist during his own time. Living in the age of post-Newtonian physics, we can return to Goethe and recognize that he was actually a man ahead of his time, who anticipated the problems of reductionism and had already developed methods for a more holistic alternative (Robbins, 2006).

Goethe’s “delicate empiricism,” as he called it, was a participatory, morally responsive, holistic, and dynamic approach to understanding the natural world (Robbins, 2006), and these are qualities shared with neurophenomenology (Robbins, 2005; Thompson, 2007). Like the phenomenological approach that Goethe would inspire in Husserl (see Simms, 2005), the scientist is meant to absorb himself or herself into a careful, open, and empathic engagement with the phenomenon of interest, whether that be a plant, animal, person, or land formation. For example, Goethe and those scientists inspired by him spent many hours sitting with and drawing a creature by hand, with the intent to become intimately familiar with the form of the organism not only as it appears in one moment but also as it transforms over time. To bask in the “exact sensorial imagination” of the organism in its natural environment, argued Goethe, was a necessary step toward identifying the essential structure of the organism—it’s most primal meaning or “Ur-phenomenon” (Amrine & Zucker, 1987).

Goethe’s participatory science, quite similar to phenomenology, has four phases: (1) exact sense perception, (2) exact sensorial imagination, (3) seeing is beholding, and (4) being one with the object (Brook, 1998). At first, the scientist attempts to bracket out presuppositions that would impose themselves on the phenomenon, and then the imagination is utilized to catch site of the morphology of the organism as it unfolds over time and across profiles or adumbrations. At a certain point, the scientist has a sense of having saturated all the given profiles of the organism, and beholding this holistic vision within the imagination, the scientist arrives at the primal or archetypal form or essence of the organism’s being. This kind of sensitivity to living organisms is morally responsive because it is thinking with the organism rather than merely thinking about the organism (Robbins, 2006; Shotter, 2000). In a sense, it is to witness the organism as an end in itself rather than merely as a means to our own end—and in that Kantian deontological sense, it is an ethical kind of relatedness to creatures and the natural world.

As an ethical stance in relation to the natural world and as a nonreductive approach that retains within its sensorial perception the value of the being that is encountered, Goethean science is holistic. Neither subject and object nor fact and value are seen to be ultimately distinguishable, but rather, they are viewed as being integrally related (Robbins, 2006). Values appear in perception, according to this view, as following a “law of requiredness,” which can be understood as a directionality by which the phenomenon moves in our perception toward a fulfillment of meaning (Fuller, 1990). This movement of the organism was identified by Goethe as the organism’s morphology—a description of the unfolding of the organism developmentally over time and within its context. Humanistic psychologists would later identify this process as “self-actualization,” inspired by Kurt Goldstein’s (1939) appropriation of this Goethean tradition of holistic natural science.
(see below). Neurophenomenology as well as humanistic psychology both share a vision of science that is Goethean in spirit: participatory, morally responsive or ethical, holistic, and dynamic.

**William James, John Dewey, and Functionalism**

The pragmatists, including William James and John Dewey, also anticipated neurophenomenology, each in his own way (Taylor, 2010, 2013). James and Dewey were both critical of the structuralist paradigm of psychology that Titchener and others imported from Wilhelm Wundt’s laboratory in Germany. In contrast to a static view of consciousness and the organism, James’s functionalism saw the organism as integrally related to the environment, such that aspects of the organism were to be understood, in the Darwinian sense, as serving survival-related, adaptive functions. James (1890b) famously described consciousness as having a streamlike quality that was ever changing rather than static, and thereby inherently resistant to reductionist explanations. Yet, as with Goethean science and phenomenology, he also adhered to the view that consciousness is deeply rooted in the body, to the extent that he viewed emotions as felt embodied tendencies toward actions in the world, which are only labeled after the fact as an “emotion” by the intellect (James, 1884). For James, consciousness was clearly embodied, but embodied in a way that is lived from a first-person perspective of a being (Taylor, 1981, 1996).

Dewey, also a functionalist after James, leaned in the direction of a holistic view of the organism. For example, in his now famous article, “The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology,” Dewey (1896) refuted the standard view that the reflex arc was thought to involve stimulus, sensation, and response related to one another in a linear, cause-and-effect chain of events. In contrast, Dewey interpreted the reflex arc as occurring holistically, such that the circuit must be understood as a unit that is responsive to situations rather than merely as a reaction to decontextualized stimuli.

Both neurophenomenology and humanistic psychology share with functionalism a concern for the dynamic unfolding of perception and embodied being-in-the-world understood holistically. Like functionalism, neurophenomenology and humanistic psychology also share an interest in the practical applications of these ideas for real-world problems, such as in education, medicine, and psychotherapy.

**Jakob Von Uexkull**

Jakob Von Uexkull was a German biologist in the early 20th century who, inspired by Goethe’s holistic approach to science, developed a more humane approach to the study of life. Anticipating humanistic psychology’s critique of mechanistic and reductionist approaches to life, Von Uexkull emphasized the place of “meaning” or “significance” in all forms of life. In his book *The Theory of Meaning*, he argued that “life can only be understood when one has acknowledged the importance of meaning” (cited in Buchanan, 2008, p. 12).

In the tradition of Kant, Von Uexkull emphasized methods of inquiry into subjectivity, not only of human beings but of all living organisms. He understood living beings to share qualities of being self-developmental and autonomous (Buchanan, 2008). As described by Goethe as well as Von Uexkull, the plant and the animal are morphological, dynamic organisms that unfold according to an inner logic quite unlike the nonliving machine, which operates according to a linear cause-and-effect chain of events. Each organism, in this sense, has self-governing laws that give it a sense of directionality in perception,
by which value comes into being. In fact, Von Uexkull went so far as to argue that it was not the metaphysics of a mechanistic, Newtonian universe within which we live—he saw this as a fiction—but, rather, that “we must abandon our fond belief in an absolute, material world, with its eternal natural laws, and admit that it is the laws of our subject” that constitute the world as meaningful (cited in Buchanan, 2008, p. 15).

Within Von Uexkull’s ontology, his understanding of life opens up possibilities that are closed off to a reductive and mechanistic biology. The aim of his work becomes not one of breaking down objective organisms into component parts but rather of viewing each organism as a subject “whose essential activity consists of perceiving and acting” (Buchanan, 2008, p. 2). To understand the subjectivity of the organism meant to study the Merkwelt, or perceptual world, as well as the Wirkwelt, or active world, of the organism, and taken together, these interactive perceptual and active worlds constitute the Umwelt, the lived world of the animal. It is this very same Umwelt that is the subject both of neurophenomenology and of humanistic psychology.

Kurt Goldstein

Holistic, nonreductive biology was directly applied to human beings in the neuroscientific theory of Kurt Goldstein. His book The Organism (1939) provided the foundation for what would later culminate into “dynamic systems theory.” He also coined the term self-actualization, which would be incorporated by the third force to describe the autonomous, self-directed movement of human existence (Kriz, 2007). In a line of argument similar to Dewey’s theory of the reflex arc, Goldstein argued that external stimuli do not affect the organism in a simple chain of cause-and-effect reactions between stimuli and response. Rather, external forces create perturbances in the complex system of an organism, which reacts in a holistic and nondetermined way to lifeworld encounters with others and things (cf. Dubos, 1959; Eblen, 1994; Lust, 2006). This view of the organism is consistent with the views of humanistic psychology and contemporary neurophenomenology.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is best known for his phenomenological work on the body. However, his first major text, his dissertation, was on the development of a holistic and naturalistic approach to understanding life and the emergence of human consciousness from more primitive life-forms. In his book The Structure of Behavior, Merleau-Ponty (1947/1983) was also critical of mechanistic and reductionistic approaches to life, which by reducing meaning to linear cause-and-effects chains of events create what he called an “explanatory gap” between our experience of consciousness and our conceptions of the natural world.

To bridge the explanatory gap between consciousness and the natural world, Merleau-Ponty developed the concept of behavior as a form of comportment. By this, he meant that behavior has a certain structure in which the parts of the organism emerge together in a system of relations in which the whole is greater than the sum of those parts. To break down these structures into more simple parts would mean to lose the structure and therefore to fundamentally mistake the part for the whole. Instead, Merleau-Ponty held that the parts and the whole are mutually determined dialectically. Thus, when an outside event has an impact on the organism, this does not set off a predictable set of events but is better conceived as an occasion upon which the whole organism responds to a meaningful environmental situation.

Merleau-Ponty thought that ontologically the universe was stratified into three levels...
Denial of Death in Modern Medicine

While nonreductive, holistic, and humanistic approaches to nature and embodied consciousness have been readily available and are waiting in the wings to replace the outdated and highly flawed Newtonian, Galilean, and Cartesian worldview, one has to wonder why the more attractive humanistic alternative worldview—shared by neurophenomenology—has often failed to gain the upper hand. According to one line of research by Robbins (2012; Robbins, Tomaka, Innus, Patterson, & Styn, 2009), mechanistic approaches to the body and nature may serve as a defense mechanism to protect scientists and physicians from their encounter with existential death.

In a qualitative study of medical students working with cadavers in a gross human anatomy course, students described intense anxiety as they anticipated dissection of the body of the cadaver (Robbins et al., 2009). As would be predicted by Ernest Becker (1973) and terror management theory (Greenberg et al., 1990; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Psyzczynksi, & Lyon, 1989), the encounter resulted in a psychological confrontation with their own mortality in ways many students had never before experienced and which was felt as threatening. The body was perceived as an ambiguous body that could be approached either as a fascinating machine for dissection—in other words a typical cadaver—or as a memorial body that housed memories of a former life with loved ones still alive and mourning the person’s death. The great majority of students could not cope with this ambiguity. As a result, either they resorted to outright denial of the personhood of the body or they actively repressed the personhood of the cadaver to carry on with the task of dissection. Those students who engaged in active denial or repression seemed more prone to reductive approaches to the body, and they may go on to approach their patients in a similar, mechanistic way. Arguably, such an approach to the body might help budding physicians temporarily cope with their own anxiety about death, but at what cost? Fortunately, there were a minority of students—just a few—who were able to carry on an integrated relationship with the body. They dissected the body and explored the materiality of the body, but while doing so, they never lost sight of the fact that this body they were examining was also a person and was a memorial to that person’s life. Such an integrated, holistic approach to the body seemed to be a less defensive and more authentic encounter with the body. Indeed, Abraham Maslow (1966) noted similar problems with his instructor’s distancing himself from death during his early medical training.

Based on the above research, it may be said that physicians and biologists need more formal training to develop less defensive and more integrated and holistic approaches to
embodiment, which promise to aid these students by helping them to more authentically encounter their own mortality. The denial of the personhood of a cadaver is a distortion of reality and threatens to fixate the researcher on a reductive, mechanistic view of the body as a way of avoiding the obvious quality of the body as a memorial of a person who is deceased. Yet a more integrated and holistic view of the body permits body and soul to be viewed together and allows one to encounter death and loss in a more direct, authentic, and existentially healthy manner. The upside of this encounter may be a more vibrant and centered experience of living in one’s own body and also the development of less inhibited and more humane ways of relating to others, including patients. This possibility seems to require revisiting what is at stake in the encounter with death: the self.

THE NEUROPHENOMENOLOGICAL SELF

What is self: psyche, soul, mind, consciousness? Self is closely tied to embodied existence and yet transcends it. Embodiment is the bodily aspects of human openness to the world, the presence of our flesh as a necessary precondition for the experience of emotion, language, thought, and social interaction. It is our kinesthetic awareness of the body as the vehicle through which we experience the sensory-motor, perceptual, and nonconceptual lived world. This is not a cognitive understanding of the self in the world but a proprioceptive, nonconceptual awareness that is tacit, prereflective, and intersubjective. Questions concerning the existential status of the self ranging from the phenomenological to the metaphysical are based on a long history of theoretical inquiry about human nature and the nature of the self across a number of disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience. This discussion of the neurophenomenological self follows from the work of Francisco Varela and colleagues on enactive cognition and the embodied mind in neurophenomenology, which has fostered renewed interest in rethinking mind–body dualism; Buddhist conceptions of no-self, which have raised questions about whether the self actually exists; and existential-humanistic theories on human growth and development. What is the neurophenomenological self, and what are its implications for humanistic psychology?

From 1940 to 1970, humanistic psychology pioneered the emergence of a person-centered, growth-oriented existential psychology of the whole person. Figures such as William James, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Rollo May, Gordon Allport, Lois and Gardner Murphy, Paul Tillich, Karen Horney, Erik Erickson, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Buber, Charlotte Bühler, Viktor Frankl, and others focused their writings on the self that is directly experienced, on the actualization of potential, on the striving toward health as intrinsic to human motivation, and on existential themes inherent to interior exploration and self-realization. Their vision went beyond the measurement of behavior to embrace a wider view of personality than mainstream trait theories because they acknowledged a growth-oriented dimension of the person or what is referred to as the neurophenomenological self. This construct depicts an embodied “sense of self” rather than a mental representation. Human subjectivity, embodied as felt sense or consciousness of self, can be described as a multidimensional stream of thoughts, perceptions, imaginings, representations, memories, and emotions associated with autopoietic or self-produced global states within the brain and body that are based on the perception of the observer and his or her ability to find meaning and significance in experience (Gordon, 2009, in press-b).

This growth-oriented dimension of the person or the neurophenomenological self is
articulated in the works of the humanistic psychologists Bühler, Maslow, and Jung (Gordon, 2013). Bühler (1968) posited that healthy personalities were active mediators of their own existence, motivated to maintain homeostasis—that is, change and growth to fulfill biological and psycho-emotional needs and spiritual values. Maslow (1967/1971) posited that metamotivation and the value life (spiritual, religious, philosophical, transcendent, and axiological) are rooted in the biological nature of the species. In self-actualizing people, this embodied, psychological self becomes larger than its biological entity through identification with the higher self, the highest values, the no-self, and nature. Likewise, Jung (1946/1971) portrayed the adult as an eternal child who is always becoming, never complete, whose conscious realization or self-actualization through individuation is the aim of human development in the second half of life. The process of individuation through active exploration of the unconscious uncovered and facilitated the person’s potential wholeness. If the unconscious can be recognized as a codetermining quantity with the conscious, the center of gravity of the personality shifts from the ego and becomes located in a hypothetical point between the conscious and the unconscious called the self.

The Self

In reaction to psychoanalytic conceptions of the disembodied ego and cognitive-behavioral conceptions of the self as a social construct (i.e., a self-concept), the founders of the humanistic movement reenvisioned “the self” as a pure subject or “I” (Bugental, 1965), an actualizing tendency (Rogers, 1986), and a process of becoming (Allport, 1955). The work of William James in the late 1800s and early 1900s speaks to the core of this vision of the self as experiential.

James (1892/1961) saw the mind and body as a fluid, integrated whole prior to the subject/object dichotomy and the self being constituted through their interaction at the level of lived experience. He divided the self into an objectively known empirical ego—the me, which he further divided into its material, social, and spiritual aspects, and the subjective knower, pure ego, or the I. The spiritual me was “composed of the more active feeling states of consciousness; the core and nucleus of our self, a direct revelation of the living substance of the soul” (p. 43), while the I was “the agent, soul, transcendental ego, spirit; or thinker behind the passing state of consciousness lending unity to the passing of thought” (p. 63). According to James, the identity found by the “I” in its “me” was only a loosely construed thing or an identity “on the whole” (p. 72) that was divided into mutations of the self based on alterations of memory. For James, experience had no inner duplicity between subject and object. Thought was itself the thinker.

James described consciousness as a stream: a field with a focus and a margin (James, 1890b), a plurality of waking and subliminal states (James, 1902), and pure experience embodied in feeling and sensation (James, 1912). The underlying nature of consciousness or the self, he believed, is a unified field of pure experience with no content other than itself, where the processes of representation are fluctuations or qualified states of this underlying field (James, 1912). His conception of pure experience was as a feeling or sensation. Its “purity” was relative to the amount of unverbalized sensation that it still embodied (James, 1884, p. 94). In “The Hidden Self,” James (1890a) spoke about the existence of buried fragments of consciousness that solidify into a secondary or subconscious self to form subordinate selves. He believed that a comparative study of trance and subconscious states was of central importance to the comprehension of human nature (p. 373). Myers (1892, 1903/2001), likewise, proposed the concept of a subliminal self in which consciousness
is a spectrum of states ranging from the psychopathic to the transcendent, the waking rational state being only one among many. The subconscious or subliminal region was the doorway to transforming experience as it opened the entire range of states beyond the margin (Taylor, 1996).

Recent compendiums on the self by neurophenomenologists (Gallagher, 2011; Gallagher & Shear, 1999; Metzinger, 2003; Zahavi, 2005) include interdisciplinary research on conceptualizations of the self (e.g., minimal, hermeneutical, real, not real, existing, illusory, reduced, irreducible, embodied) and methodological approaches (e.g., introspection, phenomenology, linguistic analysis, empirical cognitive neuroscience, and developmental, ethical, social, and political analyses). The complexity of the self has been widely debated by theorists who represent the positions of analytic philosophy of the mind, phenomenology, psychiatry, pragmatism, neuroscience, feminism, Buddhism, and postmodernism. Topics range from bodily selves to the phenomenology and metaphysics of the self, personal identity, narrative, self knowledge, the moral dimensions of the self, self pathologies, and the social construction of the self.

In contrast, Siderits, Thompson, and Zahavi (2011) discuss the doctrine of the no-self or anātman, which is a rejection of the atman or enduring self as a type of self-reference, self-illumination, or “sense of self.” The no-self theorists (Joel Krueger, Miri Albahari, Georges Dreyfus, and Jonardon Ganeri) do not infer from the sense of self that the self really exists because they claim that it is not ontologically grounded but arises from the stream of consciousness. They believe instead that the “self is a useful fiction that helps to maintain the sense of agency and mobilize action-guided emotions” (p. 137). However, the self theorists (Dan Zahavi, Evan Thompson, Wolfgang Fasching, and Ram Prasad Chaturvedi) speak of the self as the mode of givenness or the essential structure of consciousness that is prereflective, subjective, and self-revealed. They argue that a correspondence between conception and reality is required only if the sense of self is an epistemic state, which takes the self as its objective content. However, the self cannot be an object of itself. This is an important distinction. The self theorists offer no counterargument that defeats the Buddhist doctrine. Their characterization of the sense of self as “self-illuminating” captures this feature, which preconditions the sense of self that the no-self theorists focus on. Self-illumination is at the core of the neurophenomenological self.

The Sense of Self

To revisit the origins of neurophenomenology and the enactive approach to cognition, in the early 1970s, biologists argued that the living cell, when conceptualized as an autopoietic or self-producing system, is the continual creation of itself. Varela (1979) defined the unity of autopoietic systems as organized networks of the processes of transformation and destruction through which the system continuously regenerates and realizes the processes or relations that produced it. Maturana and Varela (1980, 1987/1998; Maturana, Varela, & Uribe, 1974) adapted principles from cybernetics and dynamic systems theory to explain how structural change within a biological system defines its unity, identity, stability, and internal coherence. Autopoiesis sparked a new way of thinking about both the structural determinism of biological systems and the roots of human understanding.

The theory of autopoiesis called into question hypotheses regarding the unity of consciousness, atomism, empiricism, and representationalism that were of concern to philosophers of the classical modern era such as Rene Descartes, Leibniz, Immanuel Kant,
David Hume, Franz Condorcet Brentano, William James, and Charles Sanders Peirce. For example, the question for Kant (1781/2003) was determining the form that cognition should take to make the experience of the world possible. He found pure knowledge in a priori theoretical and deductive categories, and he claimed that only through representation could we know something as an object (phenomena), given that the law of causality, founded on mathematics, has its a priori basis in human understanding. In contrast, James (1890a) believed that a thing could not be known through its representation but must be directly experienced. The ground itself does not need to be structured before the mind splits experience into subject/object and other categories of interpreted experience (James, 1885).

Varela’s position remained situated in the context of what he saw as the irreducible nature of conscious experience. He studied phenomenal experience or embodiment as lived from the point of view of the subject’s first-person experience associated with cognitive and mental events (attention, present-time consciousness, body image, volition, perceptual filling in, fringe, center, and emotion), which he posited represent an irreducible ontological level that retains its quality of immediacy because it plays a role in the organism’s structural coherence. To Varela, consciousness was a distributed phenomenon of the whole active organism, not just the brain embedded in its environment. Rejecting the computational, logical views of the mind in favor of the embodied lived description of its processes, Varela (1992) saw the mind as a selfless or a virtual self—“a coherent whole that is nowhere to be found, and yet can provide an occasion for the coordinated activity of neural ensembles” (p. 60).

The concept of a sense of self composed of the nervous system’s ensemble of synapses, whose efficacies are the legacy of genetic

Selfless Selves. Given his enactive view of human knowledge, Varela (1992) called for a science of the “sense of self.” He argued that biological cognition was not a representation of the world “out there” but, rather, an ongoing bringing forth of a world through the process of living itself. Thus, his theory of autopoiesis attempted to define the uniqueness of the emergence that produced life in its fundamental cellular form: That is, biochemical pathways of the cell and its membranes continuously regenerate through the internal production of substratum components, and biochemical states of the organism transform the state of activity of neural networks by acting on the neuron’s membrane receptors. With no fixed point of reference, human beings, as autopoietic systems, regenerate, re-creating themselves by their own mutual interactions.

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The concept of a sense of self composed of the nervous system’s ensemble of synapses, whose efficacies are the legacy of genetic
endowment and life experiences that are emergent, embodied, embedded, and imprinted in synaptic patterns, is also found in the work of contemporary affective and behavioral neuroscientists who may be considered part of the larger humanistic lineage: for example, Oliver Sacks (2010), his Romantic predecessor A. R. Luria (2005; Goldberg, 1990, 2009; Vygotsky, 1925), Antonio Damasio (1999), the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern (1985), and the interpersonal neurobiologist Daniel Siegel (1999). Like the neurophenomenologists, their approach to neuropsychology and clinical assessment combine first-person case studies with third-person experimental research. Their common vision of the sense of self is an integrated holistic unity of affect, perception, and action rooted in the brain as it interacts with the external world, the body, and the mind, which regulates the flow of energy and information within the brain toward the developmental emergence of the self.

Varela derived his concept of “self” and “no-self” from immunology as well as Buddhist philosophy. Vaz and Varela (1978) provided an autopoietic framework for understanding the genetic induction and cellular interactions of the immune system and drew parallels between the nervous and lymphoid systems with regard to ontogenetic development and plasticity. At variance with the assumptions of the times, their picture of the immune system stressed the cooperative nature of events typical of lymphoid cells as a network of interactions that defined the organism’s macromolecular individuality (p. 255).

How did Varela view the self in relation to the mind? Varela (1999) described the mind as phenomenology in action. Viewed from both the first- and third-person perspectives, he situated behavior in a specific cycle of operations where the mind emerged through a distributed process. He considered the mind to be an aspect of a pattern in flux in which our biophysical being lives. As embodied selves in dynamic equilibrium, we continually emerge within interactions of constituents and interactions of interactions. Varela and Cohen (1989) viewed the body as the locus where the corporal ego emerges, such that the ego gives rise to a sense of self in which this selfless self takes on a form so that it looks like our experience inside. Experience continuously shapes this dynamic core at all levels of reciprocal causality through the organizational complementarity of its nervous, hormonal, and mechanical pathways. Varela et al. (1991) conceptualized the organism’s identity as a meshwork of selfless selves:

Thus we need to deal with a multiplicity of regional selves, all of them having some mode of self-constitution, and in their overall assemblage giving rise to an organism. Accordingly, I want to invoke here the following “regional” selves: 1) a minimal or cellular unity, 2) a bodily self in its immunological foundations, 3) a cognitive perceptuo-motor self associated to animal behavior, 4) a socio-linguistic “I” of subjectivity, and 5) the collective social multi-individual totality. In all these regions we are dealing with levels and processes where an identity comes about—not as substance, but as movement—and whose fabric of articulation is the organism. To efface the multiplicity of this meshwork is a source of confusion. (p. 80)

Varela et al. (1991) argued that cognitive science does not distinguish between the idea or representation of the self and the actual basis of that representation, which is the individual’s grasping after an ego-self, nor does it take seriously its own finding of the lack of self, which is rooted in not having a disciplined method for examining human experience, which he later developed into neurophenomenology (Varela, 1996). He clearly believed that human beings, as dynamic systems, are characterized by a high degree of self-organizing autonomy and are therefore not reducible to
the more basic mental and physical events that constitute them.

As Thompson (2007) further clarifies, the emergent process of self-making is grounded in the fundamentally recursive processes that characterize lived experience: autopoiesis at the biological level, temporalization and self-reference at the level of conscious experience, and conceptual and narrative construction at the level of intersubjectivity. While the self may be dependently originated and empty, it is nevertheless real. The Buddhist-enactive conception of the self thus provides a middle path in which the stream of experience becomes self-referential through the structure of time consciousness. Thus, the embodied being is prereflectively aware of itself in and through its active, striving body. While the self may be emergent and constructed, it is not virtual. The self is an active, embodied, embedded, self-organizing process. Reality is not a given. It is perceiver dependent.

The Psycho-Neuro-Intracrine System. This complex system (Gordon, 2007, 2013, in press-a, in press-b) describes the perceiver-dependent, embodied sense of self in which the autonomic, neurointracrine, and limbic systems, as autopoietic networks or aggregates of neuronal ensembles, reveal a pattern of activity that is altered by experience—the phenomenological lifeworld, intentionality, and attention through a process of becoming that is conditioned by its past. Self knowledge is thus the result of ongoing subjective interpretations that emerge from our capacities of understanding rooted in the structures of our biological embodiment.

The construct psycho-neuro-intracrinology describes a complex system that is psychological (refers to the psyche, self, soul, mind, and consciousness), neurological (refers to the composition and reactions within the nervous system), and intracrinological (refers to the intracellular biosynthesis of steroids—the binding of receptors and the formation of enzymes that catalyze the creation of hormones within the cell). Steroids are catalysts of microscopic concentration that stimulate the rate of biochemical reactions, which support and sustain the evolution of human cells. It is their autopoietic capacity to transduce and transform that is the locus of an individual’s energetic balance. Within this system, the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal and adrenal axes, which govern the reactive and anticipatory response to stress, integrate pre-reflective, autonomic, and subliminal experiences in the development of meaning and the emergence of the self. The self has neural correlates in the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal and adrenal axes, which are responsible for enactive engagement through their connections to the higher-order functions of the brain. This system reveals the existential-phenomenological state, the sense of self, and the growth-oriented dimension of the person, or the neurophenomenological self.

SUMMARY

In many respects, neurophenomenology represents the culmination and integration of a long line of alternative, nonreductive, and holistic approaches to biology and cognitive neuroscience. This alternative stands in contrast to the standard view of neuroscience and biology as inherently reductive in nature, with an aim to reduce subjective experiences to objective properties of physics, such as extension and movement. Neurophenomenology directly confronts the hard problem of consciousness rather than avoiding it. By conceptualizing the self within the perspective of neurophenomenology, the self can be identified as ontologically real and valid without succumbing to the problems of dualism, in which self and body are reified as distinct substances.

Humanistic psychology has played an important role in the development of a
nonreductive neuroscience, and the integration of concepts from neurophenomenology allows humanistic neuroscience to benefit from some of the most important advances in this line of research. Moreover, a holistic and humanistic neuroscience promises a more integrated view of the body and dying, which may assist medicine with an approach to the body that is less defensive and more existentially authentic. An existentially grounded view of the body may afford more humane, empathically engaged, and authentic work with patients.

REFERENCES


Consider the following. We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others’ actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others’ activities. For this reason, it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.


INTRODUCTION

Concepts without percepts are empty; percepts without concepts are blind. (Adler, 1967, on Kant, p. 348)

As family members, friends, professionals and care partners, we need to face our own aging, as well as the aging of those elders for whom we might need to care. These elders can be our own parents, siblings, or other relatives; they can be friends or acquaintances. Elders might also be part of our professional clientele—as therapy clients, as people for whom we are responsible as guardians or conservators, as care partners, as staff, as managers and directors of eldercare communities throughout the country. How we face aging and eldercare is largely based on the mindset with which we approach these challenges. This mindset frames how we apply our knowledge, skills, and passion, as well as how we assist and partner with elders in all aspects of their care. The mindset we use also informs how we understand the meaning of our lives, what we understand to be important and of value.

As an example, a daughter in her late 30s spoke of how she had been taking care of her forgetful father for some 8 years. She remarked that in the first 6 years she envied her peers who were pursuing careers, family, travel, and other more mainstream pleasures. Only
in the last 2 years of her caretaking did she recognize that she was the lucky one, that she had been privileged with the profound experience that came with the task of having to care so deeply for her dad, who had become increasingly forgetful. She spoke glowingly about all that her dad was teaching her every day, as she bathed, dressed, groomed, and fed him. She said that she was learning about love, being in the moment with him and herself, going slowly, being kind and caring, and being attentive to the little things. After the room had fallen quiet, she stated that her caring for someone else felt like the most precious gift she could have been given in life. Indeed, this attitude can be said to be antithetical to our societal value that emphasizes looking out for one’s own good, whereas going out of one’s way is pathologized as codependency.

To honor elders as wisdom keepers and social contributors sets the stage to look at elders from their needs to connect, to feel valued, to give and receive—like all of us. What can we do to remind ourselves of the fundamental needs that they and all of us have? How can we live in a deep relationship with our elders—including our own inner elder—and receive their wisdom, so important for us to live a meaningful and sustainable life?

RE-VISIONING AGING AND ELDERCARE

Only the philosophical question is perennial, not the answers. (Tillich, 1957, p. 108)

The present conceptual framework through which we look at aging and care for our elders is demeaning and harmful to our elders and to the well-being of our societies at large. Yet this outdated framework and understanding continues to disgrace and devalue our elders. In contrast to this outdated and harmful attitude stands an existential-humanistic, process-oriented approach. Such an attitude regards aging and old age as purposeful. It understands caring—whether it is receiving or giving care—as essential to our humanity; and it regards the many symptoms of aging and old age as meaningful guideposts to be understood rather than made into problems and/or pathologies.

This attitude opposes the present mainstream idea of aging, old age, and care for elders, where aging is understood as a disease, old age as a phase to be avoided and basically useless, and the many symptoms associated with aging and old age as meaningless problems in need of treatment and cures. Even recently added concepts, such as successful and healthy aging, use longevity and physical health as basic measures of what is deemed successful and healthy. These concepts of aging and care are most often based on biologically quantitative and normative measures of human life. This means that such measurements, and the standards to which those measurements are compared, form the basis for evaluating a human being’s life—that is, whether a person, for example, is performing, declining, successful, smart, healthy, or diseased. Quantitative measures can provide important data for understanding various facets of life. Those measures, however, must be balanced by subjective, qualitative ways of being in the world.

As the philosopher Immanuel Kant reminds us even today, percepts without concepts are blind. This means that if we do not have a concept such as valuing aging, we will simply not be guided by such an attitude. We are blind. To illustrate this point, a neurologically normal brain might be regarded as healthy on a CT (computed tomography) scan display, but it will say nothing whatsoever about the person’s moral and ethical compass—that is, if this person is a kind person or a dangerous criminal. Since we are not looking for a concept such as kindness,
we do not “see” it. Similarly, a centenarian who shows no symptoms of measurable illness might be regarded as a successfully aged person; but can we say that success is simply based on longevity and absence of illness? Is the person who dies at a younger age but has made substantial contributions to the welfare of people to be considered less successful because he or she did not live long enough? Mozart died at the age of 35, and fellow composer Joseph Haydn wrote that “posterity will not see such a talent again in 100 years” (Robbins Landon, 1990, p. 171)—certainly a successful human being by any standard. Using quantitative measures to evaluate human life does not even begin to capture the unfathomable mystery of the human being.

Human beings experience themselves subjectively. An 80-year-old person can feel like a 20-year-old and experience herself or himself as vital and alive, full of vigor and ability. A 20-year-old can just as easily experience himself or herself as unable to do anything and feel cut off from any aliveness at all, ready to die at any moment.

Though most of us humans “know” this and would affirm such examples as obvious facts of human life, the reality of how we look at elders and how we care for them betrays such commonsensical understanding. Objectification reigns supreme in our increasingly technocratic and bureaucratic world. Because such a world demands measurements and quantifiability, the world is seen through the lens of the data it demands. Much like the person who lost his keys in the dark and tries to find them only in illuminated spaces, have we created a world where we have stopped looking for the immeasurable exactly because it is not measurable?

In many ways, we have turned our understanding of human beings and their needs upside down: Rather than measurement and quantification being in the service of human beings’ well-being, the quantifying mindset increasingly demands that human beings fit into measurable categories and labels. We have become the servants of the very tool we have created to help and serve us. More than 200 years ago, the German poet Novalis (1995) shared this very concern:

When numbers and figures no longer
Are keys to everything created,
When those who sing or kiss
Know more than the learned scholars,
When the world returns to a free life
And the whole world rewinds,
Then once more light and shadow will couple
To produce genuine clarity,
And people will recognize that the true histories of the world
Lie in fairy tales and poems,
Then at a single secret word
This whole wrongheaded existence will fly away. (p. 69)

AN EXISTENTIAL-HUMANISTIC, PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH TO ELDERCARE

Logos is deeper than logic. (Frankl, 1992, p. 122)

As someone who has developed and operated eldercare places for close to 20 years, ranging from independent to assisted living to so-called dementia care communities, I witness an attitude toward elders and eldercare in the continental United States very much imbedded in a quantitative perception of life. Though there are always many exceptions, most operators of elder communities, especially large-scale companies, look at aged
adults as customers whose biological health and longevity—measurable statistics—are of primary concern to them. As good a beginning as this might be, such a mindset must be augmented with a deeper understanding of aging and old age if we are to do justice to our elders and to our true humanity.

In contrast to a “numbers and figures” approach to eldercare, those with a humanistic attitude understand the importance of the subjective, the psychospiritual dimensions of the human being. An existential-humanistic approach to eldercare emphasizes that human beings at any age or stage of life, including those who are forgetful, need to “feel” themselves as valued and important, as meaningful contributors to people and causes. This approach understands that relationships and relationship building are at the core of what makes human beings feel alive and content. It also recognizes that human beings are highly individual; they have different viewpoints and must be allowed to make choices that fit their own perception. As such, techniques and otherwise fixed or mechanical procedures are counterproductive to capturing the diversity of the human spirit and will invariably lead to the creation of an oppositional force—the many revolutions and uprisings in human history are examples of this dynamic.

An existential-humanistic perspective of elders and eldercare starts foremost with the belief that elders are immensely valuable members of our societies. In their last phase of life, they continue to deepen and give back to those ready to listen. They have much to offer those younger in years in terms of guidance and experience, as well as in terms of a different perspective on life that allows other, deeper human values and attitudes to surface. From the perspective of the elder, the existential-humanistic mindset truly encompasses the depth and richness of life, in that it acknowledges all of its many dimensions. In addition, the last phase of life constitutes the necessary conclusion of each person’s life and contains all too important messages for our societies, thereby creating a more sustainable and loving world.

THE CENTRALITY OF MEANING

The most precious gift you can give to the one you love is your true presence. (Nhat Hanh, 2011, p. 3)

The existential-humanistic view emphasizes that a fulfilled life is inextricably linked to a life grounded in meaning. In other words, human beings need to create meaning in their lives if they are to live a life that is worth living. The importance of meaning creation becomes even more pronounced in the so-called second half of life. Whereas the social and economic obligations of the first half of life are often quite circumscribed with education, family, and career, the second half of life can offer more freedom of thinking and feeling and a questioning attitude about what it is important to be and how to live now. This questioning attitude is also pushed to consciousness by an increased awareness of the finitude of life, an awareness that makes us wonder about our primary considerations, our priorities—whether those are based on individual and/or global concerns.

In the Indian tradition, the second half of life begins at age 60. The question of how to create meaning in our second half of life is moving to the forefront of our consciousness today. The demographics are shifting speedily away from the outdated pyramid structure of age distribution. As will be remembered, in such a structure, the old constitute only a small percentage on top and the younger a much bigger percentage at the bottom. This old pyramid shape is now giving way to a cylindrical shape, where in the next 30 years—worldwide—the older
population over 60 will be as numerous as the young population under 15. Such a shift, combined with the continued increase in life expectancy and longevity, will place much more focus on the meaning and purpose of the second half of human life. William Thomas, geriatrician and Eden Alternative founder, faces this issue head-on with the title of his article “What is Old Age for?” As a physician, he opposes the idea of the youthful body as the standard against which we measure the continued aging process. He writes that society views the youthful body as optimal and

scientific theories about how we age nearly all accept without question the doctrine of youth’s perfection. They focus on decline and pay little heed to the steady emergence of new gifts and capacities. This tunnel vision is the root cause of their failure to fully explain aging. They fail because they are the products of a culture mired in a misunderstanding of age and aging. (Thomas, 2010, p. 32)

Countering this misunderstanding requires us to search anew for the meaning of aging and old age, really for life in its broadest meaning—for without aging there is no life, without life no aging. Given that there is no universal, one-size-fits-all meaning, that meaning needs to be discovered by each individual himself or herself, it is important to help create a container and space that allows for the discovery of the meaning that lies in each person. This requires, foremost, that in elder communities of whatever kind, we place the search for meaning, our curiosity for discovering the unknown, at the forefront of how we want to manage and operate such places. As such, these places become learning communities where curiosity and discovery are some of the highest virtues to be fostered. What if we could not wait to be an elder, like a child can’t wait to be an adult?

**CHANGING THE FACE OF AGING**

More and more, how we grow old is a personal choice. Older folks are going back to school in their 50s, starting businesses in their 60s, training for triathlons in their 70s, and, yes, having sex in their 80s. (Lawson, 2003)

Using the youthful body as a measurement stick against which we judge our well-being at different ages is based on an overly simplistic understanding of the human being. This standard is predicated on the belief that biological strength, speed, and performance, in terms of actual biologically measurable numbers (muscle mass, blood values, bone density, calcium levels, etc.), are superior to other aspects of being human, that they actually determine our humanity. This myopic, biocentered viewpoint ignores, as stated before, the deeper dimensions of being human. Such a simplistic view does not consider our ability to make choices, to fight for causes, to stand up for beliefs, and to be altruistic, generous, kind, and loving. For example, is not our ability to discern the value of what presents itself before us at least as important as our ability to take in the particulars with our senses? This issue parallels the debate about our information age, where we begin to question the value of information. If it remains data, we simply cannot process, cannot understand, and cannot act on it.

A biological view of the older adult that measures itself against a youthful body also dominates our attitude toward eldercare. As such, we enter a “declinist” view of the human life span: The older we get, the more we decline. We emphasize losses and have no vocabulary and concepts to speak of the gains we experience as we age. This is why we are in need of an existential-humanistic, process-oriented approach to eldercare. Such an approach will introduce concepts such as meaning, purpose, mystery, maturity, wisdom,
creativity, and beauty. Being guided by these concepts, we will begin seeing more completely and will notice when these so very important aspects of human life are present or absent.

THE PRAXIS OF AN EXISTENTIAL-HUMANISTIC ATTITUDE TO ELDERCARE

I can’t believe what you say, because I see what you do. (Baldwin, 1985, p. 594)

Changing the culture of eldercare starts with the modeling done by the ownership and management of each elder community. That is, ownership and management need to live the change they want to see on the floor of an elder housing and care community. Care partners will model themselves after the tone and feeling their leaders set in a community. Here the biggest change a management team can evoke is a move away from task to “being” orientation. This means that the mood in the community shifts away from one of doing and being busy, of accomplishing tasks, to one that incorporates a feeling of presence. This new feeling emanates from care partners and staff sitting with resident elders, talking, being present with them and curious about their state of mind. Thus, staff and management show that they are related to each resident, that they possess a genuine interest in getting to know the residents, their history, likes and dislikes, aspirations, and concerns. This focused interest in residents models being present for others, understands them as related and not separate, and acknowledges that it is important for us humans to feel valued and seen. Moreover, an attitude that people long for meaning in their lives, irrespective of their stage of life, that they desire to have a purpose and direction, helps create an environment where residents can feel more alive, content, and at peace.

Such an attitude shows itself through the involvement of residents in decision-making processes for the community. Rather than a top-down management style, which comes from an attitude of “Management knows best,” a participatory model of management is based on the awareness that it might take longer to reach decisions but those decisions will have more of an ability to succeed with the agreement of all community members. People want to feel a sense of control over the way their community is organized and managed.

Concretely, such an open attitude can be established through open forum–style meetings that are facilitated by someone who is aware of the need to hear all of the voices in a community, whether they are coming from the assertive and vocal or the quiet, shyer group of residents.

Another shift away from the traditional management in senior care and housing derives from the awareness that people need to feel that they are engaged in something meaningful as long as they are alive. Here it is important that the so-called activities calendar allows residents to participate in the selection of activities and enables them to feel that they can present their knowledge and experience to others willing to listen. In this context, they feel that they can be useful and can give back to others. If residents feel that they are valued for what they have to offer, it will create a sense of purpose and aliveness within them.

THE LANGUAGE OF ELDERCARE

Human life is driven forward by its dim apprehension of notions too general for its existing language. (Whitehead, 1933, p. 32)

The poet Ingeborg Bachmann (1987) stated aptly that a new world requires a new language. To move away from the idea that
human beings are biological objects in decline that can be manipulated, objectified, and thus “commodified,” we need to make a change in the language used to describe aging, old age, and eldercare. Foremost, we need to become aware of the gain–loss paradigm that permeates our culture. Given that we equate aging mostly with human biology, it is easy to look at the changing body and observe losses: inability to run as fast as in earlier years, less vision and hearing, forgetfulness, and so forth. The story of gain and loss can be replaced by a more complete viewpoint, one that does not interpret what it thinks it sees but rather stays with the phenomena. For the phenomena speak a language of their own. They simply express the following: We are changing. Without a measurement stick and standard, all we truly can observe is that we are a body and mind in the process of change. It is our interpretation that wants to make it good or bad, describe it as desirable or undesirable, or define it as gain or loss. Who is to say that we do not need exactly the changing body to help provide the ground for our deepening? That we need to go more slowly so we can live more wisely? That bone density needs to be less dense for us to be more accepting? That muscles need to be softer so the mind can think more compassionately? After thousands of years of pondering, we have yet to understand the relationship between body and mind. What we have learned is that it is increasingly more difficult to know where one ends and the other starts. Moreover, it is important to remember that words such as body, mind, and soul are only roughly pointing to something we have yet to understand, let alone define.

Much of the language in eldercare is based on a language that understands early to middle adulthood as our prime of life. This viewpoint establishes activities calendars as desirable because in our adulthood we preferred to be active. However, when we get older we often discover that much of our constant activity is anxiety directed, and going more slowly, even being still, is actually a desired state of being. From such a viewpoint, we would talk about an “enrichment calendar,” even a “course-offering” calendar.

Another word that speaks to the objectification of eldercare is the word facility. Such a word betrays that we are talking about a community of people living with each other, giving each other company. Referring to eldercare places as communities makes them human and warm, gives these places a relational purpose. Examples from a potentially long list of objectifying, biomedically influenced nursing expressions are the following: the habit of talking about case rather than care meetings (people are not cases), discussing about diagnoses rather than discovering the unmet need behind certain symptoms (people are not their diagnosis, and symptoms are not random but have meaning), and having to have answers rather than giving processes time to unfold.

These are but a few of the language changes we should consider making if we are to undertake a shift in attitude toward elders, eldercare, and aging. We might even do away with the term aging altogether and replace it with the concept of “maturing.” Stating that we are 20, 50, or 80 years mature gives more meaning to our years than simply stating it in our traditional manner as “old.” We might even get to a point where those less mature in years will feel slightly uncomfortable about their immaturity compared with the more mature folks in the room.

FROM CAREGIVING TO CARE PARTNERING, FROM CUSTODIAL TO RELATIONAL CARE

I think it’s much more interesting to live not knowing than to have answers which might be wrong. (Feynman, 1999, p. 24)
In assisted living and eldercare, it is common to refer to assistants as caregivers. This implies a one-way direction of care: I give care to you. Understood as such, caregiving can easily lead to a one-way, custodial type of care, where the caregiver is in control of the care he or she administers. This can also lead to a diminishing of the elder for whom we care: Rather than being sensitive to what elders are still able to do for themselves, we override those abilities and do for them instead of with them. This points out the difference between a custodial type of care directed by task completion and a relational type of care directed by the deepening and nurturing of the relationship with the elder for whom one cares.

A custodial type of care, governed as it is by helpers’ mental task list, cannot be a care that is present for the elder. Such a caregiver is present with the tasks to be accomplished rather than with the person with whom she or he engages. Not being present with the person in need of care does not allow that person’s needs to be met. Whereas from a biological perspective, the elder may have received a drink or medication, the need for a genuine connection, for a relationship, for a sense of comfort, belonging, and acknowledgment—all those important elements are missing from the encounter. Very much like doctors or therapists, who believe that they know what is wrong with their clients without really taking the time to know and experience them, helpers in an eldercare community will miss the most vital ingredients for which so much of humanity craves: connection and relationship.

The concept of presence is a foundational concept of humanistic eldercare. Introducing such a concept in the training of eldercare professionals, from management staff to care partners, focuses the intention not only on task accomplishment but especially on the quality of how tasks get completed. The quality of being present is the crucial factor that distinguishes care based on a one-sided, controlling attitude—the common custodial care model—from care based on valuing foremost the relationship with the person for whom one cares, what we might call the relational care model.

By being present with the person whom we encounter, we value the relationship. Valuing the relationship means that we feel ourselves as partners with the person with whom we relate—not superior or inferior, not better or less good. We meet in our shared humanity. As in existentially based psychotherapy, where the therapists understand themselves as partners in the journey toward a deeper understanding of their clients’ lives, those helping elders in eldercare communities understand themselves as care partners in the care and services they provide. Only through such an attitude of equality can a genuine relationship be formed and continually nurtured. And only through such an attitude do we human beings ever feel valued and loved.

**NOT KNOWING KNOWS BEST: TOWARD A DIFFERENT METHODOLOGY FOR UNDERSTANDING LIFE**

Awe is not a very comfortable standpoint for many people. Hence, all about us today, we see avoidance of awe, by burying ourselves in materialist science, for example, or in absolutist religious positions; by locking ourselves into systems, whether corporate, familial, or consumerist; or by stupefying ourselves with drugs. (Schneider, 2004, p. xiii)

A core belief of an existential-humanistic, process-oriented eldercare lies in the awareness of the unfathomable depth of existence, the sheer and overwhelming mystery of being. It understands fully the limits of what we
can know, of what Nietzsche (1967) called the “fable of knowledge” (p. 301).

Such a stance dwells in a “standing in awe” before all that manifests and exists. It is filled with wonder at this phenomenon called life. The foundation of an existential-humanistic approach to eldercare lies in a phenomenological methodology. This methodology allows us to be aware of how our perception is governed by biases and pre-judgments. Recognizing our perceiver bias will remind us that our viewpoint is only one viewpoint and not based on an objective reality. From the viewpoint of a perceiver-dependent world, there exists no objective reality outside the observer. The phenomenological method thus allows for a multiplicity of viewpoints and for an awareness of the complexity and richness of life itself.

This reflection encourages us to look at the world with an appreciation of its utmost complexity and unknowability. It directs us to look at the miracle of being human, of being an elder. A sense of deep respect is found for a human being who has endured many years of tribulations and has not given up, who had to experience and make sense of life and live with the paradoxes of human existence.

By approaching an elder with such an attitude, all that an elder might express, desire, and show will always remain enigmatic, filled with an unfathomable richness of meanings and possibilities. We can never entirely know another human being, just as we can never entirely know ourselves. This attitude of unknowing forms the ground on which a humanistically trained staff works and cares for elders (Spalding, Suri, & Khalsa, 2009).

The position of unknowing shows itself in an attitude of curiosity for all that elders are and present to care partners and other staff. These “phenomena”—a word existential-humanists use to refer to what they encounter in the world—are allowed to be seen and heard for what it is they want to express. Since words and nonverbal languages remain rudimentary forms of communication, what they express will always be filled with uncertainty and in need of further elaboration and understanding.

This perspective is different from a mainstream understanding of communication, where words and signals are mostly taken literally and without further exploration. Words and signals, however, are always ambiguous in nature. The signified, the object about which we are trying to speak, is not identical with the signifier, the word or expression that we use to refer to the object we want to describe. As such, we shall almost always need to further unfold and explore what someone is trying to express, since each one of us gives different meanings to the words he or she uses. Exploring what people mean by what they say seems, at first glance, to slow down communication. Indeed, it does. What we gain, however, is clarity and understanding, a deepening of truly seeing the other in front of us. Especially when people are in distress, it is valuable to grasp the depth of the other’s suffering as only in this way can we help alleviate it. Elders can be amazing teachers of slow and meaningful communication, of appreciating stillness and silence, of valuing presence and relationship.

THE CONCEPT OF MEANING AND UNMET NEEDS

There is not one big cosmic meaning for all; there is only the meaning we each give to our life, an individual meaning, an individual plot, like an individual novel, a book for each person. (Nin, 1998)

It is common to talk in eldercare communities about difficult residents. Those are residents who do not fit in with the expectations of peace and quiet in an eldercare
community. They seem to have more energy than others, seem disruptive, and even appear aggressive and loud. The problem is seen as one that belongs to those disruptive residents. The approach is thus to engage in behavior management or, as is more common, to look for medication to extinguish the behavior. This attitude of simply blaming the disruption on the person who seems to cause the problem is convenient for the staff as it is the residents who are being asked to change. This approach, however, ignores the fact that there might be reasons for the residents’ behavior, that we have something to learn from them.

A major shift in the conceptual understanding of looking at so-called difficult residents is to believe that their behavior is expressing an unmet need thus far overlooked. This attitude does not make residents wrong for being who they are but rather understands their behaviors as important signals to be explored and understood.

The concept of “unmet needs” is not at all a new way of thinking about behavior.

As a matter of fact, our own bodies are designed to express pain if something is wrong, and most parents would not ignore a child’s cry or otherwise unusual behaviors. Rather, they feel naturally drawn to want to understand such expressions further. Elders living in an elder community are not any different, especially if their language capabilities have changed over time. They often express their needs through subtle and not so subtle changes in their behaviors. We need to learn to understand such behaviors, and primarily, we need to believe that any and all behaviors have meaning.

The concept of “unmet needs” moves us away from a pathologizing attitude to one of wonder, curiosity, and further exploration. It is not that the elder or client is “wrong” or needs “fixing”; but we care partners need to deepen our awareness and understanding about human beings and life.

TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF FORGETFULNESS AND A CURE FOR “DEMENTIA”

All I got was a little piece of paper from my doctor advising me that I had been diagnosed as having dementia. What does that mean? (Voris, Shabahangi, Fox, & Mercer, 2009, p. 22)

Few modern thinkers have expressed more clearly than Heidegger the idea that the human being is the only being who is aware of his or her own being (Heidegger, 2006). As such, the human being takes on a special place among all beings on this planet. This is not to say that humans are better or worse than other beings, just that they are different in the way they inhabit this earth. This distinction is crucial. It determines that an approach to understanding used for nonhumans will need to differ from how we understand human beings.

In the past few 100 years, we have been trying to understand this world using the scientific method. This method employs analysis through taking things apart and quantification through measurement of things. Such an approach seems to work exceptionally well with the nonhuman world, something to which the many advances of the past few 100 years attest. It should be of little surprise, then, that the scientific-analytical approach is increasingly used as a means to understand human beings.

In the past few 100 years, we have been trying to understand this world using the scientific method. This method employs analysis through taking things apart and quantification through measurement of things. Such an approach seems to work exceptionally well with the nonhuman world, something to which the many advances of the past few 100 years attest. It should be of little surprise, then, that the scientific-analytical approach is increasingly used as a means to understand human beings.

Herein, however, lies the catch. What seems to work well with beings of the nonhuman kind fails utterly if applied without discrimination to human beings. There are many examples, some more horrific than others, that provide evidence of this failure to distinguish between the means to understand humans and nonhumans. These failures have not, unfortunately, prevented us from continuing such folly. The latest in this long series of failures that produces inhumane results is the
way we diagnose and treat those of us who remember differently from the so-called norm. Creating much panic in the land, the various dementia associations across the globe speak of an epidemic of cases of “dementia” and warn all of us of the devastating effects of losing our memory, mind, and cognitive functioning. We are encouraged to test ourselves as early as possible whenever we suspect that we may begin to forget more than we deem normal. “Dementia” means literally “away from mind,” also translated as “no mind.” After a few 1,000 years of recorded history, we have failed to arrive at a definition of “mind”; yet the scientific community, now along with most health care professionals, seems little concerned about the fact that in the absence of such a definition, labeling someone as “demented” is plainly nonsensical. We cannot agree on a definition of “mind,” yet we seem to have no issue with labeling someone as being of no-mind, being demented.

In my everyday practice in working with elders who are forgetful—which is a non-pathologizing way of referring to those who live in a different level of reality—I do not see “dementia.” Rather, I see playful, spontaneous, sad, funny, and serious elders. Often they talk differently, speak loudly with their eyes and also their bodies, are game to hold your hands if you would like to take theirs. They teach me how to be in the moment, be present with them, and they help me become aware of how much I am attached to my way of being-in-the-world, to my version of reality. Often, they sense astutely what I feel, how I feel about them. In being curious about the reality in which they live, I discover amazing worlds of being. In accepting their ways of communication, I discover surprising depths of human sensibility. In being patient with forgetfulness and myself, I learn about the different dimensions of my soul.

The biomedical, psychiatric label of dementia might work well for the researcher in quest of a cure; however, such jargon has no place in the care and love of the forgetful human being, often an elder. A non-pathologizing approach to dementia does not label the other. The real cure for dementia is to understand that there is always meaning hidden behind every symptom, every difference. It is up to us, who want to learn how to care and love, to discover that meaning. Such a caring attitude understands forgetfulness as a teacher that allows us to remember our essential goodness and affords us a glimpse into other forms of being. Seen as such, forgetfulness is a gift bestowed on us—whether we are the care partner or the forgetful one—to face deeper dimensions of life. Forgetfulness is a gift for which we can be grateful.

SELECTING AN ELDER LIVING AND CARE COMMUNITY

Old places and old persons in their turn, when spirit dwells in them, have an intrinsic vitality of which youth is incapable, precisely, the balance and wisdom that come from long perspectives and broad foundations. (Santayana, 2009, p. 143)

There are different models of housing and living available to elders. These range from staying at home and receiving occasional or frequent home care services; to being part of a mostly virtual communication network with other elders; to senior housing communities, where adults over 55 years of age can rent and/or buy a home or apartment; to cooperative housing, where intentional communities of elders come together to form their own collective; to assisted living communities, where elders in need of help with so-called activities of daily living, including forgetful elders, can live and receive care; to skilled nursing or convalescent homes, where an elder might need around-the-clock medical services—all these models are available and coexist today. Irrespective of the model
of living and care people choose, the prevailing attitude driving these different alternatives rests in a view of aging and old age that more often than not has little regard for the value of elders. Rather, elders are mostly seen as a commodity, an opportunity to invest in what is understood as a potentially lucrative business involving the burgeoning senior housing and senior care market.

In selecting an eldercare community, it is important to understand the attitude that guides the management of the community. Exploring what is meant by the statements that are made about care and social activities, and how these statements are implemented in the everyday operations of the care community, will provide a clear indication of how comfortable an elder will feel there.

TOWARD AN ELDERS ACADEMY: A FUTURE VISION

Old age is ready to undertake tasks that youth shirked because they would take too long. (Maugham, 1954, p. 668)

The role of the elder was once the most revered role in our human communities. Eldership as a role and position within a human community started within the tribal traditions. There we find an emphasis on elders as guides and leaders. This indicates that they are experienced and wise and are fit to lead the tribe and teach the young. In tribal traditions, elders also resolve social concerns and are expected to make final decisions about the direction communities will take on the many social and individual issues we humans must face.

Today, however, elders are scarcely available to guide and initiate the young and lead our communities to make wise decisions. There is an absence of elders also because the old have not been given the skills and ability to be elders. Moreover, in the past few centuries, the status of the elderly as respected members of their societies has declined.

Paralleling this decline has been a diminution of elders’ role in their respective communities. We need to train elders if we want to help individuals living in our communities and societies with the important tasks of supporting and guiding the younger in age and experience. For being older does not make an elder. The qualities of eldership must be acquired through much training, learning, and practice. If we recall, for example, how monks in the various spiritual traditions are initiated over many years into becoming respected members of their communities, then we have a glimpse of what it will take for an older person to grow into becoming an elder.

Michael Meade emphasizes this point as follows:

Elders, by tribal imagination, and by more recent definition, are those who have learned from their own lives, those who have extracted a knowledge of themselves and the world from their own lives. We know that a person can age and still be very infantile. This happens if a person doesn’t open and understand the nature of his or her own life and the kind of surprising spirit that inhabits him or her. (Lister Reis, 1998)

However, where do we learn anymore about how to “extract knowledge” from the world and ourselves? What places are left where those of us interested in eldership can learn? Where do we turn to allow our elder within to grow out of us?

An elders academy is a place within which we can learn to become elders at any age. It is a place where the values that often come with age are also seen as an alternative way of living a life of meaning and depth. As such, eldership provides a different approach to the way young and middle adults understand
their lives, what they deem to be their values. The second half of life, rather than being a burden or a period of decline, is understood as the most important part, for which the first half was but a preparation.

There are a few organizations in the United States that try to implement this vision into practice. Notably, the Eden Alternative programs (www.edenalt.org), AgeSong (www.agesong.com), AgeSong Institute (www.agesonginstitute.org), and Mather Lifeways (www.matherlifeways.com) are at the forefront of making this change. Hopefully, other individuals, organizations, and corporations will swiftly follow their example. For it is our elders, with their life experience, skills, knowledge, and wisdom, who will help usher in a new era of understanding how we can live in harmony with the planet and its people. And it is our elders who, together with the young, will lead the way to help establish a sustainable way of life, in terms of both matter and spirit.

The stakes are higher than one might think. The value set based on youth also brings with it an attitude and approach to life that must be balanced by the wisdom and experience of age. Though this seems obvious at first glance, the divide between the generations is widening, not decreasing. Modern technologies, with their apparent wizardry and standing in the world as benchmarks of civilization, are advancing to such a degree and at such speed that a countermovement has already begun to take hold. Elders need to be involved in the decision-making processes in the world. Their experience and their natural attitude toward sustainability are needed to help protect and guide people and our planet.

**TRANSLATING AND DEEPENING THE VISION INTO PRACTICE**

Does this talk grow corn? (Hopi saying)

The existential-humanistic perspective emphasizes experience over theory. Goethe (1987) was fond of saying that “all theory... is gray, but the golden tree of life springs ever green” (p. 61). Existential psychotherapists tell their clients and students that they should only believe what they can experience for themselves; American Indians remain suspicious of any words or statements and ask, “Does this talk grow corn?” Yet, just as maps are important tools to guide us, a theory, as has been the point of this chapter, can provide a valuable framework within which to see the world.

While there are many theories on aging, there are no theories of eldercare. We are in need of outlining a practical model of eldercare that might serve as the beginning of a new framework of eldercare based on existential-humanistic concepts and ideas.

To meet the needs of elders, we might imagine all kinds of programs. Yet all of these programs will need to be expressed through words, and words are filled with meaning that exemplifies the dominant zeitgeist. As has been pointed out, this zeitgeist is dominated by a biological, objectifying, and reductionist mindset that aims for simplicity and efficiency. But as Frankl (1992, p. 141) reminds us, *logos* is not logic. To read the import of the statements of any program that aims to care for elders, we need to question the attitude behind the program and actually “see” how this attitude is practiced on the floor of an elder community.

The human being is so unfathomably complex that working and being with elders can be an amazing experience in humility. Sitting next to frail, very old elders, who look at you with their deep eyes, reminds you like nothing else of the awesomeness of the human spirit, the magnificence of being human, and the uncanny experience called life.
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OVERVIEW

Humanistic psychology is best understood as a broad-based yet theoretically delineated movement rather than as a highly specialized school. From its earliest days to the present, humanistic psychology has aspired to be an inherently diverse sort of movement, integrating insights from manifold perspectives. Thus, Yalom (1980) has described humanistic psychology as notably “generous” in terms of its inclusiveness (p. 19). The breadth of humanistic thought extends out to perspectives such as existential psychology, phenomenological and neurophenomenological psychology, personalistic psychology, functionalist psychology, transpersonal psychology, field theoretical psychology, ecopsychology, Gestalt psychology, organismic psychology, and self-styled, social psychoanalysis, to name a few. Nonetheless, humanistic psychology does have a characteristic theoretical thrust, which provided the impetus for James Bugental to articulate humanistic psychology’s guiding postulates in 1963 (Yalom, 1980).

As adapted by Tom Greening for the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Bugental’s postulates evidence a very socioculturally sensitive view of human behavior and mental processes. One need only consider the following postulates to see this inherent sociality: (a) human beings have their existence in a uniquely human context, as well as in a cosmic ecology; (b) human consciousness always includes an awareness of oneself in the context of other people; and (c) human beings have some choice and, with that, responsibility. The remaining two postulates secure a place for the integrity of the individual amid the socializing forces that contextualize human psychological life: (d) human beings, as human, supersede the sum of their parts—they cannot be reduced to their components—and (e) human beings are intentional, aim at goals, are aware that they cause future events, and seek meaning, value, and creativity.


Toward a Humanistic-Multicultural Model of Development

EUGENE M. DEROBERTIS

CHAPTER 17
HUMANISTIC THEORY

(1896–1971), Carl Rogers (1902–1987), Ernest Schachtel (1903–1975), Ashley Montagu (1905–1999), M. J. Langeveld (1905–1989), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961), and Heinz Kohut (1913–1981). Though it is not well-known, there is a coherent humanistic developmental perspective in psychology (DeRobertis, 2008, 2012). This perspective is commensurate with the five postulates of humanistic psychology noted above. Humanistic developmental psychology also emphasizes both contextual embeddedness and the integrity of the developing human being.

The purpose of the current work is to acquaint the reader with some significant aspects of the deeply interpersonal nature of humanistic developmental psychology. This will provide the impetus for a discussion concerning the growth of humanistic developmental thought in a pointedly multicultural direction. By virtue of its emphasis on the social embeddedness of development, humanistic developmental psychology is a perspective that sees human development as shot through with context-related diversity. Humanistic developmental psychology is thus predisposed to evolve by actualizing a nascent multiculturalism.

The need for an enhanced appreciation of cultural factors in general among developmental psychologists has been gaining slow yet steady acceptance over the past few decades. The most obvious evidence of this is the widespread integration of Lev Vygotsky’s and Urie Bronfenbrenner’s respective viewpoints into developmental psychology textbooks. Developmental science still has a long way to go, however, in terms of becoming multicultural. Classic and still popular theories of social and emotional development, such as those put forth by Lawrence Kohlberg and Erik Erikson, show strong evidence of both androcentrism and ethnocentrism (Gilligan, 1982). Moreover, as Paludi (2002) noted, research in developmental psychology tends to be biased toward the accumulation of aggregate data that emphasize the differences between diverse groups (i.e., an out-group homogeneity bias) rather than understanding the unique psychological structures and behavioral characteristics inherent in those groups.

Citing the relevant work of MacPhee, Kreutzer, and Fritz (1994), Paludi (2002) further noted that many developmental studies confound socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and race. Consequently, “it is likely that 80% of research on child development is not generalizable to diverse groups. This would be especially true of research on cognitive development (notably infant perception), childhood, peer status, and normative adolescent development” (MacPhee, Kreutzer, & Fritz, 1994, p. 701). Given the relatively culture-poor state of developmental psychology, an explication of the multicultural proclivities of humanistic developmental psychology would enhance its contemporary relevance. Thus, this work proposes to consider how a specifically humanistic developmental psychology would begin to lay claim to its inherently multicultural roots.

HUMANISTIC DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY AS AN INHERENTLY INTERPERSONAL VIEWPOINT

Setting the Multicultural Stage

The most fundamental principle of a humanistic approach to human development is that each and every individual’s development is part of a dynamic and meaningfully structured network of relationships and projects occurring in the lifeworld of day-to-day affairs. This network is affected by many levels of functioning, from the molecular to the historical, all of which constitute the context of development. This context has an essentially integrated nature, such
that attempts to neatly distinguish “nature” from “nurture” are rejected. The separation of a nature component from a nurture component is rejected on a twofold basis. First, to make such a separation is artificial. The bifurcation of biology and environment/culture is the long outmoded by-product of atomistic thought (Keller, 2010; Montagu, 1970; Werner, 1948). As Murray (2001) has noted, culture is already present in utero in the foods that the mother eats, the air that she breathes, the stressors she endures, and so forth. When a human being is finally born, the infant’s brain is only 25% of its adult weight and grows in accordance with the demands of its environment, especially in its social aspects. Thus, social neuroscience (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1992), interpersonal neuroscience (e.g., Siegel, 2001), neuropsychoanalysis (Schore, 2002), existential neuroscience (Iacoboni, 2007), and cultural neuroscience (e.g., Chiao, 2009) have all demonstrated that the development of the human brain arises from a field of interpersonal relations.

Second, while development involves general, species-specific and culture-specific tendencies as a matter of course, these tendencies have been subject to the developing person’s unique form of world openness. This openness is characterized by an imaginative-integrative impetus and awareness that is irreducible and central to the individualized nature of development. In the spirit of Adler, another name for the imaginative-integrative impetus and awareness of the developing person is the creative self (Hall & Lindzey, 1978).

No theoretical homunculus is implied in this conceptualization. Selfhood does not refer to something “inside” the organism but, rather, to the integrative character of the whole developing individual embedded within a lifeworld context. From within the network of the developing person’s relationships and projects, the individual will inevitably employ her or his creative-productive imagination in the service of achieving an optimal measure of personality integration. As Daniel Stern (1985) has convincingly argued, this process begins soon after birth with the appearance of an interpersonally mediated emergent self. In highlighting the integrative aspect of development, the humanistic approach is concerned with the always meaningful co-constituted sense of being of those under study, rather than remaining at the level of anonymous predispositions, laws, trends, and the like. There is, in other words, what Vandenberg (1991) termed an ontological emphasis inherent in a humanistic approach to development that should not be overlooked in favor of an exclusive focus on localized, developmentally relevant part functions. As Vandenberg put it, “We human beings are aware, at some level, that we and others are alive; there is a shared sense of being. This kinship entails a much different relationship than is experienced with objects and carries important ethical implications” (p. 1278).

Humanistic developmental thought places emphasis on interpersonal relatedness as substantive in its own right. There is no presupposition, so common in psychology as a whole, that social relations ought to be understood in exclusively tension-reducing, adaptive, and/or otherwise survival-oriented terms. The world-with-others is not reduced to the status of a mere collection of resources to be consumed. World openness and the developing individual’s very being-in-the-world-with-others (Heidegger, 1962) are central to humanistic developmental thought. Human development involves a radically situated becoming oneself. The other is viewed as integral to the fabric of the self. As Adler (1958) once noted, “Every tendency that might have been inherited has been adapted, trained, educated, and made over again by the mother” (p. 120). Similarly, Horney (1945) observed that healthy self-development is rooted in parental love.
experienced as a deep and abiding sense of “we-ness” with others (pp. 18–19). This self–other interpenetration extends out well beyond the mother–child dyad, of course, as both mother and child are themselves embedded within a still wider contextual backdrop. Thus, as Teo (2003) noted, Dilthey “emphasized the socio-historical character of the mind and suggested that mental life is influenced by . . . the mind of a social community or era, as expressed in law, morality, ethics, and institutions” (p. 78). When it comes to human growth and development, personal production and cultural production are inherently meaningful and inextricably intertwined (Packer & Greco-Brooks, 1999).

The contextually nested nature of self-development is originally and primordially rooted in embodied being-with-the-mother. Embodied being-with-the-mother is conspicuously tactile in nature throughout the early years of childhood. The mother–child dyad constitutes a tactile point of departure for human becoming, so to speak. Research along these lines has a long, if underappreciated, history (DeRobertis, 2012; Field, 2001; Montagu, 1971). As Schachtel (1959) put it, touch is “phylogenetically and ontogenetically . . . the foundation of all sensory experience and all the other exteroceptive senses” (p. 142). The newborn will relate to its mother via a heavy reliance on olfaction and especially the haptic senses (i.e., taste and touch). The newborn comes to identify the mother in large part via touch. It “grasps” the mother with both mouth and hands (Koffka 1931, p. 267; Stern, 1924, p. 115). It is in and through a genuinely devoted repertoire of tactile relations that the mother invites or “calls” the child’s imagination into an animate world–co-constituting collaboration (DeRobertis, 1996, p. 27; Knowles, 1986, p. 29). Such a view can be found in Winnicott’s (1965) markedly phenomenological descriptions of holding and handling in infancy.

According to Winnicott (1965), empathic holding and handling provide the groundwork for the quickening of the child’s subjectivity (i.e., the “true” self), which first manifests itself as an integrative “summation of sensorimotor aliveness” (p. 149). When holding and handling is relaxed, tender, soft, warm, near, and gentle, the child is free to take in the unity of her or his being without the disintegrating effects of anxiety (Strasser, 1969). In Schachtel’s (1959) words,

If the mother appears upon the child’s crying, but is angry, anxious, tense, or otherwise not capable of giving tender attention to the child and its needs, the crying may continue, feeding difficulties may set in, and even a not hungry child may not feel comforted when it is picked up by an anxious or tense mother. (p. 50)

Where there is a conspicuous and intolerable lack of affectionate touch, the child is at risk for what has been termed hospitalism, stunting, and wasting, or a nonorganic failure to thrive.

At the very same time, devoted, empathic holding and handling sets the stage for the child’s future world relatedness. It provides for the emergence of the hope, confidence, self-acceptance, self-respect, and self-worth necessary for sustained, undistorted world openness and psychological genuineness (Rogers, 1951). It paves a pathway for the child’s imaginative-integrative impetus to operate spontaneously in vitalized interest beyond the mother–child dyad, allowing the child to conceive of a social world at large that is itself amenable to Gemeinschaftsgefühl (community feeling or social interest), to state the matter in Adlerian terms (e.g., Adler, 1979). Thus, some researchers have even suggested that intimate, affectionate contact immediately after birth may be a psychophysically sensitive period determining future behavior (Moore, Anderson, & Bergman, 2007). In short, early tactile experience with the mother establishes the primacy of the subject–subject relation over the
Toward a Humanistic-Multicultural Model of Development

The achievement of increasingly multifaceted, relatively integrated wholes (DeRobertis, 2008). This process of forming increasingly complex forms of personal integration has an intrinsically sociocultural character that cannot be outstripped.

ACTUALIZING THE NASCENT MULTICULTURALISM OF HUMANISTIC DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY—I: SELF-DEVELOPMENT AS AN AUTO-BIO-CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT

To briefly recap, becoming oneself is primordially rooted in social conditions that are conducive to sustained world openness: an atmosphere of social support that is conveyed in a host of ways ranging from the highly tactile to the highly symbolic. This support gives rise to a collaborative imaginative-integrative impetus and awareness that founds self-development and makes human development as such an auto-bio-cultural achievement (Murray, 2001). In light of its decidedly interpersonal, “decentered” view of human growth and development, the evolution of humanistic developmental psychology must of necessity move in a pointedly multicultural direction. However, a multicultural-humanistic approach to development must balance cultural embeddedness against the integrity of the developing individual. Only in this way would one be in a position to shed light on the situated becoming oneself. Accordingly, a multicultural-humanistic approach to development must be distinguished from postmodern and ego-psychological viewpoints straightaway.

Humanistic developmental psychology’s particular emphasis on selfhood distances it from the mainstream of postmodernism. This must be made clear, as the radical situatedness inherent in humanistic developmental thought does give it a postmodern flavor.
Following Schneider’s lead, humanistic developmental psychology advocates for a conceptualization of self wherein the relative integration of the individual emerges and unfolds (i.e., develops) in a manner that is complex, dynamic, socially and historically co-constituted, and thus pluralistic and multicultural.

The distinction between the self-oriented perspective presented here and an ego-oriented perspective is rooted in a history that goes back as far as Carl Jung’s archetypal studies. For Jung, the ego represented the center of the conscious mind, whereas the self stands at the very center of the personality and is the archetype of all archetypes (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). The self is the integrative archetype most closely associated with the integrating efforts of the developing person. Later, Horney (1950) would make a similar distinction between self and ego in her examination of the developmental conditions of emotional maturation:

In [Freud’s] concept of the “ego” he depicts the “self” of a neurotic person who is alienated from his spontaneous energies, from his authentic wishes, who does not make any decisions of his own and assume responsibility for them, who merely sees to it that he does not collide too badly with his environment. If this neurotic self is mistaken for its healthy alive counterpart, the whole complex problem of the real self as seen by Kierkegaard or William James cannot arise. (pp. 376–377)

Likewise, Richard Knowles (1986), in his reinterpretation of Eriksonian ego psychology in light of Heidegger, noted that psychology too often neglects the “real self” in favor of a myopic focus on the ego:

It is my contention that psychology, in setting the limits for its own discipline, has been involved in a case of mistaken identity with regard to the human being. It has, for
the most part, identified the person with the ego, the rationality, the management functions. (p. 5)

Most recently of all, Angela Pfaffengerger (2005) opined that the most detailed contribution to higher-order, health-oriented developmental ego psychology to date (i.e., Loevinger, 1976) views development according to the traditional Western model of moving from symbiotic states to increasingly differentiated forms of autonomy, independence, and individualism. Pfaffengerger noted that developmental ego psychology has provided a wealth of insight regarding those factors that appear to correlate with health in the specifically adult portion of the life span (e.g., socioeconomic status and complexity of work, education, openness to experience, resilience, identity achievement, greater flexibility and less adherence to social norms, managerial effectiveness, transcendent meditation, and responding to life challenges that are interpersonal, disequilibrating, personally salient, and emotionally engaging). Nonetheless, she ultimately concluded, “Higher levels of ego development do not necessarily mean that people have optimal development during adulthood” (p. 288).

Pfaffengerger went on as follows: “Ego development theory, and the accompanying emphasis on intrapsychic differentiation and cognitive complexity is but one conceptualization of what is desirable in adulthood. Alternate formulations may instead focus on the harmonious interaction of the individual with the environment” (p. 289).

Simply put, ego psychology remains too closely tied to the rationalist ethnocentrism of the West. Thus, Loevinger’s (1976) characterization of the ego is one of a master trait that “integrates emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal aspects of functioning” (Pfaffengerger, 2005, p. 281). Emphasis is placed on functioning rather than on being. Moreover, the lived body is absent in this integrative depiction of the ego. This ego-psychological viewpoint stands in contrast to Winnicott’s (1965) descriptions of holding and handling as facilitative of body-ego formation, which acts as a “blueprint for existentialism” and founds the emergence of the true self (p. 86).

To reiterate, the view espoused here is that human development is best understood as an auto-bio-cultural achievement. The human autos is duly recognized as substantive in its own right, but in a nested way that avoids the tendency toward rationalist subjectivity. Beyond its functional aspects, the process of becoming oneself is ever situated, embodied, and being centered. Thus, for a humanistic developmental psychology to lay claim to its inherently multicultural roots, it must avoid an unreflective bias toward a developing “subject” that is stereotypically Western-individualistic, Caucasoid, masculine, and logical. At the same time, it must avoid the impulse to bypass the relative integrity of the developing individual in favor of an analytical focus on the diverse systems (from the biological to the historical) that provide the occasion for human development to occur.

**ACTUALIZING THE NASCENT MULTICULTURALISM OF HUMANISTIC DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY—II: THE NARRATIVE BASIS OF THE SITUATED BECOMING ONESELF**

Culture is perhaps best defined as “a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life” (Matsumoto & Juang, 2013, p. 15). Accordingly, no element is closer to the heart of culture creation than language. As Montagu (1970) noted,
Considered biologically as well as socially the limiting factor which prevents nonhuman animals from functioning at a level equivalent to that at which human beings function is the comparative genetic fixity of their behavioral potentialities, their comparative lack of behavioral plasticity or educability. Instead of having his [sic] responses genetically fixed as in other animal species, man is a species that invents its own responses, and it is out of this unique ability to invent and to improvise his responses that his cultures are born. The most important vehicle through which educability is effected and expresses itself is speech or language. Again, man is unique in the degree to which he possesses this faculty. (p. 49)

Languages are what Lev Vygotsky called cultural tools, communicative meaning networks such as systems for counting, mnemonic techniques, algebraic symbol systems, works of art, schemes, diagrams, maps, mechanical drawings, conventional signs, and so forth (Wertsch & Tulviste, 1992). As Wertsch and Tulviste (1992) noted, employing a cultural tool does not simply make it part of a process that would have otherwise occurred as is. Rather, it changes the very structures of mind and action such that culture “alone” is not what is significant but how culture is appropriated with its available tools in the life of the creative-productive individual in-the-world-with-others. Language, thus, provides an exemplar for understanding the dynamic relationship between the developing individual and her or his contextual milieu.

Human development implies time. Situated becoming oneself is a temporal unfolding. Here again, language takes on a vital significance. As Cobb (1977) observed,

To be meaningful, the dimension of time must achieve expression in some pattern. Like music and other coordinations with biological rhythm that transcend sheer animal heritage, language must achieve sequence, must have beginnings and endings, and must possess some characteristic of the “good gestalt” that give shape and structure to meaning, whether in the linear causal sequences emphasized in Western cultures or in the reticulate approach to knowledge and perceptual worlds more characteristic of many Eastern and preliterate cultures. (pp. 48–49)

When married to the cultural dimension of language, human becoming (i.e., human development) becomes a narrative unfolding. Development is transformed into a dynamically unfolding story (McLean, Pasupathi, & Palls, 2007). As Ricoeur (1992) noted, “Telling a story is saying who did what and how, by spreading out in time the connection between these viewpoints” (p. 146). Elsewhere, he went on, “The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character” (pp. 147–148). Human development begins preverbal, but the cultural field into which all human beings are born is saturated with language, symbolically constructed in advance of our arrival. When it comes to human development, every individual story originates within the story of the (m)other and the stories of which she herself is a part (DeRobertis, 2012).

In effect, a multicultural-humanistic approach to human development must be a narrative approach to human development. From this perspective, human development cannot be adequately understood without a basic recognition of the cultural meanings embedded in the metaphors, symbols, and myths that permeate the developing individual’s contextual milieu (McAdams & Pals, 2006; McClary, 2007; Murray, 1986, 2001). Mythos, in particular, provides the fullest, most possibility-laden occasion for the authoring of a relatively coherent life story, which is a process that implies interactive being-in-the-world-with-others.
from its outset. Thus, Rollo May (1991) demonstrated the dangerous, disintegrating effects of attempting to live in a world without myth on both a social and a personal level (Hoffman et al., Chapter 9, this volume).

To be sure, this line of thought was not unique to May. Erich Fromm (1973) highlighted the importance of developing a frame of orientation in life. A frame of orientation provides goal directedness, emotional stability, and a sense of wholeness that orients the person in the direction of loving rather than using the other (i.e., an orientation of being over having). According to Fromm, children have an especially deep need for a frame of orientation. Healthy development hinges on its development because the frame orients the individual outside of herself or himself, away from egocentrism, narcissism, and other destructive tendencies (conceit, arrogance, jealousy, etc.). When development lacks a frame of orientation, development is easily led astray by falsified ideologies that promise to provide “answers to all questions,” paving the way for bullies, autocrats, and tyrants to annihilate diversity (p. 260).

Along similar lines, Gordon Allport (1979) identified a unifying philosophy of life as critical to human growth and development, the ultimate expression of which is a health-conducive form of tolerant, ethics-based religiosity. Viktor Frankl (2000) saw resilient selfhood as perpetually transcendent and oriented toward both a secular and an eternal logos, the latter of which he termed ultimate meaning. In his later years, Kohlberg (1981) postulated a “metaphorical” transcendental morality of cosmic orientation (p. 344). Kohlberg believed this stage of growth to have an existential, ontological thrust, constituting a form of ethical orientation that transcends “rational science and rational moral philosophy” (pp. 354–356). According to Kohlberg, this optimum level of social functioning corresponds roughly to Fowler’s (1976) highest stage of faith development, wherein the evocative power of symbols is actualized through the unification of reality, mediated by the symbol-immersed self (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 334). From all of these brilliant minds emanates a common theme: that the situated becoming oneself is the emergence of a unique life story nested within a multitude of larger stories to which a debt of gratitude and responsibility is owed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overview

Human development is rooted in being-with-other people, primordially an embodied being-with-the-mother. The devoted mother provides the basis for human growth and development by establishing a co-constituted sense of meaningful being with her child that transcends the mechanical removal of need tensions. From a specifically humanistic developmental perspective, healthy human development is grounded in an existential copresence that exceeds adaptive ego functioning. This copresence provides the raw material for confident, sustained, undistorted world openness and psychological genuineness. It mobilizes the developing individual’s creative-productive imagination in the service of achieving increasingly multifaceted forms of relative personality integration. This is a narrative process occurring in time with others. Human development is in each case a unique, dynamically unfolding story that emerges from within a field of stories that permeate the particular culture in question. Accordingly, human development is a situated becoming oneself that is an auto-biocultural achievement.

Implications

This view of human development rests on the assumption that healthy human development is reliant on a cultural context steeped
in narratives that lend themselves to meaningful personal integration. There does not appear to be any strict limitation on the variety that such narratives can take. Cultural life narratives can emanate from a bewildering array of sources. Thus, there have been many attempts to identify the core constituents of culture throughout history. For example, Max Weber considered values, beliefs, and social organization to be core components of culture (Allan, 2005). Clifford Geertz (1973) identified culture with ideology, religion, artistic forms of expression, and common sense. Similar to Geertz in his emphasis on commonsense knowledge, Jerome Bruner (1990) considered folk psychology to be essential to any understanding of culture. Triandis (1996) defined culture in terms of shared attitudes, beliefs, norms, roles, and self-definitions. More recently, Klein and Chen (2001) characterized culture as involving age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, geographic location, education level, marital status, parental status, ability/disability, socioeconomic status, and languages. In light of the diversity inherent in cultural contexts, developmental narratives and human development itself must inevitably be conceptualized in multicultural terms when viewed from a humanistic developmental perspective. In agreement with Cohen (2009), “All people are in fact multicultural” (p. 200). Thus, as Segall, Lonner, and Berry (1998) noted, when psychology as a whole develops its requisite cultural sensitivity, the notion of “cross-cultural” psychology will have become redundant (p. 1108).

Yet there is no possibility of a thoroughgoing relativism here. Not all stories are equal when it comes to authoring a life story because there remains, after all, a basic human condition. Narratives that fall short of or contradict the co-constituted sense of being-with that gives rise to development in the first place are not optimal for human growth and development. Thus, cultural contexts that are structured by myths that degrade or deface the primacy of the subject–subject relation constrict world openness and truncate those potentials that would otherwise promote maturity. As Phil Hanlon (2012) of the University of Glasgow has recently noted, it is largely the narratives of unbridled consumerism and modern natural science that have come to alienate human beings from one another. I (DeRobertis, 2012) and others have made similar arguments elsewhere. For example, Ron Miller (2000) says the following with regard to contemporary psychology and pedagogy in particular:

I believe we can accurately describe the dominant psychology of the modern age as fundamentally materialistic, mechanistic, objectivistic, atomistic and, in a word, reductionistic. . . . Schooling in the modern age—every facet of it . . . represents an objectification of human experience, an abbreviation of the life world according to particular ideological imperatives; the world is parceled into “subjects” and “departments” for mechanized interpretation and consumption. (p. 383)

Along similar lines, Plotkin (2008) lamented,

Children have a difficult time learning about the natural world and about real community when they are isolated from both. It’s as if the intention of our educational system were to shape children into industrial humans and consumers of things they don’t need, rather than to help them become fully themselves, belong to a place, create a meaningful life, and contribute to the health of the biosphere and the creation of a sustainable society. (p. 145)

According to Hanlon (2012), the alienation and fragmentation that these authors describe is a direct consequence of the disassociation of the good, the true, and the beautiful from our conceptions of human health and happiness. Cultural discourse in
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potentials for avoiding a dualist bifurcation of individual and culture, thereby healing the aforementioned senses of alienation and fragmentation (Hanlon, 2012). Self-development can be legitimately viewed on the basis of self-cultivation or *bildung*, as it is expressed in German.

A cultural context replete with narratives that give ontological priority to existential *co-being* over adaptive *functioning* and individualistic *having* is optimally conducive to transformational change and the integrative unfolding inherent in healthy human development. From a humanistic developmental perspective, human development is best facilitated when it occurs in a cultural context that is rich with narrative meanings that reflect its inherently *transpersonal* nature. The narratives of such a context would ideally express an ethical mindedness that transcends the strictures of rationalistic worldviews, a care-based ethic that allows the developing individual to imagine a social world based on community feeling and cooperation. The work of forming a unique life story within such a context has the greatest potential to display a sense of orientation, goal directedness, resilience, emotional stability, meaning, and wholeness. This is a conception of self-development and culture that can go “hand in hand,” to borrow Schneider’s (1999a, p. 126) phrase. Culture, on this view, is once again appropriated according to its original agrarian sense, as a *cultivating* factor in the life of a human being. Culture once again becomes the social sustenance of human development, the *cultura animi* or cultivation of the soul that facilitates upbringing and human development across the life span.

Before concluding, it should be reiterated that, in spite of its contextual emphasis, a multicultural-humanistic developmental viewpoint does not advocate any form of sociologism, to use the language of Husserl, or *bald environmentalism*, as Thelen and Smith (1994, p. xv) termed it. Following
Montagu (1970), “No two organisms, no two societies, no two cultures, and therefore no two persons can ever be identical—not even so-called identical twins” (p. 5). This is recognized in humanistic pedagogy:

A primary characteristic of all holistic educators is their profound respect for a spontaneous, creative life force or energy which manifests the ultimate unity of the universe . . . holistic educators have always recognized this creative energy, this ultimate Source of human unfolding which transcends biological and cultural influences. (Miller, 2000, p. 388)

Traditional quantitative methods have been found to be problematic and limited in their ability to shed light on interpersonal relatedness (Berscheid, 1999), cultural phenomena (Arnett, 2008), and creativity (Simonton, 2000) alike. Thus, a multicultural-humanistic developmental viewpoint values idiographic, narrative forms of research to gain access to the self-cultivation process. In agreement with Pfaffenberger (2005),

Achievement of advanced stages of development may require a departure from social norms and be facilitated through a deeply personal exploration. Emphasizing the commonalities in personality characteristics and life events may obscure this fact and hinder a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. One of the most promising directions for future inquiry lies in fleshing out the quantitative data with qualitative observations and methods to gain a better understanding of what individuals at higher stages of development are like, what problems they deal with, and what they have to say about their own development. (p. 298)

The multicultural-humanistic viewpoint commends developmental research that addresses the dynamics of the whole developing person, including disciplined descriptive attempts to grasp development as a meaningfully structured, experiential, and individualized narrative that is nonetheless culturally embedded. In Briod’s (1989) words,

What is needed are innumerable cross-cultural scenes, episodes, moments—narratives lovingly drawn from involved conversations with children and from awakened childhood memories. The goal is to glean something of the texture of the child’s development as it is lived through various cultural conditions, not as it appears problematically to the clinician. (p. 116)

Group averages alone cannot adequately disambiguate the underlying developmental mechanisms of change for an individual, as there are too many complex dynamics related to the context of real-time behavior that affect development (Thelen & Smith, 1998). More to the point, multicultural-humanistic developmental research should not remain exclusively tied to impersonal, third-person, explanatory approaches to development, though their value is granted as a matter of course.

In the final analysis, a multicultural-humanistic approach to human development aims to access the imaginative-integrative impetus and awareness of an individual in order to gain insight into her or his progress toward creatively and collaboratively authoring a unique, relatively coherent life story. In other words, such an approach places significant emphasis on those factors pertaining to the creative-productive imagination throughout human development. In 2009, Maddux and Galinsky published evidence suggesting that people who make an effort to adapt to and genuinely encounter other cultures tend to be more creative than those who remain insular in their native worldview. Data such as these attest to the logic inherent in the views presented here. The synthetic propensities that undergird human development are themselves fundamentally rooted in a multicultural field.
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**Bulleted Summation**

- By virtue of its emphasis on the interpersonal embeddedness of development, humanistic developmental psychology is a perspective that sees the life span as shot through with context-related diversity.

- Humanistic developmental psychology is thus predisposed to evolve by actualizing a nascent multiculturalism.

- From a specifically humanistic developmental perspective, healthy human development is grounded in an embodied, meaning-laden mother–child copresence that exceeds adaptive ego functioning. This copresence mobilizes the developing individual’s creative-productive imagination in the service of achieving increasingly multifaceted forms of relative personality integration in-the-world-with-others.

- Since this is a narrative process occurring in time, human development is in each case a dynamically unfolding story that emerges from within a field of stories that permeate the particular culture in question.

- Human development is a situated becoming oneself that is an auto-bio-cultural achievement.

- Human development is best facilitated when it occurs in a cultural context that is rich with narrative meanings that reflect the inherently transpersonal nature of selfhood.

- The concept of self-cultivation is a viable means for understanding the situated becoming oneself in multicultural terms.

**REFERENCES**


Psychology is deeply rooted in, and reflective of, its social-cultural milieu, and changes in that larger context sculpt the course of psychology’s own development. The rise and dominance of behaviorism during the first two thirds of the 20th century in the United States mirrored the development of industrialization and mass production in this country. The new need for rote, repetitive responses on assembly lines promulgated support for a psychology that promised a technology of manipulation and control of such actions. However, the appeal of the behaviorist paradigm began to wane as the United States moved into a postindustrial society in the last third of the 20th century, and competing viewpoints were finally able to gain ascendency. One of these was the humanistic approach. This movement became a major disputant to behaviorism’s hegemony, a recognition granted by modern behaviorism’s leading advocate, B. F. Skinner. In an evocative end-of-life query “Whatever happened to behaviorism as the science of behavior?” Skinner (1987) attributed this loss primarily to “three formidable obstacles” and listed humanistic psychology as the “number one obstacle.”

In the generation since humanistic psychology’s rise in the 1960s, the world again changed significantly, and these changes have also considerably affected both psychology and the larger culture in which it is embedded. Probably the most consequential of these changes has been the role of technological developments, epitomized by the increasingly transformational place of the computer in so many facets of life. This role has also fostered changes in psychology, resulting in the rise of a new dominant paradigm whose legacy is the computational model of the person. It is with this approach, and this technological culture, that contemporary humanistic psychology is now called to meet in dialogue.

PART ONE: TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS IN PSYCHOLOGY

It has become axiomatic to identify humanistic psychology as the “third force” in American psychology (Maslow, 1968, p. iii), on account of its rise at the time when behaviorism and psychoanalysis were the two major forces in the field. Behaviorism had come to dominate
Within the research tradition, a parallel development—cognitive psychology—also arose as a way of reintegrating the mind back into a psychology that had been systematically stripped of it by behaviorism. This development began with a series of groundbreaking papers by Newell and Simon, laying the foundations for the information processing model (Newell, Shaw, & Simon, 1958; Newell & Simon, 1961; Simon & Newell, 1964), and culminated with their book establishing “human information processing” as the basic premise for an alternative paradigm for psychology (Newell & Simon, 1972). This new psychology was quickly successful at reintroducing cognition into mainstream psychology at the same time when humanistic psychology was doing so from the outside. (For that reason, Skinner identified cognitive psychology as “obstacle number two” to behaviorism’s failure to control the field.)

Newell and Simon were able to persuade psychology to reopen its doors to mental life by means of a key premise: namely, that cognition could be demonstrated by a machine and therefore did not pose a threat to the mechanistic foundation still deemed necessary for psychology’s esteemed scientific status. This premise was seemingly demonstrated by their use of computer models of thinking, in which they showed that programs could be specified sufficiently for computers to perform tasks that it had been agreed involve thinking in humans—chess playing was chosen as the “fruit fly” for this emerging field (Hearst, 1978, p. 197). In that way, the analogy was advanced that people are “information processors” in the same sense that computers are, and so this computational model could account for human thought as well.

During the 1970s and 1980s, this cognitive model was articulated through a plethora of books and journals, along with generous government-funded support of its
On the research side, cognitive psychology succeeded in reintroducing the field to the possibility of utilizing verbal protocols of thinking (Ericsson & Simon, 1983). Such use, however, is extremely truncated by presuppositions of underlying computational processes and mechanisms (Aanstoos, 1983). Nevertheless, it does reopen the door to asking subjects what they are thinking, and to take seriously these data, itself a tremendous advance over the previous behaviorist dismissal of such a technique or the assertion from experimental psychology that subjects in research do not know their own experience and therefore any description from them would be necessarily flawed (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977).

For better and for worse then, cognitive psychology carried the day and continued to flourish as the successor to behaviorism. It was able to shatter the constricting taboos that had stultified the field for so long, while preserving the commitment to mechanism needed for its self-image as a deterministic natural science. In addition, its core metaphor of the computer both addressed and reflected the technological emphases of the wider cultural context. Behaviorism had premised its mechanism on the older model of the automatic telephone switchboard, in which stimulus automatically incited a response: Dial the number, and the telephone rings at the person’s house without the mediation of an operator to connect the caller. In contrast, the newer cognitive model inserted a processing loop, wherein the stimulus became an input, the response an output. In this version, the stimulus alone could not predetermine the response: What emerged would depend on the program whose rules specified the processing to be applied. Inputs of “two” and “three,” for example, might yield an output of either “five” or “six” depending on whether the processing was “add” or “multiply.” As American corporations were relocating their assembly lines to

research projects. Soon advertisements for vacant university positions began soliciting cognitive psychologists to replace the retiring behaviorists, and the paradigm shift was on. Even within clinical psychology, the cognitive model gained preeminence. Cognitive therapy came to so dominate the field of professional practice that even the subsequent order of managed care, with its retrograde criterion of measurable behavioral objectives, only effected a “cognitive-behavioral” meld for psychotherapy.

This changing of psychology’s palace guard created both dangers and opportunities for humanistic psychology. The gravest danger is that the fervor for basic change—the wave on which humanistic psychology arrived—has been largely preempted or co-opted by cognitivism, as cognitive psychologists reintroduce the field to terms such as mind, thinking, and even consciousness. While this new openness offers space where previously it was taboo, it is atavistic in that the “mind” being reintroduced by cognitivism is a “computational” mind—that is, a mechanism as thoroughly mechanical as the digital computer on which it was modeled. In that substitution, a counterfeit revolution supplants the more foundationally radical alternative of humanistic psychology, as its portrait of a mechanistic consciousness occludes the humanistic view of an intentional one (Aanstoos, 1985, 1986, 1987a, 1987b). This cognitive paradigm does also offer certain opportunities for humanistic psychology. On the clinical side, its unremitting emphasis on cognition—a caricature of the previous humanistic insight of the importance of how clients construe their world (e.g., Ellis, 1962, 1973)—allows humanistic psychotherapists to remind the field of the importance of emotions. Even mainstream critics began to accumulate evidence that emotional reactions precede cognitive processing and so are not founded on it (Zajonc, 1980).
Asia, the local workers now needed would be “processors of information” rather than merely unthinking responders to stimuli. The computer model was emerging as the “next big thing,” and a psychology that could contribute to its artificial intelligence would be highly compensated.2

PART TWO: TECHNOLOGICAL TRENDS IN CULTURE

This technologically driven vision wrought by the introduction of the computer profoundly affected not only psychology but the larger society as well. Computer use rapidly permeated and changed the cultural landscape. Its impact is particularly evident in the expanding use of the personal computer and the Internet, in work and home life, and in the innovations these are continuing to bring about. Two crucially consequential developments have emerged from this rapid and wide adoption of these new technologies: huge increases in interactivity and connectivity.

Interactivity. In contrast with earlier transformational technologies (such as print and television), which changed one direction of the relation (how the material was presented to the person), the computer has also changed the way a person can respond to the material—by actively engaging within and individualizingly altering its very presentation. The age-old dream of machines that would respond differentially to people’s wishes (i.e., robots) has come to fruition. But this vastly important change offers both dangers and opportunities because, paradoxically, this very increase in interactivity may come to supplant true interaction. As Sherry Turkle (2011) has shown, people can mistake the computer (or the robot) as sharing an actual empathic awareness of and even an affection or love for the person. From the Tamagotchi to the Furby, to the AIBO, to My Real Baby, to Cog and Kismet, to Paro, robots and/or computers are increasingly taking care of children and the elderly, but they do not care about them. Turkle’s examples, from children interacting with on-screen characters to elders interacting with robots, reveal that the barest simulation of interaction comes to supplant more complicated and more fulfilling relationships. As the simulacra of being cared for replaces actual care, and the recipients think they are loved by machines, a shallowing out takes the place of genuine human relations.3

Connectivity. Likewise, the second development—connectivity—also presents an enigmatic paradox. A great danger is the increasing fragmentation of society wrought by this new arrangement. Not only does it divide people into ever more incommensurable “haves” and “have-nots”—those who have Internet access and those who don’t—it even fragments them from each other. As more people work at home, they do not interact in a common workplace. Time spent on the Internet means less time spent with friends and even with families. Research done at the early phase of this development showed that increasing computer usage results in more loneliness and depression (Kraut et al., 1998). The sad irony is that even though the participants in this research were using the Internet primarily for social contact, its effect was to so reduce their “live” social life that their experience of loneliness and depression increased with their computer use.

Conversely, however, the spread of Internet connectivity can also offer significant opportunities, and specifically those that humanistic psychology may well be best positioned to facilitate. Connectivity, after all, is a form of connection, and the various permutations of encounter and self-disclosure required are exactly what humanistic psychologists
have long been fostering as the keys to personal development. As older forms of civic and social groups and affiliations are being abandoned, the need for newer ways to find and grow community can be facilitated by such online “virtual” communities of mutual interests, which no longer require geographical proximity. Such dispersed “cyber groups” can nevertheless offer significant opportunities for collegiality, and even for profound fellow feeling and friendship, empathy and consolation. From living in “Sim City” to having a “Second Life,” to learning in MOOCs (massive open online courses), to having your “avatar” participate in adventures with thousands of other people in MMOGs (massively multiplayer online games), the Internet has provided an ever-expanding array of connections. Developments from Twitter to Facebook, combined with hybrid devices such as Blackberries, iPhones, iPads, Tablets, and Kindles, have opened a range of social media unimagined just a few years ago.

As adolescents now routinely send each other thousands of texts and tweets a month, researchers have begun asking the basic question of the long-term impact of being raised in such an electronically connected culture. Even recent popular magazine covers pose questions such as “Is Facebook making us lonely?” (Marche, 2012) and “The touchscreen generation: What’s this technology doing to toddlers’ brains?” (Rosin, 2013). The answers given lie in the realm of “It depends on how it’s used”—with much negative and positive potential. Turkle (2011) provides the most insightful warning of how increasing reliance on such technologies can dangerously reshape one’s emotional life, resulting in fewer and more superficial relationships. Her examples of adolescents’ self-portraits on Facebook make the point very clearly that minute preferences for trivial matters (movies, concerts) become pressurized markers for who they are, with the consequence that a simplified, stereotyped (and highly managed) representation of oneself becomes the platform for their social interactions. The psychiatrist Elias Aboujaoude (2012) has expressed concern that the typically more narcissistic and impulsive online “personas” are dangerous because they contribute to the person becoming more impatient and grandiose in life. The great conundrum here may be that as people now communicate more quantitatively, they may do so less qualitatively. As texting, 140-character “tweets,” and similarly sized “status updates” on Facebook become the hallmarks, deeper communication seems boringly tedious in comparison. Internet dating sites that used to require paragraph-long essay answers in one’s selfportrait now just want phrases and multiple-choice replies. And Diplomacy, the classic MPOG of communication, has undergone a significant shift toward players communicating much more superficially than they did a decade ago.

On the other hand, so much really does depend on how these new social media are used. From “Occupy Wall Street” to the “Arab Spring,” the world has seen how electronic connectivity empowered people to come together to face hard realities as well. Steven Johnson, in a series of books over the past decade (e.g., Johnson, 2011), has questioned whether these new electronic connective technologies will be not only self-organizing but also adaptive, so that “the whole is smarter than the sum of its parts.” He strongly argues that this is the case. And Andrew Zolli, the promulgator of the concept of resilience (Zolli, 2012), has argued that their connectivity is precisely the basis for hope that the next generation (those now in their 20s and 30s) will be able to cope with the immense challenges facing the world. He says that it is precisely because “they’ve grown up in a world of normalized social networks,” in which they’ve become “proliﬁgate networkers,” who “are constantly connecting to each other,” that they are “used to working in teams”—a skill he believes will
enable them to “have an enormous impact” (Zolli, 2013).

The computer has also augmented and accelerated another emerging trend related to hyper-connectivity: globalization. Increasingly, production, commerce, and communication are dominated by transnational corporations. This change is true not only for the mass production of goods but even of entertainment. For example, the top 10 grossing movies in almost any country of the world are now produced by Hollywood rather than by their own indigenous film industries (Barber, 1996). In general, preferences in tastes are so adroitly packaged and sold across the world that young people especially are now so branded that they are almost interchangeable, all drinking Coke, smoking Marlboros, wearing Levis, and eating at McDonalds (Aanstoos, 1997; Ritzer, 2000). Beyond such apparently superficial trends lie the more nefarious way in which this Americanization of even basic facets of sociocultural life such as diet and apparel replaces the indigenous customs of eating and clothing that had evolved for centuries to be optimally suited to a particular place and culture. When locally grown foods are replaced by imports, more than taste in food is changed. When such local practices are lost, the sustainable community is destroyed and replaced by a colony of the global monoculture. As Rifkin (2000) shows, in this new era of “hypercapitalism,” all of life becomes a “paid for experience,” and access to it is purchased from giant corporations, as locally shared social connections and responsibilities are replaced by subscriptions, memberships, private schools, private security forces, private parks, and so on. In such a commodity culture, everything becomes a commodity. But such commodification reduces the person from a citizen, participating in his or her social reality, to a consumer, whose sole responsibility is simply to consume more of it. “Having choices” means only the trivial choice of “Brand A” or “Brand B.”

The resultant discontents of our civilization—loneliness, alienation, boredom, meaninglessness—are the new (yet already almost ubiquitously familiar) forms of malaise of this postmodern era (Aanstoos, 1997; Aanstoos & Puhakka, 1997; Lasch, 1979). Related symptoms include the breakdown of civility, manifested in examples such as the increase in various forms of “rage.” While mass shootings in schools or movie theaters garner the headlines, behind the scenes are demographic trends of startling proportions, showing sharply accelerating increases in phenomena such as “road rage” (by drivers toward other drivers on the road), “air rage” (by passengers in planes toward flight attendants or other passengers), “spectator rage” (by parents at coaches or other parents at their child’s sporting meets and games), and electronic rage (through “flaming” comments left on Internet blog sites). Such outbreaks auger a collapse of civility that expresses the broader collapse of the sense of community. Scholars such as Robert Putnam (2000) have documented our growing “social-capital deficit” through statistics that show a decline in participation in social, civic, religious, and work groups—everything from the PTA (parent–teacher association) to bowling leagues, bridge clubs, and garden clubs, to basic neighborliness. The ironic results of this era of hyper-connectivity include a greater degree of social isolation, animosity, and unrealistic reliance on materialistic goods to fill the gap.

CONCLUSION: THE CONTINUING ROLE OF HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

These very dangers also point the way beyond them. And, once again, it is humanistic psychology that can enable that transformative journey. Most particularly, humanistic psychology’s long-developed
increased awareness of our participation in an intermingled culture, fulfilling our deepest spiritual yearnings and leading to the development of a new consciousness. It is precisely this new awareness of our interconnectedness that is needed for the solution to the problems of tribalism, ethnic and economic divisiveness, ecological disasters, and so on. As Norbert-Hodge (1991) depicted so poignantly in her case study of Ladakh, when an indigenous culture is subjected to a massive and sudden takeover by the global economy, it loses its spiritual bearings, and new forms of divisiveness then appear. Differences that had not been problematic before now erupt as if they are age-old fault lines: Buddhist/Hindu, young/old, urban/rural. She demonstrated very concretely and poignantly how these are not inherent but are created and exploited by new economic realities.

Each of these intersecting fields—ecology, holistic health, spirituality—has an intrinsic connection with the heart of humanistic psychology. They offer timely new directions for the field, opening doors to its further development, as ecopsychology, health psychology, and spiritual psychology. Indeed, all three pathways are already under way. In the former, excellent groundwork has been laid by many humanistically inspired scholars (Aanstoos, 2009), especially by Roszak, Gomes, and Kanner (1995), Roberts (1998), Clinebell (1996), Fox, (1995), Howard (1997), Fisher (2002), and Mander (1991). The field of holistic health got its initial impetus from radical thinking by physicians themselves, such as Siegel (1988) and Chopra (1990), often in collaboration with humanistic psychologists, such as Jeanne Achterberg (2002). As more form such intrinsic melds with health care providers, this transdiscipline should provide just the advance needed to finally move our society toward an integral vision, for the problems are truly holistic. For example, a 2012 study by the World Health Organization found that Americans...
are more prone to anxiety than citizens in any other nation. Not surprisingly, the use of prescription painkillers has increased 1,000% in the past two decades.

Regarding spirituality, perhaps the clearest example of the cost to modern society is the specifically spiritual thirst evinced by people today. The emergence of a distinction between spirituality and religion offers humanistic psychology the opportunity to help in this domain as well. Certainly, the current infusion of nontheistic spiritual traditions from Asia, particularly Buddhism, provides the model for much subsequent work (Wilber, 2000). In contrast to the first wave of imported Eastern spiritual traditions in the 1960s (by writers such as Alan Watts and D. T. Suzuki), this current wave finds the domestic soil now more fertile and ready to support these transplants. Popular writers such as Kabat-Zinn (2005) have found a wide and sympathetic audience for meditation practices. More scholarly writers have also begun to integrate Buddhism and Western psychotherapy (Brazier, 1995; Epstein, 1995; Rosenbaum, 1999). Other psychologists are also depicting how to integrate Eastern and Western spirituality into our everyday lives (e.g., Walsh, 2011; Welwood, 2000; Kornfield, 2000).

In all three areas, these new subfields are emerging even as they are yet groping for foundational bases. Even definitional and methodological questions are quite unsettled. While such perplexity leaves some bewildered and discouraged, this very openness also provides significant opportunities to work out these basic issues in the most optimal, rather than dogmatic, ways. Doing so will be crucial. Indeed, these foci will be the keys to the next generation of humanistic psychologists, just as the books by May and Frankl in the 1950s on the quest for meaning were for the first generation.

NOTES

1. While the computer simulation model championed by Newell and Simon remained preeminent, it was not the only approach to a cognitive psychology. Ulric Neisser developed the most prominent alternative not based on computer models (1967, 1976). He differentiated his own approach, which seeks more concretely lived manifestations, as the “low road,” in contrast to the “high road” of abstraction taken by the computer modelers (Neisser, 1982, p. xi). However, even Neisser’s approach is abstract in that it posits certain inferred “schemata” as mediating the perceptual and cognitive relations of person and world. As these inferred schemata are not given in experience, his theory remains therefore bound to certain assumptions of processing that leave it removed from the realm of immediate experience (Wertz, 1987).

2. In the past 15 years, cognitive psychology has become ever more deeply immersed in new developments in brain science, effecting a new “cognitive neuroscience” amalgam. To explore this branch in detail would require a whole other story, but like this one, it has its parallel challenges and opportunities for humanistic psychology. The challenge is once again the old threat of the reduction of the human order to the physiological: consciousness becomes construed as brain function, following a presupposition set very early and starkly in neuroscience (e.g., Crick & Koch, 1990, 1995). The opportunities lie in the dawning realization that consciousness affects brain function and even structure (Rao, 1993; Siegel, 2011). This insight is sparking interesting lines of research regarding notions of selfhood and new subfields in emotional and social neuroscience (for foundational thinking in this
regard see Cacioppo, Visser, & Pickett, 2012; Damasio, 1999; Thompson, 2003; Zahavi, 2005).

3. The artists, as usual, lead in portraying this trend. From the proto-punk band Devo in the 1970s to the more recent electronic dance music band Daft Punk, musicians performing as robots seditiously reverses this trend of robots performing as persons.

4. This work will include many facets, for example, from efforts at “resisting McDonaldization” (Smart, 1999) to organizing international meetings devoted to alternatives to consumerism, such as the “Alternatives to Consumerism” meeting in Thailand organized in 1997 by Elizabeth Roberts, among others (Sivaraksa, 1997).

REFERENCES


INTRODUCTION TO PART III

This is a remarkable new era for humanistic research and theory building. As we saw in the previous part of this volume, there is a wealth of humanistic cross-fertilization occurring within psychology, and the trends only seem to be multiplying. The basis for this pivotal moment is complex, but there are at least three developments that are fueling it: (1) the rising discontent with linear and reductionist approaches to psychology, (2) the mounting disillusionment among both practitioners and practice-oriented researchers with conventional empirical research, and (3) the growing allure of alternative (e.g., postpositivistic) epistemologies and methodologies (Bickman, 1999; Cain & Seeman, 2002; Wertz, Chapter 19, this volume). The confluence of these trends is highly auspicious for humanistic psychology. Inasmuch as humanistic psychology has long been critical of and supported alternatives to conventional psychological scholarship, it is in a prime position to provide both guidance and concrete assistance in the rebuilding of the discipline.

Humanistic research (also called human science research methodology) is poised to take center stage in this heightening conflict. To the extent that theoreticians and practitioners look to fuller, deeper, and more holistic modes to understand and “treat” human experience, the human science research paradigm should provide relevant and critical support. The basis for this contention is that human science research prizes intimacy of understanding as much as, if not more than, concision of understanding. In addition, it favors details, complexity, and plausibility over standardization, linearity, and objectification. Although human science does not reject hypothetico-deductive-inductive methods, it views them as adjunctive and in need of experiential supplementation. That being said, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi also makes an important point in the preface to the first edition of this volume about the risks of obscurantism in
human science research and the necessity for critical systematic reflection. Fortunately, there
have been a number of attempts to redress this concern, as we shall see in this part of the
volume.

The virtue of human science methodology is that it can dramatically revitalize psycholo-
gy’s time-honored inquiries—why people think, feel, and act against their ostensible interests;
what motivates people to thrive versus merely exist; why wealth does not automatically buy
happiness; why IQ does not necessarily correlate with morality and adjustment does not nec-
essarily equate with passion; and, finally, how psychology is to respond to the radical altera-
tion of human identity wrought by technology. Going beyond the objective report or measure,
humanistic methodologies can at last return to the subtle and nuanced contexts about which
reports or measures center; moreover, they can open the door to the reassessment of volumes
of inadequate studies—legions of remote nonnaturalistic investigations and scores of anony-
mous and aggregated findings (Shedler, Maymen, & Manis, 1993).

In short, human science research methodology is poised to turn over a new chapter in
empirical psychological inquiry and, indeed, in science itself.

In this part of the volume, we present five representative illustrations of contemporary
human science research. In Chapter 19 (“Humanistic Psychology and the Qualitative Research
Tradition”), Fred Wertz sets the table for these illustrations with his magnificent update of the
qualitative research tradition in humanistic psychology. Although the qualitative tradition is
by no means exclusive within humanistic research, it generally is considered to be the optimal
staging ground within which to situate most person-centered inquiry. Indeed, this under-
standing has just gained notable clout within the mainstream of the American Psychological
Association. As of 2012, the erstwhile quantitative Division of Evaluation, Measurement,
and Statistics of the American Psychological Association (Division 5) voted to authorize an
unprecedented “Qualitative Inquiry” section. This section reflects both the growing constitu-
ency engaged in qualitative research as well as those who support its development. Following
his historical and conceptual overview of the qualitative tradition, Wertz goes on to elucidate
its present and future directions. Of particular note is his eye-opening discussion of Gordon
Allport’s little-known treatise on qualitative research commissioned by the U.S. government
during the 1930s. In this hard-hitting document, Allport formulated one of the most cogent
cases for the supplementation of mainstream inquiry with systematic qualitative inquiry ever
to be proposed. Thanks in large part to developments like the “Qualitative Inquiry” section,
mainstream psychology is revisiting documents such as Allport’s in a new light.

In Chapter 20 (“An Introduction to Phenomenological Research in Psychology: Historical,
Conceptual, and Methodological Foundations”), which begins the “Contemporary Themes”
section, Scott Churchill teams up with Wertz to provide a freshly updated overview of phe-
nomenological research methodology, incorporating both historical and conceptual elements
along with the very latest on guidelines for application. Their case illustration—the experience
of criminal victimization—is both timely and poignant, and it serves as a superb example of
their formulation.

In Chapter 21 (“The Grounded Theory Method and Humanistic Psychology”), David
Rennie and Rinat Nissam provide a completely new chapter on grounded theory methodology,
including the most recent updates concerning design, implementation, and scope. This chapter
is made all the more poignant because Rennie died soon after he completed the chapter, making
the chapter all the more notable as a testament to his profound legacy.
In Chapter 22 ("Heuristic Research: Design and Methodology"), Clark Moustakas, who also recently passed away, furnishes a masterful rendering of his pioneering heuristic methodology. In this now classic document, he details the principles of his approach, the steps by which it proceeds, and the fruits that it reaps for both traditional and nontraditional investigators. Moustakas concludes that, regardless of the “facts” derived, discovery is an essential and ongoing element of inquiry.

Humanistic narrative research is the subject of Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich’s commentary in Chapter 23 ("Narrative Research and Humanism"). With their now acknowledged eloquence, the authors elucidate both the history and the development of humanistic narrative research (including its roots in literature), vivify the current controversies surrounding the research, and survey its copious applications.

Leading off and updating the “Emergent Trends” section is the humanizing voice of Stanley Krippner in Chapter 24 ("Research Methodology in Humanistic Psychology in Light of Postmodernity"). Krippner, a now seminal figure in consciousness research, anatomizes contemporary humanistic research methodology in light of postmodernity. A highlight of his chapter is his keen analysis of the contrasts and parallels between humanistic and postmodern modalities and their potential for integration. Like others in this volume, Krippner concludes that humanistic and postmodern inquiries are richly linked, provide key counterbalances to each other, and broaden immeasurably psychology’s vibrant investigative range.

Psychotherapy outcome research has a long and distinguished humanistic legacy. For a variety of reasons, however, recent humanistic scholars have neglected such research and, ironically, have undermined themselves as a result. Today, this situation is shifting dramatically. In the final chapter of this section, Robert Elliott shows that not only can humanistic outcome research be illuminating, but it can also be methodologically convincing (see also Schneider & Längle, Chapter 26, “Introduction—The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion,” this volume). In his thoroughly updated report (Chapter 25, “Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design: An Overview,” this volume), Elliott offers an overview of the hermeneutic single-case efficacy design. With this groundbreaking synthesis, he brings both depth and finely honed logic to the study of clinical outcomes. Elliott poses a challenge: Can we make humanistic inquiry “transparent, systematic, and self-reflective enough to convince ourselves and others” of its validity? Furthermore, he asks, can we “do justice to each client’s uniqueness while still” determining whether (a) the client has changed, (b) the observed changes are credible, and (c) the changes have anything to do with our work as therapists? With these challenges in mind, Elliott responds with the latest tools at his disposal—the wealth of data that he and his colleagues have amassed.

REFERENCES

One of the most exciting and promising developments in psychology during the late 20th and early 21st centuries was the proliferation of diverse philosophically and scientifically sound research methods within sophisticated humanistic methodologies. This chapter, after spelling out the natural science context in which psychology has developed its disciplinary identity, considers the criteria by which a research method or methodology may be considered humanistic. Next, it takes a sample from the rich tradition of humanistic research in the history of psychology. Then, the chapter focuses on the recent developments in the philosophy of science and in psychology itself that have helped establish the contemporary blossoming of humanistic research methods. Finally, the challenges of employing humanistic research methods are articulated.

**PSYCHOLOGY AS A NATURAL SCIENCE**

No trend in modern psychology has been more conspicuous or more pervasive than the attempt to make psychology a natural science. With this has come the often witting, and sometimes subtle and unwitting, reduction of the human to the nonhuman. This trend is evident in behaviorism, which attempted to define the subject matter of psychology in terms of physical observables, with no distinction in principle from that which was applied to nonhuman animals. This trend is evident in many theoretical orientations, such as contemporary evolutionary psychology, which explains human behavior by means of evolutionary biology. Virtually every introductory psychology textbook contains a chapter on and pervasive references to the biological foundations of psychology, which explain human behavior using neurophysiology.

This trend of developing psychology on a natural science foundation, although not always present in psychological theories (e.g., personality and social), is nowhere more evident than in the area of research methodology. Psychology proudly identifies its founding date with that of the first psychological laboratory by Wilhelm Wundt. At the top of the agenda in virtually every
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introductory psychology textbook is the conviction that psychology is, first and foremost, a science and that being a science means employing research methods that are based on physical science—the testing of hypotheses. These hypotheses ideally postulate causal explanations and would afford prediction and control. To test such hypotheses, the variables postulated must be operationally defined—that is, by means of measuring procedures. A hierarchy of research methods is delineated, moving up from naturalistic observation to the case study, the survey, correlational methods, and the controlled experiment. Naturalistic observation and case study are given only brief accounts, reflecting their low esteem, and their shortcomings as tests of hypotheses are emphasized. Qualitative methods are considered, at best, useful sources of hypotheses during the early phases of research, prior to the proper claim of scientific status, which ideally rests on the experiment. This same view of science is evident in the American Psychological Association’s (APA, 2002) criteria for evaluating psychotherapy guidelines. Although the experiences of practicing clinicians, along with case studies and qualitative methods, are acknowledged among the criteria, randomized controlled trials remain privileged as the gold standard.

What Is a Humanistic Research Method?

The core of humanism in classical civilization, during the Renaissance, and continuing in modern times is the conviction that humans are different from physical objects and from other animals. Humanists believe that knowledge of humans must reflect those distinctive characteristics. From this it follows that humans, by virtue of what they are, make demands on inquiry that are not encountered by the natural sciences.

This point of view was articulated most clearly within the context of modern science by Dilthey (1894/1977). In his view, the primacy of the positivistic approach of “universal theory-hypothesis-exact test-probabilistic induction” is required of the physical sciences by virtue of their subject matter’s externality to experience and the mutual exclusivity and independent functioning of the subject matter’s various parts. Because physical objects and their elements occur outside of experience and in mere juxtaposition and succession, their connections, interrelations, and functions are not and cannot be observed directly; instead, causal connections must be hypothesized and inferred.

However, Dilthey (1894/1977) argued that it is a fundamental mistake to make this approach the primary, let alone the exclusive, one in psychology because the constituents of the psychological order, as well as their interconnections and organization, are given as internal to mental life itself. The various phenomena and parts of single phenomena in psychological life are from the start interrelated and interwoven in a meaningful organization of mutual dependencies, implications, and interior relations that are accessible directly within mental life. Therefore, psychology “has no need of basing itself on the concepts yielded from inferences in order to establish a coherent whole” (p. 28). Relationships are not added by inference; instead, they are concretely lived and immediately available for reflection (p. 35).

In his famous dictum, Dilthey proclaimed, “We explain nature, we understand psychic life” (p. 27; italics added).

In the Geisteswissenschaften (“human sciences”), description must play a far more profound role than it does in Naturwissenschaft (“natural science”). Methodologically, description provides an “unbiased and unmutilated” view of psychological life in all its reality. Beyond description, in Dilthey’s (1894/1977) view, psychology requires analysis that grasps the wholeness of organizations in mental life and the relations of each constituent with the
whole and with each other. Some of the general characteristics of psychic life found by Dilthey in his analyses are its structural unity, its teleological development, the influence of acquired nexus on every single act of consciousness, the centrality of motivation and feelings, reciprocity and efficacy in relation to the external world, and the irreducibility of each type of constituent (e.g., representation, feeling) to any other (although they always are involved in intrinsic interconnections). Descriptive knowledge such as this is indubitable, according to Dilthey, and objections to this certainty rest on the transference of doubt proper only to the experience of external physical objects.

Dilthey’s (1894/1977) critique of what he called constructive psychology is not a complete rejection. Dilthey objected only to the primary and exclusive use of hypothesis testing as the discipline’s orientation. He believed that after description and analysis carry Verstehen (“understanding”) as far as possible, inference and hypothesis can be used as a supplement. Note, however, that in his integration of natural science methods within human science, Dilthey reversed the methodological hierarchy currently endorsed by mainstream psychology. He placed qualitative, interpretive methods first, viewing them as a preferred way of knowing psychological subject matter, and assigned theoretical explanation and hypothesis testing to a subordinate and heuristic role. The Continental schools of metascience, as developed, for example, by Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl in the 20th century, stressed the need for a distinctively human science that would employ methods suited for a holistic conceptualization of personal experience (Radnitzky, 1973). Interestingly, the natural sciences have not constrained themselves to the mechanistic, experimental models of Dilthey’s time. Modern physics and systems biology have themselves fruitfully adopted holistic methods.

THE HUMANISTIC RESEARCH PROCEDURES: AN UNDERAPPRECIATED TRADITION IN PSYCHOLOGY

Although the 19th-century naturalistic model of science has been dominant in American psychology, qualitative human science methods have been present throughout the history of modern psychology and have provided some of the most significant psychological knowledge (Wertz et al., 2011). There has been a recent revival of interest in Wundt’s cultural psychology (Danziger, 1990), which generated volumes of qualitatively based psychological research that Wundt held to be necessary for the study of “higher” psychological processes. Psychoanalysis has had a long and voluminous history of research, from Freud to the present, which investigates the meaning of human acts by means of contextual understanding. In developmental psychology, Jean Piaget and some of his followers (e.g., Lawrence Kohlberg) stand out as having applied highly sophisticated qualitative methods for answering research questions concerning the origins and development of cognition. The Gestalt tradition in perceptual psychology, including the ecological research of J. J. Gibson, has been primarily qualitative. In social psychology, such work also has been abundant (Marecek, Fine, & Kidder, 1997)—for example, in the very careful research on “group-think” by Irving Janis.

As qualitative research begins to flourish, it is important to remember the often unacknowledged tradition of qualitative research in psychology over the past century. One of three exemplary works, among the finest, distinctively humanistic psychological studies of all times, is William James’s (1902/1982) investigation of religious experience. Another landmark attempt to establish the scientific value of uniquely humanistic research was Allport’s (1942) advocacy of
the use of personal documents. And, finally, Abraham Maslow’s (1954/1987) study of self-actualization is a brilliant classic within the recognized humanistic research in the “third force” movement.

**James’s Investigation of Religious Experience**

The context of James’s (1902/1982) investigation is his recognition that religious experience is a reality that has eluded study by the natural sciences, setting the stage for his uniquely humanistic research:

> The sciences of nature know nothing of spiritual presences. . . . The scientist, so-called, is, during his scientific hour at least, so materialistic that one may well say that on the whole the influence of science goes against the notion that religion should be recognized at all. (p. 490)

This, for James (1902/1982), is part of a larger problem of the scientist in the face of human nature:

> Science . . . has ended by utterly repudiating the personal point of view. She catalogs her elements and records her laws indifferent as to what purpose may be shown forth by them, and [she] constructs her theories quite careless of their bearing on human anxieties and fates. (p. 491)

The subtitle of his volume, *A Study in Human Nature*, indicates that James’s (1902/1982) investigation concerns the distinctively human. This study sets material existence to one side and dogmatic theology to the other to focus methodically on the human experience of religion, what he called personal religion. To accomplish this, he drew on the most diverse sources of data, such as the diaries of mystics and saints from traditions including the Christian, Buddhist, Islamic, and Hindu, and those of the Emersonian transcendentalists, and he then subjected these data to qualitative analytic procedures.

James’s (1902/1982) study is clearly based on an intimate attentiveness to his own personal experience as well as his intense immersion in a staggering array of descriptions of spiritual experiences by other people. His attitude of maximum openness allowed him to see that there is a tremendous variety of religious experiences. He accepted the full spectrum of whatever humans consider to be a contact with “the divine”—that is, the divine as they experience it, whether in the moral, physical, or ritual sphere and whether in dependence, fear, sexual connection, or a feeling of the infinite. James concluded that there is no single essence to religious experience and that the boundary between the sacred and the mundane is misty at best. Yet data of extreme religious experiences enabled James to discern common features through this diversity.

Mystics describe their contact with a mysterious and ineffable presence and are assured of the reality of the unseen. This experience draws us beyond the physical. “It is the terror and beauty of phenomena, the ‘promise’ of the dawn and of the rainbow, the ‘voice’ of thunder, the ‘gentleness’ of the summer rain, the ‘sublimity’ of the stars and not their physical laws” (James, 1902/1982, p. 498). James (1902/1982) brought to light three intertwined, constitutive beliefs: (1) that the visible world is part of a more spiritual (indeed, a loving) universe, from which it draws its significance; (2) that our true end is harmony or unity with this higher universe; and (3) that a communion with this invisible loving reality produces real effects. Because some religious experiences are nearly completely devoid of cognitive content according to his analysis, James held that the feeling dimension of the experience is primary—enthusiasm, courage, a feeling for the great and wondrous things. A new zest,
a lyrical enchantment generates earnestness and perhaps even heroism, an assurance of safety, a temper of peace, and a predominance of loving affections. Furthermore, this pathic experience entails a sense of uneasiness, that there is something wrong with us as we naturally stand and that we may resolve that wrongness through being connected to the higher power—a goodness and rightness that transcends the problematic natural self and world. The conscious self is thereby experienced as continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences occur. In this holy light, shipwreck and dissolution in the natural world are not absolutely final or definitive, for they may open the way to spiritual fulfillment.

James (1902/1982) found, in the lives of “saints,” the fruits of religious experience—the charity, devotion, trust, patience, and bravery that result from conversion and grace. In “saintliness,” spiritual emotions that are only intermittent and fleeting for many, and that James believed are common to all religions, become the habitual center of personal life. Saints experience their being in a “wider life”—not only in relation to God but also in relation to moral ideals and inner visions of holiness or right. The reality of the unseen thereby enlarges their lives. In a friendly continuity between the self and ideal power, surrender of the self engenders elation and freedom as the ego boundaries melt and the emotional center of life shifts toward loving and harmonious (divine) affections. This self-surrender may take ascetic forms, for example, when pleasure is sacrificed to the higher power. One may develop a strength of soul in which mundane realities such as popularity, ambition, and the falsehoods of daily life become insignificant. Sincerity and truth of expression can prevail regardless of their consequences, and all that is “impure” or inconsistent with the higher perfection is easily given up. The saint is able to love enemies, kiss and intimately care for the sick, and endure pain and suffering in service to the greater good. Martyrdom is the triumph of religious imperturbability. Indeed, grace is here given in proportion to the affliction (“as blows are doubled, happiness swoons within”). James contrasted spiritual morality with mundane morality. The latter is heavyhearted, burdened, and effortful, whereas the good deeds that flow from spiritual experience are light and uplifting. For mundane morality, life is war; the moralist tends the sick with tense muscles, holds his breath, and senses impotence, for well doing is but the plaster on a sore it cannot cure. Our hour of mortal death is our spiritual birthday—a happy relaxation with deep breathing in an eternal present, an effortless well-being.

James’s (1902/1982) psychology of spiritual experience is a knowledge that functions evocatively and verges on wisdom. It enriches those who thereby understand the experience and opens one’s heart and mind to this peculiar kind of transcendence as it is lived by oneself and others. Yet this knowledge is also descriptive of the psychological reality under study—rigorously analytical, systematic, and (above all) profoundly empirical. Science unflinchingly confronts the subject matter of human spirituality.

**Allport’s Case for the Use of Personal Documents**

In the course of its efforts to improve the quality of research in the social sciences during the 1930s, the Committee on Appraisal of Research of the Social Science Research Council called for a critical review of works in psychology using personal documents, defined as “account(s) of individual experience which reveal the individual’s actions as a human agent and as a participant in social life” (Herbert Blumer, cited in Allport, 1942, p. 21). In 1940, Allport volunteered for the
task of critically reviewing works in psychology that used documents such as autobiographies, interviews and other recordings, diaries, letters, expressive and projective creations, and questionnaires—data ignored or downgraded by hypothesis-testing research methods. Allport’s report, published as a monograph in 1942 and now out of print for more than half a century, provided a comprehensive inventory of all research in psychology that used first-person expression. Allport focused on the many and varied uses of personal documents in research, the methods employed by the researchers, the various types of personal documents, and the value of such documents. Allport’s monograph is a passionate, sharp-minded, and intellectually courageous attempt to claim the highest scientific legitimacy for the qualitative analysis of first-person accounts of human experience.

Although Allport (1942) recognized the brilliant and fruitful use of these documents by humanistic writers such as William James and G. Stanley Hall, he found that most psychologists used first-person accounts in an uncritical manner. He was struck by the contrast between the prevalence and continual increase of first-person documents in clinical case studies and the paucity of sophisticated discussions of the methodology. He called for the founding of a journal dedicated wholly to the case study, with special attention to the methodology using personal documents. Allport marked the advent of critical use in 1920 and reviewed the “motley array of studies, but in every case interesting, … centered in the basic problems of method” (p. 36) that emerged between 1920 and 1940, taking on problems such as the reliability and validity of the first-person report and the scientific value of personal documents in classification and prediction. In his inventory of various uses, Allport reported on numerous psychological topics, practical applications, inductive theorizing, interdisciplinary investigations, illustrations in scientific reporting, questionnaires, and test constructions. Allport argued for an expansion of scientific practice in psychology beyond the usual “nomothetic” outlook (population frequency and aggregate analyses) and into the truly individual or “idiographic” realm, insisting that the personal document is indispensable as data for both approaches.

Concrete psychology using personal documents prevents science from running “an artificial course” and is particularly necessary in investigations of subjective meaning; personal documents are the psychologist’s “touchstone to reality” (Allport, 1942, p. 184). Most important, the usefulness of personal documents is not merely in providing hunches and hypotheses to be tested by behavioral observation and measurement; nor is their use limited to illustrating knowledge validated using statistical procedures.

Behavioral observation … is inferior to the personal document when it comes to the important region of subjective meaning: experiences of love, beauty, [and] religious faith; of pain, ambition, fear, jealousy, [and] frustration; plans, remembrances, fantasies, and friendships; none of these topics comes fully within the horizon of psychologists without the aid of personal reporting. If these regions of experience are excluded, mental science finds itself confined to a shadowy subject matter. (Allport, 1942, p. 144)

The most important role of personal documents resides in the process of discovery, and they provide their own capacity for validation of both inductive generalizations and insights into regularities governing individual cases. The critical criteria of scientificity—such as understanding, prediction, and control—are met by personal documents when they are properly used in research. Allport (1942) outlined and addressed all criticisms that had been advanced against a concrete psychology
using personal documents and showed that many are irrelevant, trivial, and/or false. Moreover, the genuine problems that arise in the course of applying such a method can be addressed through critical and methodical reflection and use. The genuine limits of the method are in general no more problematic than those of quantitative and experimental methods.

Allport (1942) elaborated a host of ways by which the validity of conceptualizations based on the analysis of personal documents is established, and he made the interesting point that this validity may rightfully exceed reliability or observer agreement. Allport advocated conceptualizing psychological life using personal documents from various perspectives and argued that multiple conceptualizations may be equally valid, echoing the theme of humanism that there are many ways of knowing and many legitimate truths. Allport’s conclusion was that “bold and radical” innovation in research using personal documents should be encouraged in conjunction with the exploration of alternative ways of writing reports and organizing data as well as alternative means of validation, prediction, and interpretation:

Strong counter-measures are indicated against theorists who damn the personal document with faint praise, saying that its sole merit lies in its capacity to yield hunches or to suggest hypotheses. . . . They fail to express more than a small part of the value of personal documents for social science. (p. 191)

Maslow’s Study of Self-Actualization

One of the most well-known contributions of the third force movement in psychology is Maslow’s (1954/1987) groundbreaking study of self-actualization. Maslow, writing in a milieu still dominated by behaviorism, was apologetic about his study. He began his presentation by assuring the reader that the study was not planned as ordinary research and was not even initiated as a social venture; rather, it was a private way of learning for himself. The findings of this study were so enlightening, exciting, and full of scientifically significant implications, however, that Maslow decided to share the study “in spite of its methodological shortcomings” (p. 125). He acknowledged that however “moot” it might be, the study possessed heuristic value. But then, Maslow stated that the subject matter of this research—the healthy personality, one that is of undeniable importance in psychology—might never yield “conventionally reliable data” (p. 125) and therefore required unusual methods. He presented his work “with due apologies to those who insist on conventional reliability, validity, sampling, and the like” (p. 125).

One interesting feature of Maslow’s (1954/1987) study is the manner in which he combined traditional psychological measuring instruments and qualitative procedures. Reversing the traditional relationship, Maslow used measurement in a purely heuristic manner during the initial phase of the study, for example, to screen out individuals who manifested psychopathology. The actual scientific knowledge concerning self-actualization required qualitative procedures. Maslow’s sample of participants included his friends, personal acquaintances, and public and historical figures. He had hoped to also include college students and even characters from fictional works, but as his sense of self-actualization evolved through his encounters with potential participants, they fell short of his criteria.

Maslow (1954/1987) began with a rather commonsense (“folk”) definition including the absence of psychopathology and the presence of “self-fulfillment”; “the maximum use of talents, capacities, [and] potentialities”; a sense of safety, a sense of belonging, the capacity for love, and self-esteem; and philosophical, religious, and axiological bearings
Maslow (1954/1987) likened the data collection to “the slow development of a global and holistic impression of the sort that we form of friends and acquaintances” (p. 128). It was not possible to set up situations as one would an experiment or to do testing with some participants, so Maslow took advantage of fortuitous opportunities that presented themselves in everyday life and questioned participants to the greatest extent possible. Consequently, the data often were incomplete, and a standardized quantitative presentation was impossible. Therefore, Maslow presented his findings as “only composite impressions...for whatever they are worth” (p. 128). Maslow conducted a holistic analysis of these total impressions and expressed his findings by means of a discussion of interrelated themes that characterize the lives of these most psychologically healthy persons.

Maslow’s (1954/1987) findings, which he considered observational, are rich, informative, and provocative, drawn from and descriptive of his data as they reflect a type of composite ideal of the self-actualized personality. Maslow’s description amounts to an empirically grounded delineation of the essence of self-actualization, which he illustrated by means of the empirical details of his cases. The well-known characteristics that Maslow brought to light and clarified with great psychological meticulousness are the perception of reality, an acceptant attitude, a spontaneous style, problem-centered cognition, comfort in solitude, autonomous self-direction, a fresh appreciation of the novel, frequency of peak or mystical experiences, a sense of kinship with humanity, humility and respect for others, a democratic political stance, close interpersonal relationships, strong ethical standards, an intrinsic value orientation, a thoughtful (nonhostile) sense of humor, a pervasive creativity, an ability to resist social pressure, fallibility, an individually based value system, and resolution of dichotomies such as intellect.
including the works of Dilthey, Brentano, and Husserl—gave rise to the phenomenological, existential, and hermeneutic movements in Europe. In America, however, more impact was felt during the latter part of the 20th century by a movement in British and American philosophy that came to be called postpositivism, which has provided probing analyses and critiques of the scientific practice and the self-understanding of scientists.

Popper (1935) asserted convincingly that it is impossible to inductively verify, in any final way, scientific propositions. Kuhn (1962), who studied the changes and revolutions in natural science, demonstrated that progress in science is not continuous or linear but rather involves changes in paradigms—that is, basic and unprovable assumptions, such as the scientist's basic worldview, methods, values, and a host of social processes. Quine (1951, 1960) added to Popper's critique that even an experiment that does not support a hypothesis is not necessarily falsified, for one could challenge the experiment itself as a proper test, meaning that interpretation, not merely mathematical analysis, determines scientific progress. Wittgenstein (1953) demonstrated the essentially linguistic character of science, which precludes any purely objective observational base. Feyerabend (1975), in examining actual scientific work in detail, argued that scientific advances have involved the use of many methods and that methodological pluralism—indeed, anarchy—is often more productive than the hegemony of any restrictive set of methodological norms.

A change in the philosophy of science has taken place. Both Continental and British/American philosophers have devastatingly criticized the positivistic model in particular. They have questioned its capacity for certainty; its exclusion of subjectivity, values, and the larger cultural context; its ability to mirror reality; and the narrowness of its methodological orientation.

BREAKTHROUGH: FORMALIZATION AND SCIENTIFIC LEGITIMATION OF HUMANISTIC METHODOLOGY

Revisions of the Philosophy of Science

One of the most important developments for the social sciences during the 20th century was the growing recognition of the limits of the positivistic conception of science. The continental tradition—
Revolutionary Trends in Psychology

In reviewing the history of psychology since its scientific founding, Giorgi (1970) discovered that during virtually every period there have been diverse criticisms of psychology that have a common root—the discipline’s unquestioned adoption of the natural science approach. Around the same time, Gergen (1973) argued that psychological theory, unlike physics, is limited to particular times and cultures, questioning the appropriateness of seeking universally true propositions and advocating the practice of a narrative interpretation that is more similar to studies in literature, history, and journalism in an orientation called social constructionism. The emergence of cognitive and humanistic psychologies diminished the domination of behaviorism during the 1960s. Both cognitive and humanistic psychologies emphasized human consciousness and the general importance of subjectivity in science and human life and played important roles in revolutionary movements of the second half of the 20th century.

Fishman (1999) pointed out that changes in the zeitgeist have brought constructionism greater authority and prestige in opposition to the dominant natural science approach. This new zeitgeist, dubbed postmodernity, arose during the cultural turmoil of the 1960s and has established a diversification of methods (Fishman, 1999; see also Krippner, Chapter 24, “Research Methodology in Humanistic Psychology in the Light of Postmodernity,” this volume). For example, the cultural forces of feminism that arose during the 1960s and 1970s embraced postmodernism and social constructionism in their questioning of the universal laws governing humans, essentialism, and scientific ways of knowing, which were viewed as masculine. In contrast, feminists have emphasized that research involves a human relationship with the subject matter and should involve cooperation, equality, intuition, feeling, and valuing. The growth of multiculturalism as a social movement has contributed in a similar way to overthrowing the hegemony of Anglo-Saxon science and emphasizing the dignity of the persons researched.

By the end of the 20th century, there was a veritable explosion of alternative methods in psychology as well as a reevaluation of standard methods within alternative epistemological contexts (Wertz et al., 2011). In the past 20 years, a proliferation of new journals, textbooks, graduate courses, and professional associations featuring qualitative approaches has signaled a revolutionary movement in research methods, called “a tectonic change” by O’Neill (2002) and “the fifth force” by Ponterotto (2002). These diversifying trends have self-consciously challenged the hegemony of the natural science approach in psychology. Moustakas (1990; see also his Chapter 22, “Heuristic Research: Design and Methodology,” this volume) has steadily developed heuristic research, which calls for passionate indwelling and first-person involvement on the part of the researcher, who is viewed as a scientist-artist. Phenomenological methods of research have continued to develop (von Eckartsberg, 1986; Giorgi, 1985, 2009; Valle & Halling, 1989; see also Churchill & Wertz, Chapter 20, “An Introduction to Phenomenological Research in Psychology: Historical, Conceptual, and Methodological Foundations,” this volume). Narrative methods have been delineated from a variety of quarters, emphasizing the value of stories as research tools for the generation of psychological knowledge (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Howard, 1991; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986; see also Josselson & Lieblich, Chapter 23, “Narrative Research and Humanism,” this volume). Schön (1983) articulated a research approach that emerges as a form of reflectivity in the course of practice. Neopragmatism
has been suggested as an approach that bases assessments of truth statements on the utility or practical benefits of the knowledge rather than on any presumed correspondence with reality (Fishman, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1992). Grounded theory has been offered as an approach that begins with no hypothesis and moves toward theory generation by using thick description and inductive analyses (Charmaz, 1995; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Wertz et al., 2011; see also Rennie & Nissam, Chapter 21, “The Grounded Theory Method and Humanistic Psychology,” this volume). Ethnographic methods have entered psychology (Miller, Hengst & Wang, 2003), and their wide application has even included studies of natural science and engineering (Osbeck, Nersessian, Malone, & Newstetter, 2011). Feminist research has emphasized the relatedness of the researcher to the participants and the importance of equality, compassion, and sensitivity to the point of view of participants (Aptheker, 1989; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Neilsen, 1990; Riger, 1992). Hermeneutic methods that involve the textual analysis of meaning (drawn from literary and exegetical analyses of sacred texts) offer ways of analyzing the meanings implicit in texts of human action in light of historical context, semantics, literary structure, and social conditions (Parker & Addison, 1989; Romanyszyn, 1991). Skolinowski (1994) called participatory research an approach that uses empathy, communion, and even identification with research participants and subject matters by the researcher, an approach that has been recognized in the Nobel Prize-winning biological research of Barbara McClintock (Keller, 1985). Also drawing on feminist thought is Anderson (1998; Wertz et al., 2011), who detailed the researcher’s use of sympathetic resonance, delight and surprise, reflective listening, “trickstering,” alternative states of consciousness, artwork, poetry, music, and symbols as data in what she called intuitive inquiry. White (1998) advocated the use of what she called exceptional human experiences in psychological science, such as dreams, death-related experiences, mystical experiences, encounters, hypnagogic states, hallucinations, and out-of-body experiences. Fagen (1995) reported the use of research that uses graphic creative expressions and intentionally refrained from any verbal or quantitative analysis or interpretation of these expressions in her study of dreams. Braud’s (1998) program for establishing the validity of psychological research uses, along with a host of more traditional intellectual methods, procedures including body wisdom, emotional reactions, aesthetic feelings, empathic resonance, and intuitions.

Interview methods have been revisited within a sophisticated phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to science (Kvale, 1996). The case study has been revisited and epistemologically rehabilitated in a manner that addresses concerns about bias and generality of findings (Fishman, 1999; Schneider, 1999; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994; see also Elliott, Chapter 25, “Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design: An Overview,” this volume), and it has been developed within a very sophisticated quasi-judicial framework drawn from case law (Bromley, 1986). Historical and archival methods using documents, oral records, and artifacts have been revived (Tuchman, 1994). Spence (1982) argued that psychoanalytic research does not provide historical truth (i.e., knowledge of the way things really were in the past) but does provide narrative truth, which can be judged only by its practical and aesthetic qualities and by whether it is a good and helpful story. Even the experiment itself has been rudely removed from its privileged seat and former context, as some psychologists doubt whether, and wonder how, it will continue to serve the discipline at all. If it is retained, McGuire (1994) reasoned, the experiment might provide a heuristic function in theory construction rather than be used to test theory. Gergen (1994) contended
that experiments might serve as *vivifications* or dramatic rhetorical exhibitions of theory, and Kotre (1992) viewed the truth value of our classic experiments as parables reflecting what history already has taught us but providing a uniquely vivid imagery, a story line, or an unexpected outcome that he considered the “mythical underpinning” of psychology.

Scholarship in the U.S. and British philosophy of science has shown that it is not necessary, or even appropriate, to subordinate these methods to hypothetico-deductive-inductive ones, as the dominant model of science has demanded. With a more widespread and growing sense of their independent scientific legitimacy, and with ever more audibly voiced challenges to the legitimacy of science itself by means of postmodern criticism, the proliferation of alternative methods and the articulation of new methodological norms have not only been growing exponentially but have become institutionalized at the center of mainstream psychological organizations. The Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology joined the American Psychological Association’s Division of Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics (Division 5) in 2012. As a special section of this division, a new journal, *Qualitative Psychology*, began publication in 2013. This revolution in research methods has not been limited to the United States. The division of qualitative psychologists is not the largest one in the British Psychological Society. Watkins and Schulman (2008) have documented the global emergence of liberation psychologies, which feature research methods that honor the experiences of peoples who have been marginalized by Western cultures. Indigenous psychologies have emerged around the globe (Allwood & Berry, 2006), featuring research methods crafted from ways of knowing that are unique to non-Western cultures (Pe-Pua, 2006; see also Srelin & Criswell, Chapter 3, “Humanistic Psychology and Women: A Critical-Historical Perspective,” and Hoffman, Hoffman, & Jackson, Chapter 4, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements,” this volume).

The Society for Humanistic Psychology, under the leadership of Louise Sundarajan, has assembled a task force on indigenous psychology, welcoming psychologists from dozens of countries and featuring resources including innovative, humanistic research methods on its listserv and webpage (http://www.indigenouspsych.org/index.html).

### MEANING AS THE DISTINCTIVE THEME OF HUMAN SCIENCE

The challenge now is for humanistic psychologists to draw on the rich tradition and burgeoning institutionalization of research methods that have been used throughout the history of psychology as well as the many approaches that have been developed during recent years and, in light of a truly sophisticated contemporary philosophy of science, formulate a unified yet diverse methodology in which new norms, progressively expanded in response to the complex challenges of the human subject matter, open up the horizons of psychological science. Psychology will become increasingly faithful to what is most distinctively human rather than remain tied to rigid methods that mimic methods that have been long surpassed in the natural sciences themselves. The central thread running through this movement is the focus on meaning. We have come to understand that psychology is not merely the science of behavior or of experience in and of itself but rather a study of the meaning(s) of experience and behavior for the individual person. Humanistic methodological principles and procedures allow psychology to appropriate the demands and possibilities of studying the meanings immanent in the human experience. With a self-conscious and methodical
focus on how meanings arise in the lives of individual persons, psychology can also form a revitalized relationship with the humanities, the fine arts, and other social sciences in a multidisciplinary convergence on the meanings of human existence.

NOTE

1. The Social Science Research Council was organized in 1923. The council was composed of representatives from seven constituent professional organizations, including the American Anthropological Association, the American Economic Association, the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Sociological Association, and the American Statistical Association, with the purpose of planning, fostering, promoting, and developing research in the social field.

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humanistic psychology and the qualitative research tradition

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In this chapter, we begin with the historical and conceptual background of phenomenological psychology. We then highlight some of the major methodological principles that guide phenomenological research in psychology. After a discussion of procedures that typically are involved in empirical research, we illustrate the orientation by describing a particular application of these methods.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the early 1900s, Edmund Husserl began to develop a “philosophy as rigorous science” called phenomenology (see Husserl (1900/1970). Husserl believed that if science were to fulfill its mission of providing rational knowledge that would enable humanity to freely shape its own destiny, then science must go beyond an exclusive focus on the physical world and take human experience into consideration with equal rigor. Husserl recognized from the beginning that his work, although primarily philosophical, had important implications for the discipline of psychology, the positive science that studies the experience of persons. Husserl believed that psychology, in its efforts to achieve scientific status by imitating the physical sciences of his historical period, had not secured a proper conceptual foundation and methodology for its unique subject matter. Following Dilthey (1924/1977a), he asserted that description rather than explanation would be the best means for identifying the essential constituents of conscious experience. Husserl provided an incisive critique of natural science psychology and delineated a positive scientific alternative that would generate knowledge with a more authentic
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psychologists and psychiatrists in Europe were reading the texts of Dilthey, Husserl, and Heidegger with great care. Jaspers, influenced both by Husserl and by Dilthey’s idea of a verstehende psychology (based on an empathic understanding rather than on conceptual explanation), developed a “general psychopathology” (Jaspers, 1913/1963) that offered a descriptive phenomenology of hallucinations, delusions, dreams, expressions, motor activity, and gestures as well as a comprehensive approach to characterology and “the person as a whole.” Husserl’s phenomenology eventually would find its way into the psychiatric writings of Binswanger (1963), Minkowski (1970), von Gebsattel (1954, 1958), and Straus (1966).

Heidegger’s (1927/1962) analysis of human Dasein gave psychiatry its most radical reorientation by providing a new anthropology as a basis for understanding both the human person and the pathologies of existence. Heidegger’s (1923/1999) early lecture courses explicitly argued that philosophical phenomenology should ultimately be aimed at understanding human factical life in its particular variations (see Churchill, 2013). In his Zollikon Seminars, directed toward an audience of psychiatrists and other helping professionals, Heidegger (1987/2001b) referred back to the “existentials” he had presented in his magnum opus, Sein und Zeit (Being and Time) (1927/1972) as a way of illuminating both the psychological lives of patients and the existential modes of presence particular to healing professionals. Psychiatrists thereby acquired a viable paradigm that took them beyond the description of mental states to the “existence” within which consciousness finds its source and origin (for further elaboration, see Binswanger, 1963; Keen, 1970; Spiegelberg, 1972; van den Berg, 1972).

Other European psychologists associated with the Gestalt movement expressed an interest in phenomenological themes (e.g., Heider,
An Introduction to Phenomenological Research in Psychology

Father Henry Koren and Father Adrian Van Kaam were instrumental in the early development of the philosophy and psychology departments, respectively, at Duquesne. Van Kaam, a Holy Ghost Father from the Netherlands who had emigrated to the United States to become a counseling psychologist, later returned to his “vocation” in spiritual formation, but not before exerting influence on American psychologists to pay more attention to the contributions of European thinkers. While at Duquesne, he wrote convincingly that all psychology, not just clinical psychology, must acknowledge existential foundations (Van Kaam, 1966). Having conducted doctoral research on “the experience of really feeling understood” (Van Kaam, 1959), he delineated an existential-anthropological framework of understanding capable of bringing theoretical unity to the fragmented discipline of psychology and helped set up the master’s program in “Religion and Personality” in 1958, which would be further developed into a doctoral program in psychology in 1962, when Giorgi arrived at Duquesne.

Amedeo Giorgi (1970, 1975, 1985, 2009), hired by Van Kaam to develop phenomenological psychological research methods, brought the existential phenomenological movement to the forefront in America, along with his colleagues and students. Giorgi, having been trained at Fordham in experimental psychology with a specialization in psychophysics, played the central role of articulating the need for a “human science” foundation for the entire discipline of psychology and in developing a “scientific” phenomenological research method that has been applied for decades to a broad diversity of subject matter (see Wertz & Aanstoos, 1999; Wertz et al., 2011). Duquesne became the center of phenomenological psychology starting in the late 1960s, and in 1973, Misiak and Sexton would write that “through its diverse and substantial contributions . . . [Duquesne] has earned the title of the capital of phenomenological psychology in the New World” (p. 62). By the late 1990s, former students and associates of the Duquesne circle were teaching in approximately 50 colleges and universities.
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throughout the United States and Canada (for further elaboration of this history, see Cloonan, 1995; Misiak & Sexton, 1973; Smith, 2002).

Two direct offshoots of Duquesne include the current programs at the University of Dallas and Seattle University, each with strong clinical and interdisciplinary interests. The University of Dallas’s original undergraduate and doctoral programs in “anthropological phenomenological psychology” started in 1972 under the combined leadership of Robert Romanyshyn and Robert Sardello; its current undergraduate and master’s programs in psychology continue to emphasize existential phenomenology, depth psychology, and human science research (Churchill, 2012; Garza, 2007; Kugelmann, 1999, 2011). Seattle University’s 2-year program in existential-phenomenological therapeutic psychology started in 1981, with Duquesne graduates George Kunz and Steen Halling playing key roles in envisioning and developing the program (Halling, 2005; Halling, Kunz, & Rowe, 1994). Independent but kindred developments would include the contributions of Howard Pollio in Tennessee, Clark Moustakas in Detroit, and Max van Manen in Canada, all of whom subsequently utilized phenomenology in developing psychological research methods programatically at their own graduate institutions. Other phenomenologically oriented psychologists like Robert MacLeod (1947) and Ernest Keen (1975) worked individually to promote their applications of phenomenology to the fields of social psychology and clinical psychology.


CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The contribution of phenomenology to the foundations of the positive sciences followed from Husserl’s (1901/1968) resolute challenge: “Wir wollen auf die Sachen selbst zurückgehen . . . [und] wollen wir uns zur Evidenz bringen” (p. 6) (“We want to go back to the ‘things themselves’ . . . [and thereby] bring ourselves to the evidence”). One implication of this statement is that the basic concepts and methodology of each science must rigorously target the essential characteristics of its subject matter—and must, moreover, be based on “evidence.” It suggests that the concrete affairs (Sachen) of everyday conscious life should provide the basis for philosophical reflection. One of the original aims of phenomenology was to complement and contextualize empirical scientific investigations by clarifying the “essence” of regions of study such as nature, animal life, and human psychic life (Husserl,
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Intentionality

Fundamental for any research that attempts to address human experience is an adequate conception of consciousness, which Husserl (1913/1962) put forward in the notion of intentionality. Whereas a nonsentient being has a “nature” that resides within itself, consciousness always is consciousness of something other than itself. Experience must be grasped holistically as a relationship in which the subject encounters an object through its meaning. In perceiving, a perceiver relates to the perceived as something meaningful; for example, water is presented to the thirsty person as a drink, whereas it is presented to the dishwashing person as a cleanser. These are objectively experienced meanings of “water.” Intentionality is fundamentally relational in the sense that consciousness and its object together constitute an irreducible totality. Phenomenological psychology recognizes intentionality in all lived experiences, including perception, imagination, volition, expectation, remembering, thinking, feeling, and social behavior. These are understood as human potentials or aptitudes for relating to the meanings of our situations.

The concept of intentionality does not imply that the various modes of experience are lived through in a clear and explicit way, let alone reflected on by the person. On the contrary, inexactitude and vagueness may be present in the person’s relations with his or her situations. The concept of intentionality expresses the structural and dynamic relationship of self and world, thereby liberating our conceptions of psychic life from traditional philosophical prejudices that place mental life “inside” an “individual,” separate from an “outside” objective or social reality. Sartre (1947/1970) expressed this point rather dramatically:

If, impossible though it [may] be, you could enter “into” a consciousness, you would be seized by a whirlwind and thrown back outside, in the thick of the dust, near the tree, for consciousness has no “inside.” It is just this being beyond itself . . . this refusal to be a substance which makes it a consciousness. (pp. 3–4)

Heidegger (1985/2001a) referred to this fundamental relationship of embodied consciousness to the world, others, and time as relationality, which became the foundation for later psychological and psychiatric investigations (see Churchill, in press, for elaboration).

The Lifeworld

As we move from simple experiential acts to more extended social, life-historical involvements, we continue to find and thematize the person’s illuminating presence to a meaningful transcendent world. These meanings are different for each unique individual, although they can be seen to embrace many common sociocultural structures, such as language. A faithful interrogation of any human experience shows that it is not an isolated event but rather is, according to its immanent structure, a moment of the ongoing social relation between a whole “personality” and the “world” that can be spoken about or revealed through language. The larger-order unity, outside of which no single human activity can be understood, is referred
to by phenomenologists as the *lifeworld* (*Lebenswelt*), which provides the foundation for all scientific inquiries:

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie, or a river is. (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. ix)

One of the fundamental characteristics of the lifeworld is its spatiality, which includes a “referential totality” of equipment, cultural objects, natural objects, other people, and institutions, each of which mutually implies and is inextricably bound up with all the others (Heidegger, 1927/1962). Within this essential context, persons unfold collectively and individually through sharing and each finding and creating his or her own way. This world also always involves horizons of temporality, in which the present, rooted in and retaining a determinate past, acts into and opens onto an ever uncertain future. From birth to death, humans participate actively in and also are vulnerable to and passively caught up in this world that profoundly transcends them. Yet each person experiences this world in its meaningful relevance to his or her own “projects” (i.e., personal goals, interests, and desires), making it one’s “own” world (*Eigenwelt*) and shaping it in however limited ways.

The complexity of the lifeworld is the basis of the diversity of theories, and in relation to it, each theory is partial. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the rootedness of existence in past affective familial relations, behaviorism emphasizes the instrumentality of embodied comportment and its contingent consequences, cognitive psychology emphasizes the calculatively organizing contribution of the individual, and constructionist theory emphasizes the constitutive role of society and culture. Each of these features of the lifeworld is significant and powerful enough to give the impression of being the sole determinant, yet holistic phenomenological conceptualization shows that each is implicitly dependent on all of the others and is an abstraction apart from the whole in which all of them are equiprimordially intertwined and co-essential. Priority would ideally be given to the total lifeworld over any of the partial aspects stressed by one theory or another. The past cannot operate without a present and a future; the family cannot be understood apart from the culture and the individual; instrumental behavior cannot be understood apart from the meaningful cognition of the situation; calculation cannot be understood apart from embodiment, affect, and conation; and social construction cannot be understood apart form the passively given inhereincies of embodied meaning. Phenomenological psychology aims to recognize and even incorporate those achievements of other schools of psychology that genuinely describe aspects of human existence, thereby integrating the diverse emphases that appear antithetical when theoretically abstracted from the lifeworld and postulated as mutually exclusive determinants.

**AN EMPIRICAL METHODOLOGY FOR PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

Spiegelberg (1983) delineated four discernible (although not necessarily sequential) moments in phenomenological psychological research: (1) formulation of the research question, (2) intuitive contact with the evidence, (3) reflective analysis of the evidence, and (4) psychological description. As *moments* of the research process, these do not represent a linear sequence of “steps” but rather
dimensions of the research process that Spiegelberg distinguished for conceptual clarity.

**Formulation of the Research Question**

Like all research, phenomenological research begins with the judgment that our state of knowledge is in some way inadequate or limited. For example, fragmentary or contradictory theories, inconsistent findings, problematic methods, or scarcity of research about a particular subject matter motivates research. Phenomenological research is appropriate when an assessment of the literature leads to the conclusion that knowledge is *not sufficiently descriptive* or *not sufficiently grounded* in a faithful intimate description of the subject matter and that such a description or grounding will better our knowledge. Husserl contended that *eidetic* inquiry (i.e., investigations of the “essence” of a phenomenon) should come first so as to guide empirical inquiry (i.e., collection and analysis of “facts” about a phenomenon) because a clarified understanding of what one is studying is needed so as to target which *variable aspects* require investigation. Phenomenological questions are those that ask about the meaning or essence of what people live through, that is, about its basic constituents and types, how it unfolds or evolves over time, and so on.

**Intuitive Contact With the Phenomenon**

To engage in phenomenological reflection on a given phenomenon, an *intuitive* relationship is needed between the researcher and examples of the subject matter—*direct existential contact*. Intuitive means that the phenomenon is directly accessible to the researcher’s own consciousness; indeed, the German word for intuiting is *anschauen*, which means, literally, “looking at.” Evidence for psychological insight can be obtained from all forms of expression—verbal testimony, written protocols, observed behavior, gestures and drawings, artworks, cultural artifacts, and even media representations. In each case, the phenomenological approach brings the researcher into direct personal contact with the psychological event being studied. Only when such personal access has been facilitated can the researcher begin to acquaint himself or herself with the essence of the event.

Early phenomenological investigations generally consisted of philosophical researchers reflecting on their own experiences. This method remains invaluable and is encouraged, with a full accounting in phenomenological research projects. By the early 1970s, efforts were being made to devise procedures for making other people’s psychological lives systematically accessible in research (Colaizzi, 1969, 1973; Giorgi, 1975; Giorgi et al., 1971). For example, the participant may be invited to express an event that he or she already has lived through or to provide a simultaneous description of an ongoing experience. The researcher may indicate a type of life event and ask the participant to provide a descriptive account of an actual example. It is important that such a description disclose the contours of a particular experience as it occurs or may be relived in remembering with a minimum of scientific rubric, generalization, speculation, explanation, or anything not immanent to the original concrete event. This becomes part of what Giorgi (1976) referred to as “the ideal of presuppositionless description,” which implies that “one does not use language derived from explanatory systems or models in the initial description but [rather] everyday, naive language” (p. 311). The nature and handling of various kinds of “presuppositions” have been the topic of extensive discussion and debate among phenomenologists. Some suggest
that to prevent their inadvertent influence, researchers explicitly reflect on and openly acknowledge their presuppositions as much as possible prior to conducting the research. An open-ended contact with everyday life is thus preferred over experiments or questionnaires, which often manifest biases unreflected on by the researcher. The researcher often will explicitly ask for full details of an event as well as what led up to and followed it. Descriptions may be solicited from the person who lived through the phenomenon or from an “other” who observed someone living through that phenomenon. Descriptions may be simultaneous (as in “think aloud” protocols) or retrospective. More detailed description may be gained through interviewing, for a description that does not include the whole existential context might conceal the significance of the phenomenon (Kvale, 1983). Ultimately, questions directed toward research participants are intended to obtain enough elaboration of the subtle details of their experience to facilitate the researcher’s own imaginative “taking up” and “reliving” of the original experience—a taking up that makes possible a subsequent intuition into the immanent meanings of the experience under investigation.

The researcher’s first step is to look at the evidence. This can consist of direct observation, or in the case of narrative research, it consists of reading and rereading the description(s) so as to begin grasping the sense of the whole. This empathic intuition and intensive amplification of the reality of what the participant described, with the researcher calling on all of his or her powers of understanding so as to sensitively share in the participant’s living, is the first moment of phenomenological method. “It is one of the most demanding operations, which requires utter concentration on the object intuited without becoming absorbed in it to the point of no longer looking critically” (Spiegelberg, 1983, p. 682). By means of this resonating attunement, one begins to understand the other’s position and the rich meanings of the situation described. In “trading places” (Husserl, 1952/1989), the researcher can begin to acquaint himself or herself with the essential meanings and organization of the experience. The phenomenologist aims to make the participant’s involvement the phenomenologist’s own by co-performing it in “intuition”—whether through observation of behavior, reading a narrative, or participating in an interview. (See Husserl, 1910–1911/2006 for his earliest lectures on empathy as a mode of access to the other’s ego and its posittings; see Churchill 2006a, 2007, 2010, for application of empathy to the observation of animals and humans in research settings; see Wertz, 1985, 1987, for further illustration.) While striving to imaginatively project himself or herself into the situation described so as to “re-experience” it (Dilthey, 1927/1977b), the researcher maintains a critical presence, which will serve the subsequent reflective analysis.

**Reflective Analysis of Qualitative Data**

The analytic moment of the research consists of further interrogating one’s intuitive presence to the participant’s description (or observed behavior) to apprehend the individual moments of his or her experience in relation to the whole. In phenomenological reflection, theories, hypotheses, previous explanations, and other preconceptions about the phenomenon are bracketed or held in abeyance. Phenomenology has been defined etymologically by Heidegger (1927/1962) as letting “that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself” (p. 58). The researcher’s posture in this “letting show itself” also has been described as noninterference, open-minded generosity,
wonder, and even love. The researcher lets his or her understanding be informed by the protocol rather than be dictated on the basis of assumptions and preconceptions.

The phenomenological researcher brackets questions and concerns about “what really happened” in the situation described and focuses on the meanings of the situation as experienced by the participant. There is a turning from “given facts” to “intended meanings”—from the simple “givenness” of the situation in the participant’s experience to a reflective apprehension of the meaning of that situation for the person. Descriptive data generally present life situations in a matter-of-fact rendition in which the person’s constitutive role and many important meanings may be highly implicit. The phenomenological reduction places into relief what common sense takes for granted (Natanson, 1973, p. 58). The turn from facts to meanings is a turning from naive description to a psychological reflection in which co-constituted meanings are brought to light.

The researcher openly reflects on the present data, contemplating the participant’s description in a way that allows segments of what is described to be discerned (but not separated) as moments of the participant’s experience. Analysis consists of “the distinguishing of the constituents of the phenomenon as well as the exploration of their relations to and connections with adjacent phenomena” (Spiegelberg, 1983, p. 691). The researcher moves dialectically from part to whole, and then back again to individual parts from a sense of the whole, in an effort to discern and comprehend those relationships in which one finds the psychological significance that speaks to the researcher’s questions in a relevant way.

To the extent that the constituent immanent meanings that fulfill the researcher’s interests are not obvious or clearly stated in the original description, the process of analysis involves “explicitation” (Giorgi, 1970). Phenomenological reflection strives to be eidetic, that is, to distinguish essential constituents from accidental or incidental facts (see Wertz, 2010, for a full treatment of eidetic analysis). It is not just any constituent, implicit dimension, relation among aspects, or pervasive orientation that reflection seeks to apprehend but rather those that constitute the essential or invariant meaning and structure of the experience. Each individual protocol is analyzed in its own right, yielding what have been called individual psychological structures or descriptions of individual instances of the researched phenomenon. These descriptions, insofar as they are truly structural, involve the researcher’s seeing connections among the various moments described within the protocol and formulating an integrative account of the person’s experience.

Phenomenological analysis may strive for varying levels of generality, depending on the aim of the research, ranging from a unique individual to the typical, general, or even universal levels of experience. Constituent meanings essential to a particular experience—say a particular instance of learning—might not be universal but rather characteristic of one of the types. The attainment of various levels of generality, as well as knowledge of what is unique in a particular case, requires qualitative comparisons of different individual cases, real and imagined, in which the researcher strives to intuit convergences and divergences and, thereby, gains essential insight into relative levels of generality (i.e., a structural understanding of individual, typical, and universal features).

**Psychological Description**

Having intuited a sense of the research participant’s lived experience and reflectively analyzed its meanings and structures, the researcher expresses the findings of the reflections in psychological description. During this activity, the researcher articulates his or her
insights in integrative statements that convey the coherent structure of the psychic life under consideration—its various constituents (e.g., temporal phases) and their relations within the whole. The descriptive moment occurs throughout the reflective analysis as the thematization of what has been experienced vicariously, but nonetheless intuitively, within the researcher’s taking up of the participant’s experience (Dilthey, 1927/1977b, p. 130; see also Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. 353). Here, the researcher is not limited to the participants’ words but rather chooses those that best capture the participants’ psychology.

By taking notes as the analysis proceeds, the researcher may begin to express his or her ongoing insights regarding the subject matter, and these descriptions may be incorporated into the final synthetic understanding expressed in the research report. Ideally, all the participants’ statements in the ordinary-language descriptions that are relevant to the research problem are addressed in the researcher’s psychological descriptions, and all of the researcher’s knowledge claims refer to evidence intuitively present in the data. The implications of the new knowledge may then be drawn out, including how it helps resolve theoretical controversies, empirical questions, and/or practical problems.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE APPLICATION

To illustrate phenomenological research in psychology, we offer a study conducted by the second author with Constance Fischer because it remains one of the most explicit accounts of the use of these methods and little theoretical background is needed to understand the research (Fischer & Wertz, 1979; Wertz, 1983, 1985). This project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, focused on the experience of crime victims. The research problem was twofold. To date, there had been no thorough, systematic, and descriptive account of the experience of crime victims. Research had focused on victims’ attempts to reduce violence in criminals, characteristics that evoked helping behavior by others, the experience of victims by others, and various disparate themes, without any integrated understanding of the overall organization and temporal progression of the victims’ experience itself. Our research also had the practical goal of providing a series of public forums in which the victims, police, justice system personnel, and governmental policymakers would gain greater understanding of the plight of crime victims.

Working with a police department in the greater Pittsburgh area in Pennsylvania, five researchers interviewed a total of 50 individuals who had reported crimes against themselves (excluding rape). These interviews ranged from 40 to 90 minutes, beginning with instructions such as the following: “I would like to understand your experience of the crime you reported. Please begin before it happened and describe the events that occurred, including as much as you can remember.” Interviewers used a person-centered listening approach in the collection of data, limiting questions to requests for clarification, filling in gaps, and seeking greater detail. An interview was concluded when the interviewer and participant both agreed that everything the participant had lived through in connection with the victimization had been described.

The interviews were prepared for analysis in a series of steps. After an interview was transcribed (ranging from 8 to 30 pages), the researchers read the transcript openly. To be sure that the researchers gave due attention to every bit of data, they differentiated the interview into “meaning units,” or portions of the text that pertained to a single theme or moment of the experience. Each tended to be from one to about three sentences in the participant’s language. The meaning units then were ordered chronologically, redundancy
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and irrelevancy were eliminated, and the participant’s own words were arranged so that they formed a first-person narrative. Each of these individual phenomenal descriptions (ranging from 5 to 20 pages) was a description of the phenomenal experience of an individual instance of victimization. In one of these, for example, a participant whom we called “Marlene” described going home after work as a waitress. Here is a very abbreviated summary of Marlene’s description, which was about 10 pages:

Marlene noticed that a car behind her pulled into the driveway of her apartment building and assumed that it was a neighbor. When she approached her building’s steps and looked over her shoulder to see why she hadn’t heard the other car’s door close, she was assailed by a man who “must have flown” to her from the car, whose door was still open and contained another male passenger. As the man came upon her, Marlene tried to offer him her purse, but he grabbed her and tried to throw her over his shoulder. She imagined being hurt and even killed by him, determined to fight, screamed, and held on to the railing. After a struggle, when a neighbor opened her window and yelled Marlene’s name, the assailant released her, ran to the car, and drove away. Marlene was terrified for weeks, wondering who the man was, wondering whether he knew her, and expecting him to return. Suspecting that he had followed her from work and could find her there or even leaving her apartment, she fearfully remained home in bed. Unsatisfied with the care she received from her husband and refusing to let him touch her, Marlene thought her marriage would be ruined and planned to return home to her parents “for the arms.” Fortunately, her husband, who had previously lacked sensitivity, “turned it soft” and became her caretaker and protector. He comforted her, installed strong locks, and eventually accompanied her to and from work. Back at work, Marlene stopped flirting with male customers, wore longer skirts, and vigilantly guarded herself against any man who looked at her “the wrong way.”

To her surprise, her originally continual suspicions never turned into anything, and gradually she became more secure. But her life was changed; she avoided going out alone at night, she no longer engaged affectionately with strange male customers, and her husband remained a great deal more nurturing than he had ever been before.

The researchers then began the psychological analysis of each individual instance by reflecting on each meaning unit in order. The basic attitude of the researchers was one of empathy, dwelling on and magnifying each detail of the experience and concentrating on the meaning of the situation as it was experienced by the participant. In considering each meaning unit, the researchers reflected on its relevance for the psychology of the victim’s experience as expressed in the protocol, aimed to grasp implicit meanings, distinguished different moments or constituents of meaning, considered the relationship of each meaning unit to each other and to the whole, identified recurrent meanings, imaginatively varied the case so as to discern what was essential to its meaning, and put the findings of these reflections into language. The individual psychological structure of each instance of victimization thereby generated was several times longer than the participant’s original description.

The individual psychological structure of Marlene’s experience was both seen and described as consisting of five temporal phases, presented in a highly abbreviated form in the following paragraphs. In this type of research, one often strives for an “isomorphism” between the lived experience and the psychological account of that experience, hence the term structure.

1. Before victimization, Marlene experienced the world as safe, meaning that she could pursue her end of going home after
work as a free agent. Others were experienced as a relatively harmonious community, as exemplified by her flirting with strangers at work and interpreting the car following her as a neighbor’s. Victimization in this phase was merely an unthematized possibility.

2. The actual experience of victimization occurred through a very subtle process, beginning with what Marlene called her “fear over my shoulder,” which arose when she did not hear the other car’s door close. It culminated in a new existential organization involving Marlene’s perception of a detrimental other, the absence of any helpful community, and vulnerability—the loss of her own agency in the situation. This new experiential organization initially was fraught with uncertainty, surprise, and shock (“What does he want from me?”) but quickly was filled in by Marlene’s imagination of being raped, murdered, or “messed up so bad it’s not worth living.”

3. An active struggle ensued so as to overturn this new existential organization. Marlene tried to overcome her confusion and shock by swift understanding. She saw the car door open and anticipated being kidnapped and never seen again. She tried to offer the other money in lieu of herself, imagined a host of terrible possibilities, and resolved to resist. She held on to the rail and screamed, thereby reasserting her agency, countering the other’s detrimentality, and summoning helpful community. This effort, along with her neighbor’s response, was successful in bringing the actual victimization to an end as the detrimental other took flight.

4. The experience of victimization, however, was not over. Marlene continued to live through each of its constituents—the detrimentality of others, the absence of helpful community, and the loss of personal power. In this light, many things in her world changed their meanings. The ring of the phone or a knock on the door “sent [her] through the ceiling” because she “was sure it was him.” Her sense of her husband’s insensitivity became so heightened that, after dreaming of him raping her, she would not let him touch her. Indeed, she experienced her husband in terms of both “detrimental otherness” and “absence of help.” Customers at work, whose company she had enjoyed, became potential predators. The meanings of victimization spread throughout Marlene’s world—in her life at home after the attack, in her contact with the police (who manifested the meaning of absent helpfulness), in her relations with her husband, and in returning to work. By far, the most profound, extensive, and complex experience of victimization occurred after the actual event, through multiple experiential modalities—thinking, imagining, dreaming, perceiving, and anticipating. Correlatively, Marlene’s greatest struggle to overcome this new existential structure occurred after the event. Through her active efforts—including vigilant perception, avoidance and curtailment of risky behavior (e.g., flirting), the demanding of sensitivity and protection from her husband—Marlene recovered some of her lost personal agency and power. Customers at work proved themselves to be friendly, and her husband assured her that “I’m not the guy” and, more important, “turned it soft.” These gifts from the world gradually restored the meanings of friendliness and respectful supportive community on the part of others.

5. After the victimization, the world horizon of safety and Marlene’s sense of free agency were restored. But even though she no longer thinks of victimization thematically, her psychological life is changed in a host of ways that attest to the meanings of victimization. Marlene’s efforts to overcome the possibility of being victimized now are habitual ways of life. She wears longer skirts, does not flirt, avoids the gazes of strange men on the street, and does not go out alone at night. Her husband escorts her often and has become much more caring. She keeps the door locked and does not keep identification in her purse. Although the meaning of these changes (among others) is the negation of victimization, they attest to
imaginally varying the 50 instances they collected so as to arrive at an understanding of what generally is essential to the psychology of victimization. The researchers realized, in this way, that the struggle against victimization is not universal and that neither is the final phase of "recovery and integration"; one can be hurt or even killed without any restoration of agency, helpful community, or removal of detrimentality, as in repeated victimization or kidnapping with endless torture, not to mention murder. They decided to focus their research on the more typical "struggle with victimization" and elaborate how this struggle may be successful rather than to restrict their findings to what evidently is universal. To this extent, the researchers allowed their findings to be limited to the trends of their data that reflected the relatively successful recovery from victimization. Perhaps another type of psychology would be brought to light in the cases of victims who suffered repeatedly and/or were not able to recover from or transcend their experience.

The researchers offered general psychological discourse in a two-page summary (Wertz, 1985, pp. 192–193), in greatly elaborated detail with deepening reflections and multiple detailed illustrations from their data (Wertz, 1985, pp. 193–213), and in a form designed to provoke understanding and meaningful discussion among the lay public (Fischer & Wertz, 1979). Because of spatial limitations, here we offer only a very skeletal or distilled version of such general results, without any illustrations.

On the ground of a usual situation involving a freely enacted task, in a familiar situation with the meaningful horizon of social harmony and safety, one is shocked by the emergence of victimization—an other detrimental to one’s preferred situation made the victim prey to antithetical purposes, and the vulnerable person is relatively powerless as an ongoing possibility. In this new order, Marlene has incorporated victimization in transcending it.

Through a series of further analytic operations, the researchers proceeded to attain a more general knowledge of victimization. First, some of the findings in individual psychological structures appeared immediately to be general. For example, the five temporal phases in Marlene’s experience noted earlier and the constituents of victimization—detrimentality, loss of agency, and absent community—seemed to be quite general. This is possible because meanings already go beyond the facts of the individual case, to which they are not necessarily limited.

Second, explicit comparisons of different individual psychological structures yielded many commonalities. The five stages and three constituents of the core experience were found in all 50. For example, before the victimization, all participants re-experienced events in terms of the horizon of friendly community, as did one family returning home after a vacation when they saw their front door ajar and thought that it must be the neighbor’s kids playing until, inside, they witnessed their house ransacked. The meaning of detrimental other was present in all, whether in the form of muggers, unseen and unknown robbers, or known vandals. All participants reexperienced victimization in a variety of experiential forms throughout their worlds, for example, in dreaming (of the “Peeping Tom” appearing one night), anticipating (kids on the street snatching the person’s purse), thinking (about who might have overturned the car), or philosophizing (it is a dog-eat-dog world, and people just let it go on that way).

Third, the researchers moved beyond the 50 instances of victimization provided by their interview data by imagining yet other possible instances of victimization and

its existence as an ongoing possibility. In this new order, Marlene has incorporated victimization in transcending it.
to stop this even though it is against his or her values and will. The victim immediately struggles to overcome the disruptive shock by understanding in order to eliminate the detrimental other, to restore helpful community, and to regain the lost agency/power—and thereby to return to his or her preferred situation. When this incident is over, the person continues to live in the horizon of victimization; that is, the person elaborates the constituent meanings in various situations throughout his or her world through recollection, perception, anticipation, imagination, and thinking. The person struggles to overcome the more broadly elaborated profiles of victimization as they now lurk, as an imminent danger, throughout his or her world at large. Through the person’s own active efforts, help from others, and the world’s repeated reassertion of noninterference and safety, victimization moves from being an impending actuality to being an unlikely or remote possibility within the newly restored horizon of social harmony. By so elaborating and overcoming victimization, that is, by eliminating the ongoing risk, the former victim shapes a new existence in which victimization is integrated—both conserved and surpassed. Former victims vary from one another according to the particular way victimization was surpassed; for instance, some are more self-reliant, and some are more dependent on helpful others. This new existence is preferred relative to victimization but not necessarily preferred over one’s life before victimization (Wertz, 1985, p. 191).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Verifiability of phenomenological findings depends on whether another researcher can assume the perspective of the present investigator, review the original protocol data, and see that the proposed insights meaningfully illuminate the situations under study.

Thus, the chief point to be remembered with this type of research is not so much whether another position could be adopted (this point is granted beforehand) but [rather] whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoints as [those] articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he/she agrees with it. That is the key criterion for qualitative research. (Giorgi, 1975, p. 96)

Posing the question of validity in absolute terms (i.e., “Is this study valid or invalid?”) tends to be unfruitful. All research discloses only a limited truth, that is, a truth limited by the researcher’s procedures and perspective. Phenomenological researchers attempt to articulate those limits reflectively and honestly, and additional limits may be discerned by others whose scholarship and reflections bring additional perspectives and procedures to bear. The validity of research findings, therefore, is not contingent on whether they are entirely similar to those of other viewpoints. According to the phenomenological approach, it is not possible to exhaustively know any phenomenon, and different viewpoints can be valid (Churchill, Lowery, McNally, & Rao, 1998; Wertz, 1986). In other words, other perspectives, perhaps rooted in different research interests, and their corresponding intuitions, always are possible and contribute in a complementary manner to our knowledge of “the whole.” In the end, the value of the findings depends on their ability to help others gain some insights into what has been lived unreflectively. Other insights from different viewpoints may then supplement, and thereby extend and possibly even radically decenter, what always is essentially a partial knowledge of human life. But this does not imply that “anything goes”; phenomenological findings must be able to be evidenced by concrete prescientific experience
of oneself and others. “The main function of phenomenological description is to serve as a reliable guide to the listener’s own actual or potential experience of the phenomena” (Spiegelberg, 1983, p. 694). In the end, what makes phenomenological knowledge “true” is its fidelity to experience as it is concretely lived in the lifeworld.

REFERENCES


The grounded theory method of qualitative research was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a way of developing sociological theory from data, alternative to the usual method of using data to test theory developed rationally. Since then it has been taken up in many disciplines, such as nursing, education, and business administration. It has also been introduced to psychology (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Rennie, Phillips, & Quartaro, 1988). Indeed, a literature search has shown that, among 4,840 articles pertaining to qualitative research published in psychology journals, when compared with 31 other methods of qualitative research listed by Madill and Gough (2008), the number of articles involving the grounded theory method ranked second behind content analysis (Carrera-Fernandez, Guàrdia-Olmos, & Peró-Cebollero, 2012).

Although Glaser advocates that the method may be applied to numerical data (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967), he has had few followers in this regard. Instead, the method has usually been applied to verbal data, including documents of various kinds, the literature, notes of field observations, or reports on experience that are either written or given orally and transcribed. When applied to the study of experience, it shares a place with other qualitative research methods such as the descriptive phenomenological psychological method (Giorgi, 1970, 2009), heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990), interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), and narrative analysis (e.g., Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; Polkinghorne, 1995).

The Method’s Procedures

and methodology (theory of method) are at play here (in addition to the above writings by Charmaz, Henwood, & Pidgeon, and Rennie, see also, e.g., Bryant, 2002; Dey, 1999; Rennie, 1998, 2000, 2012, in press; Rennie & Fergus, 2006). These issues are too complex to be addressed in this chapter. That said, several procedures are common to all versions. First, data are gathered and analyzed concurrently, whereby the analysis at any point informs what kind of data to seek next and how that might be done best (theoretical sampling). Second, in aid of modeling the phenomenon under study, sensitizing concepts are applied to it under the stricture that they must prove to be borne out by the data. Third, the data are subjected to constant comparative analysis to derive their meanings, represented as codes/categories. Fourth, the latter themselves are constantly compared, leading to a hierarchy of increasingly abstract categories. Fifth, in the interest of parsimony, the categories judged most important are selected. Sixth, theoretical sampling is utilized until, within the chosen scope of the study, all meanings of the acquired data are represented by the categories (saturation of categories), whence the acquisition of data may be brought to a close. Seventh, throughout the entire process the researcher records in a research diary (theoretical memos) assumptions, speculations, surprises, and so on; these memos play an increasingly important role in the development of the theory.

Like all qualitative research methods, the grounded theory method is time-consuming. A given text as a whole is reread several times. Its passages are then dwelled on intensely. In this in-dwelling, the analyst both immerses himself or herself in and reflects on the passages, as in heuristic research (see Moustakas, 1990), the descriptive phenomenological method (see Wertz, 1983), and thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2006). The resulting categories are checked constantly against not only new data but also those already collected (because on its conceptualization, the given category may now be evident in previously analyzed text) until stability of conceptualization is achieved. As the analysis proceeds, new categories may be conceptualized, and existing categories are kept as is, modified, pooled into other categories, or discarded for lack of sufficient evidence. When a focal phenomenon in a localized domain is addressed, saturation of categories may eventuate after 6–10 protocols have been analyzed, although, as we exemplify below, the method has been applied to larger aggregates.

In the early version of the method, especially, Glaser and Strauss characterized it as producing either substantive or formal theory. A substantive theory is tied to the initial domain of enquiry, as when the theory they called “status passage” (Glaser & Strauss, 1965) was derived from studying dying patients in hospitals, a passage that they characterized as unscheduled and undesirable. A formal theory achieves broader generality by sampling from additional domains. Thus, for example, as discussed in Glaser and Strauss (1967), status passage could be moved in the direction of formal theory by the study of alternative status passages, such as getting engaged to be married (unscheduled and desirable) and becoming a prisoner (scheduled and undesirable). More recently, however, it has been suggested that both kinds of theory are middle range (Dey, 1999). Meanwhile, there has been a shift from seeing the method as a means of producing theory yielding causal explanations of phenomena to looking on it as a way of producing grounded understandings of them (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dey, 1999; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992; Rennie, 1998, 2000).

There is also the question of what the method produces on the idiographic–nomothetic knowledge continuum. On the one
hand, the uniqueness of the individuals under study is absorbed into the categories conceptualized to represent the experience of the aggregate of which they are members, which inclines the method toward the production of nomothetic knowledge. On the other hand, when excerpts from individual accounts are used to illustrate categories, the uniqueness of individual experience is given expression. On balance, the method can be seen to contribute to both kinds of knowledge.

THE GROUNDED THEORY METHOD AND HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

When applied in sociology, naturally, groups and institutional structures are focused on more than individuals. Alternatively, when used in psychology, attention is usually paid either to individuals or to small aggregates of them, such as focus groups. In these enquiries, interest is almost always on individuals' experiences. For example, they may be experiences of engaging in psychotherapy, whether as a client (Levitt, 2001; Rennie, 1992; Schneider, 1985), a therapist (Crossley & Salter, 2005; Rober, Elliott, Buyssse, Loots, & DeCorte, 2008), or both (Angus & Rennie, 1988); meaning in life (Bhattacharya, 2011); achievement of insight (Levitt et al., 2004); living with a terminal illness (Nissim, 2008; Nissim et al., 2012; Nissim, Gagliese, & Rodin, 2009); being a father of a dying child (Davies et al., 2004); grief (Chan & Chan, 2011; Johnson, 2010); shame (Brown, 2006; Van Vliet, 2009); gender (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harris, 2010); risk taking among college students (Dworkin, 2005); religious fundamentalism (Adamovová, 2005); and religious identity formation (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008). The morality, identity development, personal agency, existential angst, and search for meaning displayed in such studies are in keeping with the interests of humanistic psychology.

An Example of the Method

To illustrate the method, we have drawn on a study by the second author (Nissim, 2008; Nissim et al., 2012) on the experience of living with advanced cancer. She was a member of a research team whose main interest was in terminally ill patients' desire for hastened death. A large sample of patients with either Stage IV gastrointestinal (GI) or Stage III or IV lung cancer (all typically indicate an estimated life expectancy of 6–18 months) was recruited, and the participants were given several questionnaires, including one assessing the desire for hastened death. All participants had been informed when consenting to the study that they might be approached to be interviewed.

Out of this sample, Nissim recruited over a 3-year period 27 participants, 20 with GI cancer and 7 with lung cancer (the groups were disproportionate because in the larger study patients with lung cancer were recruited 18 months after the recruiting of the GI cancer patients began, at which point Nissim was well into extensive theoretical sampling of the latter and needed comparatively fewer lung cancer patients to reach saturation of categories).

This was a longitudinal study in which, contingent on the progress of the participants’ illness and other factors, Nissim interviewed 11 participants once, 11 twice, 2 thrice, 1 four times, 1 five times, and 1 six times, for a total of 54 interviews in all. The follow-up interviews were generally conducted 2 to 4 months apart, with the subject matter of previous interviews being smoothly integrated into the latest one. Nineteen of the participants died during the course of the study.

Although some of those involved in the quantitative study were as young as 21, Nissim recruited none under 40 years, to make her
sample more representative of the population of patients with advanced cancer. Among these participants, she began by comparing those with high versus low scores on the “desire for hastened death” scale. Thereafter, she theoretically sampled the participants in the usual grounded theory way.

She began each interview with the opening query “What’s life like for you these days?” Within the flow of the ensuing reply, she made specific probes on the will to live, thoughts about suicide, what is most important right now, morale, thoughts about the future, the progress of the illness, and, at the end of each interview, whether or not there was anything that needed to be added and what the experience of the interview was like.

On transcription of each interview, Nissim proceeded to analyze the given transcript as follows. She read it several times to get a general sense of its meaning. Then, starting at its beginning, she broke it into passages, called “meaning units” (MUs) (see Rennie, 2006; Rennie et al., 1988; for details on how this tactic compares with that of Giorgi, 1979, see Rennie, 2012). These are passages of text out of which the analyst educes (i.e., draws out) one main meaning along with, as often happens, one or more subsidiary meanings. The MUs ranged from a few lines to a page or so of transcript. Nissim conceptualized all meanings educed from the MUs as categories. When doing so she drew on experiential phenomenological philosophy (Gendlin, 1962, 1997), as recommended by Rennie and Fergus (2006), whereby she focused on her embodied felt sense of the meanings of the text as an aid to conceptualizing the categories. She used the software NVivo (Version 2) to help manage the text. Throughout the study, she regularly consulted the members of her dissertation supervisory committee.

Nissim reflexively disclosed that she had expected “the interviews to be dominated by stories of loss, burden, and suffering and was surprised at the interviewees’ expressions of personal agency and resourcefulness in navigating their new life circumstances” (Nissim et al., 2012, p. 368). Similarly, as the study proceeded, as she reported she became aware of the influence on her of Kübler-Ross’s (1969) famous five-stage model of psychological adjustment to advanced illness (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance), finding herself judging what stage the participant was at; and had had to wrest herself from this framework in order to get closer to the transcripts and understand what they conveyed.

In collaboration with her supervisory committee, the core category (see Note 2) she eventually conceptualized is “Living in the land of the living/dying” (Nissim, 2008). This metaphor conveys that, on learning of their diagnoses, the participants were now on a new existential terrain. Prior to entering it, they had lived in a world where the thought of dying had always been projected into the future. This projection was now no longer possible. Knowing that they were actually about to die was now keen, like living with a time bomb or being on death row. As one participant put it,

Death doesn’t scare me. I’m not afraid of dying but it’s something that you don’t want to think about. You think, “I want to live another 10, 15 years” but you can’t think that way anymore because you don’t know. You’re sort of under a cloud . . . I don’t know what you would call it. Like a person in death row in prison. It’s something like that. You know you’re gonna die. (Nissim et al., 2012, p. 369)

In the results, supporting the core category are 2 main categories, namely (1) land of living/dying and (2) striving to grow. These main categories subsume 9 third-level categories, which in turn subsume 6 fourth-level, and 12 fifth-level categories, for a total of 29 subcategories or properties of the core category (in the method, which can easily result in hundreds of descriptive categories,
The Grounded Theory Method and Humanistic Psychology

Turning to one's family physician and/or a practitioner of alternative medicine to help deal with the side effects, coping with shifts from one treatment regimen to another, and dealing with the consequences of a clinical trial when assented to. The side effects themselves were often risky, making engaging in treatment like “rolling dice” or “playing poker,” as the participants put it.

A second way of employing the tactic was by considering suicide as an exit plan, as the ultimate means of control when life is no longer worth living. As one participant remarked,

>The idea of suicide gives me some relief. It’s a question of control because ultimately I feel like I should be the one in control, not somebody else. So for me it’s a really important option, whether I exercise it or not. Probably depends on how sick I feel, if I feel like I’m being tortured. (Nissim et al., 2012, p. 372)

Thus, the idea of suicide provided solace, but it was only an idea because among those participants who were interviewed several times, it was clear that the exit plan of suicide was repeatedly rejected in the present moment. Time after time, they concluded that life in the present was still worth living and left the option of suicide for more difficult times in the future.

When venturing to strive to grow, the participants also engaged in valuing life in the present, to make as much out of life in the time remaining. The achievement of this goal did not involve doing things as much as being appreciative of what they had in the present. One way this was done was to make positive comparisons between themselves and those who were less fortunate, as when a participant reflected,

>Everybody’s gonna have their turn dealing with trials and sufferings and some deal with it the minute they are born till the day
Another way was conservative planning. Some of the participants described this as a “trick”: It is best to be pessimistic about what is possible in the future because if bad news comes then one will be less disappointed; and so, for example, one participant planned nothing beyond the next medical appointment. Still, it was hard to rein in plans that, for another person, are made without thought; for example, one participant rued,

A friend of mine asked me if I wanted to travel with him next month, and it was such a struggle to say, “Sure, I’d love to do it. I’m not sure I’m gonna be able to, but I’d love to.” So even thinking that far is far. I mean that’s about as far as I care to think about the future. (Nissim et al., 2012, p. 375)

Finally, although the participants rarely talked about it in such terms, we gradually came to read into their reports that they were highly engaged in creating a living legacy, in establishing an infinite future. One way this was expressed, and which they did talk about, was by putting affairs in order. This activity included handing over financial and other responsibilities and distributing their belongings to others. These activities were consistently described in terms of wanting to ease the burden on the family and to make a lasting impact on the lives of loved ones. Sometimes this was not easy, as when one participant had to make his own funeral arrangements because his wife refused to accept that he was dying.

In addition to practical matters, they also put their spiritual and social affairs in order by reflecting on their lives, solidifying their life story, and preserving it by talking about it and putting it in writing. It also involved saying good-bye, reconnecting with those who were important to them in times gone by, or organizing family reunions, all in a way of fostering being remembered and consolidating how one’s life had been worthwhile. Creating a living legacy by putting their affairs in order was less pertinent for individuals who were raising young children, however, as illustrated poignantly by the mother of a young child:

Will he remember that I played baseball with him or that I was lying in bed? So even when I don’t feel like it and even when I’m too tired I’ll play baseball with him because that’s what he’ll remember . . . I’m just worried I’m going to be this blank in my son’s life. That’s actually a major worry for me. If I will be remembered or not . . . I mean it’s partly ego too. You sort of want to be remembered, but it’s partly for him. Because I don’t want to be dismissed. I don’t want him at 20 to say, “Oh, yeah. My mom died when I was 4. I don’t remember her.” And I’ll just be unimportant. And that may happen and I’ll be dead so it won’t affect me but it’s not want I want for him. Not at all. (Nissim et al., 2012, p. 377)

The participants also contributed to their living legacies with gestures of altruism as a patient. They often talked about how being in the grip of advanced cancer enabled them to be positive role models of how to deal with dying, and to teach important life lessons to their family, friends, and even the medical staff. They also reported gaining satisfaction from contributing to lore about treatments, whether through participation in a clinical trial or otherwise. And they disclosed that consenting to being interviewed was part of the same altruism in that they saw publication of their experiences as a gift to the world. Moreover, as can be seen in the following quotation, participation in the
today, meaning that patients today comparatively are at home more and thus more engaged with the experience and action that involves.

We see implications of our understanding for treatment, particularly in terms of how practitioners might relate to patients during their trajectory of dying. Practitioners’ awareness and support of the goals we have conceptualized in light of the interviewees’ reports may help mitigate despair and sustain meaningful living with terminal disease.

In conclusion, a criticism often made of the grounded theory method is that it breaks up holistic experience. Another is that it is objectivistic. Taken at face value, both criticisms fly in the face of humanistic psychology, which prizes both persons’ subjectivity and keeping it holistically intact. Meanwhile the debate on the best way to do grounded theorizing makes it difficult for those considering the method to know which way to turn.

Nevertheless, the method in one form or another has been applied to many topics that relate to humanistic psychology, whether intentionally or not. Moreover, approaches to the method have been developed in recent years that characterize it as involving the joint creation of meaning by participants and researchers. Also, as seen in the above example of the method, it is possible to present the relationships among categories in a way that does much to retain the holism of experience. All said and done, the grounded theory method is one way of illuminating humanistic psychology.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This grounded theory enquiry into patients’ experiences of living with advanced-stage cancer was surprising and edifying in revealing the many ways in which our participants actively and positively enriched their lives up to the point of the active dying phase of their illness. This understanding does not correspond especially well with the stage model developed by Kübler-Ross, although it does relate somewhat to her ascription of hope to dying patients. However, for her that is the hope for a cure; the positive thinking displayed by our participants was much broader than that, as seen.

Part of the difference between our understanding and hers is that she took the perspective of practitioners whereas we, of course, gained the perspective of the patients themselves, and in the free-flowing way made possible through an interview. Another is that when she did her study, patients were hospitalized to a greater extent than is done

NOTES

1. Glaser and Strauss apply the term code to concepts tied closely to the data and ostensibly descriptive of them, while they use the term category to refer to more abstract concepts, usually derived from codes. In our view, even a code is interpretive, whence it is simpler to think of the conceptual work as categorizing and to organize the returns of the analysis in terms of increasingly abstract categories (Rennie, 2006; Rennie et al., 1988).
2. Glaser and Strauss emphasize the importance of creating an all-encompassing, or core, category that serves to organize the theory. Users of the method often do not conceptualize a core category, however.

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Heuristic Research
Design and Methodology

from the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-
search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery. The research question and methodology flow
out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration. When I consider an issue, a problem,
or a question, I enter into it fully. I focus on it with unwavering attention and interest. I search
introspectively, meditatively, and reflectively into its nature and meaning. My primary task is
to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness—to receive it,
accept it, support it, and dwell inside it. I awaken to it as my question, receptive, open, and
with full and unqualified interest in extending my understanding. I begin the heuristic inves-
tigation with my own self-awareness and explicate that awareness with reference to a ques-
tion or problem until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw a beginning light on
a critical human experience.

In the process of heuristic search, I may challenge, confront, or doubt my understanding
of a human concern or issue, but when I persist, I ultimately deepen my knowledge of the
phenomenon. In the heuristic process, I am personally involved, searching for the qualities,
conditions, and relationships that underlie a fundamental question or concern.

I may be entranced by visions, images, and dreams that connect me to my quest. I may
come in touch with new regions of myself and discover revealing connections with others.
Through the guides of a heuristic design, I am able to see and understand in a different way. If
I am investigating the meaning of delight, then delight hovers nearby and follows me around.
It takes me fully into its confidence, and I take it into mine. Delight becomes a lingering pres-
ence. For a while, there is only delight. It opens me to the world in a joyous way and takes me
into a richness, a playfulness, and a childlikeness that move freely and effortlessly. I am ready
to see, feel, touch, and hear whatever opens me up to delight.

In heuristics, an unshakable connection exists between what is out there (in its appearance
and reality) and what is within me (in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness). It is “I” who
is the person living in a world with others, alone yet inseparable from the community of oth-
ers; I who sees and understands something freshly, as if for the first time; and I who comes to
know the essential meanings inherent in my experience.
In our 1985 article, “Heuristic Inquiry,” Douglass and I contrasted heuristic research from the traditional paradigm, noting that traditional empirical investigations presuppose cause–effect relationships, whereas heuristic scientists seek to discover the nature and meaning of phenomena themselves and to illuminate them through direct first-person accounts of individuals who have directly encountered the phenomena in experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). We also contrasted heuristic inquiry from phenomenological research, pointing out the following:

1. Whereas phenomenology encourages a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being investigated, heuristics emphasizes connectedness and relationship. (2) Whereas phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definitive descriptions of the structures of experience, heuristics leads to depictions of essential meanings and portrayal of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know.
3. Whereas phenomenological research generally concludes with a presentation of the distilled structures of experience, heuristics may involve reintegration of derived knowledge that itself is an act of creative discovery, a synthesis that includes intuition and tacit understanding. (4) Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, in heuristics the research participants remain visible in the examination of the data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons. Phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics retains the essence of the person in experience. (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 43)

The focus in a heuristic quest is on re-creation of the lived experience—that is, full and complete depictions of the experience from the frame of reference of the experiencing person. The challenge is fulfilled through examples, narrative descriptions, dialogues, stories, poems, artwork, journals and diaries, autobiographical logs, and other personal documents. The heuristic process is congruent with Schopenhauer’s (1966) reference to lyric poetry: The depicted is “also at the same time the depicter” (p. 248), requiring vivid perception, description, and illustration of the experience.

A typical way of gathering material is through an “interview,” which often takes the form of dialogues with oneself and with coresearchers. Ordinarily, such an interview is not ruled by the clock; rather, it is ruled by inner experiential time. In dialogue, one is encouraged to permit ideas, thoughts, feelings, and images to unfold and be expressed naturally. One completes the quest when one has had an opportunity to tell one’s story to a point of natural closing.

FORMULATING THE QUESTION

The crucial processes in heuristics—once one understands the values, beliefs, and knowledge inherent in the heuristic paradigm—are as follows: (a) concentrated gazing on something that attracts or compels one into a search for meaning, (b) focusing on a topic or formulation of the question, and (c) using methods of preparing, collecting, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data.

All heuristic inquiry begins with the internal search to discover, with an encompassing puzzlement, a passionate desire to know, and a devotion and commitment to pursuing a question that is strongly connected to one’s own identity and selfhood. The awakening of such a question comes through an inward clearing and an intentional readiness and determination to discover a fundamental truth regarding the meaning and essence of one’s own experience and that of others.

Discovering a significant problem or question that will hold the wondering gaze and
the passionate commitment of the researcher is the essential opening of the heuristic process. It means finding a path. The question, as such, will determine whether or not an authentic and compelling path has opened, one that will sustain the researcher’s curiosity, involvement, and participation with full energy and resourcefulness over a lengthy period of time.

The way in which the investigator poses the question—the words and the ordering of the words—will determine what activities and materials will bear on the problem and what one will discover. To design a heuristic research study that will reveal the meanings and essences of a particular human experience in an accurate, comprehensive, and vivid way, it is essential that the question be stated in simple, clear, and concrete terms. It is necessary that the keywords and phrases be placed in the proper order. The basic elements of the search are found in the primary words stated in the ordering of the question. The question, as such, should reveal itself immediately and evidently, in a way that one knows what one is seeking. The question itself provides the crucial beginning and meaning, the nature of the searcher’s quest. The way in which the investigator poses the question will determine what fundamental events, relationships, and activities will bear on the problem.

The question grows out of an intense interest in a particular problem or theme. The researcher’s excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Associations multiply as personal experiences bring the core of the problem into focus. As the fullness of the theme emerges, strands and tangents of it may complicate an articulation of a manageable and specific question. Yet this process of allowing all aspects to come into awareness is essential to the eventual formulation of a clear question.

The heuristic research question has the following definite characteristics:

1. It seeks to reveal more fully the essence or meaning of a phenomenon of human experience.
2. It seeks to discover the qualitative aspects rather than the quantitative dimensions.
3. It engages one’s total self and evokes a personal and passionate involvement and active participation in the process.
4. It does not seek to predict or determine causal relationships.
5. It is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, poetry, dialogue, and other creative renderings rather than by measurements, ratings, or scores.

The following are the steps suggested for formulating the question:

1. List all aspects of particular interests or topics that represent curiosities or intrigues for you. Do this freely, jotting down questions and thoughts, even if they are not complete.
2. Cluster the related interests or topics into subthemes.
3. Set aside any subthemes that imply causal relationships. Set aside any subthemes that contain inherent assumptions.
4. Look at all of the remaining subthemes, and stay with them until one basic theme or question emerges as central, one that passionately awakens your interest, concern, and commitment.
5. Formulate this basic theme or question in such a way that it specifies clearly and precisely what it is that you want to know.

Then, as Pearce (1971) exclaimed,

If you hold and serve the question, until all ambiguity is erased and you really believe in your question, it will be answered; the breakpoint will arrive when you will suddenly be “ready.” Then you must put your hand to the plow and not look back; walk out onto the water unmindful of the waves. (p. 108)
In heuristic research, the openness of the researcher in elucidating the question, clarifying its terms, and pointing to its directions provides the essential beginnings of the discovery process. From there, as Kierkegaard (1963) stated so aptly, the researcher must strive to be humble and not hold a single presupposition, so as to be in a position to learn more.

HEURISTIC METHODOLOGY

Having formulated the question and having defined and delineated its primary terms and meanings, the next step is a careful and disciplined organization of methods for preparing to conduct the study. This step is followed by the construction of methods and procedures to guide a collection of data that will illuminate an answer to the question. After the data are collected, they must be organized and presented in a way that depicts and illustrates the themes, meanings, and essences of the experience that have been investigated.

Methods of heuristic research are open-ended. They point to a process of accomplishing something in a thoughtful and orderly way, a manner of proceeding that guides the researcher. There is no exclusive list that would be appropriate for every heuristic investigation; instead, each research process unfolds in its own way. Initially, methods may be envisioned and constructed that will guide the process through preparation for, collection of, and analysis of data. They facilitate the flow of the investigation and aim toward yielding rich, accurate, and complete depictions of the qualities or constituents of the experience. Keen (1975) remarked, “The goal of every technique is to help the phenomenon reveal itself more completely than it does in ordinary experience” (p. 41). Every method or procedure must relate to the question and facilitate collection of data that will disclose the nature, meaning, and essence of the experience.

Bridgman (1950) emphasized that “science is what scientists do. . . . There are as many scientific methods as there are individual scientists” (p. 83). The purpose of a method of scientific inquiry is to obtain an answer to the problem at hand. The working scientist, Bridgman observed, “is not consciously following any prescribed course of action but [rather] feels complete freedom to utilize any method or device, whatever which in the particular situation . . . seems likely to yield the correct answer” (p. 83).

The heuristic researcher constructs methods that will explicate the meanings and patterns of experience relevant to the question, procedures that will encourage open expression and dialogue.

METHODS OF PREPARATION

When I began to study loneliness (Moustakas, 1961, 1972, 1975), it became the center of my world. Everything appeared to be connected with loneliness. I found loneliness everywhere in my waking life—a crucial component of hospitalized children separated from their families, an inherent quality of making decisions that importantly affected others’ lives. It became a significant focus of the people I met with in therapy—whatever their presenting problems—and of my reflections on my own life. I recognized loneliness as a crucial component of solitude and creativity. My dreams were filled with lonely awakenings and encounters. I walked the streets at night and noticed especially isolated stars, clouds, trees, and flowers. I once was confronted by the municipal police and was told that I was violating a local ordinance; lonely, middle-of-the-night sojourns were forbidden. If I did not cease these nocturnal walks, I definitely would be arrested. On one occasion, I was escorted
“experimenter” thinks he is doing and what he considers evidence of what. It is of equal importance to ask what the “subject” thinks is being done and what he considers evidence of what. Since this can change during the course of the experiment, it is appropriate to ask “subjects” what their perception of the experimental design was at each important juncture in the experience. (p. 56)

METHODS OF COLLECTING DATA

Heuristic research investigations ordinarily employ an informal conversational approach in which both researchers and coresearchers enter into the process fully. Dialogue aims toward encouraging expression, elucidation, and disclosure of the experience being investigated. Jourard (1968) showed that self-disclosure elicits disclosure. There may be moments in the interview process when the primary investigators share experiences that will inspire and evoke richer, fuller, and more comprehensive depictions from coresearchers.

The heart of the heuristic interview is dialogue. In Disclosing Man to Himself, Jourard (1968) borrowed from Buber’s writings to emphasize that “dialogue is like mutual unveiling, where each seeks to be experienced and confirmed by the other . . . such dialogue is likely to occur when the two people believe each is trustworthy and of goodwill” (p. 21). Buber (1965) expanded on the values of dialogue:

Where the dialogue is fulfilled in its being, between partners who have turned to one another in truth, who express themselves without reserve and are free of the desire for semblance, there is brought into being a memorable common fruitfulness which is to be found nowhere else. At such times, at each such time, the world arises in a substantial way between men who have been

Methods of preparation in heuristic research include the following:

1. Developing a set of instructions that will inform potential coresearchers of the nature of the research design, its purpose and process, and what is expected of it

2. Locating and acquiring the research participants and developing a set of criteria for the selection of participants—such as age, sex, socioeconomic, and education factors; ability to articulate the experience; cooperation; interest; willingness to make the commitment; enthusiasm; and degree of involvement

3. Developing a contract that includes time commitments; place; confidentiality; informed consent; opportunities for feedback; permission to tape-record; permission to use material in a thesis, dissertation, and/or other publications; and verification of the findings

4. Considering ways of creating an atmosphere or climate that will encourage trust, openness, and self-disclosure

5. Using relaxation—meditation activities to facilitate a sense of comfort, relaxation, and at-homeness

6. Constructing a way of apprising coresearchers of the nature of the heuristic design and its process—that is, the importance of immersion and intervals of concentration and respite

Kelly’s (1969) guidance is helpful here:

Each person who participates should at some point be apprised of what the...
seized in their depths and opened out by the dynamic of an elemental togetherness. The interhuman opens out what otherwise remains unopened. (p. 86)

In heuristic interviewing, the data generated are dependent on accurate empathic listening, being open to oneself and coresearchers, being flexible and free to vary procedures to respond to what is required in the flow of dialogue, and being skillful in creating a climate that encourages coresearchers to respond comfortably, accurately, comprehensively, and honestly in elucidating the phenomenon.

Questions that might guide a heuristic interview include the following: What does this person know about the experience? What qualities or dimensions of the experience stand out for the person? What examples are vivid and alive? What events, situations, and people are connected with the experience? What feelings and thoughts are generated by the experience? What bodily states or shifts in bodily presence occur in the experience? What time and space factors affect the person’s awareness and meaning of the experience? In the process of exploring these questions with coresearchers,

we cannot and should not be unaffected by what is said. . . . On the contrary, it is only in relating to the other as one human being to another that interviewing is really possible . . . when the interviewer and the participant are both caught up in the phenomenon being discussed. (Weber, 1986, p. 68)

The researcher must keep in mind throughout the process that the material collected must depict the experience in accurate, comprehensive, rich, and vivid terms. In heuristic research, depictions often are presented in stories, examples, conversations, metaphors, and analogies.

The interview should be tape-recorded and later transcribed. The basic data for illuminating the question and providing a basis for analysis of the constituents, themes, and essences of the experience come from transcriptions and notes taken immediately following the interview.

To supplement the interview data, the heuristic researcher also may collect personal documents. Diaries, journals, logs, poetry, and artwork offer additional meaning and depth and also supplement depictions of the experience obtained from observations and interviews.

METHODS OF ORGANIZING AND SYNTHESIZING DATA HEURISTICALLY

Immersion and Incubation

The transcriptions, notes, and personal documents are gathered together and organized by the investigator into a sequence that tells the story of each research participant. This may be done in a variety of ways—from the most recent to the most remote event connected with the experience (or vice versa), in the order of actual collection of data, or in whatever way will facilitate full immersion into the material. Essential to the process of heuristic analysis is intimate knowledge of all the material for each participant and for the group of participants collectively. The task involves timeless immersion inside the data, with intervals of resting and returning to the data. The condition of again and again—of repetition—is essential until intimate knowledge is obtained.

Organizing and analyzing heuristic data during the immersion and incubation process may take many forms. Clark (1987), in his study of the psychologically androgynous male, described the process over a period of 5 months. Gradually, the core themes and patterns began to emerge and take shape. To convey a direct contact with the process,
I include the following excerpt from Clark’s dissertation:

I listened to the interview tapes for several weeks before beginning to take notes on them. Very detailed notes were done on each take including extensive quoting and notes on the affect of the co-researcher as he provided the data.

After immersing in the tape and notes of each co-researcher for some time, I developed a reflective portrait of each and contacted him for feedback on the portrait. I received very positive responses. Three co-researchers added information or emphases on certain aspects of the experience, which were then included in their portraits.

The clustering process utilized to place the data before me in one viewable panorama required many days of painstaking work transferring the essential components of the reflective portraits to a six foot by six foot diagram. This was the androgyny map. . . . This resulted in a diagram of over two hundred components of the experience of the psychologically androgynous male. As the map grew, the color-coding system used to cluster related ideas revealed a system of quadrants. Some individual aspects of the experience appeared in more than one quadrant, but each quadrant represented a unique thematic matrix of closely connected components of psychological androgyny. The process of watching these quadrants take shape was fascinating. When the androgyny map was complete, I spent several weeks alternately immersing myself in studying it and incubating by attending to other interests. During this time, many shifts occurred in my perception of the map, and I began to note themes and relationships between ideas which had not been apparent previously. (pp. 94–96)

The Creative Synthesis

Finally, the heuristic researcher develops a creative synthesis—that is, an original integration of the material that reflects the researcher’s intuition, imagination, and personal knowledge of the meanings and essences of the experience. The creative synthesis may take the form of a lyric poem, a song, a narrative description, a story, a metaphoric tale, or an artwork.

To sum up, the data are used to develop individual depictions, a composite depiction, exemplary portraits of individual persons, and a creative synthesis of the experience. In this way, the experience is illuminated. A creative vision of the experience is offered, and unlike the case with most research studies, the individual persons remain intact and fully alive in the experience.

Outline Guide of Procedures for Analysis of Data

1. In the first step in organization, handling, and synthesizing, the researcher gathers all of the data from one participant
(e.g., recording, transcript, notes, journal, personal documents, poems, artwork).

2. The researcher enters into the material in timeless immersion until it is fully understood. Knowledge of the individual participant’s experience, as a whole and in its detail, is comprehensively apprehended by the researcher.

3. The data are set aside for a while, encouraging an interval of rest and return to the data, procedures that facilitate the awakening of fresh energy and perspective. Then, after again reviewing all of the material derived from one individual, the researcher takes notes, identifying the qualities and themes manifested in the data. Further study and review of the data and notes enable the heuristic researcher to construct an individual depiction of the experience. The individual depiction retains the language and includes examples drawn from the individual coresearcher’s experience of the phenomenon. It includes qualities and themes that encompass the research participant’s experience.

4. The next step requires a return to the original data of the individual coresearcher. Does the individual depiction of the experience fit the data from which it was developed? Does it contain the qualities and themes essential to the experience? If it does, then the researcher is ready to move on to the next coresearcher. If not, then the individual depiction must be revised to include what has been omitted or deleted and what is or is not an essential dimension of the experience. The individual depiction also may be shared with the research participant for affirmation of its comprehensiveness and accuracy and for suggestions for deletion and addition.

5. When the preceding steps have been completed, the heuristic researcher undertakes the same course of organization and analysis of the data for each research participant until an individual depiction of each coresearcher’s experience of the phenomenon has been constructed.

6. The individual depictions, representing each coresearcher’s experience, are gathered together. The researcher again enters into an immersion process, with intervals of rest, until the universal qualities and themes of the experience are thoroughly internalized and understood. At a timely point in the development of the researcher’s knowledge and readiness, the researcher constructs a composite depiction that represents the universal or common qualities and themes that embrace the experience of the coresearchers. The composite depiction (i.e., a group depiction reflecting the experience of individual participants) should include exemplary narratives, descriptive accounts, conversations, illustrations, and verbatim excerpts that accentuate the flow, spirit, and life inherent in the experience. The composite depiction should be vivid, accurate, alive, and clear and also should encompass the core qualities and themes inherent in the experience. It should include all of the core meanings of the phenomenon as experienced by the individual participants and by the group as a whole.

7. The heuristic researcher again returns to the raw material derived from each coresearcher’s experience and the individual depictions derived from the raw material. From these data, the researcher selects two or three participants who clearly exemplify the group as a whole. The researcher then develops individual portraits of these persons using the raw data, the individual depiction, and autobiographical material that was gathered during the preliminary contacts and meetings or that is contained in personal documents or was shared during the interviews. The individual portraits should be presented in such a way that both the phenomenon investigated and the individual persons emerge as real.

8. The final step in heuristic presentation and handling of data is the development of a creative synthesis of the experience. The creative synthesis encourages a wide range of freedom in characterizing the phenomenon. It invites a recognition of the tacit
intuitive awareness of the researcher, knowledge that has been incubating over months through the processes of immersion, illumination, and explication of the phenomenon investigated. The researcher as scientist-artist develops an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon. The researcher taps into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and light in synthesizing the experience and in presenting the discovery of essences—peaks and valleys, highlights and horizons. In the creative synthesis, there is a free rein of thought and feeling that support the researcher’s knowledge, passion, and presence. This infuses the work with a personal, professional, and literary value that can be expressed through a narrative, story, poem, artwork, metaphor, analogy, or tale.

This presentation of heuristic research design and methodology has embraced beliefs, values, theory, concepts, processes, and methods that are essential to the understanding and conduct of heuristic research and discovery. Additional parameters of heuristics may be found in my chapter “Heuristic Research” (Moustakas, 1967), in my chapter “Heuristic Methods of Obtaining Knowledge” (Moustakas, 1981), and in my article with Douglass “Heuristic Inquiry” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985).

CREATING THE RESEARCH MANUSCRIPT

Once heuristic interviews have been completed, transcribed, organized, depicted, and synthesized, the research is nearing completion. It is time to present the research process and findings in a form that can be understood and used. I have developed an outline for the manuscript, a guide for presentation of the work of a heuristic investigation. I offer it as one way of bringing together an experience that has profoundly affected the investigator and that holds possibilities for scientific knowledge and social impact and meaning.

Introduction and Statement of Topic and Question

Out of what ground of concerns, knowledge, and experience did the topic emerge? What stands out (one or two critical incidents in your life that created the puzzlement, curiosity, and passion to know)? Does the topic have social relevance? How would new knowledge contribute to your profession, and to you as a person and as a learner? State your question, and elucidate the terms.

Review the Literature

Discuss the computer search, databases, descriptors, keywords, and years covered. Organize the review to include an introduction that presents the topic reviewed and its significance and that provides an overview of the methodological problems, methods that describe what induced you to include the published study in your review and how the studies were conducted, themes that cluster into patterns and organize the presentation of the findings, and a summary of core findings relevant to your research that differentiate your investigation from those in the literature review with regard to the question, model, methodology, and knowledge sought.

Methodology

List and discuss the methods and procedures developed in preparing to conduct the study, in collecting the data, and in organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the data.

Presentation of Data

Include verbatim examples that illustrate the collection of data and their analysis and synthesis. Discuss thematic structures, and
illustrate. Include depictions of the experience as a whole, as well as exemplary portraits that are vivid, comprehensive, alive, and accurate. In the presentation of data, include individual depictions, a comprehensive depiction, two or three exemplary individual portraits, and a creative synthesis.

Summary, Implications, and Outcomes

Summarize your study in brief vivid terms, from its inception to its final synthesis of data. Now that your investigation has been completed, how in fact do your findings differ from the findings presented in your literature review? What future studies might you or others conduct as an outcome of your research? Suggest a design for one or two future studies. What implications of your findings are relevant to society, to your profession, and to you as a learner and as a person? Write a brief creative conclusion that speaks to the essence of your study and its significance to you and others.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

This has been a lengthy journey. The heuristic process is rooted in experiential time, not clock time. Once one enters into the quest for knowledge and understanding, once one begins the passionate search for the illumination of a puzzlement, the intensity, wonder, intrigue, and engagement carry one along through ever-growing levels of meaning and excitement. It is as if a new internal time rhythm has awakened, one rooted in a particular absorption and in a sustaining gaze, a rhythm that must take its own course and that will not be satisfied or fulfilled until a natural closing occurs and the rhythm has carried out its intent and purpose.

Heuristic research processes include moments of meaning, understanding, and discovery that the researcher will forever hold on to and savor. Feelings, thoughts, ideas, and images have been awakened that will return again and again. A connection has been made that will forever remain unbroken and that will serve as a reminder of a lifelong process of knowing and being. Polanyi (1962) touched on this relationship in the following passage:

Having made a discovery, I shall never see the world again as before. My eyes have become different; I have made myself into a person seeing and thinking differently. I have crossed a gap, the heuristic gap, which lies between problem and discovery. (p. 142)

NOTE

1. This chapter is adapted from an article of the same title that appeared in the Person-Centered Review (1990), 5(2), 170–190.

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**SELECTED HEURISTIC STUDIES**


Narrative Research and Humanism

Ruthellen Josselson
Amia Lieblich

The recent burgeoning of interest in narrative inquiry in the social sciences reflects a deep discontent with the sterile legacy of logical-positivistic, objectified discourse in relation to human experience. As psychology has evolved into the study of neurological and cognitive processes, of personality traits distributed among five factors, and of the behavior of undergraduates in contrived situations, consideration of the enduring dilemmas of the human condition has been eclipsed. “It seems as if a lot of people have been waking up after a long and strange slumber, asking: Why don’t we study people?” (Freeman, 1998, p. 27).

Although rooted in quite a different philosophical tradition, narrative approaches to understanding people share common ground with humanistic psychology and can be seen as a present-day heir to this tradition. Like humanism, narrative psychology attempts to restore the experiencing person to the center of interest and to regard the person as complex, unified, and existing in context.

Although classical approaches in humanistic psychology objected to research, the type of research they found objectionable was that based in objectification of others, exemplified by the laboratory experiment or the forced-choice questionnaire. Humanism necessitated a fundamental change in the approach to research before it could be viewed as consistent with the values and ideals to which a humanistic psychology aspired. In this chapter, we attempt to show that the approach inherent in narrative forms of research, a movement that has been growing throughout the past two decades, provides a means of making the humanistic enterprise empirical.

Narrative psychology and humanism are allied in taking issue with the fragmented, variable-oriented, objectified approaches to understanding that have grown out of psychology’s emulation of the philosophy and methodology of 19th-century physics. For both, the aim is greater understanding rather than prediction and control. Fundamentally, narrative approaches stand in opposition to logical positivism and take as a rallying cry the postmodern critique of positivism. Rooted in hermeneutics and phenomenology, narrative psychology regards meaning making as central and requires reflexivity about the process, both within the person being studied and within the person doing the study. Narrative discourse recognizes the contextual nature of all knowing and focuses on the phenomenology of the actor, his or her intentions and self-understanding.
Partly out of disillusionment with the often trivializing boundaries of positivistic empirical research and partly in response to the feminist critique of research that privileges certain cultural positions and excludes the voices of women and others who have been outside the mainstream, psychological researchers have begun to resurrect narrative as a way of trying to grasp the complexity of the individual living in a society, culture, and historical time. Within contemporary psychology, Bruner (1986) has most championed the legitimization of what he called “narrative modes of knowing.” This mode privileges the particulars of lived experience rather than logical-positivistic constructs about variables and classes. It is an effort to approach the understanding of lives in context rather than through a prefurred and narrowing lens. Meaning is not inherent in an act or experience but rather is constructed through social discourse. Meaning is generated by the linkages that the participant makes between aspects of the life he or she is living and by the explicit linkages that the researcher makes between this understanding and interpretation, which is meaning constructed at another level of analysis.

The so-called narrative turn has marked all of the social sciences. Over the past 15 years or so, narrative research and the concepts of narrative and life story have become increasingly prominent in a wide area of human and social sciences—psychology, education, sociology, and history, to name just a few. Besides being used to explore specific topics, narrative studies are flourishing as a means of understanding personal identity, life course development, culture, and the historical world of the narrator.

In psychology, these new paradigms, in contrast to the traditional ones, have as their aims understanding and describing rather than measuring and predicting, focusing on meaning rather than on causation and frequency, on interpretation rather than on statistical analysis, and recognizing the importance of language and discourse rather than reducing to numerical representation. These approaches are holistic rather than atomistic, concern themselves with particularity rather than with universals, are interested in the cultural context rather than trying to be context free, and give overarching significance to subjectivity rather than questing for some type of objectivity (Smith, Harré, & Langenhove, 1995).

Narrative psychology, being still relatively young as a discipline, is in the early stages of wrestling with the problems that humanists have debated for some time. What are the implications of considering the whole person as a unit of analysis? How can we know that our observations are “reliable,” and how can we generalize about them to some broader—or more abstract—level of analysis? What are the ethical implications of encountering another person for the purpose of writing about him or her? What are the criteria for a good study within the narrative paradigm? How can we create a theoretical system that is faithful to the particularity of the individual and still offers a systematized, replicable form of knowledge?

**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF NARRATIVE APPROACHES**

In opposition to the hegemony of logical positivism, which grounds the authority of science in the presumption of a value-free, objective view of empirical phenomena, postmodern hermeneutical approaches to science recognize the relativism of truth claims and the social construction of all aspects of human experience. Psychology, then, is reconceived as “an interpretive science in search of meaning, not an experimental science in search of laws” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). The hermeneutic school of philosophy and the developing narrative tradition in the social sciences posit a relativistic universe...
in which all interpretation is inherently grounded in shifting and contestable readings of texts. Broadly conceived, the narrative umbrella covers researchers who work from a variety of interpretive stances, including phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, and feminism.

All human social interaction is mediated through language. As Gadamer put it, “Being that can be understood is language” (cited in Gardiner, 1992, p. 113). Hence, all knowledge ultimately is rooted in the apperception and translation of texts that are formed by and are constitutive of the world that they seek to portray.

Here is where hermeneutics and humanism are most at odds. Whereas some humanistic theorists regard the human as self-authoring and self-actualizing, a postmodern orientation regards the person and his or her world as inextricably linked and mutually constitutive (Sass, 1988). Thus, there is no pure subjectivity. Human experience is built out of shared contexts for meaning making, all expressed in and transformed by language.

Even if subjectivity is not sui generis, however, it remains central to narrative investigation. Embedded within personal narratives are the threads of culturally derived possibilities and individual transformation of these. People are regarded as multilayered, multivocal, and multidetermined. Like humanism, hermeneutics eschews dualities and exclusive categories, focusing instead on the processes of human experience and their interaction, both internally and externally.

Rather than taking physics as a model, the approaches of narrative analysis have more in common with literary theory and linguistics. It was the Russian literary critic and philosophical anthropologist Mikhail Bakhtin who brought the term dialogic to the history of ideas. This term has captured the imagination of scholars in a multitude of disciplines. The notion of the dialogic as it exists in narratives or texts provides a way of thinking about the foundation of all human knowing in language. In Bakhtin’s view, all forms of human interaction are mediated by our dialogic relation to others. Consciousness itself presumes an “otherness” and an “answerability.” The self also is a dialogic relation. The dialogic implies a necessary multiplicity in human awareness, all constructed as a polyphonic text (Bakhtin, 1986). Understanding of people, like understanding of literature, becomes a process of textual analysis.

Is it possible to find any other approach to [man] and his life than through the signifying text that he has created or is creating? . . . Everywhere the actual or possible text and its understanding. Research becomes inquiry and conversation, that is, dialogue. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 113)

It was in concordance with hermeneutic developments in intellectual history that interest in narrative was renewed in the social sciences. Viewing people as texts allowed for the recognition of the multiple experiences of the self and social reality that constitute human complexity.

**THE REACTION AGAINST METHODOLATRY**

Whereas logical-positivistic science has given rise to a preoccupation with method over meaning, often resulting in obscure trivial investigations that idealize statistical procedures but stray far from concern with the people being studied, narrative approaches have, at least so far, avoided becoming paradigmatic in terms of method. The hope is that “the play of ideas free of authoritative paradigms” (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, pp. 80–81) will lead us to “some new way of producing and legitimating knowledge” (Lather, 1992, p. 96). There continues to be scholarly acceptance of diverse means of producing such knowledge.
What characterizes these approaches is reflexivity, expressed in a public consideration of what one is trying to know and how one is trying to know it and an equally important focus on the characteristics of the knower that affect his or her knowing. Rather than being equipped with a tool box of “instruments” or a prescribed form of “experimentation,” narrative researchers attempt to know people within their own frameworks and often include the “observed” as partners in their studies. Interviews, diaries, artworks, and other forms of testimony become the raw data on which narrative researchers attempt to ground their analyses. Narrative researchers reflect on their interactions with the people who participate in their studies and the effect these people might have had on them. The person or people being studied are conceptualized as co-investigators (Hermans & Bonarius, 1991) rather than as people who are being “subjected” to something by faceless investigators.

Within this context, the interview is the primary mode of investigation and draws on humanistic principles for its rationale. Use of the interview is premised on the humanistic belief that people, who are unified sovereign subjects, contain knowledge that one may have access to by engaging in free and unconstrained conversation. The interviewer attempts to be fully present and in an empathic stance (Josselson, 1995). The interviewer’s orientation is phenomenological, with attention focused on the essences of the experiences put forth.

**HUMAN LIFE IS LIKE A STORY**

Narrative psychology takes as its premise that human experience can be understood only in language and that experience itself is shaped in story form. Events of significance to a person are textualized in a way that employs temporality and causation as well as meaning.

The linguistic emphasis in some branches of narrative inquiry considers the ways in which language organizes both thought and experience. Other researchers recognize the shaping function of language but treat language as transparent as they focus more on the content of the meanings that may be created out of life events. Furthermore, within this perspective, there is a continuum between taking the person’s narrative at face value as the “narrative truth” and searching for hidden (possibly unconscious) meanings and intentions.

One of the points of concordance between narrative research and humanistic theory is in avoiding having a predetermined theory about the person that the interview or life story is expected to support. Although no one is entirely free of preconceived ideas and expectations, narrative researchers try to come to their narrators as listeners, open to the surprising variations in their social worlds and private lives. In her critique of psychology as a “cruel” field, Apter (1996) deconstructed Freud’s Dora case in a manner demonstrating that “Freud tried to inflict his interpretation on her. He heard her own story as a lie, a subterfuge . . ., but in truth he was waiting for sufficient information to prove his own theories” (pp. 4, 24–25). Although no one is entirely free of preconceived ideas and expectations, narrative researchers try to come to their narrators as listeners, open to the surprising variations in their social worlds and private lives. In her critique of psychology as a “cruel” field, Apter (1996) deconstructed Freud’s Dora case in a manner demonstrating that “Freud tried to inflict his interpretation on her. He heard her own story as a lie, a subterfuge . . ., but in truth he was waiting for sufficient information to prove his own theories” (pp. 4, 24–25). Although narrative researchers try to be as knowledgeable as possible about the themes they are studying, so as to be maximally sensitive to nuances of meaning (Kvale, 1996), they are on guard against the “cruel” stance of inflicting meaning in the service of their own ends.

The humanistic focus on the individual as a meaning-making creature is foregrounded in narrative psychology’s concern about the way in which the life story is a meaning-creating enterprise. The experience of the self would be impossible without the selection
and linkages of the moments of life experience that create the life story. Identity is itself a story (McAdams, 1988) of how one has become who one is, the choices one has made, and the various ways in which one has embedded oneself in the social world. Living involves continually constructing and reconstructing stories without knowing their outcomes, that is, revising the plot as new events are added. The self, then, consists of a configuring of “personal events into a historical unity which includes not only what one has been but also anticipations of what one will be” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 150). Meaning lies in the contextual interpretations that people give to the various events of their lives, and the goal of narrative psychology is to interpret these interpretations at some higher level of abstraction.

In 1982, Donald Spence rocked the foundations of psychoanalytic thought by raising the question of whether psychoanalysts really were engaged in the archaeological project of unearthing the historical past or, instead, could be better described as pursuing a narrative task—shaping bits of memory, fantasy, and association into a coherent and plausible story. The work of psychoanalysis, in his view, is about the meanings communicated and altered through language—a hermeneutic project. Following his argument in Narrative Truth and Historical Truth (Spence, 1982), narrative researchers began to rethink the whole enterprise of developmental psychology. Is it the events that shape the person, or are the idiosyncratic and cultural meanings assigned to them even more determinative of the individual’s development?

Within this framework, a science of behavior apart from its contexts and intentions is impossible (MacIntyre, 1997). The unity of the individual life resides in a construction of its narrative, a form in which hopes, dreams, despairs, doubts, plans, and emotions all are phrased.

**APPROACHES TO NARRATIVE RESEARCH**

Within the dominant logical-positivistic research paradigms of their day, both Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow attempted to devise modes of inquiry that would implement the humanistic agenda. Rogers’s research often was qualitative, demonstrating the self-pictures of clients and their changes during therapy by using extracts from their recorded verbalizations while in therapy. Some of the works of Rogers and his students, however, used quantitative content analysis, sorting verbalizations into categories formulated according to the theory and counting their frequencies at various stages of the therapeutic process. Moreover, Rogers adopted the Q-sort technique as a method for systematically studying the notions of the person about himself or herself. Starting from a set of statements to be sorted in a prearranged distribution (from the most to the least descriptive of the self), such data were treated by correlational methods and multivariate analyses. Using the frameworks available, Rogers and his students made heroic efforts to confirm and support his humanistic theory. With the vantage point of hindsight, however, it is doubtful whether these quantifying efforts were justified or even suitable to the basic theoretical assumptions underlying this research.

Maslow (1966), who has been more critical of science, produced empirical work in the spirit of narrative research. Philosophically, he objected to the adequacy of mechanical science, as represented by behaviorism, for studying the person as a whole. Humanistic science, which he advocated, was proposed as the only possible approach to questions
of value, individuality, consciousness, ethics, and purpose. Accordingly, Maslow’s empirical study was a holistic qualitative research of the life courses of healthy people whom he defined as self-actualizers.

Looking generally at Bugental’s (1967) original compendium, Challenges of Humanistic Psychology, one is struck by the fact that the concepts of narrative or life story are not even part of the discourse of that period of time. Most of the chapters of the book deal with philosophy and therapy, and what attention is given to research still is firmly lodged within the positivistic paradigm. The studies presented as humanistic research were, during that period, very concerned with control, prediction, replicability, and experimental validity. Although there was some effort to think about the effects of the experimenter, the writers were quite far from considering the possibility of an open, dialogic interaction between researcher and participant, which characterizes contemporary narrative research.

The resurgence of interest in language and the poststructural view of people as texts have created space for narrative research to reinvigorate a consideration of the particularity and wholeness of people in the process of living their lives. Narrative research, according to our definition, refers to any study based on discourse or on people’s verbal accounts of their experiences. Such a story need not compose a complete autobiography; it may be short descriptive statements or narratives, formed in the teller’s personal language and style, in response to the researcher’s open-ended question. Thus, the data may be a complete long monologue provided in response to the instruction “Please tell me about your life as you remember it,” or it may be a much shorter narrative given in response to the question “What is your earliest memory?” or “What was your experience during the trip (or the war, or your first year at college, etc.)?” Narrative material also can be spontaneous, such as the stories children tell their mothers when coming home from nursery school. Narrative data include both oral and written accounts. The common aspect of all these narratives is that the material is offered in the natural language of the teller and is created through his or her individual experience and judgment. Although the researcher may have some previously formed ideas about the topic that naturally provide the rationale for his or her asking and listening, no direct attempt is made to put the verbal responses of the teller in specific form or in predetermined categories. The narrator is free to construct and author his or her stories—the narrator is given the status of expert—while the researcher is there to learn from the narrator’s experience.

Narrative researchers employ an empathic stance to gather data. In the spirit of postmodernism, current narrative research assumes that there is neither a single absolute truth in human reality nor one correct reading or interpretation of a life story or text. Instead, the narrative research approach is oriented toward subjectivity, intentionality, pluralism, relativism, holism, and contextuality. Although these aspects are somewhat overlapping and interrelated, they certainly are not identical. The next section attempts to clarify their distinctiveness.

The Empathic Stance

In her analysis of the history of science, Keller (1985) distinguished between the traditions based in a Baconian model of knowing (which is oriented toward prediction and control) and Platonic knowing (which is metaphorically based in eros, union, transcendence, and love). Both humanism and narrative are rooted in the Platonic approach, which regards knowledge as transcendence, that is, the overcoming of distance between the knower and the known. Ideally, a narrative research interview is an “encounter,”
in which the listener accepts the story with complete respect and refrains from judging or evaluating it. What makes this possible is the empathic stance, in which aspects of what is to be known are invited to permeate the knower, who attempts to “imagine the real” by making the other present (Buber, 1965). Research then becomes a process of overcoming distance rather than creating it—moving what was other, through our understanding of its independent selfhood and experience, into relation with us. Thus, the very indeterminacy between subject and object becomes a resource rather than a threat. Empathy is recruited into understanding precisely because its continuity and receptivity allows for a clearer perception of others. We aim to reach the internal array of an other’s experience, always bounded by our shared participation in a matrix of signification (Josselson, 1995).

As both a tool and a goal of psychological research, empathy is premised on continuity, recognizing that kinship between self and other offers an opportunity for a deeper and more articulated understanding. Empathy becomes an attitude of attention to the real world based on an effort to connect ourselves to it rather than to distance ourselves from it. The empathic stance, taking hermeneutics as its epistemological ground, affords the possibility of interpreting others, who themselves are engaged in the process of interpreting themselves.

**On Subjectivity**

Experience as lived, the inner world of a woman or a man—this is the essence of what narrative research tries to reach. In this subjective realm, people may experience freedom and choice—or the absence thereof—without being confronted with the question of whether this really is the case (objectively speaking). The narrator is seen as the author of his or her story and is encouraged to share it for the research purpose as a unique individual creation.

Postmodernism regards subjectivity as neither unified nor fixed but rather as a site for conflicting social forces that continually reshape the sense of identity. Humanism, by contrast, tends to regard subjectivity as a given—a creation of the individual and an expression of his or her freedom. Narrative approaches regard subjectivity in a more inclusive way, privileging the person’s experience of subjectivity and analyzing both its personal and its sociocultural elements. Thus, the narrative researcher is mindful of, and will present, both what the person studied says about his or her experience (the phenomenology) and the researcher’s own interpretation of it.

In this interpretation, the narrative researcher pays particular attention to aspects of the person’s experience that relate to his or her socially constructed position in life, a position that might feel self-authored to the person but may actually be a product of the person’s place in his or her culturally constituted world. For example, Chase (1995), in a study of women school superintendents, showed how submerged stories of gendered social processes are embedded in the gaps and contradictions of an interview.

Recognizing that people are not fully the authors of their lives in that they are subjected to historical and personal facts of life (e.g., age, nationality, affluence/poverty) and relationally constituted regimes of meaning that attach to their multiple and shifting identity locations (Lather, 1992), narrative research honors the fact that people, nevertheless, are engaged in the process of creating selves out of these experiences within which they can regard themselves as coherent and continuous beings. It is to both of these facets that narrative work turns its attention. In so doing, narrative research recognizes that “the better a person understands the degree to which he is externally determined,
the closer he comes to understanding and exercising his real freedom” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 139).

Narrative approaches to research attempt to grapple with the complexity of subjectivity rather than reduce it to its component parts. This complexity is essential to the hermeneutic enterprise.

Human subjectivity cannot be understood as an analyzable combination of isolable and fully specifiable mental entities or aspects that either do or do not exist in a determinate fashion (or that exist to a specifiable degree). It is, rather, an intertwining texture of only partially specifiable themes and backgrounds that exist at various levels of implicit and explicit awareness, often merging imperceptibly with one another. (Sass, 1988, p. 245)

Subjectivity, then, is regarded in a holistic fashion.

**Intentionality**

Narrative research regards the individual as intentional. The focus of research is on what the individual thinks he or she is doing and why the individual thinks he or she is doing it. Behavior, then, always is understood in context—in the individual’s context, however he or she may construct it. Even in the production of a life history, the individual is seen as an active agent who chooses the events to include in a web of meaning that links these events (Gergen & Gergen, 1997). This approach is in contrast to the mechanistic view of traditional psychology, which regards the individual as a repository of lawful and determined responses conditioned by reflexes, conditioning, schemata, and so on. From this vantage point, psychology fails to appreciate the individual as a historical entity who creates meaning over time by idiosyncratically linking events. Thus, the experimenter in a traditional psychological research project is armed with carefully observed measurements of behavior but has no capacity to say why a person behaved as he or she did. Individual differences in the construction of meaning around an experiment is what is commonly referred to as error.

This significant difference in the approach to understanding people obtains even in an experimental procedure as dramatic as the classic Milgram scenario. Undeniably, Milgram, in one of the most memorable and important experimental demonstrations in the history of psychology, raised questions about the abuse of authority. He showed that a frightening number of people would administer potentially lethal shocks when asked to do so, but he left unexplored a deeper understanding of why people thought they were doing what they were doing. To a narrative life history researcher, the interesting question would be to what people attribute their obedient or disobedient actions and what effect taking part in this experiment might have had on the participants’ lives.

**Relativism**

Although postmodern philosophy and epistemology currently is bedeviled by the problems of its relativistic perspective, and because writers are engaged in trying to locate a reality outside the text or to deny its existence (Carr, 1997; Held, 1995; Lather, 1992), most narrative research tends to regard storied life experience as a given, disregarding (or at least sidestepping) considerations of its factual worth or reliability.

Our own view of the narrative does not advocate total relativism and does not treat life stories as though they were fictional texts. It is not that we take narratives at face value, that is, as complete and accurate representations of reality. We believe that stories usually are constructed within a certain culture and language and around a core of historical and life events. Taking into consideration these
limitations on complete individual freedom, however, there still is a wide canvas for flexibility and creativity in the selection of, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of these “facts of life” or “cultural givens.”

Furthermore, a life story obtained in an interview is regarded as just one instance of the life history, which develops and changes through time and context. “The particular life story is one (or more) instance of the polyphonic versions of the possible constructions or presentations of people’s selves and lives, which they use according to specific momentary influences” (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 8).

A specific aspect of relativism regards the manner in which narrative research approaches the dimension of time. Although many studies ask the narrator to provide a report of past events and experiences, an essential assumption of narrative research methodology is that the past can be viewed only through a window of the present, leading to selecting of “memories” and determining their meanings for the teller today. The past always is understood in the context of the present in which it is remembered. Past events do not exist (or do not interest us as psychologists) separately from the self remembering in the present.

**Holism**

Although traditional research with verbal texts often used the method of coded content analysis, taking the stories apart and assembling sections by categories, this approach now is criticized by narrative researchers, who prefer to look at a story as a whole and read it in its entirety. Gilligan and her coworkers (Brown et al., 1988) developed a method for reading a narrative for the various voices that tend to appear and disappear in a text of a single interviewee. In following the “private” voice versus the “public” voice in a girl’s story, for example, the changing emphases and the interplay of these two dimensions are studied within the whole story, not as separate elements.

The complete verbal product of a research participant can be interpreted by focusing on its major themes or its form and structure (Lieblich et al., 1998). Silences and omissions also are considered (Rosenthal, 1993), and Rogers and colleagues (1999) went so far as to try to develop a “language of the unsayable.” Both explicit and implicit themes are analyzed, as is their interrelationship in the text. Thus, an individual story is considered holistically in terms of its themes and patterns before, or instead of, focusing on between-individual comparisons. When comparisons between people are attempted, an effort is made to preserve the holistic stance rather than reducing people to a single trait or behavioral tendency isolated from the total person.

**Contextuality**

Life history in narrative research is understood in contextualized terms. The person is assumed to be speaking from a specific position in culture and in historical time. Some of this positionality is reflected in the use of language and concepts with which a person understands his or her life. Other aspects of context are made explicit as the researcher is mindful of the person’s experience of himself or herself in terms of gender, race, culture, age, social class, sexual orientation, and so on. A participant is viewed as a unique individual with particularity in terms of social location; a person is not viewed as representative of some universal and interchangeable, randomly selected “subject.”

Stories told are embedded in the tellers’ cultures and take for their models basic cultural themes, plots, and forms (Gergen & Gergen, 1997). Narrative approaches try to regard a story as told in terms of the possible stories culturally available for telling. Narrative
research also is attentive to the context in which the story is narrated. Beyond the fact that different goals or opening questions produce different stories, it is understood in the narrative approach to research that all life stories are highly influenced by the persons to whom the stories are told and by the participants’ understanding of what they are doing by telling their stories in those particular circumstances. Put differently, life stories are relational; they are deeply affected by the context of the explicit and implicit relationship between researchers and the researched. No two interviewers will get the same story from an individual interviewee. Therefore, a thoroughly reflexive analysis of the parameters and influences of the interview situation replaces the concern with reliability.

Another aspect of contextuality regards avoiding unnecessary generalizations. To become a “body of knowledge,” academic fields aim at generalizing to construct laws regarding human development and behavior beyond the single case or story, so the field of traditional psychology abounds with aggregated generalizations of various types. As proposed by Runyan (1984), there are three levels of equally significant generalities in a study of lives: (1) what is true of a particular individual across time and place, (2) what is true of groups (e.g., gender, race, historical period), and (3) what is true of all people. Narrative research and humanistic approaches listen to individual voices in their particular natural context and do not strive to go beyond the two first levels, namely, generalizing within the individual or to a group of individuals who might share significant aspects of the same context.

In summary, then, narrative research is conducted through an intense or prolonged contact with the field or life situation, with the researcher/observer attempting to maintain an empathic and nonjudgmental approach to those under study. The aim is to gain a holistic overview of the phenomenon under study by capturing data from the inside of the actors with a view to understanding their meaning making in the contexts within which they live. Narrative researchers recognize that many interpretations of their observations are possible, and they present their interpretive framework through careful description of what they have observed.

**INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND ETHICS**

Because the research dyad is the heart of narrative research, much attention has been given to the nature of this relationship. Knowledge is constructed in the intersubjective space; what is known is the product of what the teller can and will tell and what the listener can hear. Researchers do not try to experience or present themselves as free of bias; they recognize that they operate within a horizon of understanding (Heidegger, 1962) related to their own situation within history and society. Eschewing notions of “scientific neutrality,” they self-consciously reflect on what they are doing as they construct and present otherness in their work (Fine, 1994).

Whenever we encounter the story of another person, we are moving “across a border,” to use Ruth Behar’s phrase. Good narrative research requires that researchers place themselves in the narration of their texts rather than trying to recount others’ stories from the points of view of disembodied observers. But this has yet to become widely accepted practice, as researchers remain shy of acknowledging themselves in written reports as persons of a given gender, class, or cultural background or as persons with evident personality quirks or predilections that are inextricably interwoven in both the hearing and the re-presentation of “cases.”

Notable exceptions to this view are the works of Behar (1993) and Lieblich (1997), both of whom considered their own stories
have made central to their work concern with the power relations inherent in all research, and they try to acknowledge these issues in their research.

Concern about the intersubjective nature of narrative research has led many to ponder the ethical implications of making use of people’s ongoing lives in the service of “science.” When people’s scores are aggregated into some statistic for the purposes of quantitative research, there is little worry about the possible harm that may be done. But when people’s lives are publicly dissected and analyzed for the purpose of scholarship, the research itself becomes an influence—and not always a positive one—in their biographies.

Some researchers have pointed out, however, that participation in narrative research, to the extent that it is an authentic encounter, may itself have healing properties (Miller, 1996). The interview may serve as an “aid to self-reflection” (Habermas, 1993, p. 118) and the discovery of self in the dialogue of the interview (Buber, 1970). Others, however, have pointed out that because the most significant truths about human lives inhere in their stories, people who make their stories available to others must be protected (Bakan, 1996). Doing narrative research—working so close to the core meanings and personal truths of people’s lives—is an ethically complex undertaking that must be done with careful self-scrutiny (Josselson, 1996). The researcher must be grounded in deeply humanistic ethics.

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN NARRATIVE AND HUMANISM

For humanism, the ultimate form of interaction is dialogue (Buber, 1970). Within narrative research, dialogue also is central. Narrative discourse involves respectful and open dialogue among three actors: (1) the narrator (whose life and story provide the
essence of the work), (2) the scholar (who assumes final responsibility for the published research), and (3) the readers (who are invited to enter into dialogue with the issues under investigation as a way of enlarging their awareness of themselves and of their world).

Whereas humanism evolved to promote human potential, narrative research has developed as a means of studying whole people in context, partly in the hope that such understanding will lead to means to better the human condition. As allies opposed to the fragmented, disembodied, decontextualized representations of people in psychology, both humanistic and narrative psychology may profit from an authentic encounter between their proponents.

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In his assessment of psychology, Koch (1969) concluded that it was unlikely to become a coherent congruent science. His assessment of the humanistic psychologies was sympathetic, yet he feared that the field was at risk of simultaneously hardening into intellectual dogmatism and deteriorating into methodological anarchy. Although there are several approaches to humanistic psychology, that which is common to all humanistic thought is the insistence on a human model distinct from models accounting for animal or mechanical behavior (Wandersman, Poppen, & Ricks, 1976, p. 5). This viewpoint has led humanistic psychologists to emphasize their concern with human growth and self-actualization, their antecedents, their correlates, and their development.

Humanistic thought has made a significant impact on counseling, psychotherapy, and personality theory, and it even has influenced management and education. Humanistic psychologists have expanded the orbit of psychology to include the person’s attention to an understanding of the context of his or her action. Hence, humanistic psychology can be defined as the scientific study of behavior, experience, and intentionality (Krippner, Ruttenber, Engelman, & Granger, 1985, p. 105). Nonetheless, humanistic psychologists have been criticized for failing to provide adequate frameworks within which they could evaluate and study their subject matter (Krippner et al., p. 113). Rogers (1985) observed that humanistic orientations in psychology have not had a deep impact on mainstream psychology in American colleges and universities, the main reason being “a lack of significant humanistically oriented research” (p. 7).

Although a positivistic methodology permeates most studies of human nature by American psychologists, it would be overly parochial to fail to recognize that there are other methodological avenues to the understanding of human nature. In fact, two methodological paradigms—the experimental and the experiential—always have dominated the history of Western psychology. Those psychological methods that take the experimental disposition imitate the model of the natural sciences and study human nature as a physical or biological phenomenon. The experiential disposition, on the other hand, uses methods that study the unique ontological characteristics of humans. Whereas phenomenological and existential psychologists consider positivism in psychology to be philosophically immature, their own
studies of consciousness and subjectivity have been viewed by experimental psychologists as merely poetic pursuits.

Proponents of both paradigms accuse one another of naively misunderstanding human nature and the epistemology of psychology. The tension between the experimental and experiential paradigms is exemplified in the works of humanistic psychologists, some of whom have made rare syncretisms of the two methods. Some well-known American psychologists became discontented with behaviorism’s mechanistic and atomistic view of human nature, drew on the long tradition linking psychology with the humanities, and institutionally founded the humanistic psychologies in a rebellious manner. They regarded themselves as a “third force,” alluding to the fact that they were an alternative to the dominant behavioristic and psychoanalytic orientations in psychology. Several key psychologists of the period became affiliated with the movement in one way or another—Gordon Allport, Henry Murray, Gardner Murphy, Rollo May, Charlotte Bühler, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and James Bugental, among others. They wrote eloquently on the philosophical tension between the methods that study human nature objectively and those that conduct their investigations subjectively (deCarvalho, 1992).

Perhaps no other group of American psychologists personally understood and lived the tension between the phenomenological and positivist epistemologies better than did humanistic psychologists. Although never totally denying the value of experimental studies of behavior, they recognized the restrictions of such studies and methods in the understanding of the unique ontological characteristics of human existence. The proposals for the humanistic psychologies that these individuals helped establish during the 1960s accommodated the perspectives of both phenomenology and positivism, albeit with different emphases from psychologist to psychologist. In so doing, humanistic psychologists significantly contributed to the dismantling of the positivistic monopoly of behaviorism over midcentury American psychology, thereby paving the way for the rise of the cognitive paradigm. Moreover, by replacing (or at least supplementing) laboratory rats and pigeons with humans, humanistic psychologists rehumanized psychology.

It can be argued that because their mentors either passed away or went into semi-retirement, the humanistic psychologies have made no significant epistemological progress and, like behaviorism, have become one more chapter in the history and systems of midcentury American psychology. It can be argued with equal vigor, however, that although the humanistic psychologies have lost some of their significance as distinct schools or systems of psychology, they still remain a viable force. Furthermore, their unique epistemology has been assimilated into other orientations, especially in the newly emerging field of human science.

The humanistic psychologies are scientific approaches to the study of behavior, experience, and intentionality that subsume many of the contributions of other approaches—not only psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and cognitive psychology but also transpersonal psychology and the neurosciences. The humanistic psychologies have departed from the psychological mainstream in many ways, especially with regard to research methods. As a result, they are uniquely positioned to benefit from and incorporate various aspects of postmodern insights, especially those offered by constructive postmodernism, which reframes rather than rejects the enterprise of disciplined inquiry.

Like the humanistic psychologies, postmodernity is appalled by the excesses of modernity—its insistence that a single “reality” and “truth” can be obtained by splitting the object being studied from the observing investigator and from values and ethics and...
that the resulting data can lead to what has been variously called “the Enlightenment Project” and “Walden II.” Postmodernity, by contrast, takes the more modest position that language is incapable of providing a completely accurate picture of reality; indeed, the powerful forces that control language explicitly or implicitly manipulate reality to their own ends, whether they be religious dogmatists, scientific authorities, or members of the psychotherapeutic establishment (Lather, 1990; Rosenau, 1992). What is called for is a discourse among competing paradigms, an acknowledgment that truth is local and perhaps different in each time and place. This shift would involve a return to the “radical empiricism” of William James, in which a range of methods of inquiry are employed, given that for James (1902/1958), empiricism including affect was more profound than the other types.

What is referred to as the “modern” worldview is responsible for impressive advances in technology, industry, and scientific discovery. However, it has not prevented—and even might have been partially responsible for—unprecedented fragmentation, nihilism, and destruction. As Berman (1984) stated, “Western life seems to be drifting toward increasing entropy, economic and technological chaos, ecological disaster, and ultimately, psychic dismemberment and disintegration” (p. 1). As a corrective to this situation, some postmodern writers hope to preserve the virtues of the modern worldview while replacing its mechanistic and reductionistic assumptions with those that are more organic and holistic in nature.

A number of psychologists (e.g., Sass, 1992; Smith, 1996) appreciate postmodernists’ diagnosis of the contemporary social malaise but do not accept prescriptions that might have what Sass (1992) called “dark and troubling” consequences (p. 171). Smith (1996) acknowledged postmodernists’ cognizance of the importance of historical and social context in inquiry, as well as their incisive detection of sources of bias, but regarded these contributions as facilitating the improvement of science, not its abandonment. In other words, “the scientific enterprise, fallible as it is, has worked,” and the critical “awareness of science’s fallibility can help it work better” (p. 153). Schneider (1998) added that experimental research works best “when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly evident, whereas qualitative research is better suited to subtler and more complex phenomena and contexts” (p. 284). In other words, humanistic psychology shares many of the concerns central to the postmodernist critique but prefers solutions that are productive rather than deconstructive.

**WORLDVIEWS**

During the late 1970s, the philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard was commissioned by the Council of Universities of Quebec to undertake a study on the state of knowledge in the Western world (Anderson, 1996, p. 4). His report, published in English in 1984, was titled *The Postmodern Condition* and concluded that all modern systems of knowledge, including science, had been supported by some “metanarrative” or “grand discourse” (Lyotard, 1984). His examples included Christianity’s story of God’s will being enacted on earth, the Enlightenment’s intellectual story of rational progress, and the Marxists’ political story of class conflict and revolution. Lyotard concluded that these metanarratives usually suppressed differences so as to legitimate their own vision of reality, and he described the postmodern perspective as one of skepticism toward all metanarratives.

Technically speaking, *postmodernity* refers to the postmodern era or condition, whereas *postmodernism* refers to the various schools,
movements, and perspectives that postmodernity has spawned. As Anderson (1996) observed, “Postmodernisms will come and go, but postmodernity—the postmodern condition—will still be here” (p. 7). Anderson identified the “four corners of the postmodern world” as (1) the replacement of “found” identity by “made” identity, which is constructed from many cultural sources; (2) the understanding that moral and ethical judgments are made on the basis of socially constructed cultural worldviews; (3) an emphasis on improvisation, variation, parody, and playfulness in art and culture; and (4) the awareness that borders of all types are social constructions of reality that can be crossed, erased, and reconstructed.

The implications of these four corners for scientific research are vast; postmodernists suspect that what scientists take back from nature depends on their way of representing nature. Whether one realizes it or not, humankind’s understanding of nature is grasped through language. The postmodern approach to science involves paradox, irony, and narratives that often employ symbols and metaphors. Postmodern practitioners shift from being detached, theory-testing investigators and onlookers to being involved, interested, interpretive, procedure-testing, critical participants who take an active role in both finding and making information (Anderson, 1990).

Postmodern investigators realize that human phenomena are altered when they are studied, especially if research participants are given feedback about investigations and their roles in them. Postmodern scientists understand that science is not value free; rather, it both produces and reflects implicit or explicit values, especially when its findings become the basis for applied technology (e.g., atomic bombs, space satellites, electronic media). If modern science has a publicly stated value, then it is its quest for certainty, a goal that postmodernists regard as futile because of their conviction that knowledge tends to be local rather than universal. In other words, the Enlightenment Project has broken down; the world’s diverse people do not think in the same way, much less in a way that modernists would consider rational (Harvey, 1989). Postmodernists would agree with existentialists that existence precedes essence, if indeed there is any essence at all.

According to postmodernists, the most important human activities can barely be measured, much less predicted and controlled. Rather, the postmodern scientist strives to identify, describe, and understand these activities as deeply and thoroughly as possible. “Truth” is a matter of perspective, and perspectives are a by-product of social interchange or “discourse.” One’s language about the world does not necessarily represent the world. The world is not simply something “out there,” but rather, it is interactive; the observer and the observed are in constant dialogue. Modernity tries to hold a mirror to nature, not realizing that the language it uses never can completely represent nature, as linguistic constructs are culturally produced. Postmodernity, to the contrary, asks scientists to realize that its projects engage nature in a discourse, hoping that such an interaction will yield new insights and novel interpretations.

Postmodernists believe that human lives largely revolve around discourse. As humans realize that social utopias are unlikely attainments of scientific investigation, they can take personal responsibility for their actions here and now. They can focus on specific community projects, whether their communities be familial, ethnic, commercial, industrial, spiritual, academic, or something else in nature. For postmodernists, local interactions are the point of departure; community context replaces global ideologies. There is an emphasis on individual, family, and group narratives and on the telling of myths and
stories—that is, the ways in which people explain how their world got to be the way it is and what is likely to happen (Anderson, 1990, p. 243).

A hallmark of postmodernity is “deconstruction,” which began as a method of literary criticism that reduces the language of a text to a multiplicity of possible meanings rather than to any single meaning, such as that supposedly intended by the author. A text can be a story, an event, or a concept. Deconstruction tears the text apart, revealing its contradictions, disclosing its assumptions, and undoing its constructions. People in each culture construct experience in terms of the categories provided by their own linguistic system, coming to terms with a reality that has been filtered through their language. Each culture has a specialized terminology in those aspects of consciousness important for its functioning and survival.

From the position of cultural psychology, the processes of consciousness are not uniform across cultures (Shweder, 1990). For example, Goleman (1993) pointed out that Western culture describes inner experience primarily in psychopathological terms, whereas traditional Eastern cultures have equally intricate vocabularies for describing altered states of consciousness and spiritual experiences. Furthermore, Western psychology equates reality with the world as perceived in the ordinary waking state, denying credibility to realities perceived in other types of awareness. Eastern perspectives, on the other hand, dismiss the physical world as an illusion and see reality as something that cannot be grasped in ordinary waking awareness.

In a scathing rebuttal of postmodernist writers, Matthews (1998) insisted that science never claimed to discover absolute fixed truths about nature; instead, science attempts to make “approximations of truth, based on refutations and challenges of previously held notions” (p. 26). Individual scientists are not objective, but the scientific process itself is objective in its critique, challenge, and refutation of a given theory and, therefore, in its application of the scientific method. “The problem for postmodernists is that while they have identified some problems and have developed a theory, they have no interest in rational criticism” (p. 27). This challenge may serve as a corrective to some postmodernists whose statements are extreme, suggesting that science is merely one of many narratives.

THE HUMANISTIC AND POSTMODERN DISCOURSE

Abraham Maslow

Most of the founders of the humanistic psychologies would be considered modernists. Maslow, for example, proposed a hierarchy of needs that was linear in nature and that supposedly varied little from culture to culture. Early in his career, Maslow advocated experimental studies of human participants by employing control groups of apes. During the late 1930s, however, Maslow gradually concentrated on the study of dominance and self-esteem among college women. His suspicion that these human conditions relate to mental health turned into a lifelong interest in the study of human motivation and psychological health.

A postmodern flavor entered Maslow’s work when he came into contact with the Oriental philosophy of Taoism, with its concept of wu-wei, or noninterference with nature. Maslow (1966) then argued that the organization, classification, and conceptualization methods of Western science abstracted its perceptions to such an extreme that they needed to be balanced by Taoistic nonintrusive receptivity and contemplation of experience, a “getting back to things themselves,” as Edmund Husserl had argued. Maslow referred to this type of knowledge as...
“Taoist objectivity,” as opposed to the “classical objectivity” of Western psychology.

Maslow was certain that psychology’s attempts to imitate outdated models of the physical sciences had led to depersonalization, making psychology atomistic and mechanistic. For Maslow, a science of human nature must be unique because the observer is also the observed. Recognizing that the empiricism of logical positivism and the private subjective world of existential reflection should be balanced, Maslow (1956) proposed a philosophy of psychology that synthesized both methods. He insisted that all knowledge pertaining to human existence is a product of direct and intimate experience and that there is no substitute for experience. Conceptual, abstract, theoretical knowledge is useful only when people already know experientially. Words fail when there is no experience; words succeed when people share similar experiences. At some point in the process of experiencing, however, one senses the emergence of a pattern, rhythm, or relationship. “Some things just come to mind,” according to Maslow (1961, p. 1).

This method assumes fearless respect for the object studied as well as a suspension of judgment. Psychologists should relax, “let it be,” melt away with the object of study, and experience it receptively, contemplatively, and Taoistically, not intruding or interfering with the “order of things” (Maslow, 1966, pp. 95–101). Maslow (1966) described this first stage as “Taoistic nonintruding receptivity to the experience” (p. 101)—that is, as an attitude rather than a technique. At this level of study, experience just happens as it is, not according to psychologists’ expectations of control and prediction. However, as researchers begin to organize, classify, and abstract their phenomenological accounts of the object under study, their own constructions determine their perception of experience. The challenge, as a result, is to develop a research methodology that combines the experimental with the experiential but that stays as close as possible to the lived experience.

**Carl Rogers**

Rogers also advanced a model of personality that is modernistic in nature in that it assumes universal aspects of the so-called self. But even in his earliest psychotherapy studies, Rogers acknowledged that psychotherapists actually combine artistry with science and that experiential—not cognitive—learning is essential in their training. From Rogers’s point of view, the proliferation of unchecked theories and techniques has turned psychotherapy into a collection of personality cults and technological cliques. This situation, according to Rogers, made it essential that empirical approaches and objective measurements be implemented but that, at the same time, the subjective aspects of psychotherapy be appraised too (Rogers, 1961, pp. 225–242; 1963, pp. 9, 15).

During the mid-1950s, however, Rogers became increasingly aware of the tension between the tenets of logical positivism and the subjectivism of European existentialism and phenomenology, both of which were forerunners of postmodern perspectives in psychology. Describing the essence of psychotherapy in terms of his personal experience, Rogers (1961) explained that when he entered the therapeutic relationship, he made a sincere attempt to understand and unconditionally accept the inner world of the other person, hoping that this would lead to a significant personality change. Rogers contended that in this process, there is a unity of experiencing, a situation in which both therapist and client slip together into a stream of subjective authentic “becoming”—that is, an “I–thou” sort of relationship. Once the client learns to dip into his or her subjectivity and the intimacy of the therapeutic encounter, there is a gradual growth of trust and even affection for the awareness of his or
depression, trivializing human passion into the satisfaction of basic needs, and making pleasure a simple release of tension.

Modern psychology, according to May (1967, chap. 1), not only suppresses but also trivializes the most meaningful aspects of human experience. Under the gospel of technique, mainstream psychologists avoid confrontation with the most concrete aspects of being human, which somehow are lost in the reductionistic tendencies of objective measurement. In his own proposal for a humanistic psychology, May stated that psychologists should abandon all pretenses to the manipulation and prediction of behavior and should stop avoiding human subjectivity merely because it does not have an animal counterpart (chap. 13). A science of human nature, according to May, must follow a human model and study the unique features of humans—what he called “the ontological characteristics of human existence” (pp. 96, 192). These characteristics would include people’s capacity to relate to themselves as both subjects and objects; their potential for choice and for ethical actions; their ability to reason; their ability to create myths, metaphors, and symbols; and their ability to participate in the historical development of their communities. Psychology, according to May (1958; see also Schneider & May, 1995), should adopt a phenomenological approach and study people as they really are, not as projections of a psychologist’s theories about human nature. Phenomenological knowledge of the person ought to precede other methodological and theoretical presuppositions.

In this context, May (1967) distinguished between “describing what” and “explaining why,” taking the position that psychologists should describe rather than explain. Causal explanations of the origins or causes of any particular event fail to describe what the event actually is. To explain how an event such as anxiety came into being does not say what anxiety is as experienced by the person.
Psychology should study the phenomenology of the human condition rather than cause-and-effect relationships. The human dilemma arises out of the capacity to experience oneself simultaneously as subject and object, according to May, and psychologists need to focus their investigations on this condition. Students of human nature also should assume from the very beginning that people are centered in themselves and need to preserve their centeredness by self-affirmation, no matter how distorted and conflicted that center might be. They should study myths, symbols, and literature (classical literature in particular, given that it is the self-interpretation of humans throughout history; May, 1991). For May, psychology has more affinity with the model of the humanities than with the model of the physical and biological sciences.

**Irvin Child and Amedeo Giorgi**

The dialectic between behaviorists and humanists has led to many attempts to form a synthesis. Child (1973), for example, observed that cognitive psychology had successfully adapted the methods of the research tradition to studying complex phenomena of the human mind. Child claimed that humanistic psychologists tend to “make statements that are not easily verifiable” (p. 20) and to overly engage in sentimentality and vagueness; hence, many of the research methods used by cognitive psychologists would provide a useful corrective. Child’s examples of synthesis include Jean Piaget’s work in developmental psychology, as well as investigations of moral development, creativity, hypnosis, psychotherapy, and parapsychology.

In other words, Child (1973) gave credit to humanistic psychologists for identifying areas ignored by most schools of psychology and then suggested the adoption of rigorous research methods to obtain data in these areas. For Child, both humanistic psychologies and the research tradition have been incomplete, but “a new image of psychology” could be established by combining the two because “the first is of the flesh alone, the second is all bones. The two images need to be brought together” (p. v). Child’s advice has been seconded by other authors such as Wandersman et al. (1976), who predicted a “creative synthesis that can unite the two approaches, or at least large parts of them, into a broader social developmental view of the human being as an active organizer of his own particular environment over time” (pp. 383–384).

One way in which to implement this synthesis would be to apply rigorous research methods to fields of study already pioneered by the humanistic psychologies, such as behavioral ecology, human development, life history research, and ecopsychology (i.e., “green psychology”). Metzner (1999) called for a “fundamental reenvisioning of what psychology is, . . . a revision that would take the ecological context of human life into account” (p. 2). Roszak (1992) denounced mainstream psychology for its lack of consideration of the ecological basis of human life in its theories and texts. Ecopsychology has taken its place on the agenda of many humanistic psychologists for the 21st century. Rychlak (1977) also outlined a program for a psychology that “can be both rigorous and humanistic” (p. 221) and would put humanistic theories to the test in typical experimental fashion, employing validating evidence. “So long as we avoid confounding what is our theory with what is our method, such a rigorous humanism is possible” (p. 222).

For Giorgi (1970, 2009), however, such a synthesis is neither necessary nor beneficial. Agreeing with May that the questions of deepest concern in the human realm are the least susceptible to treatment by existing methods, Giorgi (1986) called for a “reform” in the way in which science studies humans. This “human science” would include “phenomenological research, hermeneutic clarifications of meaning, as well as life and case
history studies and a variety of studies using qualitative data and/or reconceptualized quasi-experimental designs” (p. 44).

A variant of narrative, single-case research designs is multiple-case studies (Schneider, 1999), an example of what Sass (1988) referred to as “experience-near” research. Multiple-case studies and other types of experience-near research attempt to “intimately elucidate clients’ lived or subjective realities, . . . from the verbal to the preverbal and from the personal to the social” (Schneider, 1999, p. 2). Whereas randomized controlled trials and other forms of linear research focus on controllable psychological phenomena, multiple-case designs “address the rich and multifaceted background underlying experimental or survey data” (Schneider, 1999, p. 2). The chief issue in addressing the validity of case research is its plausibility. Are the data plausibly linked to theory? Is the theory plausibly generalizable? Is the conclusion plausibly disconfirmable? Schneider (1999) called on multiple-case study investigators to become “critical artists” who can not only learn to see artistically, feel artistically, and portray experiences artistically but also organize, clarify, and summarize data like scientists (p. 4).

Giorgi’s (1990) phenomenological method is another example of experience-near research. It obtains descriptions of various experiences and analyzes them for their “lived meanings” using the standard phenomenological procedures of “reduction, imaginative variation, and intuition of essences” (p. 113). Giorgi admitted that the problem of studying human phenomena is complex, especially if the dignity of humans is to be respected. Nevertheless, he identified certain basic interactive features of humans that could form a structure for research. These features were that (a) all humans participate in society, (b) all humans participate in linguistic communication, (c) all humans express experience meaningfully, (d) all humans are capable of transforming the received structures of experience, and (e) all humans participate in groups and communities.

Giorgi’s (2009) human science perspective is a way of obtaining methodical, systematic, and critical knowledge about human phenomena, or persons in situations, without distorting the basic characteristics of the phenomena or persons (pp. 125–126). Like May, Giorgi holds that positivistic methods are of little or no use in understanding the ontological characteristics of human existence. Some humanistic psychologists (Barrell, Aanstoos, Richards, & Arons, 1987) would add perceptual psychology, which emphasizes the relationship between an individual’s behavior and that individual’s experience. It is grounded in the premise that people behave and act in terms of their “perceptual field” (Barrell et al., 1987, p. 438). Collen (1990) identified systems inquiry as a human science as well. This method involves the study of relationships at each level of a human system, such as cells, organs, organisms, group organizations, societies, and supranational systems as well as the isomorphisms that may exist between levels.

**Chaotic Systems Analysis**

A form of systems inquiry has emerged that is beginning to demonstrate its utility in describing and understanding processes that undergo continuous change, growth, and evolution of a chaotic nature, such as weather patterns, ecological systems, and a whole array of phenomena that operate in a non-linear fashion. In accordance with postmodern thought, chaotic systems analysis questions modernists’ position that nature can be predicted and controlled. According to Prigogine and Stengers (1984), one of the most highly refined skills in the West is dissection—that is, the reduction of problems into the simplest components. They proposed that the knowledge produced by reductionistic mechanistic
science has produced models, theories, and constructs that have become insipid and pragmatically infertile. Chaotic systems inquiry offers a fresh approach that is both process oriented and steeped in evolutionary thought.

Chaotic systems analysis may become an important method of inquiry in both the biological and the behavioral sciences (Abraham, Abraham, & Shaw, 1990; Robertson & Combs, 1995). Chaos methodology shifts the emphasis from linear relationships of cause and effect to more interactive approaches that stress the importance of defining patterns, form, self-organization, and the adaptive qualities of complex processes. Although there exists a rampant debate among postmodernists about the usefulness of any scientific method employing mathematics, its advocates contend that chaotic systems analysis provides a rich and elegant way of describing various psychological processes, such as brain wave patterns, memory retrieval, dynamic fluctuations in sleep, dream content, and complex family interactions. Most experimental methods and their attendant statistical tests are based on linear cause-and-effect assumptions. The nonlinear mathematics of chaos systems analysis may demonstrate its utility for the understanding of complex human phenomena, even though its detractors assert that its derived topological representations, such as attractor reconstructions and fractal dimension estimates, do not represent “true” chaos but rather are mathematical artifacts that are not indicative of the system under scrutiny.

The attempt to study complex systems with linear analysis often yields incomplete data. The effort to use behavioral and psychoanalytic models to study complex human experiences also has been incomplete. An example is human creativity. Creativity was thought by psychoanalysts to be a sublimation of repressed sexual drives. Behaviorists described creativity in terms of a lack of ordinary environmental reinforcement. One psychoanalytic concept was that homeostasis is the end goal of human striving, but humanistic psychologists emphasize the creative processes by which humans go beyond homeostasis. Instead, humans attempt to generate values, whether these values are artistic, technological, social, or spiritual. Indeed, human creativity may have an underlying chaotic process that selectively amplifies small fluctuations and molds them into coherent mental states. These mental states are then experienced as reflection and imagination (Krippner, 1994).

For some psychologists (e.g., Robertson & Combs, 1995), the application of chaos theory to the brain marks a new frontier. Chaos theorists propose that chaotic behavior serves as the essential ground state for the brain. The model of brain activity based on chaos theory has greater utility than do brain models that compare brain activity with digital computer activity. The degree of chaos in sleep and wakefulness has been evaluated on the basis of electroencephalographic recordings. As a result, it has been proposed that dreams result from the brain’s attempt to bring meaning to the images evoked during the chaotic stimulation of the brain’s visual and motor centers, primarily during rapid-eye-movement sleep (Krippner & Combs, 2000).

Hardy (1998) suggested that dreams often depict conflicts between two “chaotic attractors,” for example, dominance versus cooperation, helplessness versus competence, activity versus passivity, or authenticity versus superficiality. It follows that the “personal myths” that Feinstein and Krippner (1997) detected in dreams may be thought of as chaotic attractors, and a “mythological dialectic” often is necessary to manage or resolve the conflict. Hardy (1998) described a dreamer whose reliance on social interactions based on authority and hierarchy was undermined by a powerful dream about cooperation and synergy. His reflection on hierarchy versus cooperation led him to
adopt a new set of values as well as different ways of relating to people at work and in social settings.

The humanistic psychologies include human intention in their domain. Humanistic psychologists assume that humans are able to make choices, search for meaning, and engage in self-reflection. Like chaos theorists, humanistic psychologists take exception to deterministic models. For example, the French mathematician Laplace (1814) claimed that a superhuman intelligence could predict the whole course of future events, both physical and human. Prediction and control are not the major goals of the humanistic psychologies and chaos theory; instead, both disciplines focus on description and explanation. Chaos theory has been used to study topics of interest to humanistic psychologists such as emotions (Isenhower, Frank, Kay, & Carello, 2012) and consciousness (Gregson & Micheloyannis, 2012).

RESEARCH AS NARRATIVE

What role can experimental and quasi-experimental methods play in encountering human experiences? Do these methods even have a role, either by themselves or in concert with experiential methods? Perhaps the controversy can only be answered as humanistic psychologists conduct research studies on the topics that they have identified as important in the understanding of human nature. Even if the control and prediction of behavior vanishes from their agenda, the issues of description and understanding will remain. One of the tasks of psychology is to obtain knowledge of human and nonhuman behavior, of individual experience, and of the activities of groups. Humanistic psychologists have flung their net wide. If they can resolve the problem of method, then they are very likely to catch some spectacular fish.

Many deconstructive postmodernists believe that modern science should be abandoned altogether. But constructive postmodernists propose that scientific methods, if properly reconstructed and recontextualized, have the ability to provide scholars with powerful and useful tools with valuable metaphors for understanding events that otherwise would elude them. The proposition that modern science is but a vast oversimplification that has no relationship with the outside world cannot be taken seriously. On the contrary, the knowledge that has been derived from modern science has provided numerous approximations of consensual reality. Although these approximations might be imperfect in some ways, they are at least pragmatic approximations.

If the direction of scientific institutions and how they go about obtaining knowledge and constructing truth is to be changed, then science must bridge the gap between the modern and the postmodern. Within this framework, theories, laws, and models can be viewed as metaphors that do not comprise a fixed body of knowledge but rather are a fluid body of ideas that progress and evolve due to the discourses of both researchers and participants. Through this reconstruction, the methodology of the human sciences can take on a socially involved, interactive narration (Polkinghorne, 1992). Dan McAdams (2009) has pioneered the use of narrative psychology to develop a life story model of human identity, generativity, and human development, with a special emphasis on the impact of modernity on the self.

Indeed, the scientific experiment can be reframed as a narrative describing an event that occurred in a specific time and place. Experimental methods might not be appropriate for the investigation of certain human problems, but they can be useful in telling other stories, albeit those that lack the profundity of existential crises and peak experiences. The Hawthorne effect
and interpersonal expectancy effects demonstrate the impact that the storyteller has on experimental results: A new procedure or story seems to be associated with more dramatic changes than does that same story repeatedly told to the same group. The expectations of the storyteller apparently are perceived in subtle ways by the audience members, who then may perform in ways confirming that story (Harris & Rosenthal, 1988).

Anderson (1990) wrote,

Testing, experimentation, replication, methodology, and all the apparatus of modern science are just as important in the postmodern world as they ever were. Science is judged, [and] possible explanations compete. Proposed theories are tested for their ability to “fit” with other theories, with intuitive feelings about reality—and also for their ability to fit with any kind of data that can be generated by observation and measurement. (p. 77)

Yet something is different in postmodernity—an increasing recognition that the foundation of scientific truth ultimately is a social foundation that rests on a network composed of theories, opinions, ideas, words, and cultural traditions (e.g., Bohart, O’Hara, & Leitner, 2007).

Postmodernists are suspicious of “metanarratives”; Lyotard (1984) pointed out that these systems of thought “typically suppress differences in order to legitimate their own vision of reality.” However, specific narratives can be used as texts in phenomenological and hermeneutic studies. Postmodern psychologists recognize that personal accounts, including those that describe “exceptional human experiences,” are to some extent culturally constructed and are loaded with accounts of local significance. The researcher can look for common themes in these narratives, both within a culture and cross-culturally, often obtaining what Hufford (1982) termed “core beliefs.” Examples might include “Humans have souls that leave the body” and “There are threatening and frightening spirits.” In turn, these core beliefs lead to “core experiences,” such as “out-of-body” travel and “demonic possession.” This project takes on special importance in studies of the self, a construct central to humanistic psychology but one subjected to considerable deconstruction by postmodernists. Yet Martin and Sugarman (1996) offered a synthesis that incorporates social constructionist thought with an acknowledgment of the self, creativity, and intentionality, accounting for both the private–individual and public–social domains. This corrective is necessary because the social constructionists often neglect human constructs such as faith, values, convictions, and intentions, as well as the cultural and individual differences apparent when each of these constructs is studied. Cassirer (1954) reminded us that names are not designed to refer to substantial things or to independent entities that exist by themselves. Instead, names and labels are determined by human interests and human purposes, neither of which are fixed and invariable. Foucault (1980) pointed out that language rests midway between nature and discourse and that science needs to shift from a fixed paradigm to a fluid discourse. With these injunctions in mind, one may recall the claim that “exceptional human experiences” cannot be communicated verbally (White, 1991). This assertion has not been welcomed by modern psychology, but it is reasonable from a postmodern viewpoint, considering that language is conceptual and it is only with great difficulty that it can be applied to nonconceptual experience. Furthermore, information acquired in one state of consciousness may be neither dependably recalled nor comprehended in another state.

From the standpoint of modernity, an individual observes and reflects on the world, transforming this experience into
words that will express these perceptions and thoughts to others. For postmodernists, language is a system unto itself, a social format that is shaped by a community of participants (Gergen, 1991, p. 110). However, the cultural agencies with power and authority influence not only how conscious events will be communicated but also how they will be experienced (Hess, 1992). Modesty is required when researchers depend on language to convey the experience of a life-changing vision, a dream that came true, an interpersonal adventure, an encounter with nature, a personal loss, a terminal illness, or any other exceptional human experience that is worth studying, albeit with tools that are not completely adequate.

Postmodernity does not speak with a single voice on these topics. Deconstructive postmodernism declares that there is nothing but cultural construction in human experience. Deconstructive postmodernists believe that even the human body image and the organisms that one finds in nature are little more than cultural projections; hence, one’s perceptions of them are suspect and unreliable. Ecological postmodernism, on the other hand, sees both the human body and the “earth body” as sources of wisdom and grounding for a humanity trying to effect a transition beyond the failed aspects of modernity (Metzner, 1999; Spretnak, 1991). Constructive postmodernists believe that the constant reexamining of one’s beliefs and the dedicated attempt to learn about one’s socially constructed reality are the most important learning tasks needed for survival at this time in history (Edge, 1994).

Finally, Jacques Barzun, one of the members of the 1964 conference in Old Saybrook, Connecticut, in which humanistic psychology coalesced as a movement, lamented over postmodernism’s relativism and its assault on the idea of truth. Gross and Levitt (1998) went further, deriding “the mentality of LSD mysticism, shamanistic revelation, and ecstatic nonsense” that characterizes postmodernism (p. 23). A more charitable approach is taken by authors (e.g., Hoborek, 2007) who believe that postmodernism has run its course, has made its contribution, and is being superseded by any number of “post-postmodern” perspectives.

The humanistic psychologies may provide strategies, metaphors, and even applications for assisting in solving some of the critical problems that must be faced both in the present and in whatever postmodern world may emerge in the future. A continuation of the discourse between humanistic psychologists and constructive postmodernists, systems and chaos theorists, and students of mythology, narrative, and non-Western thought may well move the humanistic psychologies to the cutting edge of psychological theory, practice, and research.

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The first systematic studies of therapy process and outcome were carried out by Carl Rogers and colleagues (e.g., Rogers & Dymond, 1954; see also Elliott & Farber, 2010). From the perspective of 60 years on, it is unfortunate that this scientific tradition was allowed largely to die out in North America, because humanists’ abandonment of therapy research now appears to have been a key factor in the declining fortunes of humanistic psychology in the 1980s and 1990s (Lietaer, 1990). Today, however, there is no doubt that humanistic therapists have begun once more to study the process and effects of their work with clients (Elliott, Watson, Greenberg, Timulak, & Freire, 2013). Nevertheless, we need to do much more; as I see it, there is a scientific, practical, political, and even moral necessity for us to evaluate how our clients use what we offer.

Unfortunately, the standard tools for addressing the efficacy of psychotherapy are extremely blunt instruments. The predominant research paradigm, the randomized clinical trial (RCT) design, suffers from a host of scientific difficulties (see Cook & Campbell, 1979), including poor statistical power, randomization failure, differential attrition, failure to measure important aspects of clients’ functioning, lack of clarity about the actual nature of the therapies offered, and poor generalizability.

Not the least of these difficulties are two that are key to humanistic psychology. First, RCTs typically cast clients as passive recipients of standardized treatments rather than as active collaborators and self-healers (Bohart & Tallman, 1999). Thus, the fundamental presuppositions of RCTs are at variance with core humanistic values regarding personal agency and person-to-person relationships.

Author’s Note: I gratefully acknowledge the inspiration of Art Bohart, on whose initial work the method described here is based, as well as the contributions of colleagues and students, both in the United States and in the United Kingdom. This revision is dedicated to the memory of David Rennie, friend and colleague, whose suggestions and support contributed to the development of the HSCED (hermeneutic single-case efficacy design) method.
Second, RCTs do not warrant causal inferences about single cases. This is because they rely on an operational definition of causal influence rather than seeking a substantive understanding of how change actually takes place. In other words, they are “causally empty”; they provide conditions under which inferences can be reasonably made but provide no method for truly understanding the specific nature of the causal relationship. Even when a therapy has been shown to be responsible for change in general (because randomly assigned clients in the active treatment condition show outcomes superior to those of control clients), this overall result does not necessarily apply to particular clients. After all, for any specific client, factors other than therapy might actually have been the source of observed or reported changes, or the client’s apparent change might have been illusory. Furthermore, RCTs leave open questions about which aspects of therapy clients found helpful, which might have little to do with the theorized components.

For these reasons, humanistic psychologists are in need of alternatives to RCTs, designs that are consistent with the humanistic perspective while also allowing careful examination of how clients use therapy to change themselves. In fact, the past 10 years, since the first edition of this book, have seen a renaissance of systematic case study research (see McLeod, 2010). In this chapter, I present a sketch for one such humanistic alternative, a form of systematic case study I mischievously labeled *hermeneutic single-case efficacy design* (HSCED). (For others, see also MacLeod, Elliott, & Rodgers, 2012; Schneider, 1999.)

Traditionally, systematic case studies have been classified under the traditional design rubric of *single-case pre–post designs* and have been designated as *nonexperimental*, that is, causally uninterpretable (Cook & Campbell, 1979). However, Cook and Campbell (1979), following Scriven (1974), also described the use of retrospective “modus operandi” designs that can be interpreted under certain conditions, that is, when there is rich contextual information and there are *signed causes*. Signed causes are influences whose presence is evident in their effects. For example, if a bumper-shaped dent with white paint in it appears in your new car after you have left it parked in a parking lot, then the general nature of the causal agent can be readily inferred, even if the offending vehicle has long since left the scene. Mohr (1993) went further, arguing that the single case is the best situation for inferring and generalizing causal influence.

Furthermore, standard suspicions about systematic case studies ignore the fact that skilled practitioners and laypeople in a variety of settings continually use effective but implicit practical reasoning strategies to make causal judgments about single events, ranging from medical illnesses, to crimes, to airplane crashes (Schön, 1983). For example, forensic and medical practice both are fundamentally systems for developing and testing causal inferences in naturalistic situations.

Thus, the challenge is to explicate a convincing practical reasoning system for judging the influence of therapy on client change. HSCEDs attempt to explicate a set of practical methods that are transparent, systematic, and self-reflective enough to provide an adequate basis for making inferences about therapy efficacy in single cases. The approach outlined here makes use of rich networks of information (“thick” description rather than elegant design) and interpretive (rather than experimental) procedures to develop probabilistic (rather than absolute) knowledge claims. Such an approach is hermeneutic in the sense that it attempts to construct a plausible understanding of the influence processes in complex ambiguous sets of information about a client’s therapy.

HSCED is also dialectical in that it uses a mixture of positive and negative, quantitative and qualitative evidence to create a rich case record that provides the basis for systematic
Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design: An Overview

construction of affirmative and opposing positions on the causal influence of therapy on client outcome. As outlined here, it involves a set of procedures that allow a therapist/researcher to make a reasonable case for claiming that a client very likely improved and that the client very likely used therapy to bring about this improvement. Making these inferences requires two things. First, there is an affirmative case consisting of two or more types of positive evidence linking therapy to observed client change, for example, client change in long-standing problems and a self-evident association linking a significant within-therapy event to a shift in client problems. Second, sceptic case is also required, marshaling the evidence that plausible non-therapy explanations might be sufficient to account for apparent client change. The collection and presentation of negative evidence requires good-faith efforts to show that non-therapy processes can explain apparent client change, including systematic consideration of a set of competing explanations for client change (see Cook & Campbell’s, 1979, account of internal validity).

It is worth noting that humanistic psychologists are generally suspicious of words like explanation and cause, which they equate with natural science modes of understanding (i.e., mechanical and physicalistic processes) and which they rightly mistrust as reductionistic and dehumanizing. However, thinking causally and searching for explanations is part of what makes us human (Cook & Campbell, 1979), like telling each other stories. When we describe therapy as responsible for, bringing about, or influencing change on the part of our clients, we are speaking in explicitly causal terms. Even language such as facilitating and empowering is implicitly causal. However, in discussing causal influence processes in humans, it is clear that we are not talking about anything like mechanical forces; rather, we are talking about narrative causality, which employs a range of modes of explanation, including who did something (agentic explanation); what the person’s purpose was in acting (intentional explanation); what plan, role, or schema the person was enacting (formal explanation); and what situation allowed the action (opportunity explanation) (Elliott, 1992). At the same time, it is very important for humanistic psychologists to be very careful with their language so as not to fall into the common trap of treating psychological processes as if they were mechanical causes. In other words, therapists do not “cause” their clients to change; rather, clients make use of what happens between them and their therapists so as to bring about desired changes in their lives.

A PRACTICAL REASONING STRATEGY FOR INFERRING CAUSAL INFLUENCE OF THERAPY

In our society, various types of experts must rely on practical reasoning systems in complex circumstances marked by multiple possible causal factors and contradictory evidence. Such circumstances preclude certainty or even near certainty (i.e., \( p < .05 \)) and often require that decisions be made on the basis of “probable cause” or “the weight of the evidence” (i.e., \( p < .20 \)).

The challenge, then, is to make this practical reasoning system transparent, systematic, and self-reflective enough to convince ourselves and others. This requires three things: (1) a rich case record consisting of multiple data sources, both qualitative and quantitative; (2) two or more positive indicators of direct connection between therapy process and outcome; and (3) a systematic assessment of factors that could account for apparent client change. This reasoning process is not mechanical and is more like detective work, in which available evidence is weighed carefully and contradictory evidence is sought for possible alternative explanations.
Rich Case Record

The first prerequisite for HSCED is a rich comprehensive collection of information about a client’s therapy. This collection includes basic facts about client and therapist and the client’s presenting problems as well as data about therapy process and outcome using multiple sources or measures. The following are some useful sources of data:

Quantitative Outcome Measures

Therapy outcome is both descriptive/qualitative (how the client changed) and evaluative/quantitative (how much the client changed). Thus, it is useful to use selected quantitative outcome measures, including at a minimum one standard self-report measure of general clinical distress (e.g., Symptom Checklist-90; Derogatis, 1983) and one presenting-problem-specific or theoretically relevant measure (e.g., Social Phobia Inventory; Connor et al., 2000). It is best if these measures are given at the beginning and end of therapy and periodically during therapy (e.g., once a month or every 10 sessions).

Weekly Outcome Measure

A key element in HSCED is the administration of a weekly measure of the client’s main problems or goals. This procedure has two advantages. First, it provides a way of linking important therapy and life events to specific client changes. Second, it ensures that there will be some form of outcome data at whatever point the client stops coming to therapy. (These data are particularly important in naturalistic practice settings.) One such measure is the Simplified Personal Questionnaire (Elliott, Shapiro, & Mack, 1999), a 10-item target complaint measure made up of problems that the client wants to work on in therapy.

Qualitative Outcome Assessment

As noted previously, therapy outcome is also qualitative or descriptive in nature. Furthermore, it is impossible to predict and measure every possible way in which a client might change. Therefore, it is essential to ask the client. At a minimum, this inquiry can be conducted at the end of therapy, but it is a good idea to conduct it periodically within therapy (e.g., once a month or every 10 sessions). Because clients are reluctant to be critical of their therapists, qualitative outcome assessment probably is best carried out by a third party, but it can be engaged in by the therapist if necessary. The Change Interview (Elliott, Slatick, & Urman, 2006) is a useful method for obtaining qualitative information about outcomes.

Qualitative Information About Significant Events

Because therapeutic change is at least partly an intermittent discrete process, it is a good idea to collect information about important events in therapy. Sometimes, the content of these events can be directly linked to important client changes, making them signed causes (Scriven, 1974; e.g., when a client discloses previously unexpressed feelings toward a significant other shortly after a session involving empty chair work with that same significant other). Questions about important therapy events can be included as part of a Change Interview (Elliott et al., 2006), but an open-ended weekly postsession client questionnaire such as the Helpful Aspects of Therapy Form (Llewelyn, 1988) can also be very valuable for identifying therapy processes linked with client change.

Assessment of Client Attributions for Change

The client can also be asked about the sources of changes that the client has
Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design: An Overview

• The client explicitly attributes the posttherapy change to therapy.
• The client describes helpful aspects in therapy clearly linked to the posttherapy changes.
• Examination of weekly data reveals covariation between in-therapy processes (e.g., significant therapy events) and week-to-week shifts in client problems (e.g., helpful therapeutic exploration of a difficulty followed by change in that difficulty the following week).

A posttherapy Change Interview, a weekly Helpful Aspects of Therapy Form, and a weekly measure of client difficulties or goals (e.g., Simplified Personal Questionnaire) provide the information needed to identify positive connections between therapy processes and client changes.

Sceptic Case: Evaluating Competing Explanations for Observed Pre–Post Change

The other basic requirement for causal inference is ruling out the major alternative explanations for the observed or reported client change. In other words, we are more likely to believe that the client used therapy to make changes if we can eliminate other possible explanations for the observed client change. This determination requires, first, a good-faith effort to find nontherapy processes that can account for the apparent client change. What are these nontherapy processes that would lead the therapist to discount observed or reported client changes? Following is a list of the major nontherapy competing explanations in systematic case study designs such as HSCED:

1. The apparent changes are negative (i.e., involve deterioration) or irrelevant (i.e., involve unimportant or trivial variables).
2. The apparent changes are due to statistical artifacts or random error, including measurement error, experiment-wise error from...
using multiple change measures, or regression to the mean.

3. The apparent changes reflect relational artifacts such as global “hello–goodbye” effects on the part of the client, expressing the client’s liking for the therapist, wanting to make the therapist feel good, or trying to justify his or her ending therapy.

4. The apparent changes are due to cultural or personal expectancy artifacts, that is, expectations or “scripts” for change in therapy.

5. There is credible improvement, but it involves client self-help efforts unrelated to therapy or self-corrective easing of short-term or temporary problems.

6. There is credible improvement, but it is due to extratherapy life events such as changes in relationships or work.

7. There is credible improvement, but it is due to unidirectional psychobiological processes such as psychopharmacological medications or recovery from a medical illness or condition.

8. There is credible improvement, but it is due to the reactive effects of being in research.

Space does not allow a full description of these explanatory threats and how they can be evaluated here, but Table 25.1 contains additional information, including examples and procedures for assessing their presence.

### Table 25.1 Nontherapy Processes That May Account for Observed Client Change and Methods for Evaluating Them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nontherapy Process</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Methods for Assessing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nonimprovement</td>
<td>Negative: deterioration, Irrelevant: unimportant, trivial</td>
<td>Analyze for deterioration as well as improvement, Ask about negative changes, Analyze clinical significance of change (Jacobson &amp; Truax, 1991), Ask client to evaluate importance/significance of changes (Kazdin, 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Statistical artifact (random error)</td>
<td>Measurement error, Regression to the mean, Experiment-wise error</td>
<td>Calculate Reliable Change Index (Jacobson &amp; Truax, 1991), Use multiple pretests (rapid drop vs. stable or worse), Assess duration of problem (short vs. long), Assess consistency across multiple measures, Calculate global reliable change (e.g., require reliable change on two out of three measures)</td>
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<td>3. Relational artifact (interpersonal dynamics between client and therapist)</td>
<td>“Hello–goodbye” effect: emphasize distress at beginning, positive functioning at end</td>
<td>Measure social desirability, Researcher, not therapist, interviews client, Encourage negative comments, Listen for spontaneous remarks expressing desire to please or evaluation apprehension, Global or vague positive descriptions versus supporting or convincing detail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nontherapy Process</td>
<td>Examples</td>
<td>Methods for Assessing</td>
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<td>4. Expectancy artifacts (cultural or personal “scripts”)</td>
<td>Client tries to convince self and others that change has occurred when it has not</td>
<td>Presence of both positive and negative descriptions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ask client to evaluate changes as expected versus surprising</td>
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<td>Examine client descriptions for consistency with cultural stereotypes versus plausible detail</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look for spontaneous client attempts to convince self and therapist that change has occurred</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Self-generated return to baseline</td>
<td>Temporary initial state of distress or dysfunction</td>
<td>Evaluate duration of problems (interview or ratings)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reverts to normal baseline through client’s own natural corrective or self-help processes</td>
<td>Ask client to evaluate likelihood that change might have occurred without therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not caused by therapy; would have happened anyway</td>
<td>Use multiple pretests; look for change before therapy starts</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look for client narratives of self-help efforts begun before therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Extratherapy events (positive life events)</td>
<td>Improvements in relationships or work</td>
<td>Ask client: qualitative interview</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Changes in health status unrelated to therapy (e.g., successful surgery, negative biopsy)</td>
<td>Look for in-session narratives about positive extratherapy events or changes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look for extratherapy events associated with weekly change</td>
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<td>7. Unidirectional psychobiological causes</td>
<td>Psychopharmacological medications/herbal remedies</td>
<td>Keep track of medications and herbal remedies, including changes and dose adjustments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hormonal stabilization in recovery from stroke or childbirth</td>
<td>Look for in-session narratives about medical intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Reactive effects of research</td>
<td>Effects of research activities (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder assessment)</td>
<td>Ask client about effects of research (qualitative interview)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Relation with research staff (e.g., better than with therapist)</td>
<td>Use less obtrusive data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of altruism (e.g., derives meaning from helping others)</td>
<td>Use naturalistic clients rather than recruited ones</td>
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Note that the first four competing explanations have to do with whether the observed or reported client changes are illusory or credible. Initial attention is paid to documenting and evaluating whether change has actually occurred, that is, whether there was any change to explain in the first place. The remaining four factors address whether nontherapy causes can largely or exclusively account for the client change: (1) natural self-help/self-corrective processes, (2) extratherapy events, (3) psychobiological processes, and (4) effects of research.

Thus, the task of the sceptic position in HSCED is to organize the available evidence to address each of these possible alternative explanations for client change. Because the change processes operating in therapy are opportunity causes, mechanistic data collection and analysis procedures will not work. Instead, the researcher must use multiple informants (client and therapist) and data collection strategies, both qualitative and quantitative. These strategies confront the researcher with multiple possible indicators that must be sorted out, typically by looking for points of convergence and interpreting the points of contradiction.

In any case, careful examination of non-change and nontherapy processes can lead to a number of different conclusions:

- Some alternative nontherapy processes may be ruled out entirely.
- Other alternative processes may be found to be present but as a whole may fail to provide a full explanation of the observed change.
- Alternative processes may mediate therapeutic influence on the outcome. For example, the client may use therapy to develop a more solid sense of direction, enabling him or her to develop more rewarding relationships.

**DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This has been a necessarily brief overview of HSCED. When it was developed in the late 1990s, HSCED was a relatively informal critical reflection method that any single psychotherapist could apply to one of his or her clients (Elliott, 2002). One of the first learnings my colleagues and I made, however, was that the question of whether there was any substantive client improvement is more complex than we had originally thought. Our clients typically presented us with a mixed picture, showing improvement on some measures but not on others or reporting that they had made important improvements while the quantitative data contradicted this (or vice versa).

This complexity has led us to elaborate our adjudication procedures, so that today it has become standard to use sceptic and affirmative sides, developed either by the same or different teams of researchers; sets of briefs; rebuttals and summary narratives; panels of three or more judges; and systematic procedures for rendering judgments (e.g., Elliott et al., 2009; MacLeod et al. 2012; Stephen & Elliott, 2011). In addition, there has been an increasing interest in change processes, driven by two things. First, we found that demonstrations of causal influence were more convincing if they were accompanied by a plausible theory for how the change came about (Haynes & O’Brien, 2000). Second, we concluded that the best basis on which to generalize the results of a case study are the causal processes operating; that is, you can generalize to other cases in which the same background (moderators) and within-session processes (mediators) are operating (Elliott et al., 2009). Therefore, we have increasingly focused on the question of how the change came about, adding summary narratives and the specification of likely moderator and mediator processes to the judgment step in the method.

As it is currently practiced, HSCED involves the following steps. (a) Collect appropriate measures. (b) Apply them with a client to construct a rich case record. (c) Analyze the
requires researchers to address the complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions ignored in traditional designs. These complexities are present in all therapy research, but RCTs are able to ignore them by simplifying their data collection and analysis. In fact, every group design is made up of individual clients whose change processes are as rich and contradictory as the clients we have studied. The fact that these complexities are invisible in RCTs is yet another reason to distrust them and to continue working toward viable alternatives that do justice to each client’s uniqueness while still addressing the same fundamental scientific questions about the causal status of psychotherapy. This is a rigorous, highly challenging standard to which to hold ourselves—higher, in fact, than group designs such as RCTs. However, as humanists, we owe it to ourselves, as well as to our clients, to understand our role in providing our clients with opportunities for the desired change and growth.

In comparing HSCED with traditional RCT design, we have found that HSCED requires fewer resources but in some ways is more difficult and demanding in that it

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INTRODUCTION TO PART IV

I am asking that ancient question: What does it really mean to be alive? I listen to my friends-teachers-patients as they wrestle with the death that is in them and try to claim more of the life that is also within them. And of course, I don’t come up with The Answer. Yet slowly I come to realize how all of us—if we will but really look and listen—can sense the life pulsing within. We can tell when it is beating more strongly and when it grows faint—even though none of us can really define in proper academic fashion just what that deep intuition is. What we can do, though, is to recognize, by our own inner awareness, how we can experience our own beings in changed ways.


Encounters with the profoundly personal have been a hallmark of humanistic psychology from its inception. The current generation of practitioners build on a rich legacy from the founders of humanistic psychology. These include pioneers such as Charlotte Bühler, Viktor Frankl, Sidney Jourard, R. D. Laing, Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers, Virginia Stir, and James Bugental, whose contributions to depth psychotherapy span five decades and continue to blaze trails today. The founders were men and women of courage—“heart”—who established a profoundly personal stance, “with [its] own distinctive views of human nature . . . and of psychotherapy” (American Psychological Association, 2000).

Similar courage is required during this era. A challenge for humanistic practitioners is to honor the perspective’s ideals and values as formalized in the “Guidelines for the Provision of
In the first part of this section, we show how humanistic practice principles are now viewed as integral to the research, training, and practice of effective psychotherapy. The basis for this development is the groundswell of psychotherapy outcome research that affirms personal and interpersonal context factors as the core of successful therapy. These factors include the therapeutic alliance, empathy, and collaboration and crosscut both therapist orientation and client characteristics. In the balance of the section, we feature both new and classic demonstrations of humanistic principles at work.

Leading off the “Contemporary Themes” section, in Special Section Chapter 26, Kirk Schneider, Alfried Längle, Jürgen Kriz, Lillian Comas-Diaz, Robert Stolorow, Bruce Wampold, David Elkins, and Steven Hayes discuss the “renewal of humanism in psychotherapy.” This dialogue is reprinted from the special section of the December 2012 issue of the American Psychological Association journal *Psychotherapy* and represents an unprecedented gathering of diverse leaders in the psychotherapy field. Each leader was asked to write a position paper to address his or her views on the renewal of humanism in his or her particular specialty and then on consideration of those initial papers, to write a brief reaction paper. In as much as this gathering reflects the very latest perspectives on humanistic applications to practice, and because of its significance to the field of psychotherapy, we have reprinted a portion of it here for the edification of our readers. Included in this excerpt are the introduction to the special section, six of the initial position papers, and the summary and conclusion of the section.

Following this initial set of papers, in Chapter 27, Bob Edelstein offers “Frames, Attitudes, and Skills of an Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapist.” This chapter provides a succinct and eminently accessible overview of existential-humanistic practice principles and sets the frame for the subsequent chapters.

The quality of the relationship between therapist and client has long captured the attention of humanistic theorists and therapists. It is recognized as the medium in which the client reclaims his or her wholeness. In the next special section, Maurice Friedman and Barry Duncan explore the responsibility of the therapist. In Chapter 28 ("Therapy as an I–Thou Encounter"), Friedman begins by defining the essence of responsibility as “responding to the person before you as a person,” that is, responding as “I to thou” in each unique therapeutic relationship. Responding means “hearing the unreduced claim of each hour in all its crudeness and disharmony and answering it out of the depths of one’s being.” In Chapter 29 ("The Person of the Therapist: One Therapist’s Journey to Relationship"), Duncan concretizes Friedman’s I–thou encounter as “one therapist’s journey to relationship.” In this exquisite reflection, Duncan not only demonstrates the empirical salience of therapist responsibility but its centrality to the entire enterprise we know as “effective” psychotherapy.

Courage, on the part of both the therapist and the client, is a theme that runs throughout the chapters in this section. In their updated Chapter 30 ("Existential Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Courage to Be an Existential Counselor"), Clemmont Vontress and Lawrence Epp maintain that everyone is multicultural in the sense that “most people are products of five concentric and intersecting cultures: universal, ecological, national, regional, and racial/ethnic.” The counselor is challenged to be a “macroscopic and holistic thinker,” that is, to see beyond superficial cultural differences and to help the client identify imbalances among the...
four spheres of existence. Such counselors are “necessarily artists, who are creative, individu-
alistic, and fluid in their work and who also have a genuine connection with each client”; they
are in relationship with their clients as “fellow travelers.” Vontress and Epp explore concepts
that help counselors understand the influence of culture in clients’ lives and offer practical
suggestions for working with “culturally different” clients.

The ability of the therapist to enter into the phenomenological world of the client is also
central to the success of the Soteria Project, an innovative and humanizing alternative to
psychiatric hospitalization described by Loren Mosher in Chapter 31 (“Treating Madness
Without Hospitals: Soteria and Its Successors”). The Soteria approach, based on the prac-
tice of interpersonal phenomenology, offered a “confiding relationship” to clients diagnosed
with schizophrenia and an environment in which recovery from psychosis was expected.
Follow-up studies comparing the Soteria method with general psychiatric hospitalization sug-
gest that the former offered highly effective therapeutic interventions and cost-effectiveness.
Intriguingly, despite the documented success of Soteria and its capacity for replication, it has
all but vanished from the consciousness of American psychiatry. Did it threaten the biomi-
cal perspective currently held by the American Psychiatric Association and supported by the
pharmaceutical industry? Mosher closes his thought-provoking chapter with a summary of
how he prefers to work with his clients and their families, along with this poignant statement:
“When successfully applied, there is no more schizophrenia, only two or more humans who
have been through a shared, awesome, subjective experience.”

The next two chapters constitute a special section on awe and terror in humanistic therapy.
In Chapter 32 (“Awe Comes Shaking Out of the Bones”), Mark Stern continues the theme
of humanizing and de-medicalizing psychotherapy. Through the use of riveting dialogue, he
enacts a mutually transformative therapeutic relationship with Father Gregory, a man strug-
gling with obsessive thoughts and compulsive rituals, a priest having trouble in discriminating
“between the mercilessness of awe as servile adoration and awe as earnest devotion.” We are
drawn into the drama of the relationship and experience the therapist’s attempt to embrace
“the client’s awe equally as agony and as aspiration.”

In Chapter 33 (“If You Are Ready to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, Then Have an
Experiential Session”), Alvin Mahrer describes another way in which awe is manifested in
psychotherapy—the awe-full moment evoked in the context of an experiential session. His
chapter is an invitation to take a “baby step” toward having such a session. Mahrer beckons
with an in-depth description of the ways in which awe-full moments may occur and the quali-
tative transformations in one’s sense of self that accompany this process.

Humanistic approaches and postmodern constructivist approaches to psychotherapy share
the underlying goal of liberating the individual to live more fully, creatively, and courageously.
In Chapter 34 (“Constructivist Approaches to Therapy”), Larry Leitner and Franz Epting
provide an overview of constructivism as a “firmly humanistic approach,” albeit still relatively
overlooked by humanistic practitioners. As the authors highlight constructivist philosophies
and approaches to therapy, the compatibility with humanistic theory and practice is clearly
evident. The potential power and effectiveness of this perspective in action is revealed by several
descriptive examples of constructivist psychotherapy. Leitner and Epting conclude their chapter
by stating, “To truly have a rich discipline, we must understand the magnificent creature we call
a person.” Both constructivist and humanistic therapists seek to understand the experiential
worlds of their clients. They do not seek to impose meanings; rather, they seek to understand
their clients’ “truths” as the basis from which to work together in collaborative relationships.
Searching for meaning in loss is a process that we, as embodied human creatures, are called on to do throughout our lives. In Chapter 35 (“A Humanistic Perspective on Bereavement”), Myrtle Heery describes the process of searching for meaning in loss—a companion to the existential “givens” of embodiment and finitude—as a journey into uncharted territory for each individual. Her work with people who are bereaved suggests some “stations” typically encountered during the ongoing search process. She invites the reader to explore his or her own losses and to discover the stations of his or her uniquely courageous journey. Heery ends her deeply moving chapter with a question for each of us as therapists: “Can we remain open to accompanying our clients into the depths of their hearts?” Are we prepared? Acknowledgment of the spiritual dimensions of the search is among the challenges facing contemporary psychology.

Distinguishing and agreeing on the points of philosophical interface between humanistic and existential approaches to psychotherapy is a long-standing challenge for many who identify with the “third force.” In Chapter 36 (“Existential Analysis and Humanistic Psychotherapy”), John Rowan and, with “A Reply to John Rowan,” Ernesto Spinelli update their lively and illuminating British perspectives on the relationship between humanistic therapy and existential analysis. From our perspective, humanistic psychology is making increasing room for both.

The final three chapters in this part of the volume give a sampling of current trends and considerations in humanistic applications to practice. Maureen O’Hara begins the “Emergent Trends” section with Chapter 37 (“Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World”). In this stem-winding contribution, O’Hara calls on humanistic clinicians to make the same determined commitment as their forebears to address cultural and social health as they do individual and psychotherapeutic health. She details her experiences with the masters, such as Carl Rogers, Rollo May, and Erich Fromm, and sets their global priorities against the sometimes narrower priorities of humanistic practitioners today, who tend to address the symptoms of social and individual ills, such as the standardization of psychotherapy, faulty diagnostic manuals, and the problem of medicalization, but neglect the underlying causes—the “psychospheres,” as she calls them—that inform and inflame those symptoms. In the end, O’Hara doesn’t just critique but offers concrete solutions to urgent psychosocial plights—and calls on the emerging generation of humanists to take the lead in bringing these solutions to fruition.

In Chapter 38 (“Humanistic-Experiential Therapies in the Era of Managed Care”), Jeanne Watson and Arthur Bohart discuss a different psychosocial challenge—how experiential therapists can thrive within the current mental health care system without forfeiting the essence of their approaches. In this updated piece, Watson and Bohart address the realities of practicing within the time-limited, “evidence-based” environment and provide specific suggestions for adapting five humanistic-experiential approaches. The authors highlight Bohart and Tallman’s (1999) view of clients as “active self-healers” as being compatible with contemporary stances and as offering a metatheory for working within managed care environments.

Finally, in Chapter 39 (“An Existential-Integrative Approach to Experiential Liberation”), Kirk Schneider elaborates “existential-integrative” therapy—one way of understanding and coordinating a variety of therapeutic approaches within an overarching existential-experiential context. This approach is gaining traction among humanistic and existential practitioners who value diversified modalities, as well as those who work in medicalized settings (e.g., see Benjamin, 2011; Price, 2011; Schneider, 2008; Shumaker, 2011; Wampold, 2008). The
existential-integrative approach is also becoming of increasing interest to ostensibly nonexistential-humanistic practitioners who recognize the need for depth in their orientation (e.g., see Bunting & Hayes, 2008; Wampold, 2008).

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Something remarkable has been noted in this series of articles. Diverse approaches to psychotherapy have embraced humanism. I certainly would not have predicted—at least in my lifetime—that leading scholars of cognitive-behavioral treatment, psychoanalysis, and multicultural approaches would find common ground with an affiliation with humanistic psychology.

—Bruce Wampold (from his commentary in the special section “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy”)
Introduction: The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy—A Roundtable Discussion

Kirk J. Schneider
Alfried Längle

This special section highlights the renewal of humanism in psychotherapy. For the purposes of this special section, humanism is defined as a philosophical perspective whose subject matter is the whole human being. In psychotherapy, humanism places special emphasis on the personal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions of therapy and on clients’ reflections on their relationship with self, others, and the larger psychosocial world. The contributors to this special section—Bruce Wampold, David Elkins, Steven Hayes, Robert Stolorow, Jürgen Kriz, Lillian Comas-Diaz, and the authors of this introduction—are each leaders in their respective therapeutic specialties: research and training, cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoanalytic therapy, European therapy, and multicultural therapy. In the manner of a “roundtable,” each contributor was asked to provide a short article on the renewal of humanism in his or her respective specialty, followed by brief comments on the initial round of articles. The conclusion of these reflections is that the renewal of humanism is a viable and growing phenomenon among the leading specialty areas of psychotherapy. The corollary conclusion is that although many theoretical and practical questions remain, humanism is (a) a foundational element of therapeutic effectiveness, (b) a pivotal (and needed) dimension of therapeutic training, and (c) a critical contributor to societal well-being.

This special section of Psychotherapy highlights the growing consensus among leading practitioners from diverse theoretical orientations that the humanistic elements of psychotherapy are essential factors in psychotherapy. The section also illuminates the influence of diverse expressions of therapeutic humanism on research, training, and practice and highlights the implications of the humanistic perspective for social justice and public policy.

To create this special section, the authors of this introduction gathered eight leaders to contribute articles on the renewal of humanism in five basic areas: (1) cognitive-behavioral therapy, (2) psychoanalytic therapy, (3) European therapy, (4) multicultural therapy, and (5) research, training, and practice. We all agreed that the format for this special section should be a “roundtable discussion.” This meant that each contributor would be given wide latitude to express his or her particular perspective on humanistic renewal in a short article that would be shared with the others, and that following these initial reflections, each contributor
Similarly, Robert Stolorow, the founding father of intersubjective psychoanalysis, wrote that the “dual aim” of his most recent book (Stolorow, 2011) was to “show both how Heidegger’s existential philosophy enriches post-Cartesian psychoanalysis and how post-Cartesian psychoanalysis enriches Heidegger’s existential philosophy” (p. 105). Furthermore, he notes,

Post-Cartesian psychoanalysis and Heidegger’s existential philosophy are both forms of phenomenological inquiry. Post-Cartesian psychoanalysis . . . investigates . . . the structures that prereflectively organize the lived emotional worlds of particular persons, along with the specific relational contexts in which these structures take form. (p. 105)

Finally, Lillian Comas-Diaz (2008), a leading theorist of multicultural therapy, resonated with the aforementioned view when she asserted that “the humanistic lineage of meaning-making is a source of healing and liberation. It promotes an ‘ideological ethnicity,’ or a tendency to find life meaning by revealing cultural beliefs and rituals” (p. 100). “Latino psychospirituality,” for example, Comas-Diaz elaborated, is a “healing approach that integrates existential, liberating, and cultural dimensions into psychotherapy” (p. 100).

What do each of these statements by the leading theorists of our time have in common? They suggest that a foundational shift may be occurring in our profession. This shift veers away from technical prescribing and toward humanistic presiding, away from formulas and toward personal relationships. It is a shift marked by elements that crosscut particular approaches and that accent particular contexts—such as the therapeutic alliance, empathy, genuineness, receptivity to client feedback, and meaning making.
Put more formally, and by consensus of the contributors to this special section,

Humanism is a philosophical perspective whose subject matter is the whole human being. Humanism is concerned with such existential themes as meaning, mortality, freedom, limitation, values, creativity, and spirituality as these arise in personal, interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts. In psychotherapy humanism places special emphasis on the personal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions of therapy and on clients’ reflections on their relationship with self, others, and the larger psychosocial world.

The signs of a humanistic renewal in psychotherapy are both robust and growing (Elkins, 2009). Recently, the American Psychological Association published two unprecedented textbooks—on humanistic therapy (Cain & Seeman, 2002) and existential therapy (Schneider & Krug, 2010). At the same time, the American Psychological Association produced a companion video series on the topics, called “Psychotherapy Over Time” (Cain, 2010; Schneider, 2009). There is also an increasing interest in the integration of humanistic principles into mainstream practice modalities (see Norcross & Wampold, 2011; Price, 2011; Schneider, 2008; Shumaker, in press; Wampold, 2008; Wolfe, 2008). These integrations are occurring in spite of, and perhaps even in light of, the countervailing forces of therapeutic manualization and standardization (e.g., Benjamin, 2011; Norcross & Lambert, 2011; Price, 2011; Shedler, 2010).

Finally, there is an increasing interest in specifically humanistic and existential approaches to therapy (Barnett & Madison, 2012; O’Hara, 2001). For example, the Existential-Humanistic Institute and the International Institute for Humanistic Studies, both of which are in the San Francisco Bay Area, are introducing humanistic and existential practices to a growing regional and worldwide audience. Recently, the Existential-Humanistic Institute, in partnership with Saybrook University, has launched a certificate program in the foundations of existential-humanistic practice. This is one of the first attempts to formalize such training in the United States. Humanistic and existential training is also being actively conducted in places such as Great Britain, China, Russia, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Poland, Korea, Japan, and parts of Latin America. The first major United States–China existential therapy conference took place in April 2010, and the second occurred in May 2012 (see Hoffman, Yang, Kaklauskas, & Chan, 2009, for a comprehensive overview of humanistic and existential psychology’s expanding global influence). In short, the renewal of humanism is a significant, worldwide development; it is deep, and it is of major consequence to our profession.

Without further ado, then, we now present “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion.”

NOTES

1. This special section is excerpted from Psychotherapy, 49, 430–481, 2012, and is reproduced by permission of the American Psychological Association. No further reproduction of distribution is permitted without written permission from the American Psychological Association. Copyright 2012 by the American Psychological Association.

2. This special section was conceived during a conversation between Alfried Längle and Kirk Schneider at the Freud Café, Vienna, Austria, following a highly
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successful congress of the International Society for Logotherapy and Existential Analysis in May 2011.
3. The editors of this special section thank David Elkins for his valuable input to this Introduction.

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The Renewal of Humanism in European Psychotherapy

Developments and Applications

Alfried A. Längle

Jürgen Kriz

Citation


ABSTRACT

In Europe, humanistic psychotherapy is becoming increasingly widespread. Not only are the explicitly “humanistic” psychotherapies being robustly used, they are increasingly being integrated into approaches not traditionally viewed as humanistic. One can therefore observe a progression in the personalization of methodology within European modes of practice. In the past several decades, humanistic psychology has inspired the expanding use of existential–phenomenological modes of practice. This theoretical base, coupled with recent trends in person-centered systems theory, points toward an invigorating future for humanistic forms of practice in Europe, despite the political trends toward psychotherapeutic practice in Germany.

Keywords: explanatory and understanding psychology, legislature, therapeutic relationship, malpractice, development of HP

Without a doubt, human beings can be described in a variety of ways. These various descriptions are the result of differing perspectives on what aspects constitute a human being as a whole. For example, the classic nomothetic perspective of natural science, so prevalent in psychology, focuses on the laws of observable behavior. By contrast, the idiographic perspective focuses on an individual’s unique characteristics as the central point of investigation.

Nomothetic perspectives on human beings are researched and described using objective procedures and then applied to the practice of psychotherapy by more universal applicable
methods. This is seen predominantly in scientifically oriented, objective, paradigms led by methods such as behavioral therapy (BT). In this paradigm, the universally valid, objectifiable, and determining aspects in the human being are sought out and become the focal point of any work within the therapeutic practice. According to Jaspers (1973), these methods are part of an explanatory psychology. They match a patient's suffering, problem, or conflict with concrete interventions and treatment that have been derived from universal theories or evidence-based findings. This method corresponds with today’s Zeitgeist of functional, economic, and technical orientation based on positivistic efficiency.

For example, chronic distress that leads to a high, measurable probability of psychological (and physical) symptoms of illness can be analyzed nomothetically. But which factors actually cause stress in an individual human being can vary significantly; they are often dependent on subjective interpretations and values rather than objective circumstances and should therefore be studied accordingly.

To systematically take into account such aspects as individual meaning and sense of significance, we believe, one needs an essentially idiographic description; such a description focuses on understanding over and above nomothetically explaining a patient’s given condition. In our understanding, Humanistic Psychology (HP) belongs to this class of understanding paradigms. In this way, HP may allow the individual to appear as a subject—as a singular and unique person—who cannot be measured in his or her essence but who can always surprise by the possibilities contained within the depth of their individual values (Ofman, 1974). Such a procedure or approach is individualizing, it addresses what moves a person, for it aims at understanding one’s subjective values, their possible losses through crisis, and the personal resources one can bring to bear to address these problems. Seeing what moves a person is to empathically understand her/him. For such a procedure to work positively and effectively, encounter, dialog, and empathic listening (resonant with Rogers’ 1957 facilitative conditions) are the appropriate methods of choice.

It takes both a nomothetic and idiographic approach to create a culture of psychotherapy. A holistic view of the human being and his or her continuous development can only be described through the complementarity of both paradigms. What we share in anatomy and physiology, in psychological processing and mental procedures, no doubt enables and justifies the search for general laws. But within our individual characteristics of body, soul, and spirit, however, we differ in ways that cannot be adequately described nomothetically. While the variety of psychological problems and modes of processing these problems may be examined for general structures, they are simultaneously connected to a unique person who may not be fully described/understood solely by universal procedures. Each individual has to deal with his or her situation, has the desire to understand it, and eventually has to overcome it by his or her own strength and resources. Those inner strengths, whose self-organization may seem to be blocked by problems or pathology, can be mobilized through the encounter with another person or several other persons. HP is therefore an advocate for what is unique across individuals.

A simplistic and dichotomous explanation and understanding of psychology does little justice to the diversity of human realities (and the scientific or therapeutic possibilities of describing those realities). Every psychotherapy works within both perspectives—the general and the individually directed—and each is important. No therapy
will be effective, therefore, without respecting the uniqueness of the individual as well as more general theories about human beings as a whole. Depending on the approach, the priorities differ and in turn access to the individual patient. The perspective best suited to the future of psychotherapy is one that learns from the other and integrates one another’s achievements. HP has already been assimilated by other orientations in these aforementioned ways or paved the way for similar developments within other orientations. We will touch on this issue later in the paper.

DEVELOPMENT OF HP IN EUROPE

In Europe, there are four leading therapeutic orientations that are generally classified in terms of their thematic focus. Despite the great variation in how these four orientations are interpreted, they are generally classified as follows:

1. *Psychodynamic* (psychoanalytic and depth-psychological) approaches: the focus on constructive transformation of (unconscious) psychodynamic reactions.

2. *Behavioral* approaches (including cognitive BT): the focus on constructive transformation of maladaptive cognitions and behavior.

3. *Humanistic* approaches: the focus on constructive transformation of the whole person with an emphasis on inner congruence and personal decision making.

4. *Systemic* approaches (including family therapy): the focus on constructive transformation of interactive systemic influences through challenges to pathogenic interactions.

These clusters not only differ in their main concepts and focus on what “transformation” should mean but also in their obligation to different paradigms concerning clinical-therapeutic “reality” and the determination of what is “factual.”

Psychotherapy always takes place in the context of social processes. We see this disposition in the images, expectations, wishes, assessments and valuations, narratives, preferences, and aversions by which our clients and their “symptoms” manifest. They are part and parcel of the psychosocial and symbolic structures of their environment just as significantly as those that are characteristic of their psychotherapists.

This interaction of structures strongly influences the legal/medical environment as it relates to psychotherapeutic treatment in some European countries (where there are great differences) as we will momentarily illustrate. In short, the psychosocial and symbolic structures of the environment are major players in determining Europe’s legal psychotherapeutic requirements—and this of course has further ramifications for the integration and practice of HP.

A striking example of these influences and the way they frame the conditions for a psychotherapeutic environment is Germany, by far the largest of the German-speaking countries with a population of 81.7 million (Austria, 8.4 million, and Switzerland, 7.8 million). Since the *Law of Psychotherapy* was passed in 1999, Germany may possibly have the world’s most strongly regulated requirements for psychotherapy—this comes with many benefits, but also drawbacks. One of the benefits is that psychotherapists and physicians (psychiatrists) have an equal status. Although psychotherapists may not prescribe medication, every patient can visit a registered psychotherapist of his or her own choice without having to consult a physician. Social security pays for International Classification of Diseases–indicated psychotherapy. In contrast to the United States, almost every German, Austrian, or Swiss national is medically insured by the state. A standard 50 to 150 (even 250) hours are
granted with the first application. Eighty to eighty-five euros per 50-minute session are paid for by the state enabling therapists to maintain a practice and standard of living from their work. In Austria (and partially in Switzerland), social security is the main funding source for therapy.

The advantage for clients of fully paid psychotherapy in the German state system of medical insurance has one very strong limitation or drawback: access to the psychotherapeutic profession is almost completely limited to physicians and academics with a master (or diploma) in psychology. This is a prerequisite to a postgraduate training of 3 (fulltime) to 5 (part time) years, ending with the state certificate.

The choice of psychotherapeutic method is even more limited. At present, and no less than 12 years after the law was passed, only two schools of psychotherapy are sanctioned within Germany: psychodynamic and BT. However, the legislature does provide for other methods if their efficacy can be proven. The committees in charge of validating these applications almost exclusively consist of representatives from these two schools (which is akin to letting the engineers of Ford and Chrysler decide which cars are approved for the road). In spite of the great commitment of systemic and humanistic organizations (especially person-centered Rogerian therapy) only partial success has been achieved within the very complicated procedure of approval (further constructed by representatives of these two schools). Even extensive and costly lawsuits—taken all the way to federal courts—have not been able to change the situation.

Although no psychotherapist in Germany is able to acquire legal approval to practice humanistic psychotherapy, it is remarkable to note that a representative survey among approved psychotherapists in 2005 (6 years after the law) showed that 37% stated “ideas, concepts, and impulses” from person-centered psychotherapy (Rogers) to be of considerable importance for their work (more than 50 points on a scale of 100). Seventeen percent admitted a similar sentiment toward Gestalt therapy (multiple choices possible). The question to which extent a particular method contributed to their personal identity as therapists, 43% answered in favor of person-centered and 27% in favor of Gestalt therapy. This clearly shows that it has not been possible to downplay the significance of humanistic psychotherapy for German therapists (Schindler & von Schlippe, 2006).

However, the above notwithstanding, in the last few years, behavioral therapists have occupied almost all of the university chairs in “clinical psychology/psychotherapy”; very few of these represent the psychodynamic approach and the number of chairs teaching humanistic psychotherapy has been reduced from more than a dozen in 1999 to just 2 (soon to be only 1) (Frohburg, 2011). This crucial turning point brought about by the 1999 German law of psychotherapy highlights that until 1995, 75% of German universities still taught the person-centered approach, but by 2000 only 17% did so—this percentage has now dropped even further to only a marginal percentage (Frohburg, 2011). This contraction also corresponds with the fact that membership in the largest German organization of humanistic psychotherapy “GwG” (person-centered) has dwindled from 9000 in 1993 to about 3000—among them 2000 psychotherapists (Frohburg, 2011).

Interestingly, an emerging trend has begun to reverse this situation. Concepts of humanistic psychotherapy are explicitly represented in areas of counseling, clinical social work, and similar professions (albeit often in integrated training courses). These are taught primarily at universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen). These academic professions are not considered to
be “psychotherapy” according to German law—for all intents and purposes, however, the difference between psychotherapy and counseling appears to be somewhat transitory.

In terms of our contribution, it may be interesting to note that by the end of 2010 a comprehensive organization, the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft (project group) for humanistic psychotherapy” (AGHPT), was established, bringing together more than a dozen different associations of humanistic psychotherapy (Kriz, 2011). These included person-centered psychotherapy (Rogers), Gestalt therapy (Perls), logotherapy and existential analysis (Frankl), psychodrama (Moreno), transactional analysis (Berne), Integrative therapy (Petzold), and body psychotherapy (Reich, Lowen). The main objective of the AGHPT is to not only strengthen humanistic psychotherapy in Germany but to establish one common “humanistic psychotherapy” by way of the complicated procedure of approval (Kriz, 2011).

The positive side of the German health system is in its ability to provide significant psychotherapy, which is financed by state insurance and accessible to every indicated patient. But this system also has the downside of psychotherapy being incorporated into a reductionist medical system, providing only marginal room or working possibility under misleading conditions for humanistic psychotherapy—a situation that will not change in the near future (even if the AGHPT is successful, it will take at least half a decade).

In Austria, there are no such professional or methodological restrictions. Through an academic preparatory course (Propädeutikum), many basic professions are open to psychotherapeutic training—and the number of accredited methods of psychotherapy (more specifically, training courses) is considerable (22). Among them are 10 approaches to humanistic psychotherapy (Hagleitner & Sagerschnig, 2010). Most psychotherapies are partially paid by social insurance, and all humanistic psychotherapies are included in that system, which is not the case in Germany. There has been a consistent growth of humanistic psychotherapy in Austria during the last 10 years. At present, 39% of the active psychotherapists use a humanistic approach, and as a perspective on the future, 45.4% of all training candidates are currently in HP (Hagleitner & Sagerschnig, 2010, p. 30).

In Switzerland, a new federal law for psychotherapy will come into effect in 2012, with a 5-year transitional period, allowing only physicians and psychologists to be psychotherapists. Until now, psychotherapeutic work and its accreditation by state insurance was handled rather differently in every canton. Of the 23 accredited methods, about a dozen use a humanistic approach. The reimbursement of costs is handled differently by the insurance companies—as a rule, the amount of hours granted is significantly less than in Germany, only part of the costs are reimbursed and psychologist psychotherapists work in “delegation of a physician.”

In Russia, the largest European country, psychotherapy has developed in a different direction. Until 20 years ago, under the communist regime, there was no pluralism in psychotherapy and almost no psychotherapy. Nowadays, psychoanalysis has gained a significant foothold and is as common as humanistic approaches (e.g., psychodrama, Gestalt therapy, Rogerian client-centered therapy, existential analysis), which had the strongest impact following the political turn of 1991. Today also family therapy has become more prominent and there has been a recent growth in cognitive BT (see Kholmogorova, Garanian, Krasnov, 2013, for a comprehensive review of these findings). In most parts of Russia, psychotherapy gets no funding from the state, but a minimal degree of psychotherapy is provided by the government for patients in hospitals.
HUMANISTIC CONCEPTS IN OTHER SCHOOLS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

Fortunately, the mutual influence of concepts and practices has been growing among most European schools of therapy over the last several decades (BPtK, 2009; Grawe, 1998; Kriz, 2007). Along these lines, the Journal Psychotherapie im Dialog—since its inception in 1999—has had the explicit goal of strengthening the dialog between psychotherapies. And the official journal of the psychotherapeutic state association—Psychotherapeutenjournal in its most recent issues highlights papers on the integration of therapists’ training and practice. This movement can be seen as a positive development for the theory and practice of psychotherapy as long as it is a mutual enrichment—and not merely an eclectic “addition” of theoretical and conceptual fragments.

BT has demonstrated a special “receptivity” because many researchers define “behavioral therapy” so extensively as to include practically everything that proves to be empirically effective. In recent years, the so-called “third wave” of behavioral therapies has especially emphasized practices like “mindfulness exercises,” “role-plays,” or “schema therapy”, which are not primarily derived from their own ideological background, but have been integrated into diverse therapeutic programs with a behavioral orientation. This could also be said for Hayes’ acceptance-and-commitment therapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) or Kabat-Zinn’s therapy of “mindfulness-based stress reduction” (Kabat-Zinn, Lipworth, & Burney, 1985; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002) for example, both of which also ascribe to the modern behavioral methods.

In the meantime, within almost every school of psychotherapy, the special significance of the therapeutic relationship, characteristic of the humanistic approach, has been recognized (Miller, Duncan, & Hubble, 1997). This recognition embraces the importance of early relationships in human development and potential psychological disorders—and it is currently being comprehensively discussed within the framework of attachment theories (Bowlby, 1999). In a further example, Young’s schema-focused therapy explicitly specifies the therapeutic relationship as a means for treating “maladaptive schemas” in patients (Young, Klosko, & Weishaar, 2003). Although “schema” was originally an HP concept, particularly as framed by Bartlett (1932) in Gestalt psychology, this fact is often omitted, while continuing to represent a central focus of HP in Greenberg’s (2006) “emotional schemas.”

The importance of the therapeutic relationship would also apply to Marsha M. Linehan’s (1993) dialectic BT for borderline personality disorders. This form of therapy focuses on mindfulness-based exercises and techniques, referring to Linehan’s “discovery” that there can be no therapeutic progress without the establishment of a supportive relationship requiring authenticity, empathy, and recognition of the other in his or her essential “being.” Once again, we are reminded of foundational HP concepts.

Even trauma therapy—officially founded by Francine Shapiro (2001)—stems mainly from Gestalt therapy without being cited or mentioned. In any case, many of Shapiro’s stabilizing and distancing (including screen) techniques were already implemented as tools in critical emotional flooding treatments in the early 1970s (Hartmann-Kottek & Kriz, 2005).

The systemic or family therapeutic approach—one which plays an important role in Europe (especially Germany) with the highest growth in demand for training—also illustrates the many remarkable overlaps with the humanistic approach. Already the
The Renewal of Humanism in European Psychotherapy: Developments and Applications

THE PROBLEM OF ASSIMILATION OF HUMANISTIC CONCEPTS BY OTHER METHODS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

The assimilation of humanistic concepts by other psychotherapeutic methods has problematic aspects on both sides. In the assimilation of the HP concepts, HP paradigms sometimes serve more as empty clichés than as realistic reflections of their humanistic forebears—which is more obstructive than facilitative in the propagation of humanistic concepts. The great strengths of BT, for example, to use “technique” that might prove to be “effective” in the design of dependent and independent variables, may also be an Achilles’ heel. This danger in eclecticism can become apparent in the “therapeutic relationship.” Contrary to its significance for concrete practical work, the “therapeutic relationship” is only marginally integrated into the paradigm of behavioral theory. Thus, important parts of the effect of BT do not even appear in its own theory—a status that ought to be unsatisfactory for every behavioral therapist.

An official paper of the German associations of BT (BPtK, 2009) “calls” for its therapists to “adopt methods of Rogers’ client-centered therapy” to deal with their patients “as genuinely and authentically as possible.” How this can be done concretely within the framework of BT’s strength to operationalize and manualize remains a mystery to us. Operationalization and manualization in BT’s theoretical framework of this central and highly elaborated concept of the client-centered approach might have very little, if anything, to do with the theory and practice that client-centered therapy tries to convey to its therapists.

In fact, good BT primarily means the application of operationalized methods to specific disorders; good humanistic psychotherapy,
to us, however, primarily means the tailoring of the therapeutic relationship to the patient in a dynamic process on the basis of developing certain principles (e.g., to pay attention to the incongruence between experience and it’s symbolization). Both approaches are meaningful; both are, as documented in thousands of cases, effective (albeit in different ways for different persons—and not merely for groups of disorders), but they may not be randomly compatible or combinable (Caspar & Jacobi, 2007; Grawe, Donati, & Bernauer, 2001). For HP, the central concept of “therapeutic relationship” is not geared toward an immediate manual, but rather toward reliable principles for adequate intervention. “Behavioral therapeutic rules” to effectively appear as “genuinely and authentically as possible” (BPtK, 2009, p. 8, transl. J. K.) might mean something other than observing guidelines and attitudes for being genuine and authentic.

In our opinion, a lack of comprehensive conceptual–theoretical integration of effective interventions may not only lead to a defective competence in shaping the therapy according to the needs of the client but also to an unnecessary partial dilettantism. Respecting the conceptual unity of theory and practice will remain a prerequisite and can only be guaranteed by carefully observing a critically validated application and development that is faithful to the original concepts of HP.

THE RELEVANCE OF HP

In the matter of practical procedure and philosophical foundation, the development of HP in Europe has increasingly turned toward incorporating existential philosophy and phenomenological practice (Grawe, 1998; Hutterer, 1998; Kriz, 2007; Stumm, 2011; Swildens, 1988). This development has opened more therapeutic and dialogic space to cultivate patients’ potentials. The existential-phenomenological themes of freedom, responsibility, meaning, relationship, and personality are concerned with questions such as What does it mean to be essentially human in the context of this world? A person’s inner dialog and consciousness of the uniqueness and singularity of each moment are highly significant to experience these themes. The anthropological view of personhood within HP emphasizes the essential establishment of meaningful relations with the world, to others and to oneself. The direction of human intention toward meaning reveals existential questions at the base of various psychological disorders: “Who am I really in this world?” “How may I be?” (see “The fundamental existential motivations” in Längle, 2008). This process of inquiry can lead to temporary “answers” even under unfavorable developmental constellations and, in turn, may contribute to the stabilization of symptoms as the nosological focus within an HP paradigm centered on questions of meaning and existence.

Methodologically, this approach leads to the application of phenomenology in order to reach a level of personhood wherein one experiences authenticity both in being oneself and encountering others. Therapeutic work to establish free experiences that enable an authentic positioning in order to deal responsibly with oneself and the world are the hallmarks of this procedure (Längle, 2000). The patient’s present relational and attitudinal patterns are placed against the backdrop of both biographical references and future orientations. These are further scrutinized with a phenomenological attitude in an ongoing exploration of feeling, thinking, decision, and action. The fostering of mindfulness plays an important role in the cooperative dialog with the psychotherapist—this is especially the case for processes, aspects, and/or deeper layers of the personality that are just below the
surface and beyond the immediate perceptions of consciousness.

The view that human beings require good or positive conditions to flourish and discover their unique selves is a classic humanistic concept. Compared with the more active interventionist strategies such as BT, this classic humanistic approach might seem somewhat reserved because of the emphasis placed on facilitating and encouraging a patient’s self-actualization through the comparatively nonactivist therapeutic relationship. From a humanistic standpoint, to us however, a person can (and must) actualize her/himself on the basis of the given (subjective and environmental) conditions of the wider society within which they live. What is required to elicit this balance is encounter with others, and in therapy, this encounter is characterized by the empathic relationship and dialogue the patient experiences with the therapist. By providing this kind of encounter, the therapist encourages the patient’s process of development and challenges him/her to take a position (an authentic stance) toward her/his very being.

Existential psychotherapy expands on the original humanistic paradigm by stating that it is not enough to create the positive conditions necessary for self-actualization. In addition to this, the empathic encounter and dialogue between therapist and patient moves the process toward the introduction of new ideas. By being present in a committed process, the therapist and patient search for and fertilize the proceeding steps together. In this expanded form, the HP paradigm, in Europe at least, has become more confrontational.

In practice, this means that many European humanistic therapists add their own assessment instead of merely following the patient passively. The personality of the therapist is essentially present within this dialogue. The therapist reveals his or her own position and communicates what he or she feels, senses, and thinks. By adding the very humanness of the therapist to the therapeutic encounter, this humanistic procedure methodically acknowledges the fact that, above all, a person exists and develops within and through dialog. Thus, positioning may be viewed as a strong motto in the existential paradigm of HP: the client is basically asked to take a position toward him/herself and his or her experiences. Through this kind of dialogue, the patient may experience relief (and even joy) at finding him/herself and of being seen, recognized, affirmed, and understood by another person (provided that time and content have been emphatically attuned to).

Appropriate confrontation within the therapeutic setting is based on the principles of HP as formulated by Rogers (1951, 1957). Existential psychology’s continuation of this humanistic principal is not incongruent with HP but rather true to its original concept. The existential orientation by one’s own felt sense (attunement) focuses on the core (or proprium as Allport [1955, 41ff] named it) of the person. This focus encourages the independence of the individual and the fight against being suppressed in its actualization by society and its demands or norms. To assert one’s personhood over and against normative conformity is a basis for freedom and a foundational principle in HP.

The development of HP in Europe has also led to a more holistic view of the human being by including the body as a basis for all experience. This inclusion brings together the different but linked process levels of self-regulation. Biographic material is not only saved in neuronal parts of the body (the brain) but also in other parts (muscles, hormones, etc.) (Bauer, 2002; Fuchs, 2000). This stored biographical information interferes by way of attitudes and preverbal processes with our conscious experience and behavior. It is a task in the therapeutic process to understand the meaning of this stored information. W. Reich (1945) and A. Lowen (1994)
explored this special correlation and the complementarity of “body-structures” and “character-structures.” Research shows that many principles regarding the structuring of how human beings intentionally face the world are preverbally represented in the body (e.g., attachment patterns, patterns of affect regulation, patterns regulating the reduction of the phenomenal world—like “causality”) (Gendlin, 1996). Psychodramatic role-plays (especially in pantomime or sculpturing technique) demonstrate that attitudes toward the world correlate with physical posture—just like chronic affect—reduction by shallow and controlled breathing leads to hypertrophy of the muscles involved thereby influencing emotional processing (Papp, 1973).


Finally, there are efforts in Europe to strengthen HP’s scientific foundation by a system-theoretical understanding of “self-actualization” and to join the interdisciplinary discourses on self-organization. Besides clarifying how different system levels within a human being work together—especially in somatic, psychological, interpersonal, and cultural processes—this theoretical approach in HP centers on questions of change and stability in structures of meaning. The perspective of the person as “animal symbolicum” (Cassirer, 1947)—as living being that creates symbols by which it communicates with others and the world—is the focus of attention here. This perspective considers not only the contents in the communications and encounter but also their linguistic, logical, and behavioral structures (Kriz, 2008, 2009).

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The Renewal of Humanism in European Psychotherapy: Developments and Applications


Humanism and Multiculturalism

An Evolutionary Alliance

Lillian Comas-Diaz

Humanism and multiculturalism are partners in an evolutionary alliance. Humanistic and multicultural psychotherapies have historically influenced each other. Humanism represents the third force in psychotherapy, while multiculturalism embodies the fourth developmental stage. Multiculturalism embraces humanistic values grounded in collective and social justice contexts. Examples of multicultural humanistic constructs include contextualism, holism, and liberation. Certainly, the multicultural-humanistic connection is a necessary shift in the evolution of psychotherapy. Humanism and multiculturalism participate in the development of an inclusive and evolutionary psychotherapy.

Keywords: humanism, multiculturalism, psychotherapy, liberation

Multicultural psychotherapy is embedded in humanism. Similar to humanistic psychology, multicultural psychotherapy fosters people’s capacity for choice, freedom, and transformation. Although some scholars of color have questioned the relevance of humanistic psychotherapy for people of color (Carter, 1995), others have recognized that humanism is compatible with multiculturalism (Jenkins, 2001). In principle, humanism is an aspect of multiculturalism because most multicultural healing traditions promote individuals’ strengths and development. Analogous to positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), multicultural psychotherapy aims to go beyond healing to nurture what is best in clients.

Janus, the double-faced Roman god who looks in opposite directions (http://www.pantheon.org/articles/j/janus.html), offers an apt metaphor for the humanism and multiculturalism alliance. In other words, Janus simultaneously looks into the future and the past. Likewise, while humanism represents the third force in psychotherapy, multiculturalism is the fourth evolutionary development in psychotherapy (Pedersen, 1991).

Consequently, I argue that the humanistic-multicultural connection represents a necessary shift in the evolution of psychotherapy. First, I present a brief historical account of the multicultural influences on humanism. Afterward, I discuss humanistic values within a multicultural context. I then focus on three multicultural values infused with humanism, namely, contextualism, holism, and liberation. Finally, I conclude with a brief comment about the evolutionary adaptation of psychotherapy.
HUMANISM AS A MULTICULTURAL CONSTRUCT

White European men are not the sole architects of humanism. Indeed, humanism can be considered a multicultural construct because multiple cultural influences have contributed to the development of humanism. Multicultural traditions have historically provided humanistic ways of shaping identity, agency, and freedom. Moreover, these traditions encase behavior in a collective context. For example, most Asian traditions embody humanism through their values of respect and care toward others. While Taoism and Confucianism have included strong humanistic elements within their codes of ethical behavior, Buddhism has advocated for individuals’ awakening and engagement of their humanity (Hanh, 1998).

Along these lines, Native American traditions emphasize humanist interconnectedness through the “All my Relations” principle, ethical codes of behavior, and a sacred relationship with the cosmos (Trujillo, 2000). Similarly, Islamic traditions, particularly Sufism, promote humanism, especially through its sensual-mystical literature (e.g., Rumi’s poetry). Moreover, the African Ubuntu philosophy highlights the essence of being human through the recognition of the humanness of others (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubuntu_%28philosophy%29). Indeed, Africans have used the Ubuntu collectivistic perspective (“I am because we are”) to combat colonization (Swanson, 2007). Likewise, humanism flourished in Latin America as a collective struggle against colonization and oppression (Comas-Diaz, 2008). Moreover, the Latin American humanistic value of misericordia prescribes compassion, mercy, charity, and love toward others. Likewise, the humanistic value of meaning making is a source of healing and liberation among many Latinos because this value advances the reconnection with cultural beliefs and traditions (Harwood, 1981).

Many multicultural orientations foster the humanistic value of living life with meaning. Recognizing that meaning is a primary force in life (Frankel, 1984), multicultural psychotherapists examine meaning making within their clients’ situated context. Self-meaning—the perceived effect of an event on identity—and contextual meaning—the perceived relationship of an event to its context (Fife, 1994)—are dimensions consistent with a multicultural collectivistic orientation. From a multicultural worldview, meaning making involves the development of a relational identity encased in a cultural context. Accordingly, contextualism, holism, and liberation are multicultural humanistic constructs.

CONTEXTUALISM

Multicultural individuals who contextualize have a propensity to be context-bound, and, thus, to use their own perspective to understand their reality. As a construct, contextualism refers to the tendency to describe self and other using more contextual references and fewer dispositional references (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999). When multicultural psychotherapists recognize the relevance of context, they listen to their clients’ perspectives, rather than imposing an ethnocentric psychological theory to interpret their clients’ lives (Butler, 2006). In other words, psychotherapists listen to their clients’ voice, rather than imposing their own interpretative voice (Hurtado, 2010).

To promote healing and development, multicultural psychotherapists inquire about clients’ perspectives through the use of narratives. Indeed, narrative therapy shares common elements with humanistic psychotherapy, such as placing clients at the center of therapy, and recognizing them as existing...
Moreover, he identified his areas of oppression as his divorced marital status and a mild back injury (physical health). In comparing his areas of oppression with his client’s, Dr. Carr “remembered” being raised Catholic in a U.S. southern Baptist town. The power differential analysis helped Dr. Carr to recognize his experience as a past member of a religious minority. As a reflexive tool, the power differential analysis facilitated the development of a positive therapeutic alliance.

Since contextualism is anchored in an interdependent foundation, identity is developed within an interconnected relational matrix involving family, significant others, ancestors, groups, community, and cosmos. Simply put, multicultural psychotherapy highlights the relational self-in-context. As a result, psychotherapists use clinical approaches such as cultural genograms, culturagrams, ecomaps, and community genograms (Comas-Díaz, 2012b; McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008; Rigazio Di Giglio, Ivey, Kunkler-Peck, & Grady, 2005).

Certainly, spirituality is an important element in many multicultural individuals’ relational matrix. Indeed, the relational and contextual self is enshrined in a holistic temple. In the next section, I discuss holism as a multicultural value embracing humanism.

HOLISM

A collectivistic worldview is infused with holism. Contrary to the Western concept of curing, where clinicians treating a diagnosed disease ignore the clients’ subjective experience of illness, holistic practitioners heal by treating the clients’ subjective experience of distress in conjunction with their illness (Kleinman, 1988). Moreover, holism entails a mind, body, and spirit unity for many multicultural individuals. To illustrate, people of color tend to express their relationship with spirit in a highly personal and humanistic way.
Humanism and Multiculturalism: An Evolutionary Alliance

(2) a client/sufferer who seeks assistance from the healer/therapist, and (3) systematic contacts between the healer/therapist and client/sufferer in which the practitioner attempts to reduce client/sufferer’s distress (Frank, 1973). Notwithstanding these similarities, there are salient differences between mainstream psychotherapy and indigenous healing. Table 1 illustrates some of the differences between the two worldviews.

As we can see in Table 1, many ethno-indigenous healing elements are embedded in humanism. The movement of indigenization promotes the recovery of ethno-indigenous traditions in the healing process. Indigenization attempts to raise individuals’ consciousness, heal within a culturally congruent framework, and rescue cultural identity (Sinha, 1997). As such, indigenization attempts to foster cultural strengths and traditions in order to address internalized colonization and oppression. Clients’ reconnection with their ancestry allows them to ground their identity into a collective self (Comas-Díaz, Lykes, & Alarcón, 1998).

Certainly, the humanist elements in ethno-indigenous traditions promote personal and collective healing and liberation. I draw my attention to liberation in the next section.

LIBERATION

Freedom and liberation constitute inherent humanistic values. Within a multicultural psychotherapy, practitioners promote freedom at both personal and collective levels. In other words, liberation is a collective endeavor: You liberate yourself by liberating others (Walker, 1983). Many multicultural psychotherapists ground their liberation approach in spiritual-social justice actions congruent with Black and Latin American liberation theology, pedagogy of liberation, liberation psychology, and
Table 1  Comparison of Western Psychotherapy and Ethno-Indigenous Healing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Emphasis</th>
<th>Western Psychotherapy</th>
<th>Ethno-Indigenous Healing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Sociocentric</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dominant/mainstream</td>
<td>Indigenous/ethnic</td>
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<td>Evidence/clinical based</td>
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<td>Agency</td>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Communal, cosmic</td>
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<td>Development</td>
<td>Individuation</td>
<td>Integration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>Union</td>
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<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Externalization</td>
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<td>Self</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>Identity</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Inductive/deductive</td>
<td>Inferential/connective</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>Low context</td>
<td>High context</td>
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<td>Direct, specific</td>
<td>Indirect, nonverbal</td>
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<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Tacit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sequential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem/disease</td>
<td>Reductionism</td>
<td>Imbalance, fragmentation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individually based</td>
<td>Multidetermined</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of control</td>
<td>Disconnection</td>
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<td>Orientation</td>
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<td>Rational validity</td>
<td>Self-evident validity</td>
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African American psychology (Alsup, 2009; Comas-Diaz, 2007). Consequently, commitment to social justice is an integral component of healing and liberation. Following such lineage, multicultural psychotherapists use liberation methods.

Conscientization or critical consciousness is a liberation approach. A process of personal and social transformation, conscientization aims to foster individuals’ awareness of their oppressive circumstances, helps them critically analyze the causes of their oppression, and engages them in transformative actions (Freire, 1973). According to Paulo Freire (1973), mainstream methods of education reinforce and maintain social inequities, and thus are instruments of oppression. As a consequence, oppressed individuals develop an oppressed mentality. A most virulent product of domination, an oppressed mentality fractures identity, and thus, separates the person from his or her self. Such separation includes distortions in the sense of self, others, and their world. Reconnecting with one’s true self involves a cultural archeology. Simply put, the reconnection with ancestry, ethnic heritage, and empowering cultural traditions foments individuals’ humanism through self-recognition and affirmation.

Most multicultural healing traditions teach individuals to embrace what is ambiguous without trying to understand it (Lam & Zane, 2004). Such a perspective fosters creativity. Aware of the connection between multiculturalism and enhanced creativity (Leung, Maddux, Galinsky, & Chiu, 2008), psychotherapists facilitate clients’ creative expression as a method of self-realization. Many oppressed individuals have developed creative forms such as flamenco, Spoken Word, capoeira, urban paintings, graffiti art, among others, to transcend trauma. Since a significant number of people of color have used creativity to struggle against oppression, multicultural psychotherapists frequently use mind-body approaches, such as creative visualization and artistic expressions to work with traumatized clients (Cane,
CONCLUSION: RECONNECTION AND EVOLUTION

Similar to Janus, the evolution of psychotherapy entails looking forward and backward. The humanism-multiculturalism alliance may represent the latest paradigmatic change in psychotherapy. To illustrate, Ken Wilber (2001) identified the goals of Western psychotherapies as healing clients’ split between the conscious and unconscious to create a healthy, strong ego. Moreover, he argued that while humanistic approaches attempt to heal the ego and body split to reveal the total organism, Eastern and indigenous approaches attempt to heal the split between the total organism and the environment, to attain a unity consciousness through the unfolding of a supreme identity with the cosmos.

Following this analysis, humanism and multiculturalism renew themselves through the recognition of original sources and the unification of diverse elements. Through this process, psychotherapists collaborate with clients to develop a critical analysis and engage in transforming actions. The emancipatory actions foster self-healing and collective well-being. Moreover, a liberation approach aims to consolidate identity by healing the split between the relational self and the environment. Furthermore, this approach aspires to achieve transformation at personal, collective, and societal levels. In summary, multicultural liberation fosters the integration of mutually contradictory aspects of the relational self embedded in a context.

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The renewal of humanistic values and practices in contemporary psychoanalytic therapy is exemplified vividly by the impact of Heidegger’s existential philosophy on a psychoanalytic perspective called *post-Cartesian psychoanalysis*. This perspective is a *phenomenological-contextualist* one in which the focus of psychoanalytic inquiry is shifted from Cartesian isolated minds to ways of being-in-the-world and from endogenously arising drive derivatives to relationally constituted emotional experiences. A phenomenological-contextualist approach is shown to be especially fruitful in the understanding of, and therapeutic approach to, emotional trauma. The establishment of a hospitable relational home in which traumatic emotional pain and excruciating existential vulnerability can find a context of human understanding in which they can be held is crucial for therapeutic transformation.

*Keywords*: being-in-the-world, contextualism, Heidegger, phenomenology, post-Cartesian psychoanalysis

The lucid courage for essential anxiety assures us the enigmatic possibility of experiencing Being. For close by essential anxiety as horror of the abyss dwells awe.

—Martin Heidegger (1943/1998, p. 234)

**PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONTEXTUALISM**

The renewal of humanistic values and practices in contemporary psychoanalytic therapy is exemplified vividly by the impact of existential philosophy on what I call *post-Cartesian psychoanalysis* (Stolorow, 2011), a psychoanalytic perspective that may be characterized as a *phenomenological contextualism*. It is phenomenological in that it investigates and illuminates organizations or worlds of emotional experience. It is contextual in that it holds that such organizations of emotional experience take form, both in early development and in the psychoanalytic situation, in constitutive relational or intersubjective contexts. Freud’s psychoanalysis expanded the Cartesian mind to include a vast unconscious realm. Nonetheless, the Freudian mind remained a Cartesian mind, a self-enclosed mental apparatus containing and working over mental contents. A phenomenological contextualism, by contrast, concerns emotional experience and its organization, not reified mind entities, and it reunites the Cartesian mind with its world, its context.
Traditional Freudian theory is pervaded by the Cartesian “myth of the isolated mind” (Stolorow & Atwood, 1992). Descartes’s (1641/1989) philosophy bifurcated the subjective world into inner and outer regions, severed both mind from body and cognition from affect, reified and absolutized the resulting divisions, and pictured the mind as an objective entity that takes its place among other objects, a “thinking thing” that has an inside with contents and that looks out on an external world from which it is essentially estranged. The Freudian psyche is fundamentally a Cartesian mind in that it is a container of contents (instinctual energies, wishes, etc.), a “thinking thing” that, precisely because it is a thing, is ontologically decontextualized, fundamentally separated from its world.

Within philosophy, perhaps the most important challenge to Descartes’s metaphysical dualism was mounted by Martin Heidegger (1927/1962), whose analysis of human existence provides philosophical grounding for phenomenological contextualism. Descartes’s vision can be characterized as a decontextualization of both mind and world. Mind, the “thinking thing,” is isolated from the world in which it dwells, just as the world is purged of all human significance. In his existential analytic, Heidegger sought to re-find the unity of our being, split asunder in the Cartesian bifurcation. His ontological contextualism is made explicit in his “laying bare” the constitutive structure of our existence as a “being-in-the-world” (p. 65). The hyphens unifying the expression being-in-the-world (In-der-Welt-sein) indicate that the traditional ontological gap between our being and our world is to be definitively closed and that, in their indissoluble unity, our being and our world “primordially and constantly” (p. 65) contextualize one another. Heidegger’s existential analytic unveils the basic structure of our being as a rich contextual whole, in which human being is saturated with the world in which we dwell, just as the world we inhabit is drenched in human meanings and purposes.

In light of this fundamental contextualization, Heidegger’s consideration of affectivity is especially noteworthy. Heidegger’s name for the existential ground of affectivity (feelings and moods) is Befindlichkeit, a term he invented to capture a basic dimension of human existence. Literally, the word might be translated as “how-one-finds-onself-ness.” As Gendlin (1988) has pointed out, Heidegger’s word for the structure of affectivity denotes both how one feels and the situation within which one is feeling, a felt sense of oneself in a situation, prior to a Cartesian split between inside and outside. Befindlichkeit is disclosive of our always already having been delivered over to the situatedness in which we find ourselves. For Heidegger, Befindlichkeit—disclosive affectivity—is a mode of being-in-the-world, profoundly embedded in constitutive context. Heidegger’s concept underscores the exquisite context dependence and context sensitivity of emotional experience—a context-embeddedness that takes on enormous importance in view of post-Cartesian psychoanalysis’s placing of affectivity at the motivational center of human psychological life.

It is a central tenet of post-Cartesian psychoanalysis that a shift in psychoanalytic thinking from the motivational primacy of drive to the motivational primacy of affectivity moves psychoanalysis toward a phenomenological contextualism and a central focus on dynamic intersubjective systems. Unlike drives, which originate deep within the interior of a Cartesian isolated mind, affect—that is, subjective emotional experience—is something that from birth onward is constituted within ongoing relational systems. Therefore, locating affect at its motivational center automatically entails a radical contextualization of virtually all aspects of human psychological life. From a post-Cartesian perspective,
the phenomena that traditionally have been central to psychoanalytic theory and practice—including trauma and pathogenesis, psychic conflict, dreams, unconsciousness, transference and resistance, and the therapeutic action of psychoanalytic interpretation—are all seen as taking form within systems of interacting, differently organized, mutually influencing emotional worlds.

EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

A phenomenological-contextualist approach has been especially fruitful in the understanding of, and therapeutic approach to, emotional trauma. Over the course of the two decades during which I have been investigating and writing about trauma, two interweaving central themes have crystallized. On one hand, painful emotional experiences become enduringly traumatic—that is, unendurable—in the absence of a “relational home” or context of human understanding in which they can be held and integrated. On the other hand, in virtue of our finitude and the finitude of all those we love, emotional trauma is built into the basic constitution of human existence.

I have contended (Stolorow, 2007) that the essence of emotional trauma lies in the shattering of what I call the “absolutisms of everyday life,” the system of illusory beliefs that allow us to function in the world, experienced as stable, predictable, and safe. Such shattering is a massive loss of innocence exposing the inescapable contingency of our existence on a universe that is chaotic and unpredictable and in which no safety or continuity of being can be assured. Emotional trauma brings us face to face with our existential vulnerability, plunging us into a form of what Heidegger (1927/1962) calls authentic (owned) being-toward-death, wherein death and loss are apprehended as distinctive possibilities that are constitutive of our very existence, of our intelligibility to ourselves in our futurity and finitude—possibilities that are both certain and indefinite as to their “when” and that therefore always impend as constant threats. Stripped of its sheltering illusions, the everyday world loses its significance, and the traumatized person feels anxious and uncanny, no longer safely at home in the everyday world.

I have shown that a psychoanalytic phenomenological contextualism finds philosophical grounding in Heidegger’s ontological contextualism and that the psychoanalytic understanding of emotional trauma is greatly enriched by an encounter with Heidegger’s elucidation of the structures of authentic existing. A crucial therapeutic implication of these two claims is that emotional trauma (along with other forms of emotional suffering) can be rendered more bearable when it finds a context of human understanding with a therapist.

ILLUSTRATIVE CLINICAL VIGNETTE

A young woman who had been repeatedly sexually abused by her father when she was a child began an analysis with a female analyst in-training whom I was supervising. Early in the treatment, whenever the patient began to remember and describe the sexual abuse, or to recount analogously invasive experiences in her current life, she would display emotional reactions that consisted of two distinctive parts, both of which seemed entirely bodily. One was a trembling in her arms and upper torso, which sometimes escalated into violent shaking. The other was an intense flushing of her face. On these occasions, my supervisee was quite alarmed by her patient’s shaking and was concerned to find some way to calm her.
I had a hunch that the shaking was a bodily manifestation of a traumatized state and that the flushing was a somatic form of the patient’s shame about exposing this state to her analyst, and I suggested to my supervisee that she focus her inquiries on the flushing rather than the shaking. As a result of this shift in focus, the patient began to speak about how she believed her analyst viewed her when she was trembling or shaking: surely her analyst must be regarding her with disdain, seeing her as a damaged mess of a human being. As this belief was repeatedly disconfirmed by her analyst’s responding with attunement and understanding rather than contempt, both the flushing and the shaking diminished in intensity. The traumatized states actually underwent a process of transformation from being exclusively bodily states into ones in which the bodily sensations came to be united with words. Instead of only shaking, the patient began to speak about her terror of annihilating intrusion.

The one and only time the patient had attempted to speak to her mother about the sexual abuse, her mother shamed her severely, declaring her to be a wicked little girl for making up such lies about her father. Thereafter, the patient did not tell any other human being about her trauma until she revealed it to her analyst, and both the flushing of her face and the restriction of her experience of terror to its nameless bodily component were heir to her mother’s shaming. Only with a shift in her perception of her analyst from one in which her analyst was potentially or secretly shaming to one in which she was accepting and understanding could the patient’s emotional experience of her traumatized states shift from an exclusively bodily form to an experience that could be felt and named as terror. It is in the formation of such somatic-linguistic unities, the bringing of emotional experience into language within a holding context of human understanding, that a sense of being can be born, restored, or consolidated. In highlighting the pivotal therapeutic role played by a dialogue of emotional understanding, this vignette illustrates the centrality of humanistic values in post-Cartesian psychoanalytic practice.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

What makes the finding of a relational home for traumatic emotional pain possible? I have contended (Stolorow, 2007) that just as finitude and vulnerability to death and loss are fundamental to our existential constitution, so, too, is it constitutive of our existence that we meet each other as “siblings in the same darkness,” deeply connected with one another in virtue of our common finitude. Thus, although the possibility of emotional trauma is ever present, so, too, is the possibility of forming bonds of deep emotional understanding within which devastating emotional pain can be held, rendered more tolerable, and eventually integrated. Emotional pain and existential vulnerability that find a hospitable relational home can be seamlessly and constitutively integrated into whom we experience ourselves as being, making a more authentic way of existing possible. These are therapeutic principles that can be applied to a broad range of clinical problems and issues.

Russell Carr, for example, a navy psychiatrist who got hold of my book, *Trauma and Human Existence* (Stolorow, 2007), while deployed in Iraq, successfully applied the ideas I have outlined here in doing therapy with traumatized soldiers and Marines on the front lines, and he has recently published an article (Carr, 2011) describing a model using the basic principles of phenomenological contextualism for the short-term treatment of combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I have learned that the navy’s Psychiatry Specialty Leader has sent
a pdf of Carr’s article to every psychiatrist in the navy and that it has attracted interest within the Department of Defense. A report on Carr’s work will appear in a forthcoming issue of the APA Monitor.

George Atwood has, for some three decades, devoted himself to a phenomenological-contextualist approach to the grasping of, and therapeutic approach to, the phenomenon of madness, and he has elegantly demonstrated that even psychotic states, when understood, can be shown to disclose “the inner truth of a life” (Atwood, 2011, p. xiv). Furthermore, Donna Orange (2011), drawing on the dialogical-hermeneutic philosophies of Gadamer (1975/1991) and Levinas (1969), has illuminated the important implications of a phenomenological-contextualist sensibility for therapeutic ethics.

In sum, post-Cartesian psychoanalytic practice seeks dialogically to explore and illuminate emotional worlds in all their richness, diversity, and context-embeddedness. In such practice, emotional worlds are enabled to shine with a kind of sacredness that calls forth an ethical, respectful, and caring engagement (Stolorow, 2011). Such a therapeutic attitude, I believe, embodies the essence of humanism and exemplifies the foundational shift emphasized in the articles of this special section away from formulaic and manualized techniques and toward engaged empathic-introspective inquiry and emotional understanding.

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Humanism as a Common Factor in Psychotherapy

Bruce E. Wampold

There are many forms of psychotherapies, each distinctive in its own way. From the origins of psychotherapy, it has been suggested that psychotherapy is effective through factors that are common to all therapies. In this article, I suggest that the commonalities that are at the core of psychotherapy are related to evolved human characteristics, which include (a) making sense of the world, (b) influencing through social means, and (c) connectedness, expectation, and mastery. In this way, all psychotherapies are humanistic.

Keywords: psychotherapy, common factors, humanism

Over the years, many common factors of psychotherapy have been proposed, including relationship, alliance, expectation, myth and ritual, corrective experience, and insight (Frank & Frank, 1991; Grencavage & Norcross, 1990; Imel & Wampold, 2008; Tracey, Lichtenberg, Goodyear, Claiborn, & Wampold, 2003; Wampold, 2001b). There have been many attempts to classify the common factors, each based on a different conceptual scheme. In this article, I make the case that the factors that make all therapies effective (i.e., the common factors) are ones that are uniquely human (Wampold, 2007). That is to say, all psychotherapies are humanistic. Actually, humans evolved to respond to psychotherapy—or better put, psychotherapy evolved as a culturally imbedded healing practice because of human traits.

THE HUMANISTIC COMPONENTS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

The idea that psychotherapy is a culturally imbedded healing practice has been discussed, almost from the beginning of psychotherapy (Caplan, 1998; Fancher, 1995; Langman, 1997; Morris, 1998; Painter, 1913; Taylor, 1999; Wampold, 2001a). Indeed, it seems that healing practices are uniquely human and exist in every society, historically and currently (Frank & Frank, 1991; Wilson, 1978), and such practice is one of the defining feature of humans (Wilson, 1978). There is something intimate between being human and using healing practices—the connection is made through the vector of sociality. Although the evolution of social groups in primates, and particular humans, is not completely understood, it is clear that humans’ survival is intricately linked to the ability to form social groups for survival (Dunbar & Shultz, 2007; Shultz, Opie, & Atkinson, 2011). There is a hypothesis that fitness of humans depended, in part, in being able to heal through social means (Benedetti, 2011;
Papakostas & Daras, 2001; Williams, 2002). There is good evidence that human facial expression of pain is a means to elicit assistance of others—in time of need, the assistance of others in the social network is particularly important. So, clearly, humans are social, survival depends on others in the social network, healing practices are ubiquitous, and healing through the social means is critical. In this article, I will discuss several critical aspects of humans that render psychotherapy effective.

MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD

Humans have a propensity to make interpretations about the world—that is to say, they are curious about events, their antecedents, and their consequences. The interpretations may be metaphysical (e.g., religion) or scientific, two very different explanatory systems, to say the least. Of course, this propensity to make interpretations is used to explain illness, mental and physical, and is one of the reasons that healing practices originated, according to Shapiro and Shapiro (1997). Of course, competing explanatory systems for the same phenomenon exist—for example, some prefer evolution to creationism, and some not. When applied to the human mind, the explanation of mental events, those of one’s own and of others, is called theory of the mind, folk psychology, or mentalization. Basically, all humans make inferences about the internal states of one self and of others, particularly goals, desires, motivations, and beliefs (Boyer & Barrett, 2005; Hutto, 2004; Stich & Ravenscroft, 1994; Thomas, 2001). This human ability is adaptive because it allows humans to develop a “coalitional alliance, based on a computation of other agents’ commitments to a particular purpose . . . as well as the development of friendship as an insurance policy against variance in resources” (Boyer & Barrett, 2005, p. 109).

Unfortunately, not everyone’s folk psychology is adaptive. There are times when one’s explanations, particularly around psychological problems, are not adaptive, as the explanation alienates the person from family, work setting, or community, prevents finding solutions to problems, or creates internal distress. It is critical to be aware that what is important here is not whether the person’s folk psychological explanations are scientific, but whether they are adaptive. As Boyer and Barrett (2005) put it, the “human brain’s intuitive ontology is philosophically incorrect” (p. 99). Indeed, by the standards of scientific psychology currently, people in previous generations and most people today have beliefs about human behavior broadly conceived that are scientifically incorrect. But the purpose of the folk beliefs is to regulate social relations and internal states in order to survive, not to be scientifically correct. Indeed, theories of mind have cultural variations (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Lillard, 1998; Thomas, 2001), with the variations often serving various purposes (see, e.g., Cohen et al., 1996). As well, certain nonscientific beliefs, such as religion, may serve a psychological function, such as to ease existential angst and manage the anxiety related to the awareness of one’s mortality (Vail et al., 2010).

One of the features of the various forms of psychotherapy is that each gives a particularly compelling story for the client’s complaints. Jerome Frank (Frank & Frank, 1991) referred to the healing myth, not to disparage healing practices, but to refer to the fact that all healing practices provide the person an explanation for their complaints and that the scientific basis of the explanation is not what is important. More explicitly, the scientific basis of the explanation is irrelevant (Wampold, 2007; Wampold & Budge, 2012; Wampold, Imel, Bhati, &
obesity, loneliness, and depression propagate through social networks (Cacioppo, Fowler, & Christakis, 2009; Christakis & Fowler, 2007, 2008; Fowler & Christakis, 2009, 2010; Rosenquist, Fowler, & Christakis, 2011). That is to say, people are likely to modify their behavior based on their relationship with trusted others. Indeed, we are evolved to make quick decisions about trust—humans, based on visual appraisal of faces, make trust determinations within 100 to 500 ms (Benedetti, 2011).

Of course, clients come to therapy primed to be socially influenced, generally speaking. First, they are seeking help because they are distressed, they are using psychotherapy presumably because they believe it will be helpful, and they have chosen this particular therapist because he or she will be helpful. The empathic stance of the therapist facilitates the emotional connection and increases the likelihood of influence (Benedetti, 2011; de Waal, 2008).

In all therapies, the therapist uses social influence, through the verbal transactions of the therapy, to induce acceptance of the explanation provided by the treatment method (Imel & Wampold, 2008; Wampold et al., 2006; Wampold & Budge, 2012). However, the skilled therapist will provide an explanation that is likely to be accepted—there are several considerations that improve the likelihood of acceptance. The first consideration is that recipients of a healing practice expect the explanation to be congruent with the philosophical bases of the practice—for example, patients in Western medicine expect biological explanations for their disorders. Similarly, clients of psychotherapy expect psychological explanations. Second, the explanation should not be too discrepant from the folk beliefs of the client. In this regard, cultural beliefs and attitudes are critically important, as there are differences in folk psychology across cultures (Lillard, 1998). It seems to be the case that culturally adapted treatments are

Johnson Jennings, 2006); what is important is that the explanation is accepted and that it is adaptive. This is well understood by therapists from a range of perspectives, including cognitive-behavioral therapy:

As part of the therapy rationale, the therapist conceptualized each client’s anxiety in terms of Schacter’s model of emotional arousal (Schacter, 1996) . . . After laying this groundwork, the therapist noted that the client’s fear seemed to fit Schacter’s theory that an emotional state such as fear is in large part determined by the thoughts in which the client engages when physically aroused. . . . Although the theory and research upon which it is based have been criticized . . . the theory has an aura of plausibility that the clients tend to accept. The logic of the treatment plan is clear to clients in light of this conceptualization. (Meichenbaum, 1986, p. 370).

The process of transmitting the explanation to the client occurs in the social interaction between therapist and client.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Humans evolved to be influenced by others and to influence others (see, e.g., Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991). This influence is linguistic, nonverbal, and contextual. Tightly woven into the notion of social influence is the phenomenon of social contagion, defined as “the spread of affect, attitude, or behavior from Person A (the ‘initiator’) to Person B (the ‘recipient’), where the recipient does not perceive an intentional influence attempt on the part of the initiator” (Levy & Nail, 1993, p. 266). Interestingly, mental and behavioral health statuses are transmitted through this means. For example, people with friends who smoke are more likely to smoke, after controlling for the fact that smokers tend to associate with other smokers. Similarly,
more effective than nonadapted treatments, particularly if the adaptation is around the construction of the explanation (Benish, Quintana, & Wampold, 2011). Third, treatments that match certain personality characteristics have been found to be more effective; for example, clients with characterological resistance do better in nonstructured treatments while the opposite is true for less resistant clients (Beutler, Harwood, Michelson, Song, & Holman, 2011).

We now have several pieces of the psychotherapy puzzle. People seek explanations for internal and external events in their lives, and thus are predisposed to create such explanations for mental distress. Put in the context of sociality, this gives rise to healing practices, in which the healer has a particular influence over the recipient of the practice. Endemic to the practice is the provision of an explanation, which is accepted and is adaptive. To this point, the meaning of the term adaptive has been a bit unclear, but leads us to the final piece of the puzzle—how these characteristics of healing practices in general, and psychotherapy in particular, lead to change.

CONNECTEDNESS, EXPECTATION, AND MASTERY

Psychotherapy creates change through connectedness, expectation, and mastery. It is well established that belongingness is an evolved characteristic of humans and is essential for survival (Baumeister, 2005). Attached individuals are more mentally and physically fit than unattached individuals. Indeed, the evidence “suggests that individuals in higher quality relations benefit from greater regulatory effects on the neural system involved in negative emotions, for example, the affective components of pain” (Benedetti, 2011, p. 149). In all psychotherapies, there is a real relationship between the therapist and the client (Gelso, 2011). This bond is unique—the therapist is expected to remain in this relationship, empathic and caring, despite what the client might divulge (with some exceptions of course, e.g., danger to self or others). This real relationship, which brings to the client belongingness, is in and of itself therapeutic—human connections are essential to well-being. This is particularly the case for clients with poor attachment histories and impoverished social support networks.

The second process essential to psychotherapy is the creation of expectations. Although clients seek explanations, as they are expected in healing practices, the power of the explanation is the creation of expectations. The client’s explanation (i.e., the folk psychology) for the disorder affords no possible way to change (or they would have changed already); in its place, the therapist provides a cogent explanation, based on psychological principles, that provides opportunities to change, provided the patient follows the treatment protocol (Wampold, Minami, Tierney, Baskin, & Bhati, 2005). The effects extend well beyond subjective reports, including documented neural changes, and occur for many disorders not thought to be amenable to placebo, such as diabetes, Parkinson’s disorder, and cardiac conditions (Benedetti, 2009, 2011; Simpson et al., 2006). Placebo effects most likely occur when the person is motivated to have the placebo work (e.g., is in pain or experiencing distress) and the expectation that the placebo will work is induced (Price et al., 2008). Not surprising given that
the discussion about healing through social means, the expectations are typically (and powerfully) created through the interaction of the administrator and the placebo recipient. However, the recipient is not passively provided a “placebo” and an explanation that it will work—the explanation itself must be convincing. That is, the patient actively processes the explanation to determine if it makes sense, within his or her frame, and assesses the implications. The implications of an adaptive explanation are positive—that is, the explanation foreshadows a solution, and hence provides hope and positive expectations (Moerman & Jones, 2002).

Each type of psychotherapy elaborately provides the explanation, delivered by a culturally sanctioned and trusted healer (i.e., the therapist), to a client seeking help, who will be attempting to make sense of therapy in relation to their problems. Is psychotherapy simply then a placebo? This is not a useful question, in my mind. The mechanisms of placebos have much to tell us about change and provide insight into how psychotherapy works (for a discussion of this issue see Kirsch, 2005).

But there is more. As Frank and Frank (1991) have discussed, to the “myth” must be added ritual—therapeutic actions. All forms of psychotherapy have treatment actions, loosely or not so loosely defined. The explanation is not sufficient: Explanation X suggests that if the client enacts Y, he or she will feel better. The treatment induces the patient to do something that is healthy—think about the world more adaptively, expand social networks, reinterpret past events in a constructive way, take another person’s perspective, express repressed affect, and so forth. Healthy behavior is a strong predictor of well-being, something that is often ignored (Walsh, 2011). But performing the therapeutic actions goes a step further: As the client copes with problems, a sense of mastery is created (Liberman, 1978). That is, the client has a belief that he or she has control over events, particularly internal events, such as anxiety and depression—Kirsch discusses how psychotherapy (and placebos) creates a change in response expectancies (Kirsch, 1985), and Bandura discusses a change in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1999). Again, however, the client is not a passive recipient, but rather it is the belief that one’s own efforts are responsible for the control over one’s problems that are critical. If clients are led to believe that their symptomatic relief is due to an external source rather than their own actions, then they are likely to relapse (Liberman, 1978; Powers, Smits, Whitley, Bystritsky, & Telch, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, the characteristics of humans that “make” psychotherapy work have been discussed. To me, that implies that psychotherapy is a “humanistic” activity, at its very essence. However, does that beg the question about whether all forms of psychotherapy are essentially humanistic? Schneider and Längle (this special section) noted, “In psychotherapy, humanism places special emphasis on the personal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions of therapy and on clients’ reflections on their relationship with self, others, and the larger psychosocial world.” I would make the claim that this description of humanistic approaches to psychotherapy is exactly the essence of all psychotherapies, as I have discussed. Psychotherapy clients are not passive recipients of treatment—even in the most structured therapies imaginable, the client is actively processing the meaning of the explanation and its acceptability and gauging the effects of therapeutic actions, all the time, making attributions about the situation and his or her role in that situation.

The fact that all forms of psychotherapy are—at least in my opinion—humanistic
should not be interpreted as a victory for humanism, as a school of psychotherapy. The goal is not to privilege one approach over another, but rather to understand how psychotherapy works, to improve the quality of the care we provide, and to train therapists to be effective. However, it is clear that a humanistic stance is at the very core of all psychotherapies. The therapist, whether one is a humanistic, psychodynamic, interpersonal, or cognitive–behavioral therapist, needs to appreciate that psychotherapy is a deeply humanistic experience—two humans in a room, in an intense interpersonal interaction.

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Toward a Common Focus in Psychotherapy Research

DAVID N. ELKINS

Documenting the schisms in clinical psychology, the author suggests that clinical scientists lay aside theoretical allegiances and work together by adopting a common focus in psychotherapy research on the determinants of effectiveness. Citing evidence showing that personal and interpersonal factors are primary determinants of effectiveness, the author suggests that humanism, broadly defined, provides the best philosophical and theoretical “home” for psychotherapy. Based on the evidence presented in the article, the author describes the revolutionary changes that must occur in research, training, and practice to bring clinical psychology into alignment with the findings of contemporary science.

Keywords: psychotherapy research, psychotherapy effectiveness, common factors

Clinical psychology is divided into many camps, each claiming some form of specialness or superiority over the others. It is estimated that there are more than 400 theories of counseling and psychotherapy, each with its own set of techniques and procedures (Corsini & Wedding, 2008). Clinical journals stretching back to the time of Freud are replete with articles that present arguments for the pre-eminence of one therapeutic approach or technique over another. During the past 40 years, clinical scientists have spent millions of research dollars on thousands of efficacy studies to determine whether, or to demonstrate that, a particular treatment is more effective than others. This was done despite the fact that since the late 1970s and early 1980s the research has shown that all bona fide therapies are robustly effective (e.g., Bergin & Lambert, 1978; Elkins, 2007; Lambert & Barley, 2002; Lambert & Bergin, 1994; Luborsky, Singer, & Luborsky, 1975; Orlinsky, Grave, & Parks, 1994; Rachman & Wilson, 1980; Robinson, Berman, & Neimeyer, 1990; Seligman, 1995; Shapiro & Shapiro, 1982; Smith & Glass, 1977; Smith, Glass, & Miller, 1980; Wampold, 2001). Observing this schismatic landscape, one might well ask why clinical psychology is divided into so many factions and why some seem so intent on proving their superiority over the others. This article suggests that it is time for clinical scientists to lay aside theoretical allegiances and work together by adopting a common focus in psychotherapy research on the determinants of effectiveness.

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DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVENESS: A BRIEF HISTORY

Beginning in the late 1970s, specificity research, that is, research focused on specific techniques for specific disorders, took center stage. As Bergin (1997, p. 83) said, clinical psychology began to put “all of the eggs in the ‘technique’ basket.” Subsequently, leading journals published scientific findings that seemed to indicate that certain techniques were indeed more effective than others for certain disorders. In the 1980s, managed care companies and the general health insurance industry began pressuring clinical psychologists to demonstrate the scientific validity of their treatments. In 1993, Division 12, Society of Clinical Psychology, of the American Psychological Association (APA), formed a task force to identify what eventually would be called “empirically supported treatments” (ESTs) and to publicize these to psychologists, health insurance companies, and the public (see APA Division of Clinical Psychology, 1995).

However, when the Division 12 task force made its list of ESTs public, there was “an attendant landslide of criticism from practitioners and researchers who found the project to be scientifically questionable as well as overzealous in its assertions” (Lambert & Barley, 2002, p. 17). Other APA Divisions, including Division 32, Society for Humanistic Psychology, and Division 17, Society of Counseling Psychology, raised concerns about the overemphasis on techniques and the criteria used to determine which treatments were scientifically supported and which were not (see Task Force for the Development of Guidelines for the Provision of Humanistic Psychosocial Services, 1997; Wampold, Lichtenberg, & Waehler, 2002). Division 29, Psychotherapy, established a task force to publish the scientific evidence supporting the therapeutic relationship as a major determinant of effectiveness, thereby counterbalancing the emphasis on ESTs with what the Division 29 task force called “empirically supported relationships” (Norcross, 2001; 2002).

In 2005, when Ronald Levant was president of APA, he commissioned a presidential task force on evidence-based practice. Levant’s task force issued a policy statement on evidence-based practice that was approved by the APA Council of Representatives. The task force report, which was published in the *American Psychologist* (APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice, 2006), defined “evidence-based practice in psychology” as follows: “Evidence-based practice in psychology (EBPP) is the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences” (p. 273). This report, along with the policy statement approved by the APA Council, helped moderate the emphasis on ESTs and the insistence by some that clinicians should use only treatments on the list.

Beginning in the late 1990s, Wampold’s research dealt another blow to techniques (and to modalities as well). In landmark studies, Wampold and associates (see Ahn & Wampold, 1997; Benish, Imel, & Wampold, 2007; Messer & Wampold, 2000; Wampold, 2001; Wampold et al., 1997; Waehler, Kalodner, Wampold, & Lichtenberg, 2000) reviewed decades of research and conducted analyses and meta-analyses of hundreds of studies to identify the determinants of effectiveness. The findings were clear: Specific modalities and techniques had relatively little to do with effectiveness while common factors, or what Wampold called contextual factors, that is, certain factors found in the context of all bona fide therapies, were major determinants of effectiveness. Wampold (2001) concluded: “Clearly, the preponderance of the benefits of psychotherapy are due to factors incidental to the particular theoretical approach administered.
and dwarf the effects due to theoretically derived techniques" (p. 209).

Subsequent studies repeated Wampold's findings. For example, Miller, Wampold, and Varhely (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of all studies published between 1980 and 2006 comparing treatments for children with anxiety, depression, conduct disorder, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. The results showed no differences in outcome between treatments. Another meta-analysis by Benish et al. (2007) focused on all studies published since 1989 comparing treatments of posttraumatic stress disorder. The treatments included hypnotherapy, stress inoculation, exposure, cognitive, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), prolonged exposure, imaginal exposure, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, and others. Despite longstanding claims that certain treatments for posttraumatic stress disorder were more effective than others, the meta-analysis showed no differences in outcome between treatments intended to be therapeutic. Adding to this accumulating evidence, Imel, Wampold, Miller, and Fleming (2008) conducted a meta-analysis comparing treatments for alcohol abuse and dependence, which included 12 Step, relapse prevention, CBT, and psychodynamic therapy treatments. Once again, there were no differences in outcome between bona fide treatments. These findings are foundation-shaking to a profession that for more than 100 years has focused on modalities and techniques as the instruments of change. However, these findings do not stand alone. Beginning with Rosenzweig (1936) who gave us the “dodo bird verdict,” numerous researchers and other scholars have suggested that common factors—not modalities and techniques—are the primary determinants of effectiveness (e.g., see Bergin & Lambert, 1978; Frank & Frank, 1991; Lambert & Barley, 2002; Lambert & Bergin, 1994; Lipsey & Wilson, 1993; Rachman & Wilson, 1980; Robinson, Berman, & Neimeyer, 1990; Seligman, 1995; Shadish, Navarro, Matt, & Phillips, 2000; Shapiro & Shapiro, 1982; Wampold, 2010).

**PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL FACTORS: POTENT DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVENESS**

Among the factors that contribute to effectiveness, the personal and interpersonal factors are particularly potent. For example, client factors, which include what the client as a person brings to therapy as well as the client's experiences outside of therapy, account for 87% of the outcome variance. Client factors are the most powerful determinants of therapeutic outcome (Orlinsky, Ronnestad, & Willutzki, 2004; see also Bohart & Tallman, 2010; Duncan, Miller, & Sparks, 2004; Duncan, Miller, Wampold, & Hubble, 2010). Therapist effects are also potent, accounting for 6% to 9% of the variance of change and 46% to 69% of the variance attributed to treatment (Beutler et al., 2004; Crits-Christoph et al., 1991; Wampold & Brown, 2005). Therapist effects are more powerful than any treatment provided and are second only to client factors in potency (Duncan, 2010).

The alliance, that is, the interpersonal working relationship between the client and therapist, is also a powerful factor. There is no substitute for a warm, caring, and empathic therapeutic relationship. It is powerful within itself and it also supports and helps actuate the other humanistic elements in therapy. Summarizing research on the alliance, Duncan (2010) stated that the amount of variance attributed to the alliance ranges from 5% to 7% of overall variance or 38% to 54% of the variance accounted for by treatment. Putting this into perspective, the amount of change attributable to the alliance is about five to seven times that of specific model or technique (p. 23).
In contrast to the potent effects of the humanistic elements of therapy, the effects of differences among modalities and techniques are only about 1% of overall variance and 8% of the treatment variance (Duncan, 2010; Wampold, 2001). In other words, although the humanistic elements of therapy—which include the client, the therapist, and their relationship—are powerful determinants of effectiveness, specific modalities and techniques do not make much difference. As Duncan (2010) put it, “As long as the treatment makes sense to, is accepted by, and fosters active engagement of the client, the particular approach used is unimportant” (p. 24).

Thus, after 40 years of specificity research and millions of research dollars, there is still no scientific basis for privileging one modality and set of techniques over other modalities and techniques. Instead, scientific findings confirm that all bona fide psychotherapies are robustly effective, and equally so. Further, the findings show that the humanistic elements of therapy, that is, the personal and interpersonal elements, are major determinants of that effectiveness. In light of this evidence, perhaps it is time for clinical scientists to stop looking for “silver bullet” techniques and focus instead on the factors that are actually responsible for psychotherapy’s effectiveness. In addition to traditional quantitative research it is likely that careful qualitative research will also be required to tease out the more subtle dimensions of these humanistic factors and to help us understand exactly how and under what circumstances they contribute to effectiveness. Regardless of how researchers organize themselves and which scientific methods they use, it is clearly time for clinical scientists to lay aside theoretical allegiances and work together by adopting a common focus in psychotherapy research on the determinants of effectiveness.

Rationale and Ritual:
The Role of Modalities and Techniques

A common focus on the determinants of effectiveness would not mean the elimination of the various systems of psychotherapy. Instead, it would mean that clinical scientists would reject theoretical allegiances and refuse to use their scientific abilities in the service of a particular system. In other words, a common focus in research means that researchers would transcend schismatic allegiances and work collaboratively to understand the common determinants of effectiveness found in all bona fide therapies.

Although the evidence indicates that specific modalities and techniques contribute little to effectiveness, they are nevertheless important in their role as common factors found in all bona fide therapies. Modalities and techniques provide a rationale and ritual for the therapeutic process in which the humanistic elements operate. If this seems confusing, consider how Frank and Frank (1991) described the common factors of psychotherapy:

The components common to all therapies include (a) an emotionally charged confiding relationship with a helping person; (b) a healing setting that involves the client’s expectations that the professional helper will assist him or her; (c) a rationale, conceptual scheme, or myth that provides a plausible, although not necessarily true, explanation of the client’s symptoms and how the client can overcome his or her demoralization; and (d) a ritual or procedure that requires the active participation of both client and therapist and is based on the rationale underlying the therapy. (pp. 204–205)

Modalities provide the “rationale” for therapy and techniques and procedures provide the “ritual” in which the client and therapist participate. Thus, in their role as
common factors that provide a rationale and ritual for the therapy, modalities and techniques are important. In addition, they are also important because they help therapists more effectively to match the treatment to the client’s characteristics and preferences as suggested by the definition of evidence-based practice in psychology (given earlier). Finally, as Elkins (2009) pointed out, they may also be important because it is probable that each modality and set of techniques provides its own set of “additional benefits,” that is, benefits that are unique to that orientation that are in addition to the benefits directly associated with the amelioration or alleviation of the client’s psychological problems. For example, it is likely that clients in CBT receive “additional benefits” that are unique to that approach, whereas clients in existential therapy receive “additional benefits” unique to existential therapy. This hypothesis needs to be investigated. If researchers identified and published the “additional benefits” unique to each major therapy, prospective clients might more easily choose a therapy and therapist that match their personality and preferences, thus potentially reducing client drop-out rates and increasing the probability that the therapy would be successful.

WHY PSYCHOTHERAPY WORKS: A REASONABLE HYPOTHESIS

Because the personal and interpersonal elements of psychotherapy are such potent factors, it is reasonable to suggest that psychotherapy’s effectiveness is due primarily to its humanistic elements. A corollary hypothesis, which would explain why the humanistic elements are so important, is that humans are evolutionarily evolved to develop, maintain, and restore their emotional well-being through supportive relationships with other humans. (In his contribution to this round table project, Bruce Wampold focuses on this issue, so I will not elaborate here except to discuss how attachment theory provides a useful theoretical grounding for these hypotheses.) Since the 1980s, attachment theory has been the focus of a great deal of research and scholarly attention (e.g., see Bell, 2010; Grossmann & Waters, 2005; Holmes, 1993; Karen, 1998; Miller & Rodgers, 2001; Van der Horst, 2011). John Bowlby (1951, 1953, 1969, 1979, 1988) was one of the originators of attachment theory. Based on studies of orphaned and homeless infants during World War II, Bowlby concluded that infants need a consistent relationship with a primary caregiver to develop normally. Bowlby believed that humans are evolved to care for their young and the young are evolved to need and receive such care. Although Bowlby’s original work focused on infants and their caregivers, attachment theory later was extended to include relationships between adults (e.g., see Bretherton, 1992; Hazan, Gur-Yaish, & Campa, 2004; Rholes, Simpson, & Stevens, 1998).

Attachment theory provides a new way to understand psychotherapy. If humans are evolved to develop, maintain, and restore their emotional well-being through supportive relationships with other humans, this could explain why psychotherapy, despite wide variations in theories and techniques, is effective and why the personal and interpersonal elements are particularly potent. Simply defined, psychotherapy is a relationship between a human who is in need of care and another human who is willing and able to give it. Thus, perhaps psychotherapy can best be understood not as a set of medical-like techniques and procedures but, rather, as a human relationship that is an expression of an evolutionarily derived predisposition to give and receive care in situations of vulnerability. And perhaps the best therapists are not necessarily those who memorize
manifolded procedures and skillfully administer techniques but, rather, those who can create a therapeutic milieu characterized by care that supports and actuates the healing potentials in the client, the therapist, and their relationship.

**HUMANISM: THE PROPER HOME FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY**

The philosophical and theoretical structure that houses psychotherapy, as well as the language used to describe psychotherapy, should be congruent with the humanistic elements at the core of all effective therapies. It would be a mistake to embed psychotherapy in a model whose assumptions and language are antagonistic to those elements. For example, mechanistic models that metaphorically view the human being as a complex “machine” and psychotherapy as a “set of tools” to fix the machine would not be congruent with the humanistic elements that account for psychotherapy’s effectiveness.

Humanism, on the other hand, provides an ideal philosophical and theoretical structure to house psychotherapy. Consider the second part of our definition of humanism, articulated earlier by Kirk Schneider and Alfried Längle (2012), which is directly related to psychotherapy: “In psychotherapy, humanism places special emphasis on the personal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions of therapy and on clients’ reflections on their relationship with self, others, and the larger psychosocial world” (p. 427). This definition shows why humanism is the proper philosophical and theoretical home for psychotherapy: humanism is congruent with, and supportive of, the humanistic elements, that is, the personal and interpersonal elements, that are at the core of all effective psychotherapies (Wampold, 2007). This is not a factious statement but, rather, an acknowledgment that all bona fide psychotherapies are ultimately dependent on the humanistic elements for their effectiveness.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND PRACTICE**

Currently, most psychotherapy research, training, and practice are based on the assumption that modalities and techniques—not personal and interpersonal factors—are the primary instruments of change. Thus, the scientific findings described in this paper have revolutionary implications. We must acknowledge that for more than 100 years we have focused on the wrong factors in psychotherapy. We now need to correct this historical mistake by making major changes in research, training, and practice. For example, in research, we need to shift the emphasis from specificity research designed to find effective techniques to research designed to help us understand the personal and interpersonal factors of therapy and how they contribute to effectiveness. In training, we need to reduce the focus on modalities and techniques and increase the focus on helping students to cultivate their personal and interpersonal capacities. In addition, we must also teach students how to create a caring therapeutic environment that emphasizes the personal and interpersonal dimensions of therapy. The aim of training would not be to produce trainees who have merely normative interpersonal skills. Instead, the aim would be to cultivate the trainee’s capacity to connect with clients at a profound level so that clients feel deeply accepted, supported, and understood. This will require disciplined, in-depth training and will be more demanding of trainees than current training that tends to focus on learning modalities and techniques. Finally, in practice, clinicians need to spend less time memorizing treatment protocols and more time learning how to support and actuate the healing potentials in the client, the therapist, and the
radical changes in all three areas to bring our profession into alignment with the findings of contemporary science.

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Humanistic psychology historically defined itself in part by its opposition to behavioral psychology, but the conditions now exist for a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between these two traditions. Behavioral psychology includes contextualistic variants and is no longer limited to principles drawn from animal learning. Behavioral and cognitive therapies commonly address humanistic topics and have developed process accounts that cast new light on them. In that context, a reconsideration of this relationship could prove to be beneficial for both traditions.

**Keywords:** humanistic psychology, behavioral psychology, contextualism, acceptance and commitment therapy, contextual CBT, common factors

On the surface, the historical division between humanistic approaches and the behavioral and cognitive therapies is substantial. Humanistic psychology originally defined itself to a degree by its opposition to behavioral psychology and psychoanalysis (thus the term “third force”). To this day, entities such as the Association for Humanistic Psychology explain humanism in this way (e.g., http://www.ahpweb.org/aboutahp).

Humanistic psychologists thought the behavioral wing was uniformly mechanistic, while humanism was holistic and contextualistic: “mechanistic science (which in psychology takes the form of behaviorism) [is] too narrow and limited to serve as a general or comprehensive philosophy” (Maslow, 1966, p. 3). Behaviorism supposedly focused entirely on a passive organism responding to external contingencies, or input-output explanations drawn entirely from animal learning, while humanism dealt with an active organism that was different in many ways from nonhuman animals, particularly, in the area of cognition (Maslow, 1966). Humanistic psychology emphasized existential and interpersonal themes such as meaning, purpose, values, choice, spirituality, self-acceptance, and self-actualization—all of which were thought to be beyond the reach of behavioral psychology.

From the beginning, there were functional and contextual strands of behavioral thinking that understood the importance of these topics and sought greater integration, but opportunities were missed, and the ones that occurred were unappreciated. The founder of the journal *Behaviorism*, Willard Day, overtly sought reconciliation between radical behaviorism and phenomenology (Day, 1969). Most present-day Gestalt therapists would find it incomprehensible that the coauthor who contributed the extensive personal and applied
exercises (see Perls, introduction, p. viii) to the original book on *Gestalt Therapy* (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951) was Ralph Hefferline, an experimental psychology faculty member at Columbia and a rat-running radical behaviorist in the Skinnerian tradition (Knapp, 1986). For reasons that are easy to understand today, Hefferline objected to the label “Gestalt,” preferring the term “Integrative Therapy” (Shepard, 1975, p. 63), but integration was not the order of the day and the two traditions stood far apart for decades.

Today, a fundamental realignment is under way between the behavioral tradition and humanistic psychology. Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) researchers now routinely test and develop methods that are explicitly based on humanistic psychology (e.g., Motivational Interviewing, Miller & Rollnick, 2002). However, the realignment goes deeper than that. A large set of acceptance, mindfulness, and values-based methods have emerged from within CBT that deal extensively with topics classically embraced by humanistic psychology. (Ironically this set of methods is often called “third wave” CBT, Hayes, 2004, but we will use the less confusing term “contextual CBT,” Hayes, Villatte, Levin, & Hildebrandt, 2011.) These include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT: Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (Linehan, 1993), and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), among many other methods (Hayes, Villatte, et al., 2011). Some parts of this change are linked to developments in behavioral thinking itself that hold out hope for a more transformational dialogue between humanism and behaviorism. That seems most surprisingly true of the ACT tradition (surprising because it emerged from behavior analysis), which is why I will emphasize that corner of CBT in my comments.

**PHILOSOPHICAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN HUMANISM AND THE CONTEXTUAL BEHAVIORAL PERSPECTIVES**

Humanistic psychology views itself as holistic and contextualistic, but there are strong holistic and contextualistic perspectives within behavioral thinking as well. This was always true (Day and Hefferline are examples) but it was invisible to those outside of the behavioral tradition, and historically it was controversial to those within it. As the contextualistic qualities of some behavioral perspectives have become clearer and that wing has become more ascendant, a reconsideration of the relationship with humanism is a natural next step.

The core analytic unit of all forms of contextualism is the ongoing act-in-context: the situated action of the whole person (Pepper, 1942). It is doing as it is being done, in both a historical and situational context, such as going to the store, or trying to be understood. Actions of that kind are inherently holistic and purposive—actions are defined by their purpose and meaning—which provides the philosophical background for the importance of topics such as meaning, purpose, needs, goals, and values to humanistic psychology.

The landscape changes once it is realized that this holds true for scientists themselves (see Skinner, 1945, for a classic example). Scientists too have a history, they too act in a context, and they too have goals and values for their scientific work. For that reason, there are varieties of scientific contextualism, organized and defined by their goals and purposes (Hayes, Hayes, Reese, & Sarbin, 1993).

The most common forms of contextualism are all descriptive—they seek an appreciation of the participants in a meaningful whole (Hayes, 1993). Choice, goals, meaning, narrative, and purpose are common themes to humanistic psychologists in part
because these are features that define and help form the wholeness of human action. This yearning for appreciation of key participants in the whole is reflected in the way that existentialists seek to understand how a whole human being faces a meaningless world and by choice creates meaning amid despair, anxiety, and nothingness; or in the way that Rogerians explore the client’s capacity for self-direction and integration.

However, if goals are a choice, contextualists can choose other goals, and what emerges from a scientific analysis may differ among contextualists if their goals are different. There is a functional contextual wing of behavioral thinking that reveals this possibility (Hayes, Hayes, & Reese, 1988). Functional contextualism has as its goal the prediction-and-influence of psychological events with precision, scope, and depth (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). Skinner claimed that the purposes of science were prediction and control as if this is an objective fact (1953, pp. 14 and 35) but that way of speaking is dogmatic. His purposes were to predict and influence psychological events. Once that is put right, the natural alliance of functional and descriptive contextualism can better be explored (see Hayes et al., 1993, for a book-length exercise of that kind). The possibility of different purposes is built into contextual thinking. What is key to successful communication among contextualistic psychologists is that truth be seen as matter of the accomplishment of purpose rather than a matter of ontology, and that differing goals be made clear.

Clinically, all forms of contextualism focus on local meaning and purpose. This posture helps the clinician let go of grand ontological claims more generally and thus any need to force clients into a particular worldview. The client’s purposes and values are the metric for clinical work. There is no need to struggle over who is “right”—the point is to empower clients to pursue their deepest needs and values by bringing curiosity and creativity to how they deal with their own history and circumstance. The client’s natural analytic agenda (understanding for an active purpose) can become the clinician’s—a process that fosters alliance building and the centrality of the therapeutic relationship. This paragraph applies with equal force to functional contextualists, such as those in the ACT tradition and some other wings of contextual CBT, as it does to descriptive contextualists such as those in the humanistic tradition and for a simple reason: there is a large philosophical overlap between the two. As it applies to clients, there is no a priori reason to think that functional contextualists are disadvantaged as compared to descriptive forms: after all, clients themselves generally want to influence behavior.

**HUMAN LANGUAGE AND COGNITION**

If that is correct, then why has it taken so long for a natural alliance to be explored? Part of it was that humanists mistook *some* of the behavioral tradition to be *all* of the behavioral tradition. There is a wing of behavioral psychology that is indeed mechanistic, but that is not universally true and only those within the tradition would be likely know the difference due to overlap in technical terminology.

The larger part, however, was a problem with behavioral psychology itself: even the more contextualistic wings could not meaningfully address language and cognition at the time when humanistic psychology was being formed. Without a way of addressing human cognition, core concerns of humanistic psychology are simply incomprehensible. Behavioral principles derived from nonhuman animals are not alone an adequate basis to explore meaning, purpose, values,
choice, spirituality, self-acceptance, and self-actualization. In the 1960s, even that statement would be controversial within behavioral psychology, but for most behavioral psychologists today, it would not.

Within mainstream CBT, it certainly would not, as traditional CBT has embraced a variety of cognitive perspectives. In the main, these have not been drawn from informational processing or cognitive science (much of which is mechanistic), but rather from clinical theories of cognition. The specific theories vary but few have any principled reluctance to deal with meaning and purpose or similar topics.

Perhaps, the more interesting case is clinical behavior analysis and ACT, because it has stayed attached to the same tradition that was originally based entirely on animal learning and that was pushed against by early humanistic psychologists. Reconsidering the relationship in this case is possible because behavioral psychology did not stop developing in the 1960s. ACT is based on a behavioral theory of cognition that has become among the most commonly researched basic behavior analytic theories of human action: Relational Frame Theory (RFT) (Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001).

RFT can be rather arcane, and it is impossible to address in any detail here due to the length and purpose of this piece, but clinically accessible books on it are now available for interested readers (e.g., Torneke, 2010). According to RFT, the essential core of language and higher cognition is the learned ability to derive mutual and combinatorial relations among events, and to change the functions of events on that basis. If a reader was told that X is bigger than Y and Y is bigger than Z, that would be enough to derive an entire network of relations between X, Y, and Z. If Z was now paired with shock, X would produce much more emotional arousal than Z itself, due to the cognitive relation between X and Z rather than direct experience (Dougher, Hamilton, Fink, & Harrington, 2007, provides an experimental demonstration). Said in another way, human language and cognition changes how direct learning principles operate. Several studies have shown that we learn to derive relations of this kind, but once learned human beings live in a radically different psychological world—as humanists have claimed right along.

Consider, for example, how human cognition alters the effect of the consequences of action. A person who has been criticized, attacked, or jailed because of their struggle for social justice may not react to painful consequences as a nonverbal animal might. The attacks might remind the person even more of the extent of injustice that exists; pain might create even more empathy regarding the suffering of the downtrodden; staying true to values may provide meaning and dignity to imprisonment; and so on. In other words, the effects of pain and struggle can be transformed by our psychological ability to formulate an if . . . then relation between actions and consequences, such as the possibility of a more just world.

The core ideas behind RFT have received empirical support in a rapidly growing literature encompassing well over 100 studies (for recent book-length treatments, see Hayes et al., 2001; McHugh & Stewart, 2012; Rehfeldt & Barnes-Holmes, 2009; Torneke, 2010). Humanistic psychologists might rightly feel vindicated by such changes in the behavioral tradition but reaching this agreement through a slow step-by-step inductive research program means that behavioral allies do not come to the table empty handed. Behavioral psychology now has a greater understanding of experimentally based principles and processes that in turn can be used
to examine some of the key questions of interest to humanistic psychologists.

**THE CONTEXTUAL CBT CONSENSUS: OPEN, AWARE, AND ENGAGED**

In a recent review of the entire range of contextual CBT methods (Hayes, Villatte, et al., 2011), we found three common threads in terms of methods and purposes. Almost all of them included methods to promote greater emotional and cognitive openness; to increase mindful awareness of the present moment; and to promote more meaningful or values-based behavioral engagement. The ACT wing has a name for this collection: psychological flexibility. Inflexibility seems to be becoming a de facto consensus model of psychopathology and a target for treatment in contextual CBT, while the promotion of greater flexibility is a key target of interventions.

ACT has been particularly focused on explicating this model in detail (e.g., Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). Due to key features of human language and cognition, people easily become entangled in their own thoughts and avoidant of their own emotions, memories, and sensations. People who are struggling begin to construct their lives as if they are problems to be solved. As that occurs attention stays rigidly focused on the past (detecting sources of information about where the problems came from) and the future (examining whether the problem will go away) rather than the present moment. People begin to buy into stories about who they are or need to be and events that fail to fit the story become even more threatening. The capacity for choosing and acting on values seems distant, and a passive or reactive behavioral stance is adopted.

Therapeutically, each of these processes can be turned around to foster human growth. In the place of entanglement people can learn to view their own thoughts merely as an unfolding process of sense making that can be used or not, whether or not they are “believed.” In the place of avoidance people can adopt a posture of genuine curiosity about the rise and fall of their own emotions, memories, and sensations—learning to accept their presence almost as one accepts a gift. People can learn to bring mindfulness into the present moment and to allocate attention to events based on what is worthwhile and useful, rather than what is merely habitual. Instead of defending a conceptual story about themselves, psychological flexibility is enhanced by fostering contact with the “I/here/now”-ness of awareness—looking “from” consciousness, not at consciousness. This provides a more spiritual or transcendent sense of consciousness in which the many disparate aspects of personality and history can be integrated in consciousness itself. Values are embraced as choices regarding the consequences of importance for ongoing patterns of action, establishing positive and meaningful qualities that are intrinsic to the action itself. Finally, the ability to respond is linked to these values, and the challenge of growth is engaged as a matter of building larger and larger patterns of committed action linked to chosen values.

There is a remarkable resonance between this perspective and that of modern forms of humanistic psychology (e.g., Schneider, 2008). ACT and the rest of the contextual CBT methods did not adopt these ideas wholesale from humanistic psychology—they walked a distinct path of intellectual development. But they have arrived at a similar place in certain key areas and as a result, a deep and richly interconnected discussion about the human condition can now occur between these traditions. Being able to have a meaningful and mutually beneficial conversation of the kind represented in
SPIRITUALITY AND THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Lofty rhetoric of that kind (although true in my opinion) risks setting the bar so high that anything said in a short piece such as this will be entirely deflating. My approach will be to give two examples, with just enough links to the literature that interested readers can see for themselves. Other topics, such as self-acceptance or values, would be equally useful but space precludes their exploration (but see Hayes et al., 2001). My theme is this: concrete clinical steps can now be taken that reflect the core beliefs of both humanistic and behavioral psychologists, and that are based on a solid set of experimentally derived processes that can also be used to create a more progressive empirical approach to humanistic topics.

SPIRITUALITY AND TRANSCENDENCE

The first article ever written on ACT and RFT was entitled “Making Sense of Spirituality” (Hayes, 1984). RFT researchers (see McHugh & Stewart, 2012, for a book-length review) now understand some of the cognitive processes that distinguish “self” in the sense of a narrative conceptualization and a transcendent sense of “self.” By learning deictic verbal relations such as I/you, here/now, and now/then, children acquire a sense of looking from awareness—the “I/here/now” quality of consciousness. There is a growing body of empirical work showing that deictic relations underlie perspective taking in development (e.g., McHugh, Barnes-Holmes, Barnes-Holmes, Whelan, & Stewart, 2007), and that training in deictic relations improves perspective taking and Theory of Mind performance (e.g., Weil, Hayes, & Capurro, 2011). There is an ineffable quality of this aspect of self because once established in young childhood, its edges or limits can never be consciously known, providing a sense of expansiveness or transcendence to consciousness. Rather than a thing with known characteristics, this sense of an “inner witness” or “observing self” serves as a context for verbal knowing itself.

A transcendent sense of self is critical in therapy because unlike the conceptualized self (the object-like, evaluated self), it is a sense of self that cannot be threatened by the content of experience. Humanistic psychologists have long used methods designed to foster contact with this sense of self (e.g., Assagioli, 1965) in part for that reason. In addition, this is the aspect of consciousness that helps relationships to occur because it is the scaffolding of perspective taking. Indeed, RFT researchers have found that without deictic skills, people do not enjoy being with each other (Vilardaga, Estévez, Levin, & Hayes, 2012). The transpersonal quality of consciousness emerges because deictic cognitive relations map out the perspective taking implications of time, place, and person: “I begin to experience myself as a conscious human being at the precise point at which I begin to experience you as a conscious human being. I see from a perspective because I see you see from a perspective. Consciousness is shared...Consciousness expands across time, place, and person. In a deep sense, consciousness itself contains the psychological quality that we are conscious. Timelessly. Everywhere” (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011, p. 90, emphasis added).

What does understanding the behavioral processes involved add to existing humanistic ideas clinically speaking? It increases the ability to assess, understand, measure, and change these processes in flight. While formal measures are available (see McHugh
& Stewart, 2012) the ease with which a person can shift perspective across time, place, or person can be used as an in-session marker for this key aspect of awareness. Understanding the processes that underlie transcendence helps make sense of why integrating aspects of one’s personality can be fostered by encouraging perspective-taking in therapy. It is easy to work frequent shifts of perspectives into clinical work (e.g., “what do you think I might be feeling as I hear you say that?” or “If you were your father, what would you say to yourself?”). ACT therapists do such things as have clients write themselves letters from a distant and wiser future; or visit themselves as small children in painful times and have a dialogue with themselves. In a similar way, understanding that this sense of self is harder to contact when the conceptualized self is dominant is a reason ACT therapists try to undermine the constancy of literal language through such mindfulness methods as learning to watch thoughts float by as one might watch leaves on a stream.

In other words, in principle, a process-focused understanding allows clinicians to be evidence-based in another way than merely applying manualized therapies linked to syndromes, namely detecting and changing evidence-based processes that are applicable to the case. This is possible without any sense of “painting by numbers” in therapy. The common objection to experimental science is that it ignores the spontaneous, intuitive, or ineffable elements central to clinical work. That is much less likely when experimentally validated clinical processes can be used to support sensitivity to the client and to oneself and thus to maximizing the likelihood of experiential learning. For example, there is perhaps more evidence on the importance of experiential avoidance than any other ACT process (Chawla & Ostafin, 2007)—and yet when clinicians learn to see experiential avoidance in flight in their clients and in themselves, they are better positioned to take clinical steps, whether they are called “techniques” or not, that will foster personal growth. The second area we will address is another example of that same approach.

THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

There is a vast literature showing that the therapeutic relationship is related to the success of psychotherapy (e.g., Horvath, Del Re, Fluckiger, & Symonds, 2011; Wampold, 2001). However, appreciating its importance and doing something about it are two different things. Many humanistic authors, including some in the present conversation, claim that “technique” accounts for little of the outcome of psychotherapy, while the relationship and therapist variables account for much more. Some have tried to argue for a humanistic focus on that basis (Horvath et al., 2011; Wampold, 2007), essentially tying the very future of this important tradition to correlation findings about processes of change and a somewhat controversial strategy of meta-analysis. That is not wise.

The vast majority of therapists hearing about data on the importance of the therapeutic relationship secretly believe this means they themselves are effective, since they care about the therapeutic relationship and they care about their clients. Unfortunately, that is impossible. We do not live in a therapeutic Lake Wobegon. Relationship factors work in explaining outcomes only because half of the therapists are below average—presumably unwittingly. Clinicians probably also believe that these findings mean if they focus even more on the relationship they will be more effective. That is not necessarily so. Therapists could easily do things driven by that urgency or belief that could be artificial, or excessively rule based. For example, a clinician might be less directive in a moment
that calls for it, on the grounds that this might harm the therapeutic relationship or might “coach to the test” by artificially encouraging client agreement with features of the alliance (e.g., learning that “I believe that ___likes me” is a client item in the Working Alliance Inventory a therapist might parrot “I like you” to clients). This is a restatement of the classic concern of humanistic psychology regarding ways in which scientific rules might overwhelm sensitivity to the person and the moment. The only way to prove it is not happening is experimental evidence, not the kind of correlational evidence classically promoted by common factor theorists.

A behavioral perspective grounded in functional contextualism provides a different and more practical starting point for this issue. What skills or processes account for such relationships and can they be trained so as to produce better outcomes?

That approach takes these important factors out of the bin of “nonspecific factors” and instead makes them a target for treatment development and evaluation. “Techniques” do not include merely procedures for clients, but also procedures for therapists and their training (cf., Hilsenroth, Cromer, & Ackerman, 2012). If therapists can be shown how to develop powerful and effective therapeutic alliances, for example, any benefits that result are now specific effects, not effects from a “common factor.”

In the ACT tradition, we have suggested that empowering relationships are psychologically flexible ones (see Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). That is, relationships are empowering when they are accepting, when they are not about who is right and who is wrong but rather when different ideas can be explored, when they are flexibly attentive in the now, when they have a quality of mutual consciousness and an ability to take the perspective of the other, when they are values based, and conditionally active. These are merely restatements of psychological flexibility characteristics as they apply to therapeutic relationships. Stated in simpler fashion, the therapeutic relationship is powerful if it is open, aware, and engaged. If this is correct, it provides important targets for all therapists interested in establishing empowering relationships with their clients because there are specific methods available that are known through experimentation (not mere correlations) to foster openness, awareness, and active values-based engagement.

A recent study (Gifford et al., 2011) found that the working alliance mediated outcomes, but when the working alliance and clients’ changes in psychological flexibility were entered in a multiple mediator model, only psychological flexibility remained as a mediator—the working alliance was no longer significant. This does not mean the working alliance is not important—rather it suggests that powerful therapeutic relationships are important in part because they instigate, model, and support greater psychological flexibility. That would be important to the field and to humanistic psychology if true, and would provide a model for a more empirically responsible and perhaps more effective way to work through the implications of the therapeutic relationship for clinical intervention.

**HUMANISM AND TRADITIONAL EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE**

The rise of interest in humanistic approaches and the embrace of humanistic topics by the behavioral and cognitive therapies challenge humanistic psychology to make a very difficult choice. Historically, there was no way to keep a firm grasp on humanistic issues without backing away to a degree from traditional experimental psychological science, even the more contextualistic varieties. A vast set of explanations arose within the humanistic tradition over this skepticism. Human
Humanistic Psychology and Contextual Behavioral Perspectives

I've asked my humanistic colleagues to give several examples of once strongly believed and now abandoned ideas within their tradition, they cannot. Conversely, in the history of science, virtually all theories are ultimately shown to be wrong at least to a degree, given only enough time and evidence. That is why science is progressive in a way that art can never be.

Although I understand that it will be easy to dismiss or deny these points, and that it would be painful to back away from long-standing objections, growth itself suggests a different stance. Just as a vital life means letting go of past conceptions when they are no longer useful and taking advantage of new opportunities and new relationships, in the same way, the vitality of humanistic ideas can be advanced by actively exploring the realignment with the behavioral and cognitive therapies that is already occurring, and learning to use the basic and applied experimental methods they have championed. It seems increasingly possible to use experimental psychological science to explore the processes that underlie humanistic topics, and perhaps without distorting fundamental humanistic sensitivities. For the good of those we serve, it would be a shame not to do so.

science is different than physical science; qualitative research is just as important as quantitative research; experiments analyzed collectively override the personal history of individuals; and so on through a long list. Many of these issues are important outside of humanism per se (the behavioral tradition even agrees with some of them) and by no means do I want merely to brush them all aside. But taken as a whole they have backed humanistic psychology into a bit of a disciplinary cul de sac and a needlessly distant relationship with traditional experimental psychological science.

The cost has been high, from the limited participation of humanistic psychology in the evidence-based practice movement, to the absence of grant funds to foster treatment development, to the resistance in hiring humanistic faculty in high-quality research-oriented universities. But, perhaps, the highest cost is to progressivity. Systematic experimental evidence allows mistaken ideas to be abandoned and new ideas to take hold for reasons other than mere persuasion or the charisma of advocates. Humanistic psychology has had a hard time abandoning ideas, or providing evidence that current ideas are any better than older ones. When

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This article summarizes and discusses the main themes to emerge from this special section on the renewal of humanism in psychotherapy. It is concluded that (1) despite some controversies, humanism is both a viable and growing influence among the leading specialty areas of psychotherapy; (2) humanism is a foundational element of effectiveness among these specialty areas; and (3) humanistic training is essential to the development of trainees in the aforementioned specialty areas. The implications of these findings for each of the specialty areas, for the profession of psychotherapy, and for the public at large are elaborated, concluding with a call for a reassessment of priorities in the research, practice, and training of standardized mental health delivery.

Keywords: humanism, humanistic therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoanalytic therapy, multicultural therapy, psychotherapy research, psychotherapy training

The set of articles contained in this special section represent a unique moment in the history of our profession. Rarely, to our knowledge, have eight leaders from diverse therapeutic backgrounds assembled together to discuss one of the most informally appreciated, yet least professionally recognized, phenomena of our times—the renewal of humanism in psychotherapy. For the purposes of this section, humanism was understood as a psychological and philosophical perspective for which the subject matter is the whole human being; in psychotherapy, humanism places special emphasis on the personal, interpersonal, and contextual dimensions of therapy and on clients’ reflections on their relationship with self, others, and the larger psychosocial world (Schneider & Längle, 2012).

The conclusions of these articles as well as the comments that followed are that (1) the renewal of humanism is a salient and growing phenomenon among the leading specialty areas of psychotherapy; (2) although many theoretical and practical questions remain, humanism is a foundational element of therapeutic effectiveness; (3) humanistic prac-
tice principles are a pivotal (and needed) dimension of therapeutic training; and (4) the humanistic treatment philosophy is a critical contributor to societal well-being.

In the following passages, we will elaborate on the aforementioned conclusions by highlighting several themes we believe are of particular relevance for this section. The first theme that strikes us is that there is a perplexing contradiction between the positions of the leaders in this section and the present state of official professional advocacy. Although the contributors to this section are emphatically affirming of the value of humanistic practice principles, large segments of the public, the media, and even the professional practice community continue to privilege a medical model (i.e., randomized clinical trials) over the personal dimensions of therapy (Baker, McFall, & Shoham, 2009; Elkins, 2009; Wampold, 2007). Moreover, this reluctance to embrace humanistic practice principles not only neglects a wealth of therapy effectiveness literature (e.g., see Elkins, this section, pp. 450–454; Shedler, 2010; Wampold, this section, pp. 445–449), but it also presents disturbing implications for the optimization of therapeutic training and practice as a whole (Längle & Kriz, this section, pp. 430–436; Schneider & DuPlock, 2012). If there is one message that resounds through the chorus of contributions to this special section, it is that humanistic practice principles of empathy, alliance, receptivity to client feedback, and meaning making are critical to therapeutic healing. That said, the contributions also underscore the subtlety of cultivating these contextual elements, particularly when they are integrated into established practice modalities. For example, such integrative practices were superbly illustrated in this section by Steven Hayes (pp. 419–429) when describing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Robert Stolorow (pp. 395–399) in depicting intersubjective psychoanalysis, and Lillian Comas-Diaz (pp. 386–394) in elaborating multicultural therapy. As David Elkins and Bruce Wampold implied, the future of effective practice is humanistic integration, and all pertinent resources should be harnessed in the service of that goal.

A second major observation of this section is that there is continuing disagreement regarding the optimal methodology by which to study humanistic elements of practice. Although Bruce Wampold (this section) argues for the value of broad correlational measures (such as advanced regression, multilevel modeling, and meta-analyses) to investigate humanistic and other dimensions of effective practice, Steven Hayes (this section) is just as adamant about the necessity for experimental designs, over and above the correlational approaches; and although the aforementioned theorists emphasize quantitative research as the chief arbiter of “effectiveness,” David Elkins (this section), Robert Stolorow (this section), and Alfried Längle and Jürgen Kriz (this section) argue for the value of parity between qualitative and quantitative modalities. In our view, this long-standing and critical debate strikes at the heart of empirical science: how will it be shaped, who will determine it, and what forces will comprise its evolution?

This concern leads to a thornier question about effectiveness research in general, intimated by some of the contributors: to what extent are the present findings of equivalency among treatments valid? Would the supplementation and intensification of qualitative research alter or deepen the findings? Are there “additional benefits” associated with given therapies (such as those that might be anticipated with existential-humanistic therapy) that are presently unrecognized? Or, on the other hand, are the present emphases of humanistic
practitioners on contextual factors somehow immaterial to the actual cultivation of those factors, as suggested by the present equivalency research? These are bedeviling questions, to be sure, but they are vital questions that need to be answered if our field is to genuinely progress.

That said, we cannot ignore the current state of the evidence, and this evidence indicates convincingly to those of us gathered at this “roundtable” that (1) the authentic personal relationship is fundamental to effective practice. (2) This relationship is critical to all recognized approaches to psychotherapy. (3) Human suffering is rendered more bearable within the context of an attuned and understanding relationship. (4) The collaborative nature of this relationship is key to its unfolding. (5) When appropriately supported, the encounter with emotional distress can foster a fuller capacity to adapt, a broadened capacity to choose, and a deepened appreciation of one’s personal and cultural life. (6) The renewal of humanism is integral to multicultural practice, and multicultural practice is integral to the renewal of humanism. The consistent position from our contributors is that attunement to the client leads to improved sensitivity to the client’s embeddedness in a cultural, economic, and political context; to the degree that this context is sensitively broached, the client’s welfare as a whole is also enhanced. (7) Therapeutic training should emphasize the person of the therapist (e.g., see also Duncan, 2010; Fauth, Gates, Vinca, & Boles, 2007; and Geller & Greenberg, 2012, for support for this view). This means that not only should training focus on the cultivation of personal skills, such as empathic listening and forming an alliance, but it should also concentrate on the therapist’s own life, his or her own emotional and intellectual growth, and his or her own responsiveness to clients’ needs. These elements may be stimulated by relevant reflections on psychology, culture, and the arts, but they may also be explored by personal therapy, meditation, and experiential exercises (e.g., dyadic role play). The intent here should be on helping trainees to become well-rounded (empathic and engaging) people, not just competent technicians. Although we recognize that many traditional training programs, because of other priorities, delimit the time for such wide-ranging opportunities, we, in the spirit of the contributors, question this state of affairs. If, as we believe, the cultivation of the therapist’s personality is integral to effective practice, then a priority needs to be set on developing therapists’ personalities, alongside of and in tandem with their theoretical and technical know-how.

The consensus of this forum is that despite controversies and some gaps in the extant knowledge, enough is now known to compel a serious discussion about the present state of humanism in psychotherapy. If there is one take-home message from the contributors to this section, it is that all of the major therapeutic orientations—cognitive–behavioral, psychoanalytic, existential-humanistic, and multicultural—are optimized when they draw on and are informed by a humanistic base. The contributors further believe that the converse is equally as true: that a humanistic base is optimized when it draws on and absorbs relevant aspects of other bona fide therapeutic orientations. The question is, will our profession heed this message? Will it proceed with the diligence warranted by the message?
REFERENCES


Frames, Attitudes, and Skills of an Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapist

Bob Edelstein

INTRODUCTION

While attending a professional conference in 2009, I had the opportunity to talk with a number of new therapists who disclosed to me that they had been encouraged by more experienced colleagues not to emphasize an existential-humanistic (EH) orientation in their work. One of the reasons was the belief that an EH approach to therapy did not have any clear methodology that the therapist could rely on.

I was surprised and disheartened when I heard their comments. While it is true that EH therapies are not focused on techniques, there are definitely underlying philosophical frames, relationship attitudes, and therapeutic skills that inform this orientation. Indeed, these frames, attitudes, and skills ground the therapeutic work and form the basis of an EH therapist’s presence—and that presence is a key to guiding therapeutic choices.

Presence is not a technique. In fact, it is the opposite of a technique. Martin Heidegger, an EH philosopher, used the term *dasein*, the quality of *being there* (Heidegger, 1962). James Bugental, an EH psychotherapist, defined presence as “the quality of being in a situation in which one intends to be as aware and as participative as one is able to be at that time and in those circumstances” (Bugental, 1978, p. 36).

For clarity, I have ordered the philosophical frames, relationship attitudes, and therapeutic skills according to my understanding of the dynamic interaction that occurs in therapy. There are three sections (frames, attitudes, and skills) with six entries in each. The relationship attitudes and therapeutic skills relate to the philosophical frames in the order they are presented. For example, “Being Versus Doing” is the first entry in philosophical frames. “Cultivation of the I-Thou Relationship,” the first entry in relationship attitudes, reinforces this philosophical frame, as does “Deep Listening,” the first entry in therapeutic skills. This parallel structure continues throughout, but the correlation is an approximation, as all of these frames, attitudes, and skills intertwine and overlap with one another.
My intention is to offer a personal, therapist-to-therapist overview of the core dimensions of an EH approach. The names and cases in the examples that follow are fictitious, but they are representative of the clients I have worked with over the course of 40 years of practice.

**PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMES**

1. **Being Versus Doing**

   Being drives the therapy—not doing. Doing is secondary; it is the result of what emerges from being (Maslow, 1962; May, 1983). This is in contrast to doing-based therapies, such as typified by cognitive-behavioral therapy, wherein there is a goal and specific methods to get to that goal, so once the therapist hears the problem, predetermined methodologies are employed.

   My intention is to let my response stem from my being. Coming from my being includes my awareness of what I am experiencing moment to moment in my internal life, in my felt sense of the client’s experience, and in the relationship between the two of us.

   I do not come into the session with preconceived ideas about the client or the specific therapeutic methods that I will absolutely hold on to. What is present for me is a sense of stillness, silence, and just being. My response comes from my perception of what I need to say or do, or not say or not do—right here, right now, in the moment. While I will have a flow of thoughts and feelings during the session, there is no rigid grip to any of them.

   By being fully there with my clients, I am inviting, encouraging, and challenging them to be fully there with themselves and with me. This approach enables my clients to access and express their thoughts and feelings as they emerge from their being.

   For example, Joan struggles with feeling rejected by potential partners. She has been working with me for a year. She has made some gains in feeling better about herself, but she can still retreat into feelings of unworthiness. In this particular session, I am experiencing her vulnerability and neediness. It seems to be directed at me, as if she wants me to make her neediness go away. A memory comes up in me of Joan in a number of past sessions telling me how often and in different ways her dad would let her know that he did not feel she was good enough to attract a man. What also comes up in me is an image of a child being rocked and nurtured. I feel tender toward Joan and share both the memory and the image with her. It strikes a chord in her, and she cries. She allows the experience of vulnerability and neediness to move through her. She shares a memory of a time when she had lost weight and her dad told her how proud he was of her. She is aware of her anger and expresses a resolve to not let anyone determine her self-worth. At this moment, she does not need anything from me. In being with herself, she is taking care of herself, and something is released. She leaves the session feeling more centered and self-contained.

2. **Identifying and Exploring Existential Themes**

   Existential themes are a major way by which human beings define themselves and their world. While we may be conscious of them, often these themes are semiconscious or unconscious. Even if we are conscious of them, we may feel that there is no way to change our stance toward them, or we have no idea how to change them. We assume that they are just the givens of our lives.

   We all engage with our existential themes at some level as they are part of the human condition. Irvin Yalom and James Bugental both developed paradigms of universal
existential themes. Yalom’s (1980) typology of the existential givens includes life and death, freedom and responsibility, meaning and meaninglessness, and relationship and isolation. Bugental’s (1965) typology of the existential givens includes finiteness, the potential to act, choice, separateness, and embodiedness. Both of these typologies point to universal themes that can never be eliminated, nor would we wish to do so. All human beings confront them. The challenge for continued development toward self-actualization is in how we confront them.

Within these universal existential themes, we all have personal existential themes, both inhibiting and affirming (Edelstein, 1999). For instance, personal existential themes that are inhibiting could be “I am not as good as others,” “I need to constantly justify my existence,” and/or “I see everything in life as right or wrong.” Personal existential themes that are affirming could be “I have the courage to take calculated risks,” “I am confident in myself and my ability to learn,” “I trust others to be altruistic and caring, and I am discerning.”

EH approaches to therapy illuminate these themes. Identifying and exploring these themes repeatedly allow clients to engage their concerns in a powerful and energized way. Whatever the content of their concerns may be, a deeper part of the work is tying it into their specific existential themes. Over time, they discover which inhibiting themes need to be modified or let go. They also discover which affirming themes need to be reinforced or expanded.

For example, in terms of an inhibiting existential theme, I am aware that John expresses frustration with his wife’s inefficiency in getting dinner ready for the family, and he also expresses impatience at the lack of effort demonstrated by his work colleagues. He expresses irritation with his mother’s difficulty in getting to his baseball games as a child, even though she did make it to most of his games and had to take care of his siblings at the same time. He was also upset with me when I started 5 minutes late for one of his sessions, the only time that happened after 6 months of weekly therapy. I repeatedly point out over the course of his therapy how demanding he is of others to live up to his expectations, as well as his lack of compassion and empathy to appreciate others’ life situations. Over time, he becomes more deeply aware of his anxiety over the uncertainty of life, and that his demands make him feel secure. Both his anxiety and his “demandingness” constitute a personal existential theme. This is a unifying core for the complaints he has in his life and the dissatisfaction he feels in life. Then, John explores this theme in terms of the associations that emerge inwardly. With greater awareness of this existential theme, John discovers other ways he can be with his anxiety. This allows him to respond to the needs that are authentic to his present life situation and to let go of demands that stem from unrealistic expectations. This will also allow him to be more compassionate toward others.

For example, in terms of an affirming existential theme, I am aware that Carol acknowledges that she is very successful in her career and marriage. However, in every session, she focuses on her insecurities about these dimensions of her life. I let her know how powerfully she is exploring her core issues and how much progress she has made in therapy. It is another example of her competence. She acknowledges this to be true and quickly focuses on how much work she still has to do. While I honor her insecurities and the work that still needs to be done, I repeatedly point out how difficult it is for her to own how successful she is in her life and the progress she has made in therapy. It is another example of her competence. She acknowledges this to be true and quickly focuses on how much work she still has to do. While I honor her insecurities and the work that still needs to be done, I repeatedly point out how difficult it is for her to own how successful she is in her life and the progress she has made in therapy. Over time, she explores and works through her resistance to letting herself fully experience her competence. She accepts that being competent is a core aspect of who she is. With her existential theme of competence
established, she is able to explore her insecurities in a more empowered way.

3. Process Versus Content

EH approaches to therapy emphasize process over content, although content certainly is not to be ignored (Bugental, 1978, 1987, 1999; Yalom, 2002).

Process means paying attention to how my clients are with themselves in the session and/or how they are with me in our relationship. For example, in paying attention to how my clients are with themselves, I may be aware that they qualify their statements frequently (maybe, probably, I think), that they are emotionally repetitive without resolving issues or releasing emotion, or that they are rational around content that I would expect to evoke strong feelings. I also pay attention to how they are relating with me. I may experience them as seeking my approval or being argumentative. At times, it may be important to express my awareness directly to them, whether it is focusing on their relationship to themselves (intrapsychic process) or their relationship with me (interpersonal process).

I can proceed with this process orientation in one of two ways.

One approach would be to facilitate the client’s attention toward his or her inner life in the moment (intrapsychic). For example, I point out Sally’s tentativeness in the session and encourage her to free-associate about what emerges into awareness with regard to her tentative approach to life. This could include past associations and/or future concerns about how her tentativeness influences her life. Ultimately, I am supporting Sally in exploring her tentativeness in relationship to her self-and-world constructs—how she has defined who she is and what her worldview is (Bugental, 1978, 1987, 1999). “Who am I?” and “What is my world?” are primary existential questions that frame our need and quest for meaning. In the exploration of her tentativeness, Sally may discover that she believes the world is dangerous and people are out to get her. She sees herself as being fragile, vulnerable, and needing to hide to keep from getting hurt.

With more conscious awareness and repeated exploration of this existential theme, Sally’s self-and-world constructs can be modified so that she experiences the world as being safer and sees herself as being resilient. This allows her to be more authentic to who she is now. From this more authentic way of being, she can make choices that are more self-actualizing. She is able to translate and enact her authentic inner vision in a congruent way so that it is manifested in the world. This naturally leads to greater fulfillment in life (Maslow, 1971).

The second process direction I could take is to facilitate a dialogue to explore the interpersonal relationship between my client and myself as it unfolds and evolves. In the therapeutic relationship described above, I can facilitate Sally in exploring how her tentativeness is being expressed right now in the session between us and what it means for both of us. As Sally explores her concern that I won’t like her if she is too assertive, I can let her know that actually I appreciate her being assertive—and that her tentativeness can be off-putting to me. She may then become aware that her tentativeness may also be off-putting to other people and that her dad was pleased when she was passive and irritated when she was assertive. My feedback facilitates a new self-awareness, which she can use to reevaluate how she wants to be, both within herself and in the world. With more conscious awareness and repeated interactions exploring the tentativeness between us, her self-and-world constructs can be modified so that she can make different choices that are more authentic to who she is now—which will support her being more self-actualized and fulfilled.

Whether I work with my clients’ process intrapsychically or interpersonally, I
can collaboratively reach the same end—supporting my clients to be more authentic and self-actualized, two key metagoals of EH psychotherapy.

4. Holding the Container

Holding the container is one of the primary tasks that I provide for my clients. This means that I want my clients to have a sense of confidence that whatever they express in the session, I can handle it—and they know it (Rogers, 1961, 1965).

I hold the container so that my clients can risk exploring material that is uncomfortable, and also possibly unusual, for them to explore. I am encouraging them to share what is present, alive, and vital—and communicating to them in my words and actions that I am fully with them in whatever they are sharing, whether it is hurt, rage, shame, joy, and so on.

Whatever their sharing evokes in me, I will use it in service of their therapeutic goals—sometimes sharing my experience with them and sometimes not, depending on what would be therapeutically beneficial in that moment. They experience my internal strength and ability to handle strong emotions and difficult material, and they know that they don’t have to take care of me. I am the anchor for them.

To hold the container strongly, it is important that I do my own personal work. This could include committing to my own psychotherapy, engaging in paid and/or peer supervision or consultation, and investing in self-care throughout my career. Doing my personal work allows me to know and renew myself, continuously. It reinforces my resilience, which makes me more capable of being with whatever material is presented by my clients.

5. Everything Is Everything

I work from the premise that everything is everything. I am open to the inherent connections and relationships in life. Thus, I assume that what happens in the therapy session usually isn’t an isolated incident. I am open to the possibility that clients’ ways of being that are demonstrated in the session also occur in their other relationships and in the way they live their lives (Bugental, 1999).

For example, if Harry repeatedly arrives late for sessions, I might wonder if he is late for appointments in other areas of his life. I can check this out with him at an appropriate time. If Harry becomes aware that late arrivals are a general pattern, he is inclined to explore this way of being more seriously. I facilitate his thoughts and feelings about this way of being—what meaning he makes of it, whether he would like to change it, and so on.

Thus, the arriving late is an opening for a much broader and deeper exploration of how Harry lives his life. He discovers that his lateness has been a way to protect himself from his vulnerability in feeling that he doesn’t have anything profound to say. If Harry is late, he thinks he will be able to stay invisible—and will not be shamed, for others will not be able to see his lack of depth.

In working through the material associated with his chronically being late, he realizes the depth he does have. This allows Harry to shift his definition of who he is and change his experience of living.

While this would usually be the exception, Harry’s lateness for his sessions could be an isolated incident, in which he is late for therapy but on time in the rest of his life. In that case, I can explore with him how he feels about being late for therapy, how he feels the lateness affects our relationship, and what the meaning of his lateness is as he sees it. The exploration of his habitual lateness may still lead to the recognition that everything is everything in his life. For example, in exploring his being late for his sessions, he could discover that he is afraid of my opinion of him because he sees me as...
HUMANISTIC APPLICATIONS TO PRACTICE

I can assume that any feeling, perception, or behavior that my clients bring into the session is reflective of the rest of their life. Assuming that everything is everything provides a lot of therapeutic grist for the mill.

6. Inclusion, Not Amputation

Everything takes place in the present moment—our past is embedded in the present, and our future unfolds from it. As much as possible, I want to be aware of everything going on with my clients, within myself, and between the two of us in the session. As appropriate, I want to explore my multiple levels of awareness with my clients about content or process that I perceive is being avoided by either or both of us (Schneider, 1999, 2008).

For example, in the first phone contact I am aware of Vivian’s tone. It may be primarily tentative, matter of fact, dismissive, enthusiastic, or ingratiating in her presentation of why she wants to initiate therapy. While I won’t give Vivian feedback about her tone during that first contact, if that tone continues during the therapy, I would give her feedback about it at some point, rather than ignoring (amputating) it. This could be in the 1st session, the 15th session, or the 50th session—and I may give this feedback repeatedly. My feedback allows Vivian to see how she presents herself—which she may be only semiconscious of or not conscious of at all. This feedback allows her to experience more fully a way in which she is being-in-the-world, and in exploring that, she can discover more of her unconscious material, which would then be further grist for the therapeutic mill.

Another example would be if I constantly find myself feeling tired when working with Bill. Rather than avoiding that awareness (amputation), I include it. I let Bill know that I often feel tired when I work with him, and then, I explore it with him. How does Bill feel about that? Does my tiredness point to a lack of presence that occurs in his relationships in general? And/or does it point to something he evokes in me that makes me tired? And/or does it point to something in me that I am projecting onto Bill? Expressing the content of my awareness at an appropriate time, including aspects that may feel uncomfortable, can lead to a dialogue in which Bill makes self-discoveries that will further his personal growth.

Inclusion allows clients to explore and integrate material that has been hidden—from them and from me. This supports them in becoming more accepting of themselves.

RELATIONSHIP ATTITUDES

7. Cultivation of the I–Thou Relationship

The I–thou relationship (Buber, 1958) refers to the sacredness of the relationship, experienced by both client and therapist, that goes beyond any overt transaction. The therapeutic stance would be that while I hope you grow in the way you want in your life, and as your therapist I will do my best to facilitate that, you have inherent worth beyond what you accomplish or do not accomplish. I embody and demonstrate this through my words, gestures, and actions. I have unconditional positive regard for my client (Kirschenbaum & Henderson, 1989).

The I–it relationship (Buber, 1958) refers to the daily transactional interactions of human beings wherein mutual pragmatic needs are being met. For example, the client pays my fee, and I do my best to facilitate the client’s growth.

The I–thou relationship contains and transcends the I–it relationship. Beyond
any transactions, I feel reverence for my fellow travelers—these human beings doing the best they can and making the best life they can have for themselves, just as I am doing in my life (Yalom, 2002). In honoring the I–thou relationship, I facilitate clients’ development of a similar feeling of caring and respect toward me, beyond my role as a therapist.

There is a sacredness in the I–thou relationship that goes beyond the very important goals being sought in therapy and beyond the content and process explored during therapy sessions. The I–thou relationship allows clients to explore their concerns in a more fully open and authentic way, for in the I–thou relationship, there is permission and encouragement to share whoever they are. They trust that I will accept and value them. From this foundation, powerful therapeutic growth occurs.

8. Transparency/Contextual Authenticity Versus Transference/Countertransference

Transparency and contextual authenticity are key components in facilitating my clients’ growth. Therapist transparency and contextual authenticity require that I allow myself to be real and to be seen as a person—within the context of the therapeutic relationship, in support of the clients’ goals. My intention is to be open, honest, direct, and clear with my clients—and to be therapeutically appropriate in terms of when and how I express myself with them (Bugental, 1965; Jourard, 1971; Rogers, 1961).

Therapist transparency and contextual authenticity include sharing my perceptions of what is going on with my clients as well as sharing what feelings are evoked in me in relationship with them. For example, it could include sharing how I experience Sam as being detached and that I feel like I am not making strong contact with him. It could include sharing that I care for Sam and that I appreciate the courage it takes for him to explore his concerns. It could include sharing my frustration at Sam’s “stuckness” and/or my own stuckness in discovering what can mobilize him. It could include sharing some identification I have with Sam’s concerns and perhaps sharing a story from my own life, past or present, to demonstrate that he is not alone in his concerns—I have been there, too. It could also include briefly sharing something from my current life—for example, if Sam asks, “How are you?” at the beginning of the session, I could briefly share something relevant and then shift the conversation back to him and his life. It could also include working through the different opinions, miscommunications, insensitivities, and other challenges in my relationship with Sam, which allows him to experience that relationships can feel closer as conflict is resolved.

The underlying belief is that the experience of an authentic relationship can be transformative and that my transparency is an important way to facilitate and engage authentically with my clients. In the context of an authentic engagement, they can discover a deeper and more positive level of connection—with me, with themselves, and with others.

In EH therapy, transparency and contextual authenticity are the driving forces in exploring the relationship between client and therapist. Transference and countertransference are addressed openly as they emerge, within the context of transparency and authenticity.

Transference may arise in terms of my clients not seeing who I am and not taking in what I am communicating because they are projecting past relationships onto me. For example, Lois may share that she feels ashamed that she is not very intelligent. Even though I express my compassion for her, somehow Lois feels I am judging her as not...
being too bright. In her exploration of feeling judged, she eventually comes to understand that in fact I do value her intelligence and that her expectation that everyone looks at her as not being intelligent has kept her from taking in my verbal and nonverbal validation. Lois may also be more open to the possibility that she is more intelligent than she has been giving herself credit for.

Countertransference may arise in terms of me not seeing my clients for who they are and not taking in what they are communicating because I am projecting my past relationships onto them. For example, Frank may express criticism about my abruptness in the session, which could trigger my resentment—How could he be critical after all the work I have done with him? As I do my own inward searching and get more feedback from Frank, I realize that I am overreacting. I realize a link to my relationship with my dad and how I would become impatient with my dad and defensive around his criticism toward me. I realize that I have not completely worked through my resentments toward my dad and that I put a bigger charge on Frank’s criticism than was merited. I then share my overreaction with him, possibly sharing some of the content of my countertransference, and acknowledge his concern as being valid. I can then express to Frank my willingness to be less abrupt with him and encourage him to continue to let me know whenever he experiences me as being abrupt.

Transference and countertransference need to be explored within the context of the transparency and contextual authenticity established in the therapeutic relationship. This is in contrast to some models of psychotherapy, such as classical psychoanalysis, wherein transference and countertransference are the driving forces in exploring the relationship between client and therapist—and transparency and contextual authenticity are considered less important and at times even detrimental to exploring the transference and countertransference aspects of the relationship.

9. Intention and/or Resistance

Intention is the drive toward wholeness. Resistance is the inhibiting of the drive toward wholeness (Bugental, 1978, 1987). It is assumed that human beings naturally move toward wholeness, and any resistance (e.g., semiconscious or unconscious) to that movement is an attempt to protect themselves in some way (Schneider & Krug, 2010). Thus, even resistance has an underlying positive intention.

I am aware that with just about anything my clients say or do, I can focus on the intention and/or resistance toward wholeness with regard to the clients’ existential theme. I will emphasize either one or both, or go back and forth, depending on what is therapeutically optimal.

For example, if Marilyn focuses on her obsessive attention to her health concerns (hypochondria being one of her existential themes), I can facilitate her in exploring how this focus keeps her from engaging in life in more expansive ways and in discovering why she needs to protect herself in this way. Or I could point out the strength she demonstrates in tenaciously focusing on her health concerns and have her explore what would happen if she used that strength in other ways. How would that be, and what would her life and world look like?

Another example would be if Ben shares a recent achievement with me (the need for achievement being one of his existential themes). I can focus on the celebration and joy of that achievement—his book was just published—and explore how that will contribute to the world. Or I can focus on how he may be overidentified with this achievement, and with his achievements in general, and how he feels unworthy if he is not achieving. The exploration of this overidentification
may also allow him to see how he ends up pushing people away, with a continual focus on his achievements at the expense of mutual exchange. Or I can explore both the intention and the resistance aspects of his existential theme of identification with achievement.

I am also aware that with just about anything clients say or do (or do not say or do), I can focus on their intention or their resistance to their engagement in their own process. The successful intention of their engagement in their process occurs when they are very much aware of what is happening internally in the present moment and are expressing it to me. I respond minimally, for they are in a powerful, autonomous, self-directing process—and I trust that. I might want to reinforce this with a nod of my head or with short statements, “I hear you. . . . Go on. . . . Whatever comes. . . .”

Resistance to their engagement in their own process occurs when they are not fully available to themselves. Then I am more active in pointing out how they are not immersing themselves in what is going on in their flow of consciousness in the moment. An example of this might be if they say “maybe . . . probably . . .,” then I will reflect their tentative language back to them (“maybe . . . probably . . .”). Another way they may demonstrate their tentativeness is to say “I don’t know . . .”; then I will want to draw them out by saying “You don’t know what?” or “If you did know, what would come up?” or “Slow down and take a breath. . . . See what comes.” By pointing out how their tentativeness keeps them from being fully present and by drawing them out to see what other material may be there, they become more engaged in their process, which allows them to work through their issues more powerfully.

10. Alliance and Context

I pay attention to the state of the alliance I have with my clients and to the context in which they are expressing their concerns.

Alliance refers to the level of trust my clients and I have with each other. As I am working with my clients, I monitor the state of the alliance I have with them. This will help determine my response (Bugental, 1987).

Alliance is established and deepened over time. My responses will be different if I have been working with a client for a year than they will be if this is our first session together. In our first session, I will primarily be listening to my client’s story. After a year of working with my client, I will have a range of responses, from supportive to challenging. Even when I have been working with my client for a year, I will still want to monitor the level of trust established, the depth of inward searching my client is exhibiting, and the depth of connection I have with my client to determine my response.

For example, if my relationship with a vulnerable client is primarily a nurturing one, I may be gentler in my challenging than I would be with a client who likes to challenge me in the sessions. I match the clients where they are. However, there may also be times when I want to do the opposite. For example, with a client who needs a lot of validation, I may challenge him—and then explore his experience of being challenged. With a client that is often oppositional, I may validate him and then explore his experience of being validated.

Context refers to the circumstances surrounding the clients’ concerns (Bugental, 1987; Schneider & Krug, 2010). As I am working with my clients, I am aware of the context of what they are bringing to the session. For example, if Roger is agitated, I will want to understand the context of his agitation before responding. Is his agitation the result of a disagreement with his boss the day before? If that is the case, I may encourage him to express fully his anger. Or is it a repeated way of being for him? If this is so, I may point the repetition out to Roger and explore his
need to agitate himself. Or is the agitation a coming apart at the seams for him? In this situation, I may be supportive and firm, aiming to keep him from unraveling—reminding him of his ego strength and his ability to not succumb so much to his upset.

11. Interaction Versus Action

Growth comes from the ongoing interaction between therapist and client much more than from any single action by the therapist (Friedman, 1985; Yalom, 2002). For example, I listen to Amy express her anger at her mother’s lack of empathy for how difficult it was for Amy to move across the country and establish a new home. Instead of expressing empathy for how hard it was, her mother told her that she is strong and to keep focusing on why she moved. While I empathize with Amy and acknowledge that it was hard for her, I also express where I think her mother was coming from. I see her physically withdraw and become quiet and realize I did not give her enough time to vent her feelings before I explored her mother’s point of view. I encourage Amy to talk about what is happening in her silence and withdrawal. She lets me know that she feels invalidated by me, that she is a bad person for being angry at her mom. This is also what she experiences with her mom. I let her know that I hear her. I take responsibility by letting her know that I didn’t communicate my full understanding of her position. I apologize for my insensitivity. I also share that there is value in what just happened, in that it brings her experience of her mom into the here and now between the two of us.

She now feels heard and understood and expresses her appreciation of my openness to her feelings of hurt and frustration toward me. This is in contrast to her mom’s defensiveness and attacks when she expresses hurt or frustration toward her mother.

Thus, while my initial response missed the mark, that action was superseded by the positive therapeutic effect of the ongoing interaction. Ultimately, the interaction facilitated Amy in having a positive growth experience with me, in contrast to the invalidating experience she often has with her mother. Also, my connection with Amy is deepened, which will be beneficial for further therapeutic work.

12. Mutuality Versus Hierarchy

In EH therapy, the focus is client centered. I am working collaboratively with my clients to support them in empowering themselves. They get that I trust that they ultimately will know themselves better than I do and that I am facilitating them in discovering and accessing their self-knowledge and innate wisdom (Rogers, 1961, 1965).

In the mutuality of the client–therapist relationship, a deep connection is forged from the understanding that both the client and the therapist are moving through the human journey (Friedman, 1985). This awareness is a substantial support to clients’ self-empowerment and accessing of their courage. Knowing that I am on the same human journey that they are on helps them realize that they can work through the life issues they dread facing. There is something very reassuring in knowing that they are not alone in dealing with their demons and that within my own frame of reference and life experience, I can empathize with what they are going through (Yalom, 1974, 2002).

Both client and therapist are equals in that they are both accessing and expressing their experience. The clients’ power for change resides within their subjectivity and within the relationship between us. The experience of mutuality supports their deeper contact with themselves and increased connection with me, which leads to further growth for them.

For example, I give feedback to Barbara that I feel she is holding back in the session
and she has tended to do that in her therapy in general. I check if that is her experience or not. She says it is. I then share my wondering if her tentativeness with me stems from the coldness in the way her dad related to her and if that is her experience of me. I let her know that if it doesn’t fit, that is fine. She says it doesn’t. She shares that her dad’s coldness made her more determined to engage with him, to show him she wasn’t scared of him. In contrast, she feels I am warm and appreciative of her. She feels her tentativeness with me is because she has the impression that I often want her to explore a particular issue in a particular way and she is often unsure that she wants to go there. She feels tentative to challenge me because she doesn’t want to hurt my feelings. I am aware that it has not been my intention to lead her so strongly, and I want her to feel free to challenge me. This leads to a rich dialogue about how each of us are relating to one another in ways that have inhibited the openness of the relationship. The result is a more engaged, authentic dialogue that more powerfully facilitates her personal growth.

The opposite of mutuality is a hierarchical model wherein the therapist evaluates the client, gives the client a diagnosis, and prescribes a treatment plan. The treatment is deemed successful if the client follows the treatment plan. The treatment is deemed unsuccessful if the client deviates from the treatment plan. In a hierarchical model, the power for change resides within the therapist’s expertise and authority and within the objectivity of the treatment plan. There is minimal emphasis placed on the client’s subjective experience of the treatment.

THERAPEUTIC SKILLS

13. Deep Listening

Deep listening is the ability to listen with a deeply attuned sensitivity to my clients’ experience. I am listening not only to the overt content of what my clients are saying but also to the nuances of sensing their more authentic needs as well as their more covert and less expressed feelings in relationship to their expressed concern (Reik, 1983; Schneider, 2009).

Deep listening is communicated to my clients nonverbally in my expressions and gestures, as well as verbally in reflecting back to them what they are saying to me—empathizing with their dilemma and pointing out to them both in process and content what they may be semiconsciously aware of. Giving them feedback on what is semiconscious can be an opening to allow more unconscious material to emerge, which then can be explored and integrated. For example, I may say, “I notice your hand is clenched . . . and I am sensing you are feeling angry with your boss right now. . . . Does that resonate for you?”

Deep listening allows clients to feel powerfully heard, seen, and received.

14. Have the Clients Check the Feelings, Thoughts, and Bodily Sensations Behind Their Story Line

Clients can block their immediacy and/or fluidity by becoming too vested in their story line and/or stuck in the repetitive expression of their concerns.

It is important to facilitate both the immediacy and the fluidity of my clients’ lived experience. This shifts the focus, which is likely to lead to more spontaneity and more accessing of unconscious material being discovered in relationship to the concern being explored.

To help my clients access fresh material around their concern, I guide them to focus on something different from their usual and/or present focus. That may involve a shift from thinking to feeling, or vice versa. For example, Andrew tells me how he treated his
I can’t read any expression on your face.” This allows her to become aware of her detachment, which had been semiconscious. Then, by focusing on her detachment, levels of awareness and associations can come to her—such as her use of detachment as a way to protect herself from feeling too much emotional pain and a childhood memory of when she needed to detach to protect herself.

Mirroring can also be used to reflect back to Patricia an awareness of when she is expressing herself congruently. For example, if she is expressing her grief over her mom’s death in a sad and tearful way that seems alive in the moment, I can simply nod and/or give brief verbal acknowledgement, “Yes. . . . Keep going . . .” My feedback encourages her to continue exploring her material further in this manner.

Mirroring allows clients to be more aware of how they are living in the present moment. They can then use that feedback to empower themselves by more consciously choosing ways of being they want to maintain, ways of being they want to modify, and ways of being they want to release. This allows them to be more authentic to whom they are now in their lives.

15. Be a Mirror to the Client’s Process

I can be a mirror to my clients, reflecting back to them not only what they are expressing but also how they are expressing it.

Often, clients are semiconscious or unconscious of how they are expressing themselves. By mirroring my clients’ ways of expressing themselves, I facilitate them in opening up to greater conscious awareness of self-and-world constructs and patterns of interpersonal interaction, which furthers continued exploration (Bugental, 1987, 1999).

For example, when Patricia talks about intense emotional material in a detached way, I may feed that back to her: “You are telling me you’re heartbroken about your mom dying, but your voice is pretty flat and I can’t read any expression on your face.” This allows her to become aware of her detachment, which had been semiconscious. Then, by focusing on her detachment, levels of awareness and associations can come to her—such as her use of detachment as a way to protect herself from feeling too much emotional pain and a childhood memory of when she needed to detach to protect herself.

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16. Have Clients Broaden or Narrow the Scope of Their Inquiry

Expanding the scope of inquiry opens up an exploration of the meaning of the client’s story (Frankl, 2006). Some clients specifically and repeatedly share the details of their concerns but are unable to discover how they can change their story. They remain in the repetition of the details of their story. Broadening the scope of inquiry can allow them to discover the meaning behind the details of their experience.

For example, I am working with Mike, who is having an affair. He describes the range of feelings he experiences, from the passion he has for the woman he is having
an affair with to the guilt he has in betraying his wife. He is stuck in the repeated expression of these conflicting feelings. A broadening of the scope of inquiry would be for me to ask him questions that expand and deepen the dialogue. “How does the conflict serve you?” “What keeps you from making a decision?” “How much is this conflict about your struggle with your image of who you think you are supposed to be?” These questions challenge Mike to move out of the repetitive cycling of the content he already knows. This broader exploration can lead him to self-discovery and deeper meaning to help guide his decisions.

Narrowing the scope of inquiry helps me understand the lived experience of my clients and allows my clients to comprehend their own experience more concretely (Bugental, 1987). Narrowing brings my clients out of vagueness and obscurity and into a more grounded and clear sense of what is happening in their life presently. This helps them have a more delineated focus of inquiry.

For example, Susan expresses her concern about the ongoing and numerous arguments that she has with her husband. She shares that she is worried about the effect these arguments might have on their marriage. She is afraid that they will not be able to change. She speaks in generalities, so I don’t get a clear sense of how it plays out specifically in her life. Susan goes on in this manner for a while. I ask her to give me an example of how this occurs, being as descriptive as possible. She then describes how they argue about money. Her husband complains that he has to work too hard to make money and she spends too much. Susan defends herself and says she always keeps him in mind whenever she spends anything. He then withdraws, and she becomes placating. This concrete description allows me to understand more fully her lived experience and to comprehend her concerns more clearly. In narrowing the focus, Susan is able to connect more directly and powerfully with the full range of thoughts and feelings that are evoked in her by the arguments. Knowing clearly how her issues are occurring in her daily life allows her to work through them in a deeper and more comprehensive way.

17. **Identify and Explore the Client’s Enactment in the Session**

At times, clients will be talking about a concern in their life and not be aware that the concern is also taking place directly in the session. I identify when this enactment occurs, which allows them to explore their concern more powerfully since the dynamics are immediately present (Bugental, 1987; Yalom, 2002). There is also an energized vitality because the concern being expressed is alive in the room.

For example, Jim shares a concern that he feels invisible in his life and that is very depressing to him. As he explores this, I become aware that I am not very present with him. I am having trouble paying attention to what he is saying. I also notice that Jim is not very present with himself. He lacks energy and is detached emotionally. He seems almost apologetic for taking up time and space in the session.

I point out that his experience of feeling invisible is playing itself out in the current moment between the two of us. He is surprised by the feedback. As Jim explores his invisibility to me, he becomes aware that he does feel uncomfortable in taking up time and space when he is with others. This leads to an exploration of what that is about for him and how this way of being has manifested over the course of his life. Jim starts gaining a better understanding of how he makes himself invisible. He sees himself more fully and becomes open to having others see him more fully.
**18. Engaged Curiosity**

I want to “get” my clients, and in so doing help my clients “get” themselves.

To “get” my clients, I tune into my genuine curiosity and let that guide me in drawing them out (Schneider, 2009). The direction of my curiosity can have a broad range. The aim is to have my clients describe their experience of living in every facet of their life, as fully and comprehensively as they can. For example, I may ask Lynn how she spends her day or what she likes about her job—or if she doesn’t like it, why she doesn’t like it and how she keeps doing it in that case. Similarly, I may want to hear what she likes and values about her partner, what she holds back in communicating with her partner, and so on.

My engaged curiosity facilitates Lynn to expand her awareness beyond her previous boundaries. She discovers more of who she is. This allows her to gain a clearer understanding of the issues she needs to work through and supports her in gaining more self-acceptance.

It is important that my engaged curiosity is not scripted. Rather, I am following both the lead in what my client is expressing (verbally and nonverbally) as well as my own inner promptings in what I am subjectively interested in pursuing further.

**CONCLUSION**

An EH approach to therapy is not technique oriented. However, there are philosophical frames, relationship attitudes, and therapeutic skills that can serve as a bridge for the therapist to develop a more fully engaged presence, a key to guiding optimal therapeutic choices.

The above list is not exhaustive. My hope is that it facilitates further reflection and an ongoing dialogue regarding the frames, attitudes, and skills identified and explored in this chapter. I also hope it facilitates the identification and exploration of additional frames, attitudes, and skills that apply to the practice of EH psychotherapy.

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**NOTE**

1. I acknowledge the influence of Jim Bugental, PhD, my mentor and friend, who emphasized a number of these frames, attitudes, and skills. An early version of this article was first published in the December/January 2011 edition of the AHP Perspective.

**REFERENCES**


Responsibility, to Buber (1985), and to me following him, means responding—hearing the unreduced claim of each hour in all its crudeness and disharmony and answering it out of the depths of one's being. The great character who can awaken responsibility in others is one who acts from the whole of his or her substance and reacts in accordance with the uniqueness of every situation. He or she responds to the new face that each situation wears despite its similarity to others. The situation “demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility, it demands you” (p. 14). “Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding” (p. 114).

A situation of which we have become aware is never finished with, but we subdue it into the substance of lived life. Only then, true to the moment, do we experience a life that is something other than a sum of moments. We respond to the moment, but at the same time we respond on its behalf, we answer for it. A newly created concrete reality has been laid in our arms; we answer for it. A dog has looked at you, you answer for its glance, a child has clutched your hand, you answer for its touch, a host of men moves about you, you answer for their need. (p. 17)

Only as a partner can a person be perceived as an existing wholeness. To become aware of a person means to perceive his or her wholeness as person defined by spirit—to perceive the dynamic center that stamps on all utterances, actions, and attitudes the recognizable sign of uniqueness. Such an awareness is impossible if, and so long as, the other is for me the detached object of my observation, for that person will not yield his or her wholeness and its center. It is possible only when he or she becomes present for me.

Mutual confirmation is essential to becoming a self, that is, a person who realizes his or her uniqueness precisely through relations to other selves whose distance from him or her is completed by the person’s distance from them. This mutual confirmation of persons is most
fully realized in “making present,” an event that happens partially whenever persons come together but, in its essential structure, only rarely. The other becomes present to me through “inclusion,” that is, a bold swinging into the other that demands the most intense action of one’s being so as to imagine concretely, to some extent, what the other is thinking, feeling, perceiving, and willing.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THERAPIST

In his unpublished book on companionship, my old friend George Morgan, author of The Human Predicament (Morgan, 1968), made a distinction between accountability and responsibility that I have found to be particularly helpful in understanding the responsibility of the therapist. Accountability is one’s formal obligation according to the laws of the states and the ethical rules of one’s profession. Responsibility, on the other hand, means really responding to the person before you as a person. In that sense, it entails mutuality or reciprocity.

If “all real living is meeting,” as Buber (1958) claims, then all true healing also takes place through meeting. If the psychotherapist is content to “analyze” the patient, that is, to bring to light unknown factors from his microcosm and to set to some conscious work in life the energies which have been transformed by such an emergence, then he may be successful in some repair work. At best, he may help a soul that is diffused and poor in structure to collect and order itself to some extent. But the real matter, the regeneration of an atrophied personal center, will not be achieved. This can only be done by one who grasps the buried latent unity of the suffering soul with the great glance of the doctor, and this can only be attained in the person-to-person attitude of a partner, not by consideration and examination of an object. (p. 132)

For the meeting with the patient or client to take place in responsibility, there has to be what Buber called an “I–thou” relationship, that is, a relationship of openness, presence, directness, immediacy, and mutuality. But it is not full mutuality. On the contrary, there is what Buber called a “normative limitation of mutuality” that holds for the therapist as for any helping person. In my terms, there must be mutuality of contact, mutuality of trust (neither therapist nor patient must believe that the other is just making a business out of him or her), and mutuality of concern (both therapist and patient are concerned not only with the problems of the patient but also with the sickness of the family, community, culture, and society from which the patient comes). What there cannot be, however, is mutuality of what Buber called “inclusion” or “imagining the real.”

Inclusion, or imagining the real, means a bold swinging to the other with the most intense action of one’s being, through which one experiences, to some extent, what the other is thinking, feeling, perceiving, and willing. Yet the therapist must not leave his or her own ground, for it is a bipolar reality. This is how it differs from the much used term empathy. Empathy, in the strict sense, means to leave one’s ground so as to go over to the other, just as identification means remaining on one’s own side of the relationship and understanding only those experiences of the patient that fit one’s own.

The fact that inclusion cannot be mutual in the therapy relationship fits the structure of the relationship (the patient comes to see the therapist) and often also the given of the situation (the patient is enormously interested in the therapist but not for his or her sake). The patient cannot be both in relationship and detached, as the therapist must be. This does not mean that the therapist is primarily an observer, but where the therapist does bring his or her self in, it is for the sake of the therapy and not to claim “equal time.”
In his 1957 dialogue with Carl Rogers, Buber would not accept Rogers’s insistence that the relationship between therapist and patient be seen, within the relationship itself, as fully mutual. The patient cannot experience the relationship from the side of the therapist equally well without destroying or fundamentally altering the relationship (Buber, 1988, appendix). This does not mean that the therapist is reduced to treating his or her patient as an object or “it.” The one-sided inclusion of therapy still is an I–thou relationship founded on mutuality, trust, and partnership in a common situation, and it is only in this relation that real therapy can take place.

Buber (1990) suggested that there are times when the therapist must put aside his or her professional superiority and method and meet the patient as self to self:

In a decisive hour, together with the patient entrusted to him, he [the therapist] has left the closed room of psychological treatment in which the analyst rules by means of his systematic and methodological superiority and has stepped forth with him into the air of the world where self is exposed to self. There, in the closed room where one probed and treated the isolated psyche according to the inclination of the self-encapsulated patient, the patient was referred to ever-deeper levels of his inwardness as to his proper world; here outside, in the immediacy of one human standing over against another, the encapsulation must and can be broken through, and a transformed, healed relationship must and can be opened to the person who is sick in his relationship to otherness—to the world of the other which he cannot remove into his soul. A soul is never sick alone, but there is always a betweenness also, a situation between it and another existing being. The psychotherapist who has passed through the crisis may now dare to touch on this. (p. 142)

Buber wrote this statement as part of his introduction to Healing Through Meeting, the posthumously published book of the formerly Jungian Swiss psychotherapist Hans Trüb. In his writings, Trüb described how, in his work, he became aware of the invariable tendency of the primary consciousness to become monological and self-defeating. He also told of how this closed circle of the self again and again was forced outward toward relationship through those times when, despite his will, he found himself confronting his patient not as an analyst but as human to human. From these experiences, Trüb came to understand the full meaning of the therapist’s responsibility. The therapist takes responsibility for lost and forgotten things, and with the aid of his psychology, he or she helps bring them to light. But the therapist knows in the depth of his or her self that the secret meaning of these things that have been brought to consciousness first reveals itself in the outgoing to the other.

Psychology as science and psychology as function know about the soul of man as about something in the third person. . . .

They look down from above into the world of inner things, into the inner world of the individuals. And they deal with its contents as with their “objects,” giving names and creating classifications. . . . But the therapist, in his work with the ill, is essentially a human being. . . . Therefore, he seeks and loves the human being in his patients and allows it . . . to come to him ever again. (Trüb, quoted in Friedman, 1991, p. 497; see also Trüb, 1935, p. 550, my translation)

Real guilt is the beginning of ethos or responsibility, wrote Trüb, but before the patient can become aware of it, the patient must be helped by the therapist to become aware of himself or herself in general. The therapist does this by playing the parts of both confidante and big brother or big sister. The therapist gives the patient the
understanding that the world has denied him or her, and makes it more and more possible for the patient to step out of his or her self-imprisonment into a genuine relation with the therapist. In so doing, according to Trüb, the therapist must avoid the intimacy of a private I-thou relationship with the patient, on the one hand, and the temptation of dealing with the patient as an object, on the other. The therapy relationship cannot become the mutual inclusion of friendship without destroying the therapeutic possibilities of the relationship. But neither can it make the patient into an it. The therapist must be able to risk himself or herself and to participate in the process of individuation.

The therapist must see the illness of the patient as an illness of his or her relations with the world, wrote Trüb (quoted in Friedman, 1991). The roots of the suffering lie both in the patient's closing of himself or herself off from the world and in the pattern of society itself and its rejection and non-confirmation of the patient. Consequently, the therapist must, at some point, change from the consoler who takes the part of the patient against the world to the person who puts before the patient the claim of the world. This change is necessary to complete the second part of the healing—that establishment of real relationship with the world that can take place only in the world itself. On the therapist falls the task of preparing the way for the resumption in direct meeting of the interrupted dialogical relationship between the individual and the community. The therapist must test the patient's finding of himself or herself by the criterion of whether the patient's self-realization can be the starting point for a new personal meeting with the world. The patient must go forth whole in himself or herself, but the patient also must recognize that it is not the patient's own self but rather the world with which he or she must be concerned. This does not mean, however, that the patient is simply integrated with or adjusted to the world. The patient does not cease to be a real person responsible for himself or herself, but at the same time, the patient enters into responsible relationship with his or her community (Trüb, quoted in Friedman, 1991, pp. 497–499).

I gave the title “The Problematic of Mutuality” to a chapter in my book The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy (Friedman, 1985, pp. 169–194) because the question of how much mutuality is possible and desirable in a “healing through meeting” relationship between therapist and patient is not a problem admitting of a once-and-for-all solution. In that long chapter, in fact, I described the approaches of responsible professional therapists, ranging from Freud's recommendation of mirror-like impassivity (which he did not practice himself) to a therapist who encourages his or her patients to become his or her friends during the later stages of therapy.

Despite this range of responses to the problematic of mutuality, I do have three conclusions that apply to the whole spectrum. First, the problematic of mutuality goes beyond the intrapsychic reality of transference and countertransference to the real interhuman relationship between therapist and patient. Second, although the therapist and patient share a common situation, this does not mean that each enters from the same or even a similar position. In psychotherapy, the difference in position is not only that of personal stance but also that of role and function, a difference determined by the very difference of purpose that led each to enter the relationship. If the goal is a common one—the healing of the patient—then the relationship to that goal differs radically, as between therapist and patient, and the healing that takes
place depends as much on the recognition of this difference as on the mutuality of meeting and trust.

The amount of mutuality possible and desirable in therapy depends not only on the stage of the relationship but also on the unique relationship between a particular therapist and patient and on the style and strength of the therapist. Some therapists testify to bringing their feelings into the therapeutic encounter to a greater or lesser degree, and many testify to themselves being healed through that encounter or at least growing in creativity and wisdom. None of this changes the basic fact—and this is my third conclusion—that the therapist’s expression of emotion always is made in the service of the therapy and never in the service of the healing of the therapist, much less mere self-indulgence on the part of the therapist.

A part of the responsibility of the therapist has to do with the nature of the will to heal that he or she brings to the therapeutic task. For the therapist, the distinction between arbitrary and true will rests on a quite real and concrete experiencing of the patient’s side of the relationship. Only if the therapist discovers the “otherness” of the patient will the therapist discover his or her own real limits and what is needed to help the patient. The therapist must see the position of the other in that person’s concrete actuality yet not lose sight of his or her own. Only this will remove the danger that the will to heal will degenerate into willfulness.

Another part of the therapist’s responsibility is caring enough about the patient to wrestle with and for him or her. Certainly, the therapist should have what Rogers called “unconditional personal regard.” Yet at times, the therapist must contend within the dialogue with the patient while making sure that it remains a dialogue.

If we begin by honoring each person’s unique relation to reality, then to say of a person that he or she is “sick” does not imply that the person is outside reality but only that he or she needs help in being brought into the dialogue of “touchstones of reality,” to use my own phrase. The terrible dilemma of the sick person is having to choose between giving up one’s touchstones of reality in order to communicate with others and giving up communication in order to keep one’s touchstones. Such a person needs the help of someone who can glimpse and share the unique reality that has come from this person’s life experience and can help this person find a way of bringing it into the common order of existence so that the individual also may raise what he or she has experienced as “I” into the communal reality of “we” (Friedman, 1985, chap. 18). This also is the responsibility of the therapist.

REFERENCES

At bottom every man (sic) knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

There seems to be a prevailing view that to be an accomplished psychotherapist one must be well versed in evidence-based treatments (EBTs) or in those models that have been shown in randomized clinical trials (RCTs) to be efficacious for different “disorders.” The idea here is to make psychological interventions dummy-proof, where the people—the client and the therapist—are basically irrelevant (Duncan & Reese, 2012). Just plug in the diagnosis, do the prescribed treatment, and, voilà, cure or symptom amelioration occurs! This medical view of therapy is perhaps the most empirically vacuous aspect of EBTs because the treatment itself accounts for so little of outcome variance, while the client and the therapist—and their relationship—account for so much more. The fact of the matter is that psychotherapy is decidedly a relational, not a medical, endeavor (Duncan, 2010), one that is wholly dependent on the participants and the quality of their interpersonal connection.

A long time ago in a galaxy far away, I was in my initial clinical placement in graduate school at the local state hospital. This practicum was largely, if not totally, intended to be an assessment experience. Tina, my first client ever, was like a lot of the clients—young, poor, disenfranchised, heavily medicated, and on the merry-go-round of hospitalizations—and at the ripe old age of 22, she was called a “chronic schizophrenic.”

I gathered up my WAIS (Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale), the first of the battery of tests I was attempting to gain competence with, and was on my merry but nervous way to the assessment office, a stark, run-down room in a long past its prime, barrack-style building that reeked of cleaning fluids overused to cover up some other worse smell, the institutional stench. But on the way, I couldn’t help but notice all the looks I was getting—a smirk
from an orderly, a wink from a nurse, and funny-looking smiles from nearly everyone else. My curiosity piqued, I was just about to ask what was going on when the chief psychologist put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Barry, you might want to leave the door open.” And I did.

I greeted Tina, an extremely pale young woman with short brown, cropped hair, who might have looked a bit like Mia Farrow in the Rosemary’s Baby era had Tina lived in friendlier circumstances, and introduced myself in my most professional voice. And before I could sit down and open up my test kit, Tina started to take off her clothes, mumbling something indiscernible. I just stared in disbelief, in total shock really. Tina was undaunted by my dismay and quickly was down to her bra and underwear when I finally broke my silence, hearing laughter in the distance, and said, “Tina, what are you doing?” Tina responded not with words but with actions, removing her bra like it had suddenly become very uncomfortable. So there we were, a graduate student, speechless, in his first professional encounter, and a client sitting nearly naked, mumbling now quite loudly but still nothing I could understand, and contemplating whether to stand up to take her underwear off or simply continue her mission while sitting.

Finally, in desperation, I pleaded, “Tina, would you please do me a big favor? I mean I would really appreciate it.” She looked at me for the first time and said, “What?” I replied, “I would really be grateful if you could put your clothes back on and help me get through this assessment. I’ve done them before, but never with a client, and I am kinda freaked out about it.” Tina whispered “Sure,” put her clothes back on, and completed the testing.

I was so appreciative of Tina’s help that I told her she really pulled me through my first real assessment. She smiled proudly, and ultimately smiled at me every time she saw me from then on. I wound up getting to know Tina pretty well and often reminded her how she had helped me. The more I got to know Tina and realized that her actions, stemming from horrific abuse, were attempts to take control of situations in which she felt powerless, the angrier I became about her being used as a rite of passage for the psychology trainees—a practice that I stopped.

I’ll never forget the lessons that Tina taught me in the very beginning of my psychotherapy journey: Authenticity matters, and when in doubt or in need of help, ask the client because you are in this thing together. Thanks, Tina, for charting my course toward relationship.

This chapter addresses the person of the therapist and what qualities of therapists make a difference in outcomes—after the client, the therapist is the most potent aspect of change in therapy, and in most respects is the therapy. With that empirically based assertion as a backdrop, the factors that account for change are presented, and through stories of clients, I describe my journey to a relational perspective of psychotherapy.

THE COMMON FACTORS

It is easier to discover a deficiency in individuals, in states, and in Providence, than to see their real import and value.

—Hegel

To understand the common factors, it is first necessary to separate the variance due to psychotherapy from that attributed to client/life factors, those variables incidental to the treatment model, idiosyncratic to the specific client, and part of the client’s life circumstances that aid in recovery despite participation in therapy (Asay & Lambert, 1999)—everything about the client that has nothing to do with us (see Figure 29.1).
If we do not recruit these unique client contributions to outcome, we are inclined to fail. When I was an intern, I worked in an outpatient unit that provided “stress management” services but mainly was devoted to clients with the moniker “severely mentally ill.” By that time, I had experience in two community mental health centers and the aforementioned stint in the state hospital. The hospital experience lingered, leaving me with a bad taste in my mouth. Now, in my internship position, my charge was to help people stay out of the hospital, and I took that charge quite seriously.

One of my first clients was Peter. Peter was not very well liked because he sometimes said ominous things to other clients in the waiting room or often spoke in a boisterous way about how the florescent lights...
controlled his thinking through a hole in his head. As a new intern, I was put under considerable pressure to address Peter’s less than endearing behaviors, particularly because he sometimes offended the stress management clients, who were seen as coveted treasures. Actually, Peter was a terrific guy with a very dry sense of humor, but a man of little hope who lived in dread of returning to the state hospital. His behaviors were mostly distraction efforts from the tormenting voices that told him that people were trying to kill him.

Peter’s unfortunate routine was that he was terrorized by these voices until he started taking action that would ultimately wind him up in the state hospital. He might empty his refrigerator for fear that someone had poisoned his food, creating a stench that would soon bring in the landlord and ultimately the authorities. Or, occasionally, he would start threatening or menacing others, those he believed were trying to kill him. Once hospitalized, his medications were changed, usually increased in dose, and he essentially slept out the crisis. These cycles occurred about every 4 to 6 months and had done so for the past 8 years. Peter’s “treatment” brought with it tardive dyskinesia and about 100 pounds of extra weight.

I felt profoundly sad for this young man, who was about the same age as me. I also felt completely helpless. I knew he was ramping up for another admission—he had already emptied his refrigerator and left the contents on the kitchen floor.

Only because I had no clue what to do, I asked Peter what he thought it would take to get a little relief from his situation—just a glimpse of a break from the torment of the voices and the revolving-door hospitalizations. After a long pause, Peter said that it would help if he could start riding his bike again, and he told me about what his life was like before the bottom fell out. Peter had been a competitive cyclist in college. I heard the story of a young man away from home for the first time, overwhelmed by life, training day and night to keep his spot on the racing team, topped off by his falling in love for the first time. When the relationship ended, it was too much for Peter, and he was hospitalized, and then hospitalized again, and again, and so on until there was no more money or insurance—then the state hospitalizations ensued.

Enjoying a level of conversation not achieved before, I asked Peter what it would take to get him going again on his bike. He said that his bike had a broken wheel, and he needed me to accompany him to the bike shop. Peter was afraid to go out in public alone for fear of threatening someone and ending up in the hospital. I immediately consulted with my supervisor, who gave me an enthusiastic green light. The next day, I went with Peter to the bike shop, where I bought a bike as well. Peter and I started having our sessions biking together. Peter still struggled with the voices at times, but he stayed out of the hospital, and they never kept him from biking. He eventually joined a bike club and moved into an unsupervised living arrangement.

You can read a lot of books about "schizophrenia" and its treatment, but you’ll never find one that recommends biking as a cure. And you can read a lot of books about treatments in general, and you’ll never read a better idea about a client dilemma than will emerge from a unique client in relationship with you—a person who cares and wants to be helpful.

Figure 29.1 also illustrates the second step in understanding the common factors. The second, larger circle in the center depicts the overlapping elements that form the 14% of variance attributable to therapy. Visually, the relationship among the common factors is more accurately represented with a Venn diagram, using overlapping circles and shading to demonstrate mutual and interdependent actions.
Therapist Effects

Therapist effects represent the amount of variance attributable not to the model wielded but rather to who the therapist is—it’s no surprise that the participants in the therapeutic endeavor account for the lion’s share of how change occurs. Depending on whether therapist variability is investigated in efficacy or effectiveness studies, a recent meta-analysis suggested that 5% to 7% of the overall variance is accounted for by therapist effects (Baldwin & Imel, 2013). This is a conservative finding compared with earlier estimates that suggested that 8% to 9% of the variance is accounted for by therapist factors (Wampold, 2005), including a recent investigation by my colleagues and I (Owen, Duncan, Reese, Anker, & Sparks, in press), which found that 8% of the variability was accounted for by therapists. Therefore, in Figure 29.1, a 5% to 8% range is depicted, or 36% to 57% of the variance attributed to treatment. The amount of variance, therefore, accounted for by therapist factors is about five to eight times more than that of model differences.

Although we know that some therapists are better than others, there is not a lot of research about what specifically distinguishes the best from the rest. Demographics (gender, ethnicity, discipline, and experience) don’t seem to matter much (Beutler et al., 2004), and although a variety of therapist interpersonal variables seem intuitively important, there is not much empirical support for any particular quality or attribute (Baldwin & Imel, 2013). So what does matter? There’s a preliminary possibility and one absolute certainty.

A possibility is experience, but not the generic kind that we were often told would make us better. A criticism often leveled at research investigating therapist experience is that it is not operationally defined and that a more sophisticated look may yield more positive findings (Beutler et al., 2004). For example, Kraus, Castonguay, Boswell, Nordberg, and Hayes (2011) found that therapist competencies can be domain specific, as some therapists were better at treating certain “conditions.” Specificity in the definition of experience may be important. My colleagues and I put this to the test in our examination of therapist effects in the study mentioned above (Owen et al., in press). This analysis revealed that, similar to other studies, demographics were not significant but specific experience in couple therapy explained 25% of the variance accounted for by therapists. So experienced therapists can take some solace that getting older does have its advantages—as long as it is specific to the task at hand.

And the absolute certainty—the client’s view of the alliance is not only a robust predictor of therapy outcomes but also perhaps the best avenue to understand therapist differences. Marcus, Kashy, and Baldwin (2009) noted,

High levels of consensus in client ratings of their therapist indicate that clients of the same therapist tend to agree about the traits or characteristics of their therapist, suggesting that there is something about the therapist’s manner or behavior that evokes similar response from all of his or her clients. (p. 538)

Baldwin, Wampold, and Imel (2007) found only modest therapist variability (2%) compared with other studies, but they reported that therapist average alliance quality accounted for 97% of that variability. Owen et al. (in press) found that therapist average alliance quality accounted for 50% of the variability in outcomes attributed to therapists. In general, research strongly suggests that clients seen by therapists with higher average alliance ratings have better outcomes (Crits-Christoph et al., 2009; Zuroff, Kelly, Leybman, Blatt, & Wampold,
predictive beyond early benefit suggests a more causal relationship.

Based on the profound work of Carl Rogers (1957), the concepts of empathy, positive regard, and genuineness still represent the best way to understand and facilitate the relational bond. Rogers (1980) defined empathy as the “therapist’s sensitive ability and willingness to understand the client’s thoughts, feelings and struggles from the client’s point of view” (p. 85). It is important to remember that perceived empathy is quite idiosyncratic; some experience empathy as an affective connection, some as a cognitive understanding, and others as a more nurturing experience (Bachelor, 1988). So there is no single, invariably facilitative empathic response, but finding how clients experience empathy is well worth the effort. A recent meta-analysis of 57 studies looking at empathy and outcome (Elliott, Bohart, Watson, & Greenberg, 2011) found a significant relationship, an \( r = .31 \). Similarly, another idea championed by Rogers, unconditional positive regard, characterized as warm acceptance of the client’s experience without conditions, a prizing, an affirmation, and a deep nonpossessive caring or love (Rogers, 1957), continues to demonstrate the centrality of the relationship to outcome. A recent meta-analysis of 18 studies examining positive regard and outcome found a significant relationship, an \( r = .27 \) (Farber & Doolin, 2011). And finally, there’s congruence/genuineness, “that the therapist is mindfully genuine in the therapy relationship, underscoring present personal awareness, as well as genuineness or authenticity” (Kolden, Klein, Wang, & Austin, 2011, p. 65). Kolden et al. (2011) meta-analyzed 16 studies and found a significant relationship between congruence/genuineness and outcome, an \( r = .24 \). Lambert (2013) rightly notes that these relationship variable correlations are much higher than those of specific treatments and outcome.
A gas furnace explosion when Maria was 6 years old had killed both her father and sister. Her mother had collapsed emotionally after the accident and spent most of her days in bed. Maria had essentially grown up without a parent and, partly as a result, had been repeatedly sexually abused by an uncle. By the time I saw her, Maria was 35 and had been in therapy and taking antidepressants for most of her life. She held a responsible but unsatisfying job in a biotechnology company. Maria had tried to kill herself five times, leading to five psychiatric stays. She called her latest therapist eight or nine times a day, leaving agonized messages with the answering service, demanding to be called back. Perhaps because of her borderline diagnosis, Maria’s demands were rarely, if ever, met by her therapist, which provoked Maria into escalating levels of distress and self-harming. She was headed toward another suicide attempt when her resentful and burned-out therapist referred her, with a sense of relief, to me and an investigation I was involved in called the “impossible”-case project (Duncan, Hubble, & Miller, 1997).

After consultation with my colleagues, I decided to encourage Maria’s calls and nurture rather than limit our relationship. I worked hard to court Maria’s favor during our first three sessions, and it wasn’t easy. She sat in my office tight-lipped, twisting a handkerchief in her hands. She told me from the first that she wanted her phone calls returned, because she only called when she was in really bad shape. I returned her calls when I had spare time during the workday and again in the evenings after my last client, talking each time for about 15 minutes. Perhaps because I reliably called her back, she rarely called more than once or twice a day. In our sessions, she seemed to get softer.

Then, after our sixth session, I went on a backpacking trip with my son Jesse, entrusting my colleagues to cover for me. After setting up camp the first night, I felt inexplicably worried about Maria. This was before cell phones. So I hiked 4 miles back to my truck in the darkness and drove to a pay phone in a nearby town to see how she was getting along. She was okay.

That call proved to be a turning point. Afterward, Maria became proactive in therapy and outside it. She started going to church, got involved in a singles group, and signed up for additional technical training that would allow her to change jobs. Her thoughts of suicide stopped, and she discontinued taking antidepressants. In sessions, at her direction, we talked less about how lousy she felt and more about how she could change her life. Over the next 6 months, she left her unrewarding job, where everyone knew her as a psychiatric casualty, and joined a medical missionary project in Asia. Six months later, she wrote to let me know that things were going pretty well for her in northern Thailand:

I picture myself in your office, just telling you stuff and you listening. Every time I called you, you called me back. It didn’t always help, but you were there. And I realized that is just what a little girl would want from her daddy, what I had been missing all my life and wanting so badly. Finally, when I was 35 years old, someone gave it to me. I sure am glad I got to know what it feels like to have someone care about me in that way. It was a beautiful gift you gave me. You also made me realize how much God loves me. When you called me that weekend you went backpacking, I thought to myself, “If a human can do that for me, then I believe what the Bible says about us all the time.” So thanks for loving me—because that’s what you did.

Maria taught me to honor the client’s view of the alliance—she knew that she needed a certain sort of contact to heal, and I gave it to her. That was not all I did, but it was
the affectionate container for our conversa-
tions, which included discussions of what
she wanted to change and how she could
make it happen. Maria also taught me the
power found in simple acts of human caring,
in empathy and positive regard. Of course, I
had no idea of the connection of my actions
to her desire for a loving father; it never
occurred to me, perhaps because we were
close in age. Within the limits of what I can
ethically and personally manage, I have
learned to provide as much human caring
and nonpossessive love as possible.

The more cognitive aspects of the alliance
are the agreements with the client about
the goals and tasks of therapy. When we
ask clients what they want to be different,
we give credibility to their beliefs and val-
ues regarding the problem and its solution.
Collaborative goal formation begins the
process of change, wherever the client may
ultimately travel. Tasks include specific tech-
niques or points of view, topics of conversa-
tion, interview procedures, the frequency of
meetings, and all the nuts and bolts aspects
of doing the work, including scheduling,
cancellation, payment, and between-session
contacts. These are all aspects of the task
dimension and can count for or against us
in the alliance. In our follow-up study of the
Norway Feedback Project, we found that
the highest category of complaints was the
eye everyday aspects of providing service (Anker,
Sparks, Duncan, Owen, & Stapnes, 2011).

Asking for help to set the tasks of therapy
further demonstrates respect for client capa-
bilities, and sets the stage for further efforts
to enlist participation. This is probably our
biggest alliance blind spot. In an important
way, the alliance depends on the delivery of
some particular treatment or technique—a
framework for understanding and solving
the problem (Hatcher & Barends, 2006).
There can be no alliance without a treat-
ment, and on the other hand, technique is

only as effective as its delivery system—the
client–therapist relationship. So you can’t
have a good alliance without some agree-
ment about how therapy is going to address
the issues at hand. Tryon and Winograd
(2011) conducted two meta-analyses related
to the agreement on tasks—goal consensus
(which included agreement on tasks) and
collaboration—and their relationship to out-
come. Looking at 15 studies, they found a
goal consensus–outcome $d$ of .34, indicating
that better outcomes can be expected when
client and therapist agree on goals and the
processes to achieve them. Based on 19 stud-
ies, the collaboration–outcome meta-analysis
found a $d$ of .33, suggesting that outcome is
likely enhanced when client and therapist are
in a cooperative relationship. So your client’s
perception of any of the big three relational
variables as well as agreement about goals
and the methods to attain them are individu-
ally more powerful than any technique you
ever can wield.

Perhaps the most important part of this
 collaboration is whether the favored expla-
nation and ritual of the therapist fits client
preferences. Swift, Callahan, and Vollmer
(2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 35
studies of client preference, breaking client
preferences into three areas: role, therapist,
and treatment preferences. They found that
clients who received their preferred condi-
tions were less likely to drop out and that
the overall effect size for client preference
was $d = .31$. So it makes sense to ensure that
whatever explanation and ritual is chosen is
a framework that both the therapist and the
client can get behind.

Your alliance skills are truly at play here:
your interpersonal ability to explore the cli-
ent’s ideas, discuss options, collaboratively
form a plan, and negotiate any changes
when benefit to the client is not forthcoming.
Traditionally, the search has been for inter-
ventions that promote change by validating
It’s hard work. We often think that “therapeutic work” only applies to clients; it actually applies to us too. We have to earn this thing called the alliance. We have to put ourselves out there with each and every person, each and every interaction, and each and every session. It is a daunting task to be sure, but one whose importance and difficulty are perpetually minimized. It gets so little press compared with models and techniques and is often relegated to statements like “First gain rapport and then . . .” or “Form a relationship and then . . .”—as if it is something we effortlessly do before the real intervention starts. The alliance is not the anesthesia to surgery. We don’t offer Rogerian reflections to lull clients into complacency so we can stick the real intervention to them! Intervention is not therapy.

When Lisbeth was introduced to me in the waiting room, she told me to go f . . . k myself. I was doing a consult because this 16-year-old was refusing to go to school and had assaulted five foster parents. Lisbeth was one angry adolescent, and my initial thought was “Wouldn’t it be sweet if she told me what she was angry about,” because I knew there had to be a good reason. In the opening moments, I asked Lisbeth what she thought would be most useful for us to talk about and she said, “What I think of you is that you are a condescending bastard with no understanding of your clients whatsoever!” Whew, she knew how to hit where it hurt! But slowly, and surely, I listened, and I didn’t react to her as others had likely responded. I maintained my conviction that if I understood her story, everything—especially her anger—would make complete sense. For example, she told me how she refused medication in one of her many hospitalizations and had threatened to break the kneecaps of the psychiatrist who attempted to force her to take meds. This likely stimulated replies about the inappropriateness of her violent
Ensuring that any selected treatment resonates with both the client (expectancy) and the therapist (allegiance) also complements the so-called placebo factors, or the general effects of delivering any model or technique. Model/technique factors are the beliefs and procedures unique to any given treatment. But these specific effects, the impact of the differences among treatments, are very small—only about 1% of the overall variance or 7% of that attributable to treatment. But the general effects of providing a treatment are far more potent. When a placebo or technically “inert” condition is offered in a manner that fosters positive expectations for improvement, it reliably produces effects almost as large as a bona fide treatment (Baskin, Tierney, Minami, & Wampold, 2003). (There is some controversy surrounding how potent this effect is, hence the question mark in Figure 29.1.) Models achieve their effects in large part, if not completely, through the activation of placebo, hope, and expectancy, combined with the therapist’s belief in (allegiance to) the treatment administered. As long as a treatment makes sense to, is accepted by, and fosters the active engagement of the client, the particular approach used is unimportant. Placebo factors are also fueled by a therapist belief that change occurs naturally and almost universally—the human organism, shaped by millennia of evolution and survival, tends to heal and to find a way, even out of the heart of darkness (Sparks & Duncan, 2010).

Feedback Effects

Common-factors research provides general guidance for enhancing those elements...
shown to be most influential to positive outcomes. The specifics, however, can only be derived from the client’s response to what we deliver—the client’s feedback regarding progress in therapy and the quality of the alliance. Although it sounds like hyperbole, identifying clients who are not benefiting is the single most important thing a therapist can do to improve outcomes. Combining Lambert’s Outcome Questionnaire System (Lambert & Shimokawa, 2011) and our Partners for Change Outcome Management System (PCOMS) (e.g., Anker, Duncan, & Sparks, 2009; Reese, Norsworthy, & Rowlands, 2009), nine RCTs now support this assertion. A recent meta-analysis of PCOMS studies (Lambert & Shimokawa, 2011) found that those in the feedback group had 3.5 higher odds of experiencing reliable change and less than half the odds of experiencing deterioration. In addition, collecting outcome and alliance feedback from clients allows the systematic tracking of therapist development, so that neither client benefit nor therapist growth over time is left to wishful thinking. Visit https://heartandsoulofchange.com/ for more information (the measures are free for individual use and are available in 23 languages). PCOMS is listed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration as an evidence-based practice. It is different from what is usually considered evidence based because feedback is atheoretical and therefore additive to any therapeutic orientation and applies to clients of all diagnostic categories (Duncan, 2012).

An inspection of Figure 29.1 shows that feedback overlaps and affects all the factors—it is the tie that binds them together—allowing the other common factors to be delivered one client at a time. Soliciting systematic feedback is a living, ongoing process that engages clients in the collaborative monitoring of outcome, heightens hope for improvement, fits client preferences, maximizes therapist–client alliance potential and client participation, and is itself a core feature of therapeutic change. Feedback embodies the lessons I learned from Tina, providing for a transparent interpersonal process that solicits the client’s help in ensuring a positive outcome.

### MY JOURNEY TO RELATIONSHIP: CLOSING THOUGHTS

Listening creates a holy silence. When you listen generously to people, they can hear the truth in themselves, often for the first time. And when you listen deeply, you can know yourself in everyone.

Rachel Remen, *Kitchen Table Wisdom*

I was recently asked (Kottler & Carlson, 2014) what it is that I do, and who I am, that most made my work effective (assuming that it is). What I do that is most important in contributing to my effectiveness is that I routinely measure outcome and the alliance (via PCOMS). This allows me to deal directly and transparently with clients, involving them in all decisions that affect their care and keeping their perspectives the centerpiece of everything I do. In addition, it serves as an early-warning device that identifies clients who are not benefiting, so that the client and I can chart a different course, which in turn encourages me to step outside my therapeutic business-as-usual, do things I’ve never done before, and therefore continue to grow as a therapist. This also allows me to focus every session with every client on the alliance, so that I tailor what I do to the client’s expectations. Finally, tracking outcome and the alliance also enables proactive efforts to improve, without guesswork or waiting for the platitudes about experience to manifest. It enables our clients—especially...
those who aren’t responding well to our therapeutic business-as-usual—to teach us how to work better.

That’s what I do. But what I bring to the therapeutic endeavor is that I am a true believer. I believe in the client, I believe in the power of relationship and psychotherapy as a vehicle for change, and I believe in myself, my ability to be present, fully immersed in the client and dedicated to making a difference. The odds for change when you combine a resourceful client, a strong alliance, and an authentic therapist who brings himself or herself to the show are worth betting on, certainly a cause for hope, and responsible for my unswerving faith in psychotherapy as a healing endeavor.

I believe in psychotherapy, not in spite of its inherent uncertainty but because of it. Although we long for the structured, scripted, predictable, manualized, surefire way to conduct a session, uncertainty is endemic to the work as it is to life, and therefore is important to embrace. Uncertainty is the place of unlimited possibilities for change. It is this indeterminacy that gives therapy its texture and infuses it with the excitement of discovery. This allows for the “heretofore unsaid,” the “aha moments,” and all the spontaneous ideas, connections, conclusions, plans, insights, resolves, and new identities that emerge when you put two people together in a room and call it psychotherapy. Tolerance for uncertainty creates the space for new directions and insights to occur to both the client and you.

Seven-year-old Rosa had gone to live with foster parents—her aunt and uncle, Margarita and Enrique—because the parental rights of her birth parents had been terminated. Her father and mother were addicts with long criminal records; the father was in jail, and the mother was still using. Rosa clearly had been born with two strikes against her: (1) parents missing in action and (2) her development impaired by drugs.

Although much psychopathological gobbledygook accompanied her, it was safe to say that Rosa was a “difficult” child—prone to tantrums, which included kicking, biting, and throwing anything she could find. I began the session by asking Rosa if she was going to help me today, and she immediately yelled, “No!”—leaning back, with her arms folded across her chest. As I turned to speak with Enrique and Margarita, Rosa began having a tantrum in earnest—screaming at the top of her lungs and flailing around, kicking me in the process.

With Rosa’s tantrum escalating, Margarita dropped a bombshell. In a disarmingly quiet voice, she announced that she didn’t think she could continue foster-parenting Rosa. The tension in the room immediately escalated; the only sound was Rosa’s yelling, which had become more or less rote at that point. I felt as if I’d been kicked in the gut. I’d expected to be helping the foster parents contain and nurture a tough child. Now it felt like I was participating in a tragedy in the making. Here was a couple trying their best to do the right thing by taking in a troubled kid with nowhere else to go, but they seemed ready to give up. The situation was obviously wrenching for Margarita and Enrique, but it was potentially catastrophic for Rosa. In this rural setting, they were her last hope, not only of living with family but of living nearby at all, since the closest foster care placement was at least 100 miles away. I contemplated Rosa’s life unfolding in foster care with strangers, who’d encounter the same difficulties and likely come to the same impasse—resulting in a nightmare of ongoing home placements.

What’s the correct diagnosis for Margarita? Is there an EBT for feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, and not knowing whether you can go on parenting a tough kid?

Margarita continued explaining why she couldn’t go on, speaking softly while tears rolled down her cheeks. Not only did she feel she couldn’t handle Rosa, she also
worried about the child’s attachment to her. As Margarita expressed her doubts in a near whisper, Enrique’s eyes began to tear up, and a feeling of despair permeated the room. At that moment, I felt helpless to prevent a terrible ending to an already bad story and didn’t have a clue about what to do. Meanwhile, Margarita began gently caressing Rosa’s head and speaking softly to her—the Spanish equivalent of “There, there, little one”—until the little girl started to calm down. With her tantrum at an end, Rosa turned to face Margarita, and then she reached up and wiped the tears from her aunt’s face. “Don’t cry, Auntie,” she said warmly, “don’t cry.”

Witnessing these actions was yet another reminder to me of how new possibilities can emerge at any moment in a seemingly hopeless session and the uncertainty of what will happen next. “It’s tough to parent a child who’s been through as much as Rosa has,” I said. “I respect your need to really think through the long-term consequences here. But I’m also impressed with how gently you handled Rosa when she was so upset and with how you, Rosa, comforted your Auntie when you saw her crying. Clearly there’s something special about the connection between you two.”

Margarita replied that Rosa definitely had a “sweet side.” When she saw that she’d upset either Margarita or Enrique, she quickly became soft, responsive, and tender. I began to talk with Margarita and Enrique about what seemed to work with Rosa and what didn’t. While Rosa snuggled up to Margarita, we talked about how to bring out Rosa’s sweet side more often. As ideas emerged, I was in awe, as I often am, of the fortitude clients show when facing formidable challenges. Here was a couple in their late 40s, who’d already raised their own two children, considering taking on the responsibility of raising another one who had such a difficult history.

By now, the tension and despair present a few moments before had evaporated. The decision to discontinue foster parenting, born of hopelessness, had lost its stranglehold, though nothing had been said explicitly about that. Now all smiles and bubbly, Rosa was bouncing up and down in her chair. Somewhat out of the blue, Margarita announced that she was going to stick with Rosa. “Great,” I said quietly. Then, as the full meaning of what she’d said washed over me, I repeated it a bit louder, and then a third time with enthusiasm—“Great!” I asked Margarita if anything in particular had helped her come to this decision. She answered that, although she’d always known it, she’d realized in our session even more than before that there was a wonderful, loving child inside Rosa and that she, Margarita, just had to be patient and take things one day at a time. The session had helped her really see the attachment that was already there. I felt the joy of that moment then, and I still do. Follow-up revealed that this family stayed together. Margarita never again lost her resolve to stick with Rosa. In addition, many of Rosa’s more troubling behaviors fell away, perhaps as a result of having stability in her life for the first time.

In my view, the session included that intimate space in which we connect with people and their pain in a way that somehow opens the path from what is to what can be. My heartfelt appreciation of both the despair of the circumstance and their sincere desire to help this child, combined with the fortuitous “attachment” experience, generated new resolve for Margarita and Enrique. This session taught me, once again, that anything is possible—that even the bleakest sessions can have a positive outcome if you stay with the process. Just when things seemed the most hopeless, when both the family and I were surely down for the count and needed only to accept the inevitable, something meaningful and positive emerged that changed everything—including me. This is the power of relationship and why my psychotherapy journey continues on course.
NOTE

1. The percentages are best viewed as a defensible way to understand outcome variance but not as representing any ultimate truths. They are meta-analytic estimates of what each of the factors contributes to change. Because of the overlap among the common factors, the percentages for the separate factors will not add to 100%.

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During the past 40 years, counselors have come to recognize the impact of culture on therapeutic relationships, diagnoses, and the techniques used to help clients. During the 1950s and 1960s, counselors generally considered counseling to be counseling; that is, theories and techniques that worked with one group of clients would work with another group regardless of cultural background (Jackson, 1995). One indication of how far the helping professions have departed from this position is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fourth edition) (DSM-IV), which has been prepared to incorporate an awareness that the manual is used for culturally diverse populations in the United States and internationally (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. xxiv). Although significant advances have been made in recognizing that clients are reflections of the cultures in which they have been socialized, a theoretical framework still does not exist to help counselors work effectively with culturally different clients who do not fit comfortably within the worldviews of the American psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioral, and humanistic approaches to counseling. The purpose of this chapter is to offer an existential model of cross-cultural counseling, but the sticky issue of defining the culturally different client will remain a philosophical and practical challenge.

Three or four decades ago, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers began to call attention to the problems they encountered in working with the culturally deprived, the culturally disadvantaged, and African American (or “Negro”) clients. During the 1970s, the literature that described the dimensions of the problems presented by such clients increased (Jackson, 1987, 1995). At the same time, some universities introduced graduate courses to enhance the effectiveness of counselor working with the culturally different (Sue, 1981). These courses are now required by the various accreditation bodies in counseling and psychology, but the students who complete them often end up feeling more dissimilar from than similar to their culturally different clients because the courses convey reams of
factual information on cultural differences that make these seem unbridgeable. Students often come to the faulty conclusion that only persons of like cultures should work together therapeutically. This belief even has become embodied in some Afrocentric counseling theories.

What these courses offer is essentially a group approach. In other words, there is today—as there was during the 1960s—the tendency to generalize about the characteristics of a minority group in graduate classrooms, at professional conferences, and in journal articles and books. Even though Americans of Hispanic, African, Asian, and indigenous descent continue to become total participants in and reflective of the national culture, it often is assumed that cultural differences among ethnic groups are readily distinguishable and easily described. It is our contention that although there are some shared values within ethnic groups, there is a danger of stereotyping ethnic groups if counselors expect too rigidly a given set of behaviors from them. Approaching cross-cultural clients with stereotypes can cause as much misunderstanding as approaching them with stark ignorance of the cultural values they hold.

**CULTURE**

Culture is simultaneously visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious, and cognitive and affective. Although most of it is out of sight and out of mind, it provides humans with their most essential qualities, which are transmitted throughout the life cycle by way of socialization. Culture is the sum total of their beliefs and procedures for negotiating environments at each stage of existence (Vontress, 1986). Most people are products of five concentric and intersecting cultures: universal, ecological, national, regional, and racial/ethnic. The cultures are neither entirely separate nor equal. The most foundational, the universal, is biologically determined and influences all the others.

Regardless of the conditions under which people live, they still must adjust to the fact that they are humans. For example, African Americans are, first of all, culturally alike because they are members of the human species. As such, they share the biologically dictated behaviors of all members of the human group. Second, they are forced to adjust to the same climatic conditions as are all other Americans. Third, as members of the national culture, they take on the behavior, attitudes, and values of Americans in general. Fourth, they are influenced by the culture of the region in which they live. Thus, Marcus, a native of rural Alabama, is apt to betray his roots by the manner of speech peculiar to that region. Fifth, because of Marcus’s African ancestry, Euro-Americans are apt to react to him as if he were inferior—a fact that leaves psychological scars on him and on members of his group (Vontress, 1986).

This perception of culture suggests that everybody is multicultural in the sense of being composed of multiple cultural influences rather than being culturally monolithic. It also limits the subgroups that may be classified as culturally different to those who share traits that traditionally have been recognized as cultural—ecological, regional, national, or racial/ethnic traits—rather than those who share a universal characteristic. Therefore, women, gay men and lesbians, the physically challenged, and senior citizens are not considered culturally different because they are socialized in the same families and under the same cultural influences as are their male, straight, able-bodied, and younger (respectively) siblings and relatives.

Although their forced or voluntary segregation from their families or privileged circles gives them the flavor of separate subcultures, we would like to discourage thinking of these groups as culturally different.
because such a strong label is alienating and not reflective of how these groups think of themselves. To make distinct cultural groups based on the stage of human development, gender, a disabling condition, or sexual preference is to magnify the natural differences within groups. It would mean looking at all differences through a microscope rather than within their natural contexts.

We are not insensitive to the discrimination that these subgroups may experience in our society.

Their isolation from mainstream society can engender the development of unique behaviors and shared traumas. Moodley, Epp, and Yusuf (2012) raised the question of whether culture can at times be too limiting a concept in societies where multiple social identities can intersect with cultural differences to become impediments to counseling—such as socioeconomic class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, among others. Perhaps we should talk more broadly about “diversity” in counseling rather than “culture.” But for now, we view the issue through the traditional lens of culture, with a sense of humility at this concept’s myopia.

It may also be argued that the core issue in relation to subgroups is not that they are of a “different culture” but that they are forced to live “in dissonance” with their culture. While culture can be like a cocoon, offering nurturance and a compass for life, its coordinates are not always good, fair, or humane. Many subgroups must live simultaneously accepting and rejecting their culture, with a sometimes pernicious end product of unhappiness that Vontress called “cultural dysthymia” (Moodley et al., 2012, p. 123).

**AN EXISTENTIAL MODEL OF CULTURE**

Humans are the products of their genetic endowments and life experiences. At conception, their destinies already are determined in part by the DNA helix that exists in every cell. The final shape of that destiny, however, is influenced by individuals’ life experiences. Human genetics and life experience intermingle as they are filtered through five cultural layers. The first one is the *universal culture*, or the way of life that is indicated by the physiology of the human species. People conceived in a given way, they must consume nourishment to live, they grow into adulthood, they contribute to the welfare of the group, and they grow old and die. These and other ways of life are invariable dimensions of human existence. Therefore, they may be called *universal culture*.

Human genetic endowment and life experiences also are shaped by the ecosystem and the demands that it makes on people’s way of life. The climatic conditions, indigenous vegetation, animal life, seasonal changes, and other factors determine how people interact with nature and themselves. Obviously, people who must use dog sleighs to commute to the grocery store see life differently than those who need only to pluck their nourishment from trees and plants in their backyards. Imagine also what it must be like to live several months of the year in complete darkness and how such an existence affects daily activities. For these and other reasons, it seems tenable to posit the existence of an *ecological culture*, the second ring of the cultural filter.

The third ring of the filter is the *national culture*, which derives from the fact that a stable community of people share the same territory, heritage, language, economic system, government, and allegiance to a way of life for which they are willing to die if necessary. Although people born abroad may join the community, they must fit into the culture already established by earlier generations. In other words, they are expected to become *acculturated*, or to take on the culture of their adopted country. In large measure, schools serve as primary institutions of acculturation for young people. However,
Although people may relocate to other communities, their cultural roots usually remain in their communities of origin.

**THE CULTURAL DISTILLATE**

Individuals are distillates of a cultural filter consisting of five layers. The filtering continues throughout their life spans. At each developmental stage, their genetic endowment interacts with life experiences to determine the nature of their existence. Each human is distinctively different from all others. As Vontress (1979, 1996) pointed out, individuals embody four dynamically interactive “worlds” that can be best described in the language of the German existentialists (Binswanger, 1962). First, there is the Eigenwelt, or that “private realm” of the human personality that cannot be shared with or completely understood by another person. Second, the Mitwelt, or “social/cultural relationship,” suggests that what people are is a product of their relationships with others. In fact, many would say that no humans really are themselves; rather, they are composites of the other people—primarily their parents and siblings—who shaped their personalities, just as their genes directed their physical characteristics. Third, humans are influenced by the Umwelt, or the “natural environment.” How people relate to that environment directly affects the nature of their existence as well as their personalities. Although the natural environment often is taken for granted, it makes the difference between life and death for thousands of species residing in its bosom, which is affectionately called “Mother Nature.” Without the natural environment’s nourishment and support, none would exist. Fourth, humans relate to the Überwelt, or the “spirit world.” They require the respect, direction, love, and affection of parents, elders, departed loved ones, and potent spiritual entities. The spirit
world connects people with those who, although come and gone, still reside in them due to memories, genetic contributions, and cultural indoctrination (Vontress, 1996). Perhaps this realm also includes intangible feelings of the here and now, such as love, empathy, devotion, respect, and altruism, that bind the human community together in mutual understanding with a powerful, if unseen, emotional glue.

The existential model of culture presented here highlights the paradoxical complexity and simplicity of human existence. Culture should not be viewed separately from the rest of life; it is the compass of life. Because people cannot live to adulthood without a set of practices and procedures designed to guide their existence, they require a culture for their orientation and survival in the world. The model intends to communicate the notion that acculturation has a purpose. That purpose is to ensure that people live as best as they can while they develop though their life spans.

During existence, humans must maintain a working rapport with themselves; that is, they need to know themselves at all times. Second, they are obliged to establish and maintain a rapport with others because they exist in the world of others and require their love and respect. Third, it is absolutely necessary that individuals recognize that they are a part of the animal kingdom and are governed by biological systems similar to the ones that animate other creatures. Fourth, there is a need for humans to relate to something or somebody greater than themselves. These four needs are dynamic and interactive. Each may demand fulfillment more strongly at one period of life than at others. For example, the need to learn about one’s self is urgent during adolescence, as one’s body quickly changes in the service of developing organs of reproduction. Although the need to relate to others is a powerful force throughout life, it is especially demanding during early adulthood, when individuals prepare to assume adult roles and to initiate intimate and, hopefully, lifelong linkages with members of the opposite or same gender. In many societies, people seem to be more in touch with their spiritual selves toward the end of their lives than at other stages of their existence.

In general, everything that lives manifests a predictable chronology of existence. It is conceived, sprouts, bears fruit, shrivels up, dies, and returns to nature to be recycled. This sobering and inevitable cycle also occurs with humans. The model intends to suggest that human existence is a continuous and changing movement. During youth, human existence flows quickly and abundantly. As people age, the flow of life (genetic expression and life experiences) slows, but the evaporation process continues unabated until the tub of life is empty. No one escapes from life alive, nor can its flow be stopped or reversed. Considering how our existence ends and evaporates helps emphasize how precious each moment is.

THE BALANCING OF THE FOUR WORLDS

In recognizing the four worlds of human existence in this model, we outline the expansive outlook of existential cross-cultural counseling. The existential cross-cultural counselor is a macroscopic and holistic thinker who sees beyond superficial cultural differences to find the imbalances among the client’s four worlds that produce and maintain his or her emotional disturbances. Viewed as an organic whole, the different worlds are like the developing petals of a flower. For a young sapling to bloom fully, each petal must grow and integrate into the single entity of the flower. As van Deurzen-Smith (1988) applied this notion to counseling,
It is not possible to work exclusively in one [existential] sphere and neglect all the other aspects. Though clients frequently emphasize their struggle in one particular dimension, it is usually essential to ensure that difficulties in living get worked through on all four dimensions. (p. 88)

Existential cross-cultural counseling recognizes that life is an intricate balancing act. The physical, public, private, and spiritual worlds all require attending to, or else their neglect will form a hungry vacuum that cries out for emotional nourishment. Individuals must learn how to balance and integrate the various existential spheres of their lives so as to achieve a meaningful synthesis. Due to differing life circumstances, certain individuals will find this task easier than will others. The random meeting of sperm and ova ensures great variations in the intellectual, emotional, and material endowments with which we come into the world. We arrive on different planes, and fate deals us different life spans in which to unfold our existential possibilities. Some will experience long and harmonious lives, whereas others will face brief and nasty struggles ending in unfair deaths. The goal of the existential cross-cultural counselor is to help clients face whatever existence fate bequeaths them with courage, hope, and a striving to find meaning in life’s suffering.

However unequal our existence in the four worlds, each of us inevitably moves toward death, in which all humans find their ultimate equality. We cannot stop time; the sifting of the hourglass grains is the most rigid and unmerciful aspect of living. Yet this irrevocable movement enriches life and reminds us of the short chronological boundaries to our existence. Yalom (1980) believed that the striving to transcend death is the creative force behind our monuments, inventions, books, artistic creations, and the like, all of which are conceived to gain individual immortality through the realm of ideas or materials. Some persons, however, become stuck in the past to distract themselves from their movement toward death, with the sad by-product that this retrospective existence hampers their creativity and enjoyment of the present. It is easy to blame the past for life’s unhappiness; it is more difficult to find the courage to move forward and make the best use of the time remaining within the four worlds of existence.

**THE CULTURES DEFINING US**

Existential cross-cultural counselors realize that cultural groups cannot be understood with fixed principles or stereotypes. Human groups always are changing and possess great diversity among members. But although cultural differences can become sources of cross-cultural misunderstanding, when one scratches off the patina of culture from a human, one finds at the core a humanness that is universal. The existential cross-cultural counselor approaches every culturally different client as a unique human first, but he or she uses some of the concepts listed in the following subsections to help understand the influence of culture in the client’s life. Each concept is briefly defined, and the implications for existential cross-cultural counseling are discussed.

**Acculturation**

Acculturation is the process of becoming adapted to a new or different culture with more or less advanced patterns. It usually suggests that the new arrival or socially excluded takes on the language, values, attitudes, dress, and behavior of the host culture. Becoming like the others also implies duration, as Fischer (1965) pointed out. That is, it takes people a while to adjust to a new culture. Young people tend
to acculturate more quickly than do their older cultural peers (Turner, 1986). The related concept, assimilation, conjures up the image of the human organism unconsciously absorbing the surrounding stimuli. Because culture is cumulative, it seems tenable to conclude that young people in a host culture or community are apt to become more like the people in that community more quickly than are their older relatives, who have been socialized during their formative years in their native cultures.

An obvious implication is that the more clients are acculturated, the more counselors can feel comfortable using theories and techniques that they use generally with American-born clients. However, counselors are faced with the problem of having to make a determination of the level of acculturation presented by each client. There is no single index for doing so. For example, a client may speak perfect English but have little or no understanding of the values, attitudes, or affective dimensions of the host culture. Counselors need to develop an easy yet effective way of finding out the degree to which culturally different clients are similar to people in the host culture. They may require each new counselee to write structured cultural autobiographies in which he or she reveals dimensions of himself or herself, such as place of birth, schools attended, languages spoken at home, places traveled, any American-born friends, languages spoken, and as many other items as are needed to obtain thumbnail sketches of the new client.

**Collectivism Versus Individualism**

Collectivism and individualism are concepts widely discussed and contrasted in social science (Triandis, 1994). Collectivism refers to social systems in which individuals submit to the interest of the group, which may be the family, ethnic leaders, community, work colleagues, nation, or other affiliations that provide a sense of belonging for the people. On the other hand, individualism suggests societies in which the needs, desires, and aspirations of individuals take precedence over those of groups, such as the family, kinship clan, and community at large. Although the concepts often are presented as polarities, it probably is more correct to view them as indicators of general tendencies and inclinations that can coexist in the same individuals depending on the issues or circumstances (Carrithers, 1992; Dube, 1988).

With the intense and constant movement of people from one nation to another, it no longer is tenable to hold to fixed views regarding them. People who are individualistic in one country often become collectivistic in another country, and vice versa, for various reasons. For example, in developing countries, where agriculture is the primary means of subsistence, people benefit from being neighborly. In capitalistic societies, where individuals often live and work in impersonal environments, others who do not contribute significantly to the fulfillment of one’s immediate needs are seen as competitors rather than as compatriots (Fischer, 1965). In collectivistic societies, the heads of families assume a powerful and respected role. In individualistic societies, household heads exert much less influence over family members, especially adults. Existential cross-cultural counselors need to ascertain the extent to which clients are products of individualistic or collectivistic socialization. It is a good practice to ask clients whether there are people at home or elsewhere who should be consulted regarding the presenting problems and their solutions. To enter into counseling without respecting the heads of families may negatively affect the outcomes of counseling. Whatever recommendations are decided on in counseling may be rejected by family authority figures unless they are consulted early in the counseling process.
**Cultural Intuition**

*Cultural intuition* is the immediate knowledge, sensation, and rapport that counselors often experience when they relate to clients from their own cultures. It is the empathy that people feel for cultural peers. As a result, there is increased ability to relate to clients and to determine the nature of their presenting problems. This concept should not be interpreted to mean that counselors external to the native cultures of their clients are unable to empathize with them. All people are multicultural in the sense that they share commonalities at some level of experience. For example, the existence of Americans is influenced by a common ecology, economic system, network of bureaucratic procedures, media, and the like. As such, Americans are socialized to respond spontaneously to certain cues to which people reared in other countries do not respond. Therefore, there is a national cultural intuition that enhances the rapport and mutual comprehension of one American for another. Likewise, on the racial/ethnic cultural level, people who grow up in the same racial or ethnic community generally sense the feelings, thoughts, and knowledge of their cultural peers more quickly and spontaneously than do outsiders.

Although cultural intuition is a human phenomenon, the uncanny ability to know what another person thinks, wants, and feels without knowing the origin of this power is especially prevalent among homogeneous groups unaffected by outside influences (Moles, 1967). In such societies, each person is a veritable template of the other. Even so, cross-cultural counselors must guard against countertransference or unconsciously generalizing their own experiences onto clients, who are in fact different from them in many ways because they were socialized in other families. People are alike and different at the same time.

**Direct Versus Indirect Intervention**

In helping clients, counselors talk to them face-to-face or interact with others on their behalf. In the United States, counselors usually talk directly with clients who have problems, especially adult clients. On the other hand, in many cultures external to American society, the head of the family assumes responsibility for all problems in the unit. If a family member has a problem, then the head of the household consults the helper on behalf of the entire family, not just the person who is perceived to be the identified patient. In collectivistic societies, individuals do not have problems; rather, families have problems, and this in turn reflects negatively on the heads of families, who feel responsible for their entire unit (Triandis, 1994; Vontress, 1991).

Indirectness seems to be more pronounced in traditional collectivistic societies than it is in their individualistic counterparts. In West Africa, for example, parents and other adults in extended families socialize children by reciting fables, riddles, and maxims designed to inculcate important lessons. When the children become adults, they are apt to consult traditional healers, who use the same indirect intervention strategies to communicate suggested solutions to the problems that clients present (Vontress, 1991). Indirect intervention refers to counselors working through one person to assist another person. It also refers to indirectness in terms of the language and techniques that counselors use to help their clients. In general, American-born people are apt to be up-front in communicating with people. In counseling culturally different clients, direct communication styles might offend them.

**Historical Hostility**

People are cultural extensions of their forebears (Fischer, 1965; Wade, 1993). Even
problems are categorized into four groups: physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. Each category has its own set of specialists who are trained to relieve individuals of their problems. In the United States, individuals consult physicians for biological problems; they consult counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists for psychological concerns; they consult social workers and related experts for social difficulties; and they consult ministers, priests, rabbis, and imams for spiritual guidance. This categorization of diagnoses is called monistic diagnoses.

In traditional societies, humans and their problems in living usually are understood holistically. In West Africa, for example, individuals seek the counsel of a single healer for problems ranging from a broken toe to perceived conflict with a deceased relative (Vontress, 1991). They also consult the healer when they are concerned about the yield of their crops. Mainly animists, they perceive problems in holistic terms. Everything in their environment is related. To understand the problems presented by clients, traditional healers in Africa seek to understand their relationship with nature, other people, themselves, and the spirits they consider important in the conduct of their lives. American counselors, who focus exclusively on the psychological dimension of their clients’ lives, must recognize that in many cultures the social, physical, and spiritual dimensions of people’s lives are just as important as the psychological ones. Therefore, they are advised to search for ways in which to explore these dimensions with clients from holistic cultures.

Holistic Versus Monistic Diagnoses

Societies differ in terms of what people perceive to be problems in life, their causes, and who should be consulted to remedy them (Fischer, 1965). In general, in modern and technologically advanced societies, human though much of the past no longer is a conscious part of their present existence, it continues to affect their relationships with others, especially those whose ancestors were participants in their earlier history. For example, because of slavery, many African Americans harbor unrecognized negative feelings toward Euro-Americans (Vontress & Epp, 1997). In a like manner, Native Americans are unable to forgive and forget the atrocities inflicted on their people by the European settlers, who pushed them off their ancestral lands. The inability of cultural progenies to forgive usually is related to the perception that the people who mistreated their forebears continue to mistreat them (West, 1993). The hostility that they feel has been passed down through generations and, therefore, may be called historical hostility.

The phenomenon can be observed in many parts of the world. In Africa, old ethnic rivalries cause parts of the continent to be drenched with blood and set in motion the exodus of thousands of refugees fleeing the murderous attacks of adversaries whose hatred for them goes back many generations. In Europe, the slaughter and displacement of people in the former Yugoslavia is another example of historical hostility being vented against people long removed from the events of the past that first triggered the hostility. In the Middle East, old hostilities continue to simmer and threaten to explode at any time. Therapeutic phenomena such as resistance, transference, and the reluctance of clients to self-disclose often are manifestations of events buried in the cultural histories of counselors and clients.

Personalism

Personalism is a perspective on life that maintains that the person is the center of intrinsic value (Lavely, 1967). People are more important than what they do to earn a living or the material things they possess.
In general, collectivistic societies, in which individuals live interdependently in small communities, encourage the development of reciprocal interpersonal alliances (Mounier, 1992). Neighbors inquire daily about the well-being of families and the individuals in them. Privacy is not a cherished value as it is in industrialized urban societies. Individuals are less apt to be split into two personas—one private and the other public. Each person is unique, irreplaceable, and worthy of respect and attention.

As a cultural ingredient, personalism has implications for counseling culturally different clients. First, clients may annoy counselors with personal questions that seem inappropriate. For example, they might ask counselors whether they are married, whether they have children, or how old they are. Such questions usually are signs of respect in their culture. Clients want to indicate that they value their counselors as humans. Second, personalism has implications for diagnosis. Individuals are considered to be more than sets of traits that can be inventoried and added up. Each person is a dynamic presence that responds to the same environments differently at different times. Viewing clients as a static sum total of inventoried traits and facts is apt to cause many culturally different clients to resist taking tests and accepting the results as indications of who they are.

**Introspection and Self-Disclosure**

Introspection and self-disclosure are closely related concepts. *Introspection* refers to the self looking within to discover and evaluate the content housed there. In counseling, it is assumed that the content and insights derived from introspection will be shared with the counselor. The revealing of the self to others so that they may know that self is called *self-disclosure* (Chelune & Associates, 1979). Counselors need to recognize that in many collectivistic societies, people are socialized to submerge the self in the interest of the group. In such cultures, it might be considered impolite or unhealthy to focus on the self; the person is a part of the whole. On American college campuses, international students from family-centered societies often write their family names first and their given names last on official documents.

However, there are other reasons why some clients might not self-disclose. For example, African American lower-class males resist revealing personal content unless they perceive their audience to be persons of goodwill. Although most of them can introspect, what they discover about themselves might be so painful that they do not want to share it with anyone. Historical hostility also can keep such clients from self-disclosing with counselors whose ethnicity symbolizes historical oppression. In fact, African American clients have been known to generalize the hostility to African American counselors whom they perceive to identify with Euro-Americans.

**Cultural Anxiety**

Life is a series of events taking place in different venues populated by people and a variety of natural and human-made objects. In large measure, socialization of the young in any culture is designed to teach individuals to manage different problems, situations, and expectations as they move through their life spans. Because parts of the world differ in terms of climate, soil, terrain, and foodstuff, it is understandable that cultural groups develop a variety of patterns of behavior as required for survival. Their survival skills put them in good stead so long as they remain in their native cultures. When they travel to strange lands, however, they are likely to experience uneasiness because of their unfamiliarity with role behaviors in the host cultures.
In coming to America, many individuals from collectivistic societies, characterized by interdependence among family members, are overwhelmed by anxiety. Back home, relatives validate their personalities and statuses in their families and communities. People know where to go, what to do, and who to see when they need information, diversion, support, and objects destined to enhance the quality of life. In living abroad, they may lose the sense of community that is basic to well-being. Being alone in a foreign country for the first time, sojourners often are obliged to make a multitude of unaccustomed daily decisions by themselves, use public transportation, eat strange food, and communicate in a strange language. Although international university students might come from upper-class families, on American campuses they are just foreign students, who in fact might be treated as simpletons simply because their ability to use English is less than perfect. Therefore, their anxiety is understandable. It is generated by the strangeness of the host culture. It may be referred to as cultural anxiety.

The symptoms of cultural anxiety often are misdiagnosed because they are reported as somatic in persons from nonpsychological cultures. That is, individuals often complain of headaches, eye strain, constipation, inability to sleep, and other physical problems. Although living far away from their family members, they often communicate with them by telephone. Counselors who intervene to help them adjust to the United States should ask them about the advice they receive from their parents and other significant adults back home, whom their cultures recognize as the repositories of appropriate advice. Such inquiries enhance the rapport with such clients and contribute to the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions with them.

Cultural anxiety approximates the DSM-IV diagnostic category of separation anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It also resembles homesickness, which many American college students experience. However, it is a much more intense feeling for individuals residing in a totally new culture, where most of the cues and responses acquired during socialization back home serve little purpose. To some degree, racial and ethnic minority group members who are citizens of the United States experience cultural anxiety when they move from the comfort and support of their communities to mainstream cultural environments. Those who have been socialized in integrated settings prior to going away to college usually fit in well on most campuses.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING**

It is antitherapeutic to stereotype clients who appear to represent national, cultural, or racial groups. People with ancestral roots in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, and other parts of the world defy the simple classifications that their superficial racial characteristics would indicate. Their forebears, in adjusting to the natural and social requirements for living, evolved behavioral differences to adapt to their regions of the continent, but many of these differences can be lost to subsequent generations who are socialized differently. Differences in socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, and educational attainment further confound the ability to stereotype ethnic group members.

American racial and cultural minorities also elude precise definition. For example, wealthy Hispanics, regardless of their countries of origin, are different from those from rural villages in Central and South America. Those who are of the third and fourth generations should not be compared with people who are recent immigrants. In the case of Native Americans, it is unreasonable to
consider individuals from different tribes or those who live in cities as similar to people who still reside on the reservations. In counseling Asian Americans, it is important to recognize that individuals of Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian descent are apt to be as different from one another as they are from Anglo clients. Although African Americans might have darkly pigmented skin, that is often where the similarity ends. There are cultural differences resulting from educational and economic advantages that set apart upper-, middle-, and lower-class people. Perhaps more important are differences in terms of their identification with or rejection of the white American majority culture. In summary, individually expressed cultural differences, rather than generalizable group differences, risk affecting all three aspects of counseling: the relationship, the diagnosis, and the intervention.

The Relationship

Even though it is untenable to generalize about group similarities and differences as they relate to psychotherapeutic relationships, it is useful to recognize that some clients in all cultural groups respond to counseling differently because of their socialization. For many, the idea of introspecting and self-disclosing is cause for high anxiety. For others, historical hostility or prejudice toward their counselors’ cultural or racial groups may impede the establishment of effective rapport. Other clients from countless backgrounds may expect friendly, relaxed, and personal relationships with their helpers, an expectation that might be threatening to counselors who perceive helping as a scientific enterprise demanding a prescribed social distance between the interactants. Potential clients present too many perceptions and expectations of helpers to forewarn therapists of each possible cultural pitfall. Instead of relying blindly on therapeutic relationship prescriptions, therapists should realize that the therapeutic relationship, as modeled in Western psychology textbooks, is imbued with cultural assumptions that might need to be altered creatively to serve culturally different clients.

Throughout the history of counseling psychology in the United States, authorities have devoted more attention to the helping relationship than to any other aspect of the therapeutic enterprise. Some writers and theorists have made the relationship the essence of counseling itself. The emphasis on the relationship has highlighted numerous problems in cross-cultural counseling because, in the United States, clients from lower-status racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and national backgrounds are unaccustomed to relating to their higher-status counselors as equals. They often feel uncomfortable in cross-cultural counseling relationships because they believe that they are being judged by people who are affluent, more educated, and perhaps unfamiliar with the moral compromises and complexities of a less privileged existence.

In a few instances, culturally different clients might desire unequal relationships with their counselors owing to their cultural belief that professionals are wiser and able to provide accurate advice. Although professionals do possess a wellspring of useful information, and although clients may accord them the deference of respected elders or even gurus, it is important for counselors, irrespective of their clients’ attributions, to maintain a posture of philosophical equality with their clients. Culturally different clients might wish to defer to the opinions of their counselors, but there is something detrimental to the human spirit across cultures when counselors do all of the thinking for their clients. Achieving some degree of individuation—to borrow a term from Jungian psychology—may be a universal developmental task that is revisited at each of life’s stages as choices must
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be made about the people we are to become. It should be no different in the counseling suite.

The existential cross-cultural counseling relationship strives to approach what Buber (1970) called the “I–thou” rapport—that is, a deep fellowship stressing honest sharing and mutual regard. It would not be an overstatement to characterize this relationship as one that generates a platonic exchange of love akin to what the Greeks called *agape* love (affection of a nonsexual nature), whereas Boss (1963) chose to label it *psychotherapeutic eros* (affection of a therapeutic nature), without intending to imply the romantic element that the word *eros* (affection of a sexual nature) would suggest. Although underemphasized in other counseling theories, existential counseling sees the sharing and generation of loving feelings as a powerful therapeutic force essential to all significant relationships, not simply therapeutic ones. Satir (1988) expressed the value of love most powerfully: “Without loving and being loved, the human soul and spirit curdle and die” (p. 141).

In the existential cross-cultural counseling relationship, the counselor is not a blank slate awaiting projection in the Freudian schema. In fact, the therapist’s interpretation of transference is peripheral to this encounter given that existential counseling assumes that seeking a parental relationship or friendship with a therapist is a natural striving, disguising the very human desire for connection, bonding, and love. To be effective facilitators of such authentic relationships, therapists must be truly willing to help others as a calling and must be at peace with themselves as imperfect and mortal humans who can honestly draw on their own experiences and frailties and be unafraid to share these with their clients.

The existential cross-cultural counseling relationship is spontaneous, unselfish, and respectful, and it shows reverence for the client’s culture and uniqueness. Existential cross-cultural counselors love their fellow humans as they love themselves. They are personalistic in the counseling relationship. The person is more important than anything else in life—role, status, class, money, or attractiveness. They do not distance themselves professionally from their clients with a cool detachment—they are warm, sensitive, and engaged. Gross (1978) found that psychotherapeutic closeness increases the likelihood of successful counseling. In other words, it is important that clients believe that their counselors appreciate them deeply as fellow humans.

Existential cross-cultural counselors are world citizens who commit themselves to helping their fellow humans through life. They do not allow cultural, national, or racial ideologies or conflicts to loom large in their encounters, for to do so is to encourage cultural defensiveness on the part of their clients. Although it is ironic in a profession that prides itself on its caring and humanism, Vontress noted how radical the notion of a caring therapeutic relationship is to the professional counseling community:

> Over the years, my colleagues have come to see me as an iconoclast because I reject the notions of therapeutic objectivity and professional distance and declare them to be anti-therapeutic. . . . I believe that we must genuinely care about our clients as fellow human beings. I have come to despise the professional games and bureaucracy that we dispense as our means of helping others. No wonder clients often come to hate counseling centers; these organizations often reflect the insensitivity of the clients’ world instead of offering a place of refuge and healing. (Quoted in Epp, 1998, p. 12)

Being an existential counselor would seem to mean having the courage to be a caring human in an insensitive world.
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The Diagnosis

There are several points that therapists should keep in mind when diagnosing clients external to the mainstream culture. First, therapists should ascertain whether the assessment tools and procedures normally used with dominant-group clients are appropriate for their culturally different counterparts. Second, they should decide whether to diagnose from an “emic” or “etic” perspective, or both. That is, should the yardstick for “normal” be based on the expectations of the individual’s immediate cultural group (emic) or on those of the community at large, extending beyond the client’s racial or cultural neighborhood (etic)? In most cases, people move through several cultural layers in a single day. Therefore, both emic and etic perspectives might need to be considered at the same time. Even so, the focus of therapy always depends on the nature of the presenting problem. Third, therapists should determine whether a purely psychological assessment is sufficient or whether the diagnosis should be based on social, physical, and spiritual considerations as well. Each client must be viewed individually, not in stereotypical terms.

In choosing diagnoses, therapeutic professionals need to recognize that life consists of opposites and contradictions (Lowen, 1980). That is, to understand and appreciate the negative, it is imperative to experience the positive (Ricken, 1991). Humans are a complex mixture of opposites—sanity and neurosis, rationality and irrationality, good and evil, aggression and compassion, and so on. Due to life circumstances, upbringing, and biology, some have learned to keep these polarities tilted in the positive direction, but it is a naive conviction that some live without pathology or evil; all attempt to live managing their negative polarities so that they do not hurt themselves or others. In diagnosing the presenting problems and personalities of their clients, counselors should resist the temptation to classify people and their struggles with the human condition into simple categories of praise and blame, sanity and pathology.

The Intervention

Historically, counseling psychology in the United States has placed considerable responsibility on clients to help themselves. The imposition of counselors’ own values and expectations on clients has been discouraged. Counselors are taught not to think for clients but rather to help clients think for themselves. However, expecting helpers to solve their problems is normal for people from collectivistic cultures, in which authority figures often directly influence the lives of others. Therefore, it is understandable if such people, on their arrival in this country, anticipate the type of intervention to which they have been accustomed. Furthermore, culturally different people may be more comfortable talking to counselors if they can bring other family members or friends with them to the consultations. Counselors are advised to determine, during their first interviews with clients, what the clients expect from them in terms of the outcomes and styles of intervention. Do clients prefer (a) to work things out for themselves with a minimum of assistance from counselors, (b) to work cooperatively with counselors, or (c) to be authoritatively directed by counselors in searching for solutions to their presenting problems?

Existential cross-cultural counseling is a voyage of self-discovery not only for clients but also for their counselors, who invariably see a little of themselves in each of their clients. The main goal of therapeutic encounters is to engage individuals in a personal struggle to confront the areas of “stuckness” in their lives (Johnson, 1971). To accomplish this goal, counselors should be flexible in
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style, varying their therapeutic approaches from one client to another and from one phase to another in the treatment of the same clients (May, 1991). The specific technique, approach, or style to be used should be based on the uniqueness of each individual. Existential cross-cultural counselors are necessarily artists who are creative, individualistic, and fluid in their work and who also have a genuine connection with each client. They reject the notion that psychotherapy is a pure science embodying facts, principles, and methods that must be memorized and applied in a standardized way to all clients (May, 1991). In fact, Ungersma (1961) indicated that helpers who emphasize techniques too much run the risk of becoming technicians rather than therapists; their clients, in turn, become machines to be manipulated in accordance with prescribed techniques. In a sense, an exclusively scientific approach to psychotherapy can sometimes be unwittingly antitherapeutic. At the same time, existential cross-cultural counselors respect scientific guidance but do not worship its standardization of technique, as what is found helpful for the average person may not apply to a client sitting before them.

Perhaps the simplest way in which to communicate the existential intervention style is to refer to it as a Socratic dialogue. As the reader may recall, the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates had a knack for getting individuals to discover themselves and live according to the content of their self-discoveries (Wolff, 1976). He was convinced that the surest way to attain reliable knowledge was through the art of disciplined conversation, in which he acted as an intellectual midwife (Stumpf, 1975). He would confront people with various points of view on the topics under discussion and try to bring into focus their strengths and weaknesses. Out of this experience, he hoped that individuals would develop their own wisdom and the resulting direction in life, giving birth to new selves (Johnson, 1977). Socratic dialogues did not always end in clear-cut answers for individuals (Rychlak, 1979). Sometimes the hard questioning would trigger ideas in the minds of students that would take time to understand. This approach to knowledge of self was called the maieutic or hatching method.

In essence, existential cross-cultural counselors, like Socrates, do not use a bag of tricks to get their clients to explore their existence. If they have a “technique,” then it is their focus on the unique existential struggle of each client. As dialecticians, they look for difficulties impeding the unfolding or becoming of individuals and help them discover the reasons for their stuckness (Christian, 1977). There is no one way to accomplish this task. How counselors do their work depends on the uniqueness of the interactants. Counselors must ask themselves how they can know and enter the worlds of their clients (May, 1967). Once they are inside, the most important question is what counselors should do next. The answer to this self-inquiry resides in the hearts and minds of counselors, not in a recipe box of techniques. In an interview, Vontress warned,

I do not know whether all counselors are equipped to be existentialists, however simple this philosophy may sound. Being an intimate friend, in a therapeutic sense, is emotionally draining for the counselor while healing for the client. In my opinion, counseling techniques . . . are not for the client’s benefit but [rather] for the counselor’s [benefit]. They are a structure for the therapeutic interview as well as the filler, or white noise, to use when the counselor is unsure of what to do. (Quoted in Epp, 1998, p. 6)

The central agent of healing in existential cross-cultural counseling is the therapeutic personality of the counselor (Frank, 1961), who relates to the client as a fellow traveler.
In graduate schools, many counselors view counseling as a science and justify their teaching techniques designed to put counselors-in-training in good stead in relating to clients. Unfortunately, culturally different clients often do not see the science or understand the techniques. They see and understand only the helpers there with them—the other humans—who cannot substitute technique for true caring because phoniness, superficiality, and indifference are recognized by members of every human culture.

**CONCLUSION**

Existential cross-cultural counseling is a rich philosophical approach to psychotherapy that shares many of its tenets with the world’s major cultures and religions as well as both Eastern and Western philosophies. It is this fact that makes it a universally applicable theory of counseling. However, existentialism subtly challenges the other counseling perspectives in its expansive view of life through the four worlds and through its belief that a narrow focus on cognitions, feelings, or psychodynamics in the therapeutic relationship addresses only a narrow slice of existence. Ultimately, the existential cross-cultural counselor wishes to concertedly explore with the client all of life, not simply the random issues that emerge in session, whose transient importance might only fade into the background of the larger scheme of life that went unexplored.

**REFERENCES**


Schizophrenia, psychiatry’s “sacred cow” (Szasz, 1976) and longest-running conundrum, traditionally is the most medicalized and dehumanized of all the so-called mental illnesses. Besides incarceration, with its known adverse consequences, persons with this label have been subjected to a terrifying array of “treatments”—fever, gold, arsenic, bismuth, tonsillectomy, electroshock, insulin shock, lobotomy, and (most recently) the neuroleptic drugs. When looked at contextually, these interventions seem to be designed to allow the rest of us to avoid having to deal with these persons’ humanity—that is, their subjective experience of psychosis and its effect on us. Indeed, persons who are “out of their minds” must, by any means possible, be kept “out of sight”—that is, our emotional/psychological sight. Degradation, detribalization, marginalization, and stigmatization are the defining conditions of their subhuman state. How, I asked, can this process of dehumanization be avoided? The critical elements of the process seemed obvious—medicalization (via labeling), hospitalization, professional treatment, and the use of chemical lobotomy with the neuroleptic drugs. How, in the real world, could care be afforded to such persons that at least minimized these psycho-noxious elements? The answer: Divert such persons out of the hospital system, involve them in a normalizing context (i.e., a home), allow them to interact with staff who approach them without preconceptions and who are interested in understanding and sharing their experience, and try to avoid drugging their humanity out of them. What came out of this was the Soteria Project.
BACKGROUND

The Soteria Project owes much of its clinical methodology to the phenomenological/existential thinkers who provided a breath of fresh air for many clinicians in a psychoanalytic theory–dominated field (Mosher, 1999). During my psychiatric training, I became interested in the meaningfulness of madness, understanding families and systems, and the conduct of research. In addition, I had an unpleasant “total” institutional experience while in psychiatric training (Goffman, 1961) and had to ask, “If places called hospitals are not good for disturbed and disturbing behavior, then what kinds of social environments are?” During 1966 to 1967, R. D. Laing and his colleagues (all influenced by phenomenological and existential thinking) at the Philadelphia Association’s Kingsley Hall in London provided live training in the “dos and don’ts” of the operation of an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization (Laing, 1967). The deconstruction of madness and the madhouse that took place at Kingsley Hall was fertile ground for the development of ideas about how a community-based, supportive, protective, normalizing, relationship-focused environment might facilitate reintegration of psychologically disintegrated persons without artificial institutional disruptions of the process.

The practice of interpersonal phenomenology, as developed and used in the Soteria Project, is a nontheory that can be very helpful in understanding and finding meaningfulness in the experience of being a person labeled as having schizophrenia once an appropriate context is established. To wit, do no harm; treat everyone, and expect to be treated, with dignity and respect; provide asylum, quiet, safety, support, protection, containment, and food and shelter; and, perhaps most important, make sure that the atmosphere is imbued with the notion that recovery from psychosis is to be expected. Within this defined and predictable social environment, interpersonal phenomenology can be practiced. Its most basic tenet is “being with,” an attentive but nonintrusive and gradual way of getting oneself “into the other person’s shoes” so that a shared meaningfulness of the psychotic experience can be established through a relationship. This approach requires unconditional acceptance of the experience of another person as valid and understandable within the historical context of the person’s life, even when it cannot be consensually validated. The Soteria approach also included thoughtful attention to the caregiver’s experience of the situation. This emphasis on the interpersonal aspects of phenomenology is relatively new. Although it might seem to be a departure from the traditions of phenomenology, it brings the method more into step with modern concepts of the requirements of interactive fields without sacrificing its basic open-minded, immediate, accepting, nonjudgmental, noncategorizing, “what you see is what you get” core principles. It is in this way that the whole “being” (Dasein) in relation to others can be kept in focus. It is not prudent to exclude well-known, seemingly universal ingredients in interpersonal fields; by their very presence and reaction, participants have an effect on the interactions. This application of the Heisenberg principle to interpersonal fields provides us with additional information while preventing us from being uninvolved observers. Basically, the California-based Soteria Project combined Sullivan’s (1962) interpersonal focus and phenomenology in developing this unique treatment environment for persons newly labeled as having “schizophrenia.”

RESEARCH METHODS

This project’s design was a random assignment, 2-year follow-up study comparing the Soteria method of treatment with usual general hospital psychiatric ward interventions for persons newly diagnosed as having schizophrenia and deemed in need of hospitalization.
We focused on newly diagnosed persons so as to avoid, as far as possible, having to deal with the learned patient role. The Soteria study selected 18- to 30-year-old unmarried participants who three independent raters could agree met the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (second edition) (DSM-II) criteria for schizophrenia (American Psychiatric Association, 1968) and who were experiencing at least four of the seven Bleulerian symptoms of the disorder. The early-onset (ages 18–30 years) and marital status criteria were designed to identify a subgroup of persons diagnosed with schizophrenia who were at statistically high risk for long-term disability, that is, candidates for “chronicity.” We believed that an experimental treatment should be provided to those individuals most likely to have high service needs over the long term. All the participants were public sector (uninsured or government insured) clients screened in the psychiatric emergency rooms of two suburban San Francisco Bay Area public general hospitals (N = 179).

The original Soteria House opened in 1971. A replication facility opened in 1974 in another suburban San Francisco Bay Area city. This replication was decided because clinically we saw, almost from the beginning, that the Soteria method worked. Immediate replication would address the potential criticism that our results were a one-time product of a unique group of charismatic persons and expectation effects. So there were in fact two geographically separated Soteria-type facilities in California, with the second one called “Emanon.” Despite the publication of consistently positive results (Matthews, Roper, Mosher, & Menn, 1979; Mosher & Menn, 1978) for this subgroup of newly diagnosed psychotic persons from the first cohort of participants (1971–1976), the Soteria Project ended in 1983. Because of administrative problems and lack of funding, data from the 1976 to 1983 cohort were not analyzed until 1992. Only recently (Bola & Mosher, 1999, 2000) have combined-cohort, 2-year outcome data analyses been conducted.

RESULTS

Briefly summarized, the significant results are described in the following paragraphs.

Admission Characteristics

Experimental (N = 82) and control (N = 97) participants were remarkably similar on 10 demographic, 5 psychopathologic, 7 prognostic, and 7 psychosocial preadmission (independent) variables. Because of our selection criteria and the suburban location of the intake facilities, both Soteria-treated and control participants were young (age 21 years), mostly white (10% from minority groups), and relatively well-educated (high school graduates) men and women raised in typical lower-middle-class, blue-collar, suburban American families.

Six-Week Outcome

In terms of psychopathology, participants in both groups improved significantly and comparably despite only 24% of Soteria participants having received neuroleptic drugs for 2 weeks or more during this initial assessment period. All control participants received adequate antipsychotic drug treatment during their entire hospital stay and were universally discharged on maintenance dosages. More than half stopped the medication over the 2-year follow-up period (Matthews et al., 1979; Mosher & Menn, 1978; Mosher, Vallone, & Menn, 1995).

Milieu Assessment

Because we conceived the Soteria program as a recovery-facilitating social environment, systematic study and comparison
with the general hospital psychiatric wards were particularly important. We used the Moos Ward Atmosphere Scale (WAS) and Community Oriented Program Environment Scale (COPES) for this purpose (Moos, 1974, 1975). The differences between the programs were remarkable in their magnitude and stability over 10 years. The Soteria/hospital differences were significant on 8 of the 10 WAS/COPES subscales, with the largest differences on the three “psychotherapy” variables: involvement, support, and spontaneity (Wendt, Mosher, Matthews, & Menn, 1983).

**Two-Year Outcomes**

The relationship between outcome and neuroleptic drug intake from both cohorts for individuals not lost to follow-up (N = 129) was analyzed and presented recently (Bola & Mosher, 1999). Of all Soteria-treated participants, 43% received no neuroleptics during the 2-year study period. Three baseline variables predicted membership in this group: (1) better adolescent social adjustment, (2) low levels of paranoia, and (3) being older. These were predictive despite the homogeneity, and hence little variance, of this specially selected sample. As a group, experimentally treated participants (N = 68) had significantly better outcomes on a composite outcome scale (+0.54 of a standard deviation, p = .024) representing the dimensions of rehospitalization, psychopathology, independent living, and social and occupational functioning, and on three of eight component measures. (The experimental group had markedly better outcomes adjusting for differential attrition, differential length of follow-up, and proportion of individuals with insidious onset.) When individuals with DSM-IV schizophrenia (i.e., those predicted to have poorer outcomes) were analyzed separately (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), experimental treatment was even more effective on the composite outcome scale (+0.97 of a standard deviation, p = .003) (Bola & Mosher, 2000). These and previous results from the Soteria study continue to challenge conventional wisdom as to the benefits of early and universal administration of antipsychotic drugs to newly diagnosed psychotic individuals.

**Cost**

In the first cohort, despite the large differences in lengths of stay during the initial admissions (approximately 1 vs. 5 months), the cost of the first 6 months of care (in 1976 dollars) for each group was approximately $4,000. Costs were similar because of Soteria’s low per diem cost and extensive use of day care as well as group, individual, and medication therapy for the discharged hospital control patients (Matthews et al., 1979; Mosher & Menn, 1978). Data were not available for a cost study of the participants studied during the 1976 to 1982 period.

**WHY DID SOTERIA “WORK”?**

There is no simple answer to this very important question. The relevant aspects include the setting and milieu characteristics, the relationships formed, the personal qualities and attitudes of the staff, and the social processes that went on in the facilities. Probably the single most important part of why the program “worked” were the types of relationships established among the participants—staff, clients, volunteers, students, and any individuals who spent a significant amount of time in the facility. It certainly is useful to ask, “How does one establish a confiding relationship with a disorganized psychotic person?” It is in this arena that the contextual constraints or setting characteristics mentioned earlier are so important. A quiet, safe, supportive, protective, and predictable social environment is
required. Such environments can be established in a variety of places—a special small, homelike facility that sleeps no more than 10 persons including staff (e.g., Soteria); the psychotic person’s place of residence, including involvement of significant others; and almost anywhere the context can be established in which a 1:1 or 2:1 “being with” contact ratio is offered on a 24-hour basis. Such environments usually cannot be established within psychiatric hospitals or on their grounds; the expectation of chronicity for schizophrenia is simply too pervasive in such places, and eventually the dominant biomedical philosophy will prevail.

An important reason why the project worked seemed to depend on the personality characteristics of the staff. The Soteria staff were characterized as psychologically strong, independent, mature, warm, and empathic. They shared these traits with the staff of the control facilities. However, the Soteria staff were significantly more intuitive, introverted, flexible, and tolerant of altered states of consciousness than were the general hospital psychiatric ward staff (Hirschfeld, Matthews, Mosher, & Menn, 1977; Mosher, Reifman, & Menn, 1973). It is this cluster of cognitive-attitudinal variables that seems to be highly relevant to the Soteria staff’s work. Their interactions are best described in the treatment manual (Mosher, Menn, Vallone, & Fort, 1994; Mosher, Vallone, & Menn, 1992). Because they worked 24- or 48-hour shifts, they were afforded the opportunity to be with the residents (their term for clients/patients) for periods of time that the staff of ordinary psychiatric facilities could not. Thus, they were able to experience firsthand complete “disordered” biological cycles. Ordinarily, only family members or significant others have such experiences. Although the official staffing at Soteria was two staff members for six clients, over time it became clear that the optimal ratio was about 50% disorganized persons and 50% more or less sane persons. This 1:1 ratio usually was made possible by the use of volunteers and recovering clients who knew the territory. We found that these residents could develop very close supportive relationships with the other residents. In this context, it is important to remember that the average length of stay was approximately 5 months. For the most part, at least partial recovery took about 6 to 8 weeks. Hence, many clients were able to be caregivers during the latter parts of their stay. In fact, former residents often returned to Soteria and “adopted” newly admitted clients, for whom they subsequently found community resources.

Viewed from an ethnographic/anthropologic perspective, the basic social processes differed greatly between the houses and the control facilities (the general hospital psychiatric wards). Five categories were identified in both experimental settings that set them apart from the hospitals:

1. Approaches to social control that avoided codified rules, regulations, and policies
2. Keeping basic administrative time to a minimum so as to allow for a great deal of undifferentiated time
3. Limiting intrusion by unknown outsiders into the settings
4. Working out social order on an emergent, face-to-face basis
5. Commitment to a nonmedical model that did not require symptom suppression

By contrast, the control wards were characterized as using a “dispatching process” that involved patching, medical screening, piecing together a story, labeling and sorting, and distributing patients to various other facilities and programs (Wilson, 1978, 1983).

With the passage of time, it has been possible to try to understand why Soteria worked from a variety of overlapping perspectives.
It also is likely that Soteria’s four explicit rules contributed to its success:

1. No violence to self or others
2. No unknown, unannounced visitors (family and friends had easy access, but as a home its boundaries to outsiders were like those of usual families)
3. No illegal drugs (there was enough community-noted deviance at Soteria already)
4. No sex between staff and clients (an inter-generational incest taboo)

Note that sex between clients or between staff members was not forbidden. The project’s administration introduced the first three rules. The fourth was put in place by the staff and clients in a house meeting after the second month of the project’s operation. It solved an ongoing potential problem in this relatively easygoing environment.

Although mentioned previously, it is worthwhile to characterize the Soteria milieu’s characteristics and functions in one place because they certainly were important ingredients to Soteria’s success (Mosher, 1992):

1. Milieu characteristics: quiet, stable, predictable, consistent, clear, and accepting
2. Early milieu functions: supportive relationships, control of stimulation, provision of respite or asylum, and personal validation
3. Later milieu functions: structure, involvement, socialization, collaboration, negotiation, and planning

The early and later functions almost always overlap.

Despite the abundance of outcome-related processes cited, it still must be said that it remains difficult to narrow them down to the few most important ones. With this apology, I provide here a nine-point summary of what I believe to be the critical therapeutic ingredients of the Soteria environment:

A set of interventions (recall that the word therapy was eschewed in the Soteria Project) have also been described:

1. An interpersonal phenomenological stance
2. “Being with” and “doing with” without being intrusive
3. Extensive 1:1 contact ratio as needed
4. Living with a temporary family
5. Yoga, massage, art, music, dance, sports, outings, gardening, shopping, cooking, and the like
6. Meetings scheduled to deal with interpersonal problems as they emerged
7. Family mediation provided as needed

The following 12 essential characteristics have been defined (Mosher & Burti, 1994):

1. Small and homelike, sleeping no more than 10 persons including staff
2. Two staff members on duty (a man and a woman) in 24- to 48-hour shifts
3. Ideologically uncommitted staff and program director (to avoid failures of “fit”)
4. Peer/fraternal/sororal relationship orientation to mute authority
5. Preservation of personal power and, with it, maintenance of autonomy
6. Open social system, to allow easy access, departure, and return if needed
7. Sharing of day-to-day running of the house by everyone to the extent possible
8. Minimal role differentiation to encourage flexibility
9. Minimal hierarchy to allow relatively structureless functioning
10. Integrated into the local community
11. Encouragement of postdischarge continuity of relationships
12. No formal in-house “therapy” as traditionally defined
1. Positive expectations of recovery from psychosis, and perhaps learning and growth, are important.

2. Flexibility of roles, relationships, and responses on the part of the staff is important.

3. Acceptance of the psychotic person’s experience of psychosis as real, even if it cannot be consensually validated, is important.

4. The staff’s primary duty is to be with the disorganized client. It must be specifically acknowledged that the staff need not do anything. If frightened, they should call for help.

5. The experience of psychosis should be normalized and usualized by contextualizing it, framing it in positive terms, and referring to it in everyday language.

6. Extremes of human behavior should be tolerated so long as they do not represent a threat to the person, other clients, or the program.

7. Sufficient time must be spent in the program to allow for relationships to develop that will have a lasting impact through the processes of imitation and identification.

8. These relationships should allow precipitating events to be acknowledged, the usually disavowed painful emotions experienced as a result of them to be discussed until they can be tolerated, and these emotions to be put into perspective by fitting them into the continuity of the person’s life as well as the life of his or her social system.

9. A postdischarge, peer-oriented social network to provide ongoing community reintegration, rehabilitation (e.g., help with housing, education, work, social life), and support is important.

THE SECOND GENERATION

Although I was closely involved in the California-based Soteria Project throughout the study’s life, I lived in Washington, D.C., while working for the National Institute of Mental Health. In 1972, I became a psychiatric consultant to Woodley House, a halfway house founded in Washington in 1958. In consultation, staff often were distressed when describing house residents who went into crises and there was no option but to hospitalize them. They saw recovery from such incarceration as taking nearly 18 months. So in 1977, a Soteria-like facility (called “Crossing Place”) was opened by Woodley House programs that differed from its conceptual parent in that it (a) admitted any nonmedically ill client deemed in need of psychiatric hospitalization regardless of the diagnosis, length of illness, severity of psychopathology, or level of functional impairment; (b) was an integral part of the local public community mental health system, meaning that most patients who came to Crossing Place were receiving psychotropic medications; and (c) had an informal length-of-stay restriction of about 30 days to make it economically appealing.

So, beginning in 1977, a modified Soteria method was applied to a much broader patient base, the so-called seriously and persistently mentally ill. Although a random assignment study of a Crossing Place model has only recently been published (Fenton, Mosher, Herrell, & Blyler, 1998), it was clear from early on that the Soteria method was effective with this nonresearch criteria-derived heterogeneous client group. Because of Crossing Place’s location and open admissions, its clients, in comparison with Soteria participants, were older (age 37 years), more nonwhite (70%), multi-admission, 25% HIV positive, 30% homeless, long-term system users (average 14 years), and raised in poor urban ghetto families. From the outset, Crossing Place was able to return 90% or more of its more than 2,000 (by 1997) admissions directly to the community, completely avoiding hospitalization (Kresky-Wolff, Matthews, Kalibat, & Mosher, 1984).
In its more than 20 years of operation, there have been no suicides among the clients in residence, and no serious staff injuries have occurred. Although the clients were different (as noted previously), the two settings (Soteria and Crossing Place) shared staff selection processes (Hirschfeld et al., 1977; Mosher et al., 1973), philosophies, institutional and social structure characteristics, and the culture of positive expectations.

Descriptively, the two settings can be compared and contrasted as follows. In their presentations to the world, Crossing Place is conventional and Soteria was unconventional. Despite this major difference, the actual in-house interpersonal interactions were similar in their informality, earthiness, honesty, and lack of professional jargon. These similarities arise partly from the fact that neither program ascribed the usual patient role to the clientele. Crossing Place admits long-term system “veterans.” Its public funding contains broad length-of-stay standards (1–2 months). Soteria’s research focus viewed length of stay as a dependent variable, allowing it to vary according to the clinical needs of the newly diagnosed patients. Hence, the initial focus of the Crossing Place staff is on what the clients need to accomplish relatively quickly so that they can resume living in the community. Because they come from the local public system of care, nearly all Crossing Place clients are on one or more psychotropic drugs. There is a somewhat more formalized social structure than was the case at Soteria. Each day, there is a morning meeting on what clients are doing to fix their lives that day, as well as one or two evening community meetings.

The two Crossing Place consulting psychiatrists each spend 1 hour a week with the staff reviewing each client’s progress, addressing particularly difficult issues, and helping develop a consensus on the initial and revised treatment plans. Soteria had a variety of ad hoc crisis meetings but only one regularly scheduled house meeting per week. The role of the consulting psychiatrist was more peripheral at Soteria than at Crossing Place; at Soteria, he or she was not ordinarily involved in treatment planning, and no regular treatment meetings were held. Demedicalization was the rule.

A SECOND-GENERATION SIBLING

In 1990, McAuliffe House, a Crossing Place replication, was established in Montgomery County, Maryland. This county borders Washington, D.C., along its southern boundary. Crossing Place helped train its staff. For didactic instruction, there were numerous articles describing the philosophy, institutional characteristics, social structure, and staff attitudes of Crossing Place and Soteria as well as a treatment manual from Soteria (Mosher et al., 1992, 1994). My own continuing influence as philosopher/clinician/godfather/supervisor is certain to have made replicability of these special social environments easier. In Montgomery County, it was possible to implement the first random assignment study of a residential alternative to hospitalization that was focused on the seriously mentally ill “frequent flyers,” a living, breathing, never before researched public system of care. Because of this well-funded system’s early–crisis intervention focus, it hospitalized only about 10% of its more than 1,500 long-term clients each year. Again, because of a well-developed crisis system, less than 10% of the hospitalizations were involuntary; hence, our voluntary research sample was representative of even the most difficult multiproblem clients. The study excluded no one deemed in need of acute hospitalization except those who had complicating medical conditions or who were acutely intoxicated. The participants were as representative of suburban
Montgomery County’s public clients as were Crossing Place’s participants of urban Washington, D.C., clients—in the mid-30s, mostly poor, 25% minority, 15% homeless, 10% HIV positive, long duration of illness, and multiple previous hospitalizations. However, many of the Montgomery County clients came from well-educated, affluent families. The results (Fenton et al., 1998) were not surprising. The alternative and acute general hospital psychiatric wards were clinically equal in effectiveness, but the alternative treatment cost was about 40% less. For a system, this means savings of roughly $19,000 per year for each seriously and persistently mentally ill person who uses acute alternative care exclusively (instead of a hospital). Total costs for the hospital in this study (in 1993 dollars) were about $500 per day (including ancillary costs), and for the alternative facility, they were about $150 (including extramural treatment and ancillary costs).

OVERALL THERAPEUTIC INGREDIENTS

Descriptively, the therapeutic ingredients of all these residential alternatives—ones that clearly distinguish them from psychiatric hospitals—in the order they are likely to be experienced by a newly admitted client, are as follows. First, the setting is indistinguishable from other residences in the community, and it interacts with its community.

Second, the facility is small, with space for no more than 10 persons to sleep (6–8 clients and 2 staff members), and experienced as homelike. Admission procedures are informal and individualized, based on the client’s ability to participate meaningfully.

Third, a primary task of the staff is to understand the immediate circumstances and relevant background that precipitated the crisis, necessitating admission. It is anticipated that this will lead to a relationship based on shared knowledge, which will, in turn, enable the staff to put themselves in the clients’ shoes. Thus, they will share the clients’ perception of their social context and what needs to change to enable them to return to it. The relative paucity of paperwork allows time for the interaction necessary to form a relationship.

Fourth, within this relationship, the client will find staff carrying out multiple roles—companion advocate, caseworker, and “therapist”—although no therapeutic sessions are held in the house. Staff have the authority to make (in conjunction with the client) and be responsible for on-the-spot decisions. Staff are mostly in their mid-20s, college graduates, and selected on the basis of their interest in working in this special setting with a clientele in psychotic crisis. Most use the work as a transitional step on their way to advanced mental health–related degrees. They usually are psychologically tough, tolerant, and flexible and come from lower-middle-class families with “problem” members (Hirschfeld et al., 1977; Mosher et al., 1973, 1992, 1994). In contrast to psychiatric ward staff, they are trained and closely supervised in the adoption and validation of the clients’ perceptions. Problem solving and supervision focus on relational difficulties of the staff (e.g., transference, countertransference) and are provided by fellow staff, on-site program directors, and consulting psychiatrists. Note that physicians are not in charge of the program.

Fifth, staff are trained to prevent unnecessary dependency and, so far as possible, maintain autonomous decision making on the part of clients. They also encourage clients to stay in contact with their usual treatment and social networks. Clients frequently remark on how different the experience is from that of hospitalization. This process may result in clients reporting that they feel in control and a sense of security. They also
experience a continued connectedness to their usual social environments.

Sixth, access and departure, both initially and subsequently, are made as easy as possible. Short of official readmission, it is an open social system where clients can continue their connection to the program in nearly any way they choose. They can phone in for support, obtain information or advice, make drop-in visits (usually at dinner time), or arrange to spend time with persons with whom they have especially important relationships. All former clients who served in Soteria’s successors are invited back to an organized activity one evening each week.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES TO HOSPITALIZATION

During the more than 25 years since the successful implementation of the Soteria Project, a variety of alternatives to psychiatric hospitalization have been developed in the United States. Their results (including those of the Soteria Project) have been reviewed extensively by Braun and colleagues (1981), Kiesler (1982a, 1982b), Straw (1982), and Stroul (1987). Warner (1995) described a subset in greater detail. Each of these reviews found consistently more positive results from descriptive and research data from a variety of alternative interventions than from control groups. Straw (1982), for example, found that in 19 of the 20 studies that he reviewed, alternative treatments were as effective as, or more effective than, hospital care and also were 43% less expensive on average. The Soteria study was noted to be the most rigorous one available in describing a comprehensive treatment approach to a subgroup of persons labeled as having schizophrenia. It was also noted that, for the most part, the effects of various types of hospitalization (e.g., large vs. small, long vs. short) had not been subjected to equally serious scientific scrutiny.

Few true residential alternatives to acute hospitalization have been developed, except in California, where there are a dozen. A recent study of the cost-effectiveness of these alternatives to hospitalization in San Diego (Hawthorne, Green, Lohr, Hough, & Smith, 1999) found results consistent with those of Fenton and colleagues (1998). Unfortunately, it was not a random assignment study. Within the public sector, because of cost concerns, there currently is a movement to develop crisis houses. Their extent or success has not been described completely. However, they usually are not viewed or used as alternatives to acute psychiatric hospitalization, although this is subject to local variation. It is surprising that managed care, with its focus on reducing the use of expensive hospitalization, has neither developed nor promoted the use of these cost-effective alternatives. It is truly notable that nearly all residential alternatives to acute psychiatric hospitalization are in the public mental health system. Private insurers and health maintenance organizations have been extremely reluctant to pay for care in such facilities (Mosher, 1983).

THE FATE OF SOTERIA

As a clinical program, Soteria closed in 1983. The replication facility, Emanon, had closed in 1980. Despite many publications (40 in all), without an active treatment facility, Soteria disappeared from the consciousness of American psychiatry. Its message was difficult for the field to acknowledge, assimilate, and use. It did not fit into the emerging scientific, descriptive, biomedical character of American psychiatry, and in fact, it called nearly every one of psychiatry’s tenets into question. It de-medicalized, de-hospitalized, de-professionalized, and de-neurolepticed
psychiatry’s most persistent, ambivalently held conundrum. So far as mainstream American psychiatry is concerned, it is, to this day, an experiment that either never was conducted or was the object of studied (conspiratorial?) neglect. Taken in concert with the extraordinary power of the pharmaceutical industry over psychiatry and the American Psychiatric Association’s alliance with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, this should come as no surprise. In support of the studied-neglect assertion is the fact that neither of the two recent comprehensive literature reviews and treatment recommendations for schizophrenia (Frances, Docherty, & Kahn, 1996; Lehman & Steinwachs, 1998) references the project. This omission happened despite my having reviewed both of those documents in draft form and having brought this remarkable oversight to the authors’ attention. There are no new Soteria replications in the United States. It is possible that if a replication were proposed as research, it might not receive internal review board approval for the protection of human participants because it would involve withholding a known effective treatment (neuroleptics) for a minimum of 2 weeks.

Surprisingly, Soteria has reemerged in Europe. Luc Ciompi, a professor of social psychiatry in Bern, Switzerland, is primarily responsible for its renaissance. Operating since 1984, the Bern-based Soteria has replicated the original Soteria study findings. That is, roughly two thirds of newly diagnosed persons with schizophrenia recovered with little or no drug treatment within 2 to 12 weeks (Ciompi et al., 1992). As the original Soteria Project papers diffused to Europe and Ciompi began to publish his results, a number of similar projects were developed. At an October 1997 meeting held in Bern, a Soteria Association was formed, headed by Weiland Machleidt of the Hannover University medical faculty. Soteria lives and thrives, admitted as variations on the original theme, in a number of sites in Germany and one in Stockholm, Sweden.

THE FUTURE

Soteria-type facilities can be very useful for the provision of a temporary artificial social network when a natural one is either absent or dysfunctional. However, common sense would tell us that immediate intervention at the crisis site actually is preferable, when possible, because it avoids medicalization (i.e., locating “the problem” in one person by the labeling and sorting process) of what is actually a social system problem. Dedicated facilities cannot, by definition, be where the problem originates. There is no inherent reason why the special contextual conditions of Soteria-type programs cannot be created in a family home, in a nonfamily residence, or in a network meeting held nearly anywhere. This approach has been applied systematically by Alanen and colleagues (1994) in Finland, and it has spread throughout much of Scandinavia with rather remarkably positive results.

In fact, once the contextual “package” that has been described is established, the simple paradigm within which I prefer to work with clients and their families is (a) to define and acknowledge what happened, (b) to learn to bear the heretofore unbearable emotions associated with the event(s), and (c) to gain a perspective on the experience over time by fitting it into the continuity of the individual’s life as well as his or her social system’s life. This approach focuses on understanding and trying to find meaningfulness in the subjective experience of psychosis. When successful, there is no more schizophrenia, only two or more humans who have been through a shared, awesome, subjective experience. (Editor’s Note: See Whitaker, 2001, and Williams, 2012, for outstanding elaborations on Mosher’s view.)
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Awe Comes Shaking Out of the Bones

E. Mark Stern

The Greek tragedians contended that grave adversity unveils the most buried varieties of trembling awe. Overcome with ineffable awe, an individual may be left with feelings of shock and bewilderment. A greater share of cringing awe embellishes the unassuming life.

Those awed by a tenacious desire live in a seemingly unending cycle of partially realized cravings. In the extreme, such awe is terror-ridden, inducing torments and finally leaving its prey essentially numb.

Exuberance, too, may be a type of awe, one that often transcends the usual measures of sanity and normality.

Certainly, mystical awe provides the invaluable luminescence often necessary to recognize one's place in an otherwise chaotic universe. Profound awe provides an access to bearing up under these eventualities. Indeed, the persistence of such awe acts as a catalyst to major change.

In the tradition of humanistic psychology, the therapist embraces the client's awe equally as agony and as aspiration. A never-ending capacity to learn to discriminate and not discriminate between the mercilessness of awe as servile adoration and awe as earnest devotion is key to the humanistic therapeutic process. Particularly affected by this responsibility are those individuals whom psychiatry labels obsessive. The trials and tribulations of the obsessed over love and hate, and over idolatry and affinity, can be touched by the initiation of integrity. Only there can the hopeless burdens of obligation and devotion be met. In these encounters, transformations happen for both therapists and clients.

The vantage point of this chapter involves two people encircled within a therapeutic process: the therapist and the client. It encompasses 2 years of twice-weekly meetings between these two. Because awe, being transpersonal in all its phases, extends beyond the experience of the individual, there is a noticeable blurring of identities in this exposition. Therefore, this obfuscation of boundaries is purposeful. Even as one other states what is, there is on the part of the other one or more a necessary cannibalization, a dismantling, and a merger.

A Catholic priest, about 3 years ordained, suffered daily anxiety over the chance happening that bits and pieces of the wafer he had just consecrated at Mass might have slipped
Gregory’s father died months before his ordination. Although he was much attached to his father, in an early therapy session, he expressed relief at not being ordained at the time and, therefore, at being “free” not to have to officiate at his father’s funeral mass. Concerned about his overarching obsessive traits, Gregory felt helpless to do anything to help himself beyond confessing his sins. And even here, he considered his contrition unworthy and too meager.

Gregory’s first parochial assignment was as the assistant pastor of a middle-class parish within walking distance of a contemplative convent. In time, he sought out the chaplain of the convent to be his regular confessor. But “regular” soon became recurrent and habitual. He chastised himself for needing to ring the chaplain’s doorbell at all hours requesting that the chaplain hear his urgent confessions. He confided to the older priest that he believed he had been “irreverent” to the Blessed Sacrament by “allowing” consecrated particles to slide from his hands. The confessor, wise in psychological matters, thought at first that he could deal with Gregory’s “scrupulosity.”

But the confessor soon realized that he was dealing with a condition beyond his capacity. He advised Gregory to seek psychological counsel.

There was, from the start, an unease about Gregory’s being in therapy. There were so few variations in his early narrative. “Impure thoughts” (sexual or assaultive) were forever eroding. Day after day, he remained convinced that because of his neglect the disunited crumbs of the Blessed Sacrament were left undetected and were trampled underfoot. His sleep had become erratic, leading to increasing “forgetfulness.”

The dialogue between the therapist and the client moved to another dimension. I became an embodiment of Gregory’s deepest
emotion and content. Our empathic engagement dissolved the boundaries between the two of us. In the spirit of the meeting, we became functionally indistinguishable. In what follows, the reader is asked to suspend the usual need to mark off which one of us is speaking and/or ruminating. An ideal of humanistic psychotherapy is to disperse identities long enough for them to individuate once again. The reader is left with the task of deciding when or if, within the process, this takes place.

A recurring nightmare was human limbs and parts of torsos hidden underneath the floorboards of an unfamiliar house, with police officers never far away and “detectives” and “double agents” about to close in.

“Do you think of yourself as a double agent?”
“For someone to be so holy and still be implicated in possible murder!”
“Look carefully into the dream. . . . Look especially for ‘telltale’ variations.”
“Has it ever occurred to you that someone else may be the real killer?”
“That there are accomplices?”
“Let’s ‘bring the house’ into our sessions.”
“Describe where we are.”
“Familiar surroundings?”
“Point to the floorboards.”

Tension grew.

“Why would I want to be a double agent?”
“Does a person doubt his own intentions?”
“Foul play? That’s possible since nothing ever feels secure.”
“I keep asking myself, ‘Why me?’”
“What someone else does is their own business.”
“But have you ever felt so intertwined with that other person?”
“Who?”

“Whoever.”
“Ex-fiancée?”
“People can be unsuited to each other.”
“I have my doubts about marriage.”
“She knew that?”
“There was no contact after the break.”
“Miss her?”
“I think not.”
“Never missing anyone?”
“Whatever else, I see you as a shrine keeper.”

A conundrum evolved.

“Yeah, the house in the nightmare is kind of like a shrine or a reliquary. . . . Martyrs, saints—who knows, maybe even sacrificial beings?”
“Bones can be first-class relics [of saints] in certain circumstances?”

No apparent conscious link to the detached particles of the consecrated Host.

“It feels right to stay with the rummaging.”
“The dream house is evidently haunted.”
“But haunted by whom?”
“By a murderer or by one who consecrates?”
“Or could they be both?”

Some religiously inclined people suffer from spiritual concupiscence, a Latin word for obsessive awe or adoration.

An occasional consequence of holy men suffering from spiritual concupiscence is that the vestiges of what had been consecrated come shaking out of one’s bones. Breakdowns, in such cases, are not at all unusual. If a brokenhearted person believes that faculties for reaching God are a means of re-creating the cosmos by giving it meaning and are wanting, then it becomes all the more necessary to be penitential.

“Gregory always a guardian?”
“A holy man?”
“I feel all the more demeaned.”
Weeks later, the following dialogue took place:

“The priesthood is about sacrifice.”

“Depravity and sacrifice are not always easy to sift through.”

“An ax murderer may be his own accomplice.”

“Accomplices are either liable to be confederates or stool pigeons.”

Attention intensifies. As a teen, Gregory’s father had studied in a minor (preparatory) seminary.

“It sometimes comes over me how full of self-pity he was.”

“Should he have become the priest?”

 “[A mother/wife] under these circumstances can feel rejected and [is] likely to infer how sorry he must feel for having married instead of heeding the ‘call’ by taking priestly vows.”

“Therefore, if he had taken priestly vows, there would be no now for us.”

“Was he forever caught up in the conflict between marriage and priesthood?”

“I take it from what you’ve been saying that you were destined to serve as your father’s resolution of his conflict.”

“The notion of there being an accomplice takes on a poignancy.”

“A meaning of its own.”

“A bittersweetness with you as the ‘alternative.’”

“Sounds like you were designated to ease his pain.”

“No one ever believed how sick he really was, but I counted him a dead man years before his fatal heart attack.”

“And his leaving the preparatory seminary?”

“About two thirds never made it to the major seminary. It was not that unusual.”

“Usual may hardly be what counts.”

“Among his favorite yarns was one about how one of his ‘kids’ would eventually latch on to the rope of his ‘calling.’ He often told about the time when, as an adolescent, he was dangerously adrift in the bay due to the defectiveness of an outboard motor. ‘Lord,’ he prayed, ‘if you spare me, I promise . . .’, but just before completing that pledge to give his life to God as a priest, a larger boat approached and tossed him a tow line.”

“So it was you who embraced his faith?”

“But hardly with faith.”

“Narcissus’s reflection?”

“Embodying another’s aspiration?”

“Drowning was inevitable?”

“Perpetual terror?”

“As a child growing up where we grew up, I was frightened by backyard sounds.”

“Even in the present, there remain distinctive traces of apprehension.”

“For example?”

“A fence creaking or a strong wind met at a crossroad.”

In the middle of the second year of our meetings, a day came when I found myself threaded to Gregory’s steady glance at a tassel on my throw rug. His glance was steady—not steely or calculated but unwavering. This was a place, an arrival. His shoulders circulated toward me. Minutes created a time to follow and wait. His eyes were again moving ever so slightly. Then a brief retreat. The tassel clearly was a nucleus. Eventually, “Something gripping you?”

A passing frown. At that instant, he wanted to shut down. Ever so briefly, a glance at his watch. It was about time for the session to end. At last, “Do you mind?”

And without waiting for a permissive nod, he leaned over, now brushing his index finger along the ends of the tassel. “It was nothing.”
Seconds later, the gesture was repeated. There was an exacting precision. In a flash—index finger and thumb rounding out a speck of lint.

“Could we just stay with what is happening?”

“Just for the moment.”

Another minute passed.

“And, if at all possible, please bring the house in here so it can be with us.”

The doorbell sounds. The next client sits in the waiting room. In context, the rattling sound creeping through the adjoining wall could have been the creaking of floorboards.

“There’s time enough.”

The briefest of pauses.

He kept his hand in place, rolling a speck of lint ever so barely. It might have been masturbatory. He looked past me. No noticeable eye contact. Then, in extreme shame,

“I thought perhaps a particle of the Blessed Sacrament might have become attached to the heel of my shoe.”

I suggested that he say no more.

“May I bring my own veneration to whatever is between your fingers?”

He had fleeting doubts about whether I would not disrespect this ceremony.

“I’m not sure.”

Then, as if an “All is well” siren sounded,

“It feels like fuzz from your rug.”

“Nevertheless.”

And almost as a magician, the lint was lost to his fingers. His face only momentarily relaxed. Gregory could not believe in his passion for sin.

Lewis (1996) gave such a passion to the words of the archfiend:

You will say that these are very small sins; like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that their cumulative effect is to edge man... into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. (p. 56)

As bogus as a specter of lint might be, it could not be denied that there was, nonetheless, an innuendo of murder. Had this murder been self-annihilation? Was it ransom for a derelict father? Was this man sitting across from me a man of awe and faith—yet inescapably trapped in an inherited obligation?

He had once wanted to be a law enforcement officer. Cloaks and daggers are for the elementally fearful. Those who routinely anticipate exploitation and other assaults are well geared to implicate others in unspeakable crimes (Angyal, 1965).

“Perhaps the FBI or the Secret Service.”

These were paths some choose after law school.

“There had been no sharing of these discarded plans?”

“Not even with the woman you thought to marry?”

Suddenly,

“Did I mention that her father was a police officer?”

“Had she known that you were considering dropping her after law school?”

“Any which way she knew.”

“But the ‘decision’ was obviously underplayed.”

“And the effect on her?”
Underhill (1915) portrays a person shackled by belief as one given to a constancy of “violent shattering and rearranging of . . . self” (p. 34). Awe shakes one’s bones and rearranges them.

“Whatever role is played, even in defeat, is ultimately a victory. This greatest mask is more often the greatest truth.”

Maslow advised caution about not recognizing innate instinctive needs as quests for identity (cited in Becker, 1969). He told of a man who, in an extraordinary panic of believing himself to be a failure to his wife, flees her and hides away in a hotel room in a distant city. As the man lies awake in dread, a heavy presence bears down on his reclining body. The force is so strong that he surrenders. “This is God,” he murmurs. Then he falls into a deep and tranquil sleep. At daybreak, refreshed and renewed, the man vows to serve God by good works. Returning to his wife, the newly infused man rediscovers himself as the redeemed lover.

“How to know I’ve been ‘had’ and even so be sanctified?”

Parallel to Maslow’s illustration is Gawain in the German epic Parsifal. Deep in dream, Gawain forces a knife into the palm of his hand without feeling the slightest pain. Only when a drop of blood appears in the white snow does he become aware of a tear on his wife’s cheek. He now is truly humbled and uncommonly free to prevail in battle. His supplications tenderly interweave themselves, first to God and then to his wife. There are no distinctions between power and helplessness.

Maslow and the German epic each engaged what must be the fragmentation necessary for loss and gain. Maslow
seemed to defend fragmentation as the urgent “utter anxiety of . . . finitude [in the] lifelong urge to drown out feelings of helplessness and inadequacy in some self-transcending source of sure power” (cited in Becker, 1969, p. 134).

“There is personal value in what I do, even if I’m anguished about being called to do it.”

This, Erikson (1998) noted, is a way of affirming “universal potentials in one’s neighbor” (p. 305).

Gregory’s impulse to return to the altar so as to check for broken vestiges of the universal body was obsession and, beyond the obsession, activation. His invocation of a true presence surfaced a driving singular vision compounded by disruptive contradiction.

The Jesuit psychiatrist Meissner (1984) contended that any action of any one person necessitates the activation of multiple integrated systems. Beyond that, there are both conscious and unconscious influences that must be counted as necessary for any personal decision to be anything.

“Priesthood invokes a reconstruction of the torn apart.”

“My poor guilt-ridden father.”

“My poor guilt-ridden mother.”

“Poor guilt-ridden believers and nonbelievers.”

“The sacrifices are for them?”

“Only in part.”

“I walk with Him along my own lonely path.”

Much was gleaned. The fragments finally became not merely murdered limbs but rather building blocks. While in therapy, we came to appreciate in each other the gifts of failure, forgiveness, and unconditional acceptance.

Years have passed. Gregory serves in another locale. More than likely, he continues to hear intermittent unwelcome creaks and whispers. Sometimes the whispers might have transcendent intentions. He might still, at times, consider bits of fluff to be objects of terror, awe, and devotion. And so they might be.
NOTES

1. The appellation “Father Gregory” is in honor of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, who so beautifully portrayed the joy of creation as the risen Lord.
2. Gregory’s obsessiveness was perhaps not so uncommon for a religiously zealous person. Church jargon employs the terms _scrupulosity_ and _sensitive conscience_ almost interchangeably.

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If You Are Ready to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, Then Have an Experiential Session

Alvin R. Mahrer

I am going to describe a particular type of awe-full moment, a moment that is brief, almost like a flash. It comes and goes in an instant. It can be accompanied by a sense of ecstasy, wonder, amazement, or compelling fascination. It can be accompanied by a sense of dread, terror, primal fear, or frozen nonbeing. These two feelings are like two sides of a coin that is the sense of awe.

The first purpose is to describe this particular type of awe-full moment and the experiential sessions in which it occurs. A case is made that this particular type of awe-full moment can occur outside of experiential sessions, but it is a precious characteristic of most experiential sessions (Mahrer, 1996).

The second purpose is to provide an up-close, in-depth description of three ways in which this particular type of awe-full moment occurs in each experiential session.

A case is made that there are three awe-full moments in each experiential session.

The final purpose is an invitation. If this particular type of awe-full moment is cherished, if it is valued and important to you, and if you truly are ready to undergo these three awe-full moments, then you are invited to take a baby step toward having an experiential session.

THIS PARTICULAR TYPE OF AWE-FULL MOMENT IS A PRECIOUS CHARACTERISTIC OF EXPERIENTIAL SESSIONS

The common notion of awe is large enough, flexible enough, and friendly enough to admit that, even though a sense of awe is rare and is to be treasured, it can happen under a lot of circumstances and in a lot of places. A person can undergo a sense of awe when seeing the birth of a baby, being in the presence of God, opening his or her eyes and truly seeing radiant colors, watching the sun rise, being deeply understood by another, being transfixed by a miraculous change, waking up to the utter beauty of fulsome nature, coming to a cataclysmic
realization, or being transfixed by the sheer power of a tornado or a full eclipse. However, there is a particular type of awe-full moment that is a precious characteristic of experiential sessions.

**This Particular Type of Awe-Full Moment Is When You Have Passed the Point of No Return in the Awe-Full Final Leap**

The particular type of awe-full moment that I am referring to occurs when you have taken that momentous step into the complete and utter commitment of the final leap, when you have gone beyond the point of no return and are in the throes of the final leap into the black abyss, into giving up everything of who and what you are, into a wholesale sacrificing of your entire self into the bottomless pit of the unseeable unknown, into the cataclysmic ultimate change, into the final oblivion, and into the final leap into the void of absolute death of oneself.

The stakes are about as high as they can be. The risk is the ultimate risk of certain death, eternal nothingness, the end of your existence, or the risked possibility of the becoming of a whole new person, of absolute transformation, of qualitative metamorphosis, and of an entirely new existence. This is the particular type of awe-full moment that perhaps may rarely occur outside of experiential sessions but is a precious characteristic of experiential sessions themselves.

What is so precious is the moment of being in the final leap rather than the accompanying feeling of awe. From the experiential perspective (Mahrer, 1989, 1996), what is so precious, what is celebrated and valued, is having committed yourself to this final leap, the actual undergoing of this final leap, the being in it, and the feeling and experiencing of it. Something is magnificently different in you in this moment. You are committed. You are in the actual throes of the final leap. You no longer are quite the person you had been just before. All of this is what is so precious rather than the accompanying feeling or state of awe.

In this precious moment, there is no one to bathe in this accompanying sense of awe. You would have to stop, turn to the side, and expose yourself to the awe that is nearby. You are not undergoing this awe that is here. You are not facing what can inspire the sense of awe. In this moment, there is little or no appreciation of this sense of awe. The sense, feeling, or state of awe is simply not important in this precious moment. The burst of awe in this awe-full moment is merely a wonderful, automatic, brief accompaniment of truly being in this final leap. It is an indication, a lovely momentary sign, of actually being in this final leap. You will pass by this puff of awe as you descend in the final leap. Yes, this is an awe-full moment. No, you are not filled with awe.

**Most People Never Know That Precious Moment of Having Committed Themselves to the Final Leap**

Each experiential session offers you a golden opportunity to undergo the final leap of departing from, of letting go of, the whole person you are and falling headlong into the risked possibility of becoming the person you can become. By stark contrast, most people go through their entire lives without undergoing even a single moment of having committed themselves to that final leap. For nearly every person, living from day to day, and year after year, has few (if any) moments when the person actually commits himself or herself to giving up his or her very existence, sacrificing that ever-present sense of self, actively letting go of that sense of “I-ness,” letting go of the precious core of who and what the person is, stepping away from the innermost spark of being himself or herself, and resolutely ending the living center of the person’s actual existence.

This precious moment is not quite the same as drifting into death. This precious moment comes from actively placing oneself in the position of being ready to undertake the final
If You Are Ready to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, Then Have an Experiential Session

The Field of Psychotherapy Protects you From Actually Undergoing the Awe-Full Final Leap

Virtually, the entire field of psychotherapy lends its weight to preserving and protecting your self from hurling itself into the final leap. The field uses its resources to enhance your self, to strengthen your self, to feed your self with insight and understanding, and to respect your self’s ability to know, make decisions, and modify and change its thoughts and actions. Your self is the prized darling of much of what psychotherapy is here to do.

The field of psychotherapy keeps the essential you safely intact while it makes cosmetic changes in things that are nonessential. You can let go of some behavior and adopt a new one. You can react and respond in some new way. You can revise a way in which you think, an attitude, or an outlook. These are nonessential bits and pieces that can be safely revised and altered. None of them endangers the precious self. None of them requires that you actually undergo the awe-full leap.

The field of psychotherapy aligns itself on the side of the fears that protect you against the final leap. The field dedicates itself to preserving control, to opposing your losing control, to preventing the outbreak of the awe-fullness of what lies deep inside, to upholding morality and ethics and values, to safeguarding against craziness and derangement, and to preserving your existence.

The field of psychotherapy rushes away from the promotion of wholesale metamorphosis, deep-seated qualitative change, and utter and complete transformation. In these ways and more, the field of psychotherapy effectively guards against your undergoing the awe-full moment of the final leap.

**Experiential Sessions Can Occur by Yourself or With an Experiential Teacher-Therapist**

Consider two different pictures of what is meant by experiential sessions. In one

leap, of then hurling oneself into that final leap, and of knowing the sense of having passed the point of no return. Most people never have known what this tiny moment is like.

There Are Plenty of Fears to Protect you From Actually Undergoing the Awe-Full Final Leap

You may come close to the edge. You may even lean perilously forward. But there are plenty of fears that can rescue you from the final leap.

There is a fear of losing control, of giving up that moment-by-moment control that almost always is there. There is a fear of becoming uncivilized, out of control, wild, and animal-like. There is a fear of craziness, lunacy, derangement, and losing your mind. There is a fear that inspires codes of ethics, morality, values, laws, and familial, community, and societal recrimination and punishment. There is a fear of the unknown, the empty blackness, and the endless void. There is a fear of death, of the ending of your very existence. Before you commit yourself to the final leap, these fears snap into place and ensure that you never undergo the awe-full final leap.

First there is the lure, the promise, or the goal. Are you really passionate about undergoing wondrous change and becoming all that you can become? Are you passionate about being free of your hurts and pains, your personal anguishes and sufferings? If your ready answer is yes, then all you have to do is undergo the awe-full final leap. Now come the fears. Must you undergo that awe-full final leap? Yes. This is the requirement. It is as if you choose to keep all the hurts and pains, to remain the person with the anguish and sufferings, and to decline undergoing the wondrous transformation into becoming all that you can become. You choose to remain in this state rather than succumb to all of the fears that protect you from actually undergoing the awe-full final leap. Isn’t this interesting?
picture, you are alone in a room. You have the skills to go through an experiential session by yourself. You know what to do and how to do it. You are the “practitioner.” Throughout the session, you are in a large comfortable chair with your feet on a large comfortable footrest, or perhaps you are lying on a bed. Your eyes are closed throughout the entire session, which usually lasts for about an hour and a half, sometimes 1 hour and sometimes 2 hours. No one is around to disturb you or even to hear you going through the whole session by yourself. This is one picture of an experiential session (Mahrer, 2001).

In a different picture, you are in the office of an experiential teacher-therapist. The office is likely soundproofed. The two chairs are large and comfortable, facing in the same direction and almost touching one another. Both of you have your eyes closed throughout the entire session, which also lasts for about 1 to 2 hours, ending when the work is done or when both of you agree that the session is over.

The experiential teacher-therapist guides you through the session, showing you what to do next and how to do it (depending on your proficiency), and also joins right there with you in undergoing what you are undergoing as you proceed through the session. The session moves along at your own personal pace, honoring your own personal readiness and willingness to go through each step and baby step. This is the second picture of what is meant by an experiential session (Mahrer, 1996).

**This Type of Awe-Full Moment Happens Because of What Happens in Experiential Sessions**

Each experiential session offers the person opportunity after opportunity to go beyond the point of no return in hurling himself or herself into the awe-full final leap. Each experiential session has a series of invitations to a series of final leaps. The goals of each experiential session invite the person to take these momentous final leaps. The steps of each session show the person how to take these momentous final leaps.

The goals and the in-session steps are not aimed at putting the person in some type of state of awe or at putting the person through moments of awe. However, if the person has an eye on the goals and if the person actually walks through the steps, then one of the bonuses or side effects is that the person will undergo this type of awe-full moment.
If You Are Ready to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, Then Have an Experiential Session

One Goal Is to Become the Qualitatively Whole New Person You Can Become

Picture that you begin a session as the person you are, and then picture that you are a qualitatively whole new person by the end of the session. A transformation has happened. It might last only a few minutes or so, or it might last a long time. You look qualitatively different. The feelings in you are qualitatively new. So is the way in which you think, how you act and behave, and how you are in your world. There is a basic, fundamental, deep-seated qualitative shift in who and what you are. You live and exist in a qualitatively new world. What is “out there” is as different and as new as the person you are inside. The change is awesome.

Nor do you undergo just any change. You become the person you are capable of becoming. Chances are that you ordinarily will spend your entire life without becoming the whole different person you are capable of becoming. Chances are that you have little or no idea of the person you are capable of becoming. As surprising and outlandish as it might seem, a goal of every experiential session is to enable you to undergo this incredible qualitative change into being the whole new person that you are capable of being. This goal sets the stage for your going through this type of awe-full moment.

The Other Goal Is Being Free of the Painful Scene and Feelings That Were Front and Center for You in the Session

By the end of the session, the related other goal is that the qualitatively whole new person no longer has the painful, hurtful, and bad feelings in the painful, hurtful, and bad scene that was front and center for the person you were when you began the session. Your personal world in which you live now is essentially free of that painful situation, and if the situation still is roughly in your world, it is somehow different, less painful, and less welded to painful feelings in you. You might start the session with a painful scene of being hated, rejected, and shoved away by the one to whom you entrusted yourself. By the end of the session, your world no longer contains such scenes and such feelings in those scenes.

The awe-full moments occur because the session is dedicated to achieving these goals. The awe-full moments also occur because the session proceeds through the following steps.

Step 1: Discover the deeper potential for experiencing. The aim of the first step is to access, to bring forth, to find, and to discover something that is deep down inside you. Picture this as a potentiality for some type of experiencing, a deeper potential for experiencing that which is typically outside your awareness. Start by putting yourself in a state of welcoming readiness for undergoing a relatively strong feeling. Then find a scene of quite strong feeling, either a good or a bad feeling, from your current world or from long ago. Let yourself fully enter into, live, and be in this scene, and actively search for the exact instant of peak feeling. The deeper potential for experiencing can be discovered when you enter down inside that precious instant of peak feeling.

Step 2: Welcome, accept, and cherish the deeper potential for experiencing. The purpose of the second step is to achieve a new state of genuinely loving, welcoming, embracing, and cherishing what you had kept sealed off deep down inside—that discovered deeper potential for experiencing.

Step 3: Undergo a qualitative shift into being that reflects a deeper potential for experiencing in the context of earlier life scenes. The third step is achieved when you wholly disengage from, and no longer are, the ordinary person you have been and, instead, enter wholly and completely into being the utterly new person who embodies that formerly deeper potential for experiencing. This is accomplished by wholly living and being
almost any person can have this type of awe-full moment. It seems to make no difference whether you are young or old, a tower of strength or a fractured soul, psychologically sophisticated or naive, a seasoned veteran or a mere beginner in probing the inner world, an old hand or a novice in achieving altered states of consciousness. It does not matter that you have spent your whole life effectively dodging these awe-full moments. Apparently, there are no special qualities, characteristics, talents, or abilities required.

WHAT ARE THE THREE AWE-FULL MOMENTS IN EACH EXPERIENTIAL SESSION?

What are the three awe-full moments in each experiential session, whether the session is with oneself or with an experiential teacher-therapist?

The First Awe-Full Moment Is When You Say Yes and Actually Throw Yourself Into Having an Experiential Session That Can End the Very Existence of the Very Person You Are

The first awe-full moment is when you take the first step of committing yourself to going through a session that can end the very existence of the essential person you are. Once you throw yourself into having a session, there can be no turning back. You have leaned far enough forward that you are about to fall into the abyss. It is too late.

When you stand at the very edge, when you can either hurl yourself into a session or draw safely back, when you stand poised at the edge of the precipice, are you really ready to commit yourself, to submit yourself, to a session that can change you forever, that can put you through a wholesale qualitative wrenching change into being the radically new person you can become, whatever that may be? You know that the two goals are wondrous, precious, and all-powerful. Achieving them means a total commitment. The machinery is ready. Only you can turn it on. Once you say yes, once you turn it on, it stays on until the session has done its work, until the session is over. Take your time. The choice is yours.

Picture that you are in a room. You hear the voice of your therapist-teacher, or if you are alone, you hear the voice of the method. The voice says, “Are you truly ready to go through this session, never to turn back until the session is over, no matter what happens and no matter how long it takes? Are you truly ready to commit and dedicate yourself completely? If you are ready, say yes loud and clear. If you are ready, say YES... NOW!”
If you are, in this instant, fully committed to saying yes, if you are wholly dedicated to saying yes, then if we freeze this tiny instant, there almost always is a fraction of a second of awe, of the ecstasy and terror of fully committing and submitting yourself to undergoing a session of wholesale transformation, of undergoing the qualitative change into becoming a whole new person.

Most people never reach this moment. You spend your life staying safely away from this edge and from the awe-full instant of committing yourself to hurling yourself over the edge and into a session of deepest change.

This is the first moment of sheer awe in a precious experiential session.

The Second Awe-Full Moment Is When You Say Yes and Actually Throw Yourself Into Fully and Completely Being the Qualitatively Whole New Person You Can Be

The second moment comes after you have discovered something deep inside you. It is a hidden deeper quality, a way of being, a possibility for a type of experiencing, and a deeper potentiality for experiencing. It is so deep inside that you rarely, if ever, have felt it, undergone it, or even known that it was there. It is that deep inside you.

But now you do have a clear shot at what it is. You see it up close and in detail. You have discovered a deeply hidden, whole new way of being, a possibility or potentiality for experiencing. Suppose that it is a deeper possibility for experiencing being in charge, in control, and dominating. This is not at all a part of the person you are. This is not part of your daily being or of undergoing, feeling, or experiencing. Once in a rare while, you might touch lightly on a tiny token sample, but this is not you or a part of the person you are. It is sealed off and hidden deep within you.

You also have found a scene, a situation in which you certainly were not this way. You were the way you usually were in that situation—kindly, understanding, gracious, and compromising. The scene happened last night when the whole family was at your place trying to decide what to do with poor old Momma, who is getting more and more gloomy since Daddy died last year. The whole family is politely skating around topics that everyone is astutely complicit in not talking about directly. The scene was explicitly when you did your gracious best to head off the usual confrontation between your explosive older brother and your nasty aunt.

The moment of awe comes when you go back into that scene, just before you actually launched into being the level-headed compromiser between your older brother and your aunt. If we freeze this instant, are you ready for an earth-shattering change, a massive transformation? Are you truly ready, instead of being the person you were, to undergo a truly catastrophic shift into being a qualitative, radical, wholesale new person who is not at all you but rather is the living embodiment of being completely in charge, completely dominating, and in absolute control? You are to undergo being this altogether new and different person fully, with supercharged gusto, in full force, all the way, and with full vigor and intensity. Let yourself be this whole new person totally free of all reality constraints; in total silliness, zaniness, and wildness; and with unbounded exhilaration and excitement.

All right. You are indeed living and being in the scene. It is in that instant when your aunt has just said, “Sam ought to care for Mom. He’s got all the money in the family!” And you see your brother Sam’s lid about to explode. Right here, in this very frozen instant, are you absolutely ready to throw yourself into being this whole new other person who is the sheer experiencing of wholesale in charge, wholesale control,
and wholesale domination? Yes? Then throw yourself into being it . . . NOW!

If we freeze what happens, if you have chosen to say yes, and if you have thrown yourself into wholly being this whole new person in this real moment, then there is a fraction of an instant in which you have absolutely let go of every last shred of being the ordinary, continuing you; you have passed the point of no return in becoming the qualitatively whole new person who is the pure experiencing of being in absolute charge, complete control, and full domination; and you have a flash of awe, of wonder and excitement, of fright and terror.

This is the second moment of awe in a precious session. It is the instant of having passed the point of no return in your wholesale letting go of the very person you have existed as and into actually being the utterly new, radically new, and qualitatively new person who is the deeper potential for experiencing that you had kept hidden and sealed off throughout your whole existence.

The Third Awe-Full Moment Is When You Say Yes and You Continue Being the Qualitatively New Person in the Qualitatively New, Postsession World

Now you truly are a whole new person in this session. You have undergone the qualitative switch, the radical conversion, and the dramatic transformation. For perhaps the first time in your life, almost certainly in your current life, there is a whole new part to the whole new you. It feels peaceful and exciting to have a sense of being in charge. It feels right and joyful to have a sense of absolute control. It feels natural and alive to have this wonderful sense of domination.

In the final part of the session, you were living and being this whole new person in all types of scenes and situations from the postsession world. You sampled what life can be like as this qualitatively new person who leaves the session and lives and exists in the imminent new world out there, in the whole new world of this whole new person. The new person had a foretaste, a preview, of what life can be like when the door opens and the new you walks into the world of today, tomorrow, and maybe forever.

You are being far more than just the formerly deeper potential for experiencing. You are far more than merely the new experiencing of being in charge, being in absolute control, and experiencing this newly felt domination. This formerly deeper potential now is an integral part of a whole new you. You have become a whole new person that includes this whole new, and integrated, potentiality for experiencing.

What is more, this whole new person lives in a whole new world that is essentially free of those old painful scenes and situations, and the whole new person is essentially free of the painful feelings in those painful situations.

As the session comes to an end, you are this qualitatively whole new person, and you are ready to end the session and enter into a qualitatively whole new world that fits nicely with the qualitatively whole new person you are.

Suppose that we freeze this moment, hold it still. In this very moment, you can remain being this whole new person, and when you open your eyes and walk out of the room, you can live and be in a whole new world out there. Or you can, in this precious moment, switch back into being the ordinary person you always have been, the person you were in the beginning of the session.

This is the third awe-full moment in virtually every experiential session. Who is here? Who is this person you are? Are you the qualitatively new person who opens your eyes, walks out of the room, and lives in a whole new world? Being this whole new person is marvelously available. Or will you, in this frozen awe-full moment, revert back to the ordinary person you almost always have been?
In this frozen moment, there is an instant when the decision has to be made. You must choose one way or the other. Which is it to be? The choice is here. You must choose yes to remaining, or you choose no and revert back. And your choice is . . . ? Here is the moment of awe, filled with excitement and wonder as well as with dread and fright. It all happens in a brief moment.

In this brief moment, perhaps, we can appreciate how and why awe can include such a sense of ecstasy, wonder, and fascination. Perhaps it comes from the incredible transformation, from having stepped into being the whole new person. Being this whole new person now, and being able to be this whole new person from now on and forever, can be awe-full. And when awe is accompanied by dread, terror, and primal fear? What then? Perhaps this third awe-full moment allows us to know how easy it is to step back into the ordinary you, how easy it is to see how we actually may choose to step back into a personal world of pain, suffering, hurt, and anguish. We deliberately choose to return to this world of pain and terrible feelings. It is as if the dread, the terror, and the primal fear are from having the choice of either becoming and remaining the qualitatively whole new person or of watching ourselves clinging to a world of pain, suffering, hurt, and anguish.

If You Would Like to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, You Are Invited to Take a Baby Step Toward Having an Experiential Session

Chances are that you never, or rarely, have undergone any of these awe-full moments, and the chances of your having undergone all three are even more remote. Is there now enough of a spark for you to take a first baby step? I hope so.

Take a baby step. Read about baby steps. Attend a workshop. Take a course. Ask a teacher to walk with you through as much of a session as you wish. Reach me in the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5 (amahrer@uottawa.ca).

The awe-full moments in an experiential session can be precious. Are you ready and willing to take a first baby step?

REFERENCES


Constructivist Approaches to Therapy

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Beginning with The Psychology of Personal Constructs (Kelly, 1955/1991a, 1955/1991b), constructivist theorizing has been an integral aspect of psychology and psychotherapy. A family of theories that assume that reality is in some way created by persons, constructivism both anticipated and benefited from the current interest in postmodern philosophies in psychology. Despite constructivism’s powerful influence in helping shift psychology toward more postmodern understandings of the world, most therapists have little idea of the ways in which constructivist approaches can and do contribute to helping humans solve even the most severe problems. In this chapter, we hope to provide a brief overview of some of the many ways in which constructivist therapies can liberate people to approach life more creatively and courageously. We begin by providing an overview of constructivist assumptions and philosophies. This is followed by a brief discussion of classic constructivist approaches to therapy. Next, we briefly describe some of the more recent developments in constructivist thought. We conclude with our thoughts on the future of constructivist therapy. Because of space limitations, we focus on individual therapy; however, we provide references for those interested in other approaches.

WHAT IS CONSTRUCTIVISM?

Constructivism is a term for a family of theories starting from a philosophical position that, rather than there being a “reality” out there to be discovered, persons play an integral role in creating the reality they perceive and grasp experientially. Beginning with Kelly’s (1955/1991b) philosophy of constructive alternativism (i.e., the universe is open to an infinite variety of interpretations), constructivists have argued that “objective reality” does not impose its meanings on persons. Science, rather than being about discovering truth, is more about theory

Authors’ Note: All clinical material has been altered to preserve client anonymity.
building or meaning creation. For example, Einstein’s fundamental reconstruing of physics rendered many of the “truths” discovered in previous centuries irrelevant. Furthermore, Einstein’s theories themselves are not true and eventually will be swept away by a newer way of understanding the world.

The meanings that people create determine what aspects of the universe are grasped as well as the ways in which these aspects are experienced. For example, psychological theorizing assuming the independent autonomous individual had not grasped the sensitivity to context and relationship shown by many women (e.g., Gilligan, 1993). Furthermore, when some meanings (e.g., traditional Freudianism) allowed for women’s sensitivity to context, it was understood in pathological ways. It took feminist psychology to create meanings that understood this aspect of women as a rich and viable alternative to the traditional views of morality. In this regard, constructivists are continuously attempting to determine the ways in which hidden assumptions about persons and reality empower or limit the persons we serve.

Thus, constructivist psychology is not about the powerful psychologist imposing reality on the powerless client. Rather, therapy and research are cocreated journeys exploring the lived reality of persons. Constructivists believe that meaningful understandings of persons develop when we grasp the unique, personal, and rich realities that humans have created. Most constructivists are concerned more about the process of meaning creation than about the specific meanings created by persons (Leitner, 1985). This emphasis on the process of meaning creation allows the constructivist therapist to respectfully listen to the client’s felt reality without getting into whether the meanings are accurate, realistic, or rational. This more egalitarian view of the relationship between therapist and client can be seen as empowering clients to explore the ways in which they approach the world.

While agreeing that reality never can be known directly, constructivist schools disagree on the exact nature of the relationship between the person and the world. Radical constructivists (e.g., Efran, Lukens, & Lukens, 1990) argue that there is no way of even saying that there is a reality outside the meanings we have created. In a way, then, the real world does not exist given that there is no way in which to see any reality other than the reality of our constructions. Giving primacy to the ways in which we use language (broadly construed such that the term language is similar to our use of the term meaning), radical constructivists would argue that the language we create totally determines our experience of the world.

Social constructionists, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the meanings that the culture has created and given to its members. In so doing, they critique other schools of psychology as being excessively individualistic. A person is defined for the social constructionists by the culture’s way of discussing personhood. Furthermore, as the culture has started to shift ever more rapidly, the self is saturated with so many different social constructions that the very idea of a unified and cohesive sense of self is viewed as an impossibility (Gergen, 1991). Rather, we have multiple “selves,” culturally defined, interacting with the multiple selves of others. Interestingly, social constructionism, while agreeing that objective reality cannot be known directly, posits a relativistic cultural reality so powerful that it can impose itself on its members (Burr, 1995).

Critical constructivism occupies a middle ground between these two positions. Critical constructivists assume that there is a real universe that the person engages in the meaning-making process. Meanings are created in interaction between the person and
Constructivist Approaches to Therapy

Creating an atmosphere of reverential caring (Leitner, 2001), these illustrations become things done to, rather than ways of being with, the client.

Classic Constructivist Approaches

The credulous approach (Kelly, 1955/1991a; Rigdon, Clark, & Hershgold, 1993) involves understanding the client from the assumption that literally everything the client says is “true” (in the sense of communicating important aspects of the client’s experience). Viney and Epting (1999) stated that if a client says that he went to the moon, then “he really went to the moon” (p. 4). After all, there are many ways of going to the moon; indeed, there are many moons to which one can go. Therapists can communicate the credulous approach through questions such as “What is it like to . . .?” The therapist’s choice of trusting in the reality of the client’s reported experience can powerfully contradict the many ways in which persons are told to discount, ignore, and devalue their feelings and beliefs.

Constructivist therapists are also respectful of the ways in which meanings are inherently bipolar (for empirical support of this position, see Rychlak, 1994). For example, someone who contrasts “passive” with “self-confident” should be approached very differently from someone who contrasts “passive” with “murderous.” Faidley and Leitner (1993) described a construction of “passive versus murderous” used by a person who shot her spouse when he filed for divorce. Constructivist therapists ask questions such as “How would you be if you were not . . .?” as a way of understanding the potential contrasts in meaning.
A good example of the power of the credulous approach and contrast concerns a client who had a meaning of “depressed versus irresponsible.” The credulous approach suggests that we should not ignore this strange duality given that it may reveal important truths about the client’s experience. Interestingly enough, this person was referred for therapy after attempting suicide soon after being “rewarded” with a prestigious job promotion (Faidley & Leitner, 1993).

**Invitational Mode and Safety**

The meanings we create govern our existence and are continually at risk as we encounter a world without certainties and guarantees. Not surprisingly, people often feel great threat as central values are potentially disconfirmed by the world. This threat can be so severe that the very process of meaning creation can be frozen (Leitner, 1999a). Thus, constructivist therapists emphasize making the therapy relationship a safe place, providing the client with a secure base from which to explore the world that he or she has created. Constructivists may do this by making personal exploration more tentative, experimental, and even playful.

Safety can be emphasized through the invitational mode, that is, the therapist always inviting but never insisting that the client explore certain aspects of experience. Statements such as “Can you tell me more about . . . ?” and “I wonder what it is like to . . . ” implement the invitational mode. When the client chooses to accept the invitation and explore aspects of his or her experience in more depth, the therapist can be confident that the therapy relationship is experienced as safe enough to handle the material being developed. When the client declines the invitation, the therapist needs to consider the reasons why the client does not trust the safety of the therapy relationship.

**Change**

Like most humanistic theorists, constructivists assume that people are processes of growth and evolution. Specifically, we assume that people are processes of meaning creation and re-creation (Leitner, 1985). However, many clients cannot see themselves as changing along certain meanings. Because our constructions of the world determine our experience of the world, seeing the self as unchanging sharply limits the prospects of therapeutic growth. Thus, constructivist therapists often work at helping clients apply constructions of change to the dilemmas they face. (The ability to see a dilemma as changing is the reason why it is easier for “acute” problems to be overcome than for “chronic” ones.) Questions such as “Are there times when it is better [or worse or different]?” can help the client apply a construction of change to the problem. Alert therapists also can make comments when they see the client’s experience of the problem shifting, even if ever so slightly.

When the client construes his or her despair as outside the client’s control (e.g., entrenched in one’s biology or society), the therapist might find it very difficult to help the client see the ways in which changes in his or her meaning system might very well be beneficial. For example, if George is less depressed because he is being “treated better,” then he still is not able to take responsibility for the ways in which his meanings have played a role in his depression. If others choose to “treat him worse,” for example, then he is back in his old prison. In other words, helping the client to tie changes in symptoms to changes in meaning making is important.

**Fixed-Role Therapy**

Fixed-role therapy (Kelly, 1973) can be described as a form of brief psychotherapy applying a self-narrative approach.
In its original form, a 2-week invitation is extended to a client to explore some alternative ways of being in the world—alternatives with possibilities for growth and development. The client first writes a self-description that is open and revealing yet sympathetic, like a character in a play. The therapist and client then cocreate (in written form) an alternative character for the client to enact, first in the therapy hour and then in the outside world. Over the 2-week period, the client is invited to undertake enactments that initially involve low-risk others (e.g., a clerk in a store) and then progress to more important others (e.g., spouse, significant other). At the end of the 2 weeks, the therapist and client assess how things have gone, deciding which experiences were of value and deserve to build on and which to disregard. This procedure is built on the premise that self-consistency can be stultifying at times and a temporary fragmentation in the form of an alternative role enactment can excite the creative imagination of a client.

Many modifications and elaborations of the procedure have been undertaken. Epting and Nazario (1987) and Viney (1981) showed that very productive work can be accomplished by having clients play out the opposite end of their (bipolar) constructs. For example, a client who self-describes as shy undertakes a rather boisterous alternative-role enactment. Many clients cannot wait to jump on the opposite end of their meanings, just for the fun of it, even if they later decide to go back to their original positions. In addition, clients have been found to make use of alternative-role descriptions long after the 2-week enactment schedule has ended. Fixed-role therapy has been used with small groups (Beail & Parker, 1991), families (Procter, 1981, 1985), and the exploration of personal myths (Epting & Pritchard, 1991). Brophy and Epting (1996) used this approach in consulting with junior executives in a large company. Role enactments were used to help employees reinvent themselves in the face of negative evaluations from their seniors.

CONSTRUCTIVISM AND NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Constructivist theorizing (Mair, 1977, 1988, 1989, 1990) anticipated and shaped many narrative approaches to psychology (Howard, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1988; Terrell & Lyddon, 1995). Many constructivists have used the metaphor of “self-as-storyteller” (Neimeyer, 2000, p. 211) and have described the person as both the author and the leading character in a story created to understand meaning in one’s life. Narratives “establish continuity of meaning in the client’s lived experience” (Neimeyer, 1995, p. 233). Like other narrative therapists, constructivists focus on gaps, incompleteness, and incoherence in the client’s life story as indicating problems in living. (Gonçalves, Korman, & Angus, 2000, discussed ways of inferring incoherence and incompleteness in narratives.) Because the person is the principal character in the life story, such incoherence implies problems in creating an integrated construction of self-in-the-world.

The reader who is interested in ways in which narratives can be used within constructivist therapy is referred to the rich literature on the topic (Gonçalves, 1995; Moffett & McElheny, 1995; Neimeyer, 2000; White & Epston, 1990). To give one concrete illustration, if the setting (e.g., the “where” and “when”) of one’s narrative is barren, gray, and impoverished, then the narrator could be communicating an important aspect of the experience of self-in-the-world. Gonçalves (1995) described a “moviola” technique in which the therapist’s attention moves over the setting like a camera might do in a movie. Often, this focused attention helps the client create a richer setting for the life story.
FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

There is a rich literature on the application of classic constructivist principles to family therapy (Feixas, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1995; Goolishian & Winderman, 1988; Procter, 1981, 1985, 1987). Procter, for example, argued for a family construct system (i.e., a set of meanings shared by members of the family) in addition to each person’s personal construct system. Each person in the family has a unique position in this family meaning system. Change for the person involves change along the family’s meaning system.

Systemic bow tie diagrams might offer the clearest example of one constructivist technique for family therapy. For example, John and Patsy sought help regarding their inability to communicate around emotionally laden topics (Figure 34.1). John approached these topics with meanings and issues around his fear that Patsy did not love him. These fears led him to be vague and nonresponsive during their conversations. However, Patsy experienced John’s vagueness as his not respecting her enough to discuss important issues. Her feelings of not being respected led her to be short and sarcastic with him. John experienced her shortness and sarcasm as confirming his fears about not being loved.

In the bow tie diagram, each person’s actions, based on his or her own fears and issues, confirm the fears and issues of the partner. Interventions at any point (at either the level of behavior or the level of the underlying meanings for either partner) could change the entire system. For example, if John could see sarcasm as linked to frustration rather than to lack of love, then he might be less evasive. If he could courageously risk being open and specific even as he feels unloved, then Patsy would feel more respected, thereby decreasing her sarcasm. Patsy could check her sarcastic responses when feeling disrespected, allowing John to feel more loved, thereby reducing his evasiveness. Patsy could experience John’s evasiveness as fear more than as disrespect, leading her to be less sarcastic toward John.

Ravenette (1997) is arguably the most creative psychologist using constructivist techniques to understand the inner experience of children. He goes into the assessment session armed with nothing but blank sheets of paper. He invites the child to draw a picture that incorporates a simple structure that he provides (e.g., a bent line drawn in the center of the page). The child then is asked to create the opposite picture of the one just drawn. From there, an engaging dialogue

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**Figure 34.1** Systemic Bow Tie

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patsy does not love me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John does not respect me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enough to discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>important issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fearfulness, vague, nonresponses

Anger; sarcasm
```
allows the child to share some of his or her personal world. The child also is asked to describe himself or herself as the child imagines a parent would describe him or her (e.g., “What sort of boy would your father say you were?”), setting a rich dialogue into motion. All of Ravenette’s numerous techniques have the aim of enabling children to say what they know about their worlds but could not otherwise find words to express.

EXPERIENTIAL PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOTHERAPY

Experiential personal construct psychotherapy (EPCP) reveals constructivism’s profound relational, experiential, and existential foundations. EPCP sees persons as needing rich and intimate relationships (termed ROLE relationships) in which the very being of one another can be experienced and confirmed. At the same time, such relationships are terrifying in that they expose one’s very core to potentially devastating disconfirmations. This potential terror often results in the person retreating from intimacy and paying the price through the experience of emptiness, meaninglessness, and guilt (Leitner, 1985). Often in response to such danger, the client numbs the self to his or her own experience (Leitner, 1999b). EPCP engages the client in this very process of needing to connect deeply (with subsequent richness and terror) versus needing to retreat to protect the self (with subsequent safety yet emptiness).

Because people are relationship seeking, the client brings the desires as well as the terrors associated with deep connections to the therapy room. This allows the client and the therapist to use the living relationship of the therapeutic encounter to help the client in self-transformation. Ways in which the client (and the therapist) retreat from, minimize, or avoid the therapeutic ROLE relationship are experientially explored to uncover the reasons why the client (and the therapist) has created a reality in which retreat and emptiness are the better choice.

EPCP has been used to explore the experience of resistance in psychotherapy (Leitner & Dill-Standiford, 1993), the ways in which therapist interventions are confirmed or disconfirmed by clients (Leitner & Guthrie, 1993), and therapeutic interventions with serious disturbances (Leitner & Celentana, 1997). It has also been used to explore the ways in which clients can act from differing levels of consciousness without resorting to a “therapist-knows-all” position (Leitner, 1999a) and the use of creativity in psychotherapy (Leitner & Faidley, 1999). Leitner and colleagues (2000) proposed a system of diagnosing human meaning making that simultaneously respects the lived experience of the client and opens treatment options for the therapy relationship.

Optimal therapeutic distance, a central aspect of EPCP (Leitner, 1995), is an integration of profound connection and separation. Experientially, optimal distance can be seen when the therapist is close enough to the client to feel the client’s experience inside the therapist while also distant enough such that the therapist can recognize it as the client’s experience and not the therapist’s own. Optimal distance can be contrasted with therapeutic strangers (i.e., the therapist is so distant that he or she cannot experience with the client) and therapeutic unity (i.e., when the therapist is so swept up in the client’s experience that the feelings are the therapist’s more than the client’s). In other words, optimal therapeutic distance combines subjectively experiencing the client’s experience while, at the same time, professionally understanding the client’s experience.

When the therapist is optimally distant, therapy is opened to the possibility of great personal transformations. The therapist simultaneously experiences the overwhelming terror of the client (powerfully affirming
its reality for the client) while, through the therapeutic relationship, providing the client with the felt sense that one can approach, grapple with, and learn from the terror. To be optimally distant, however, the therapist has to be aware of his or her very humanity, that is, the ways in which the therapist has retreated from, injured, or avoided the very ones he or she loves the most (Leitner & Celentana, 1997).

For example, a young man had the delusion that the KGB (the Soviet spy organization) was going to kill his therapist (Leitner, 2001). Rather than treating the delusion with neurotoxins or accusations of crazy thinking, the therapist tried to understand the reality of the message behind the delusion. The delusion disappeared when the therapist spoke “from the heart” about knowing what it was like to be so consumed by rage that a person could kill someone and to be so terrified by life that a person had withdrawn to the point where he or she no longer knew for sure what was real and what was fantasy. At the same time, the therapist talked about such rage being closely tied to a felt injury and hoped that there would come a time when the client would trust the therapy relationship enough to talk about the injury. In other words, the delusion ended when the therapist simultaneously could connect with the client’s rage and potential for “psychotic” terror (because the therapist recognized them in himself) while offering an understanding that gave the therapy relationship some hope (see also the chapter by Friedman [Chapter 28, “Therapy as an I–Thou Encounter”], this volume).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Constructivist therapy continues to evolve and grow. We believe that the future will hold further developments in the area of more focused short-term treatments for mild to moderate disorders. (Ecker & Hulley’s, 1996, 2000, depth-oriented brief therapy provides one example of the creative use of constructivist principles in this area.) Furthermore, experiential personal construct psychotherapy was developed using constructivist principles to transform the experiences of the most severely disturbed persons being seen in psychotherapy today. Elaboration of this approach into areas of lesser disturbance will be important. Although constructivist principles can be applied to entire communities, little has been done to date in that arena. We find it difficult to predict the exact path of constructivist therapy in the future, but we are optimistic that it will become increasingly important as psychology rediscovers that, to truly have a rich discipline, we must understand the magnificent creature we call a person. In so doing, we must honor the meaning-making mystery lying behind the various creations on which psychology has focused in the past.

REFERENCES


These reflections on loss are particularly poignant for me right now. From start to finish as I have written these words, my dog has been slowly dying. He has been with my family for 14½ years, and he has been at my side throughout this creative process, watching, sleeping, and loving without expectation, as only a dog can do. It is a mystery that his tired body is crying “Stop!” even as I am writing.

As I hear, smell, and touch this loss, I am searching for meaning. When we experience a loss, meaning may emerge. This possibility does not diminish the pain of loss, but it enriches us as we open up to searching. After struggling with his wife’s cancer, a client poignantly expressed a meaning he had found after her death: “I appreciate the small things in life so much now. I am grateful for the toilet paper hanging there. I hardly noticed toilet paper before my wife’s cancer and her death. I hardly noticed a lot of ordinary things. I notice a lot now.”

What does it mean to experience a loss? Some losses are small and have an objective quality, such as the loss of house keys, an article of clothing, or a piece of jewelry. Do these objective losses prepare us for more intensely personal and subjective losses, such as the loss of a marriage, a parent, a spouse, a child, or a woman’s own breast? What happens as we prepare—or fail to prepare—for these more personal losses? What happens to us as we age and continue to lose parts of our lives that are near and dear to us? These questions are part of a search latent in each of us as we age and draw closer to our own deaths.

There are some basic “givens” that are inevitable aspects of the human condition. This chapter addresses the given that Yalom (1980) referred to as “death” and that Bugental (1981, 1987) referred to as “finitude.” As humans, we are born with the ultimate and inescapable limit of the death of the physical body. This is the inevitable outcome of another given, that is, embodiment (Bugental, 1981); we are born into a body with all the limitations that bodies are subject to, including the fact that one day it will cease to function. Each of us approaches these givens along a number of parameters such as age, gender, social class, cultural/religious beliefs and practices, family, and emotional support systems (including both external and internal support).
This chapter describes the individual’s internal support through searching for meaning in loss. Let me stress that this search is not a linear movement that provides definite answers at the end; rather, it is an ongoing process that often takes us into new and uncharted territory. “Spiritual pioneers” (Coles, 1990) are those who have courageously journeyed into this uncharted territory to find meaning in loss. This chapter presents some landmarks of that journey, which I call the “stations” of the search; these are the perceptual stances that we typically encounter as we search for meaning in loss.

A CALL AND A RESPONSE

The human potential movement during the 1960s called for enhancement and enrichment of the human. At first, this idealistic call seemed to ignore the limits of the human condition as growth centers such as Esalen expanded and awareness groups flourished across the nation. Those of us who responded to the call of the human potential movement knew that we were going to make great personal and global changes. We did and we did not make changes. It is the did not that I now address.

Responses to the challenge of human potential have not changed the fundamental givens. Each of us has a limited time in this body, and most of us have no idea when this time will end. We live with the certainty and uncertainty of death. The baby boomers in this country, roughly 80 million of us born between 1945 and 1965, now are in midlife or aging (Elkins, 1998). More people than ever before, and more people at the same time than ever before, are looking at mortality and the possible meanings or lack of meaning of this most basic given.

Midlife is a time of profound questioning impelled by deep losses. Most baby boomers have lost at least one significant other to death—spouse, child, friend, or parent. It is no longer “Death never will happen to me” but rather a question of when, where, and how. A major shift of perspective for baby boomers is that we no longer have the luxury of philosophizing about death as something that comes to others and not to ourselves. It is a very different experience to touch, smell, and live with death. One of the significant findings by Yalom and Lieberman (1991) in their research with bereavement and existential awareness is that the death of a spouse often brings one’s own death into focus. A participant in their study reported the following:

I realize that everything that’s present right now can suddenly stop to be; I know this is very obvious, but somehow it’s something I never experienced before. Death can really happen.... I see it happening to my friend.... My husband’s death has made it very clear to me that I was born to die, that death is inevitable.... My time will be up eventually. This is obvious; who doesn’t know it? But somehow I’m aware of this in a way that I never was really aware of it before.... I feel like I could die almost any minute.... I’m just more conscious of my mortality.... I don’t shrug off aches and pains as I have in the past. I think about them. I get a little nervous if I get bronchitis. (p. 337)

As this quote illustrates, a loss that we actually experience heightens our awareness of death. Other contemporary factors heighten our awareness of death including high-risk diseases (e.g., AIDS, cancer) and the increasing uncertainty of life-threatening environmental factors. Psychotherapists are also changing along with the heightened awareness and risk of death, listening with more of an “existential ear” (Bugental & Kleiner, 1993) both to the client and to themselves. We are now responding to our own limitations. Bugental (1981), Frankl (1958),
May (1953), and Yalom (1980) have for decades regarded the given of death as essential to psychotherapy.

**MEANING AND MEANINGLESSNESS**

Meaninglessness has often been perceived as a theological and a philosophical concept. Philosophers, artists, writers, historians, and journalists also recognize meaninglessness as an existential concern. For many existential thinkers, such as Camus and Tillich, the anxiety of meaninglessness is a part of human existence. Tillich (1952) characterized the anxiety of our times as “the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness” (p. 73). According to Tillich (1952) and Camus (1942/1955), nothing can take this existential anxiety away; we must accept it as a part of existence.

The existential psychotherapist Frankl, who led groups while living in a concentration camp, wrote that the “will-to-meaning” is the dominant drive of humans. Frankl (1958) emphasized that the human is “dominated neither by the will-to-pleasure nor the will-to-power but [rather] by what I call man’s will-to-meaning, that is to say, his deep-seated striving and struggle for a higher and ultimate meaning to his existence” (p. 20). This drive is often frustrated and can lead to a sense of meaninglessness, which Frankl (1959/1963) referred to as an “existential vacuum” (p. 108).

This existential anxiety or existential vacuum becomes the driving force of our search for meaning. The discomfort of that anxiety provides intense motivation. Nowhere do we confront meaninglessness more starkly than when we face the prospect of our own deaths—the loss of our physical bodies, our connections with all those we have loved, all the labors and creations into which we have poured our energies. Perhaps death drives the search in which we might very well find the meaning of living.

There is a range of possible responses to the sense of meaninglessness. Denial certainly is one; the individual may seek to avoid existential anxiety by repressing the sense of meaninglessness. Denial may complement escape as a response, in which the individual selectively drowns out the anxiety with an ongoing flurry of activity, often deriving some sense of meaning from accomplishment and the resulting recognition.

One can also respond to existential anxiety with a sense of absurdity (Bugental, 1981) or despair (Tillich, 1952), in which the individual succumbs to the sense of meaninglessness. This might make a search for meaning seem vain; it renders life absurd. The result is self-alienation expressed through an apathetic or self-destructive lifestyle.

One can trivialize life and its experiences through any of these responses. One also can rob it of richness through dogmatism, accepting preset beliefs and answers that offer a sense of comfort and security. Dogmatism might not necessarily trivialize life, but like the other possible responses mentioned so far, it certainly can act as an anesthetic that keeps us from looking at what death and loss mean on a personal level. Through any of these responses, we give away our authenticity, that is, the condition of being true to ourselves.

Another possible response to existential anxiety is what Tillich (1952) referred to as courage. The choice of courage facilitates taking responsibility in spite of the apparent meaninglessness of one’s existence (p. 66).

**THE COURAGE TO SEARCH**

Courage consists in a confronting of our limitedness within the unlimitedness of being. Courage consists in the exercising of our choice and the taking of our responsibility while recognizing that contingency can
overthrow our decision and reverse our best efforts. Courage finds its finest expression in the choice to be. (Bugental, 1981, p. 26)

We often begin looking for meaning in the objective world; for example, focusing on what the doctor should or should not have done can help resolve feelings about a loved one dying. When we do not feel satisfied with the outer search, we turn to inner searching. In discussing the courage to search, I refer to an inner-directed process (rather than an outer-directed one), that is, to a subjective process that reaches deep into one’s inner being. When we search so deeply, we often find ourselves in uncharted waters, and this requires great courage. The inner search is focused on what is happening inside the person—the feelings, awarenesses, and nuances of the depths of the person’s inner ocean.

My own courage to search emerged when I nearly drowned in the ocean at around 12 years of age. My girlfriend and I were swept out to sea in a riptide. We were terrified, and our efforts in swimming and screaming for help only exhausted us. My mother heard us and came out to help. She instructed us to float instead of trying to swim and to scream for help periodically. My mother got caught in the riptide as well. I have never forgotten that seemingly endless time of floating and screaming. As I drifted farther and farther from shore, I found myself imagining what was on the other side of this vast expanse of water, and I realized that I might not live to see it. This only intensified my panic. I remember thinking, “I could die.” My mother and friend also were floating out to sea, and I felt tremendous sadness that we all might die.

In the midst of all this, my mother’s instructions resonated deeply within me, and no matter how tired I got, they fueled the courage to keep struggling and calling for help, that is, to continue to be. It took great courage for the three of us to float without knowing whether we would be rescued or keep drifting farther from shore. Help finally came. For many days after this experience, I sat at the edge of this vast ocean in awe of my experience and my sense of touching life and death firsthand. The search for meaning in this near-death experience has always brought me deep awareness of my mother’s courage and love for me; she risked her life to save mine. I also became aware of a loss—the assumption that my life would go on forever. It was my first wake-up call that life is finite and that death can come at any time and any place.

As theologians such as Tillich and scholars such as May have pointed out for so long, courage is vital to the searching process. My experience in my own psychotherapy practice bears this out. Some people immediately access the courage to search for meaning. They respond to the blank canvas of meaninglessness with inner exploration and creativity, encountering a full range of human experiences. A client who recently had separated from her husband used gardening, and the metaphor of gardening, to explore the meaning of her loss. She said, “My loss reminds me of gardening. When the plants aren’t growing for whatever reason, I start over. I see it as an opportunity to plant things completely differently.” Her courage sustained her through many hours of therapy in which she searched the depths of sadness, loneliness, and estrangement from her husband. Using her own metaphor, she could creatively transplant these emotions to new places in her inner garden.

Sometimes, inner searching can lead to confirmation of our underlying beliefs about human nature. We see an example of this in a recent interview by Rehak (1999) with the diarist and composer Ned Rorem after the death of his partner of 32 years. Rehak asked, “What do you feel grieving has taught you about human nature?” Rorem replied,
I haven’t learned a thing. I haven’t learned anything except for the fact that you don’t learn anything when people die—and that’s already something. Everybody says, “I know just how you feel,” and I’m sure they do, but it’s like love. Love is very selfish. People who are in love are a bore, usually because all they say is, “How can you possibly understand this great love?” It’s the same with death. There’s something selfish about love and something selfish about a person dying. I think there is a certain egotism in grief—there has to be. (p. 19)

Rorem gave this reflection on grieving for public reflection. It shows that inner searching does not always deliver sweet answers. In fact, it sometimes brings up hard facts that it takes courage to face and hold in one’s life.

I have been a bereavement counselor for a local hospice for 10 years. I facilitate support groups for those who recently have lost loved ones. I am in awe of the courage of people who first come together as strangers and meet for 8 weeks to plumb the depths of their losses together. It takes courage to attend these groups and even more courage to show up for them emotionally. It is a profound experience to show up for one’s own losses and even more so to show up for other people’s losses.

SEARCHING FOR MEANING: IMPORTANT CONDITIONS IN THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC SETTING

Bugental (1987) described “searching” as an innate natural capacity that a variety of therapies tap into. Freud’s technique of “free association” is an inner-searching process, as is Gendlin’s (1982) “focusing” and Welwood’s (1982) “unfolding.” Bugental (1987) said the following of searching: “This innate capacity of human beings is that on which we call whenever we meet a situation to which we need to respond but for which we have no preexisting well-practiced response pathways” (p. 167). This inner searching is vital when one deals with loss.

I recognize three conditions that facilitate the searching process in a psychotherapeutic setting: presence, accompanying the client’s subjective search, and caring. It is essential for the client to hold these qualities in order to do any meaningful searching. It is equally crucial for the therapist to hold these qualities during the session because they profoundly affect the client’s search.

Presence is accompanied by heightened self-awareness on the part of both therapist and client. With a recent client, I found myself asking, “What is going on in me [the therapist] as my client shares the suicide of her daughter?” I am acutely aware that the depth of my self-awareness directly influences my client’s search. If her child’s suicide brings up in me an unacknowledged terror concerning my own child, then my lack of presence will limit my client’s ability to visit her own terror. The opposite also is true. Consciously experiencing and containing my own terror can create a supportive holding environment that serves my client’s search. Being sustained by the therapist’s presence often is the turning point for a client (Bugental, 1981, p. 180).

Accompanying the client’s subjective search is the second vital condition for searching. My client’s daughter committed suicide. It certainly is important for the therapist to know this objective fact, but objective facts are not the focus of the work. The essential work is the willingness and courage of the client and the therapist to immerse themselves in the client’s subjective world. What is happening inside this woman as she talks about her daughter’s suicide? How is her child’s death affecting her at this moment? Where does she feel it in her body? These questions, whether or not I ask them aloud, elicit the client’s subjective world, the
place where she truly lives the tragedy and where she does her inner searching.

Caring is the third vital condition for searching. All care begins with the therapist’s courage to recognize the client’s suffering and to accept responsibility to be present for this suffering. “Telling a story about suffering gathers together what feels fragmented and injured and leads to feelings of wholeness and presence” (Fredriksson, 1998, p. 29). I have had the experience of caring vividly impressed on me while working with clients whose losses involved physical suffering. On occasion, I have felt physical pain in my breast as a client told and retold the story of her mastectomy. If it feels appropriate, I might share this experience, but generally I hold it within myself.

“Maintaining a holding stance requires a level of attunement that is both deeply satisfying and exhausting” (Slowchower, 1996, p. 332). This ability to maintain a holding stance becomes a deep reservoir from which my caring flows; sometimes, my capacity to access that holding stance is temporarily exhausted. Caring is an experience shared between therapist and client; at times, it is satisfying to both, and at other times, it is exhausting to both as the pain of loss is slowly transformed into meaning.

COMPASSION: OPENING THE HEART

Jourard (1971) suggested the term spirit to the field of psychology, and Bugental (1984) expanded on it to apply to a human who is aware, awake, dynamic, energetic, and involved. In holding a space of spirit and compassion for clients in their searching, the therapist helps clients hold that same space for themselves. As clients receive that compassion, their hearts are opened, and their spirits are enlivened. Welwood (1982) and many Buddhist psychologists have elaborated on the opening of the heart in psychotherapy. Eastern and indigenous traditions have long viewed the opening of the heart as essential to the unfoldment of the individual on the mystical path. The Sufi tradition has described the heart in detail:

The heart is conceived of as a multi-layered spherical organ, each layer finer than the outer one that envelops it. Each layer has a function which is meant to serve the heart as a whole. The well-being of any layer depends on the well-being of all other layers. Ultimately, all layers are seen as protective sheaths for that which lies at the center. That which lies at the center is the source of light, wisdom, and mystical knowledge. (Sviri, 1997, pp. 5–6)

This emotional and spiritual center holds our capacity for compassion, which takes caring to a new depth. Loss offers the potential gift of opening the spirited heart from a deep level of being. I am reminded of my times with a client whose child had been murdered. We often sat in silence and wept together. I often felt a physical ache in my heart as she recalled the murder of her child. On a subjective, nonverbal level, I held her pain close to my being. This closeness stirred my heart to open to the experience of compassion.

How do I know that I am experiencing compassion? Compassion includes caring and the possibility of taking action, such as when one cares for a child or someone who is ill. Compassion is often more detached and more universal than caring, and at the same time, it involves a resonance with the suffering of others. Compassion crosses time and space; I feel compassion for the children of Bosnia even if I cannot personally do anything about their plight, and I feel compassion for the victims of a nuclear holocaust that happened more than 50 years ago.

Compassion has a quality of unconditional love and allowance.
In Albom’s (1997) interviews with his mentor, Morrie Schwartz, Schwartz spoke of the experience of compassion:

“Now that I’m suffering, I feel closer to people who suffer than I ever did before. The other night, on TV, I saw people in Bosnia running across the street, getting fired upon, killed, innocent victims, . . . and I just started to cry. I feel their anguish as if it were my own. I don’t know any of these people. But—how can I put this?—I’m almost . . . drawn to them.” His eyes got moist, and I tried to change the subject, but he dabbed his face and waved me off. “I cry all the time now,” he said. “Never mind.” (pp. 50–51)

For me, compassion is a way of holding another’s experience, that is, a way of being with another and simultaneously separate from him or her. My client whose child was murdered was living every mother’s nightmare. I am a mother; I know this nightmare. We are united in the nightmare, yet my client lives the nightmare that for me is a mere possibility rather than a reality. I am separate but not apart. In this union, the compassion of the heart flows. Just as tears produce enzymes that heal the body, compassion produces a felt unity that enlivens the spirit.

This woman’s tragic loss has changed both her outer and her inner life. My inner life also has been changed by her loss. I have lived the transformative power of compassion. I have accompanied (Doka & Davidson, 1998) this mother through the dark night of her soul, with the haunting whispers of my own fears enlivening the flow of compassion between us. I remember her once asking whether I had a child. I said yes. She looked at me with compassion and said, “I hope you never have to face a tragedy like this.” Guilt and shame filled my being. My child lives. This tragedy has not happened to me, but it could.

I returned to the present moment and met her eyes of compassion. She was accompanying me in my unspoken process. She knew that it was her tragedy, yet her compassion for this unspoken vulnerability of being human reached out to me. Our eyes met with this knowledge, and we nodded to one another—heart open to heart. Out of this compassionate stance and the mutual facing of grief, she blossomed and gained personal strength. Charmaz (1997) said the following of this process:

And that is the paradox of feeling and facing grief. Out of the resolution of grief can come a tremendous blossoming, of confidence, of competence, and of compassion. Through experiencing deep grief, the bereaved may gain amazing strength and wisdom. (p. 240)

SEARCHING FOR MEANING IN LOSS: AN EXERCISE

Inner searching for the meaning of loss can be fostered in bereavement groups. Let me share an exercise that I do with bereavement groups, usually about halfway through the eight-weekly group meetings. I explain the structure and purpose of the exercise and invite the members of the group to form triads. There are three roles in the exercise: (1) interviewer, (2) interviewee, and (3) secretary. Participants rotate between roles every 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the time that the whole group has decided on.

The interviewer gently and repeatedly asks, “What is the meaning of this loss?” The interviewer’s job is to be fully present in asking this question. The interviewer waits for the interviewee to complete his or her response before repeating the question. No matter what the response is, the interviewer stays with that single question, “What is the meaning of this loss?” This continues for the duration of the interviewee’s turn.

The interviewee chooses one loss on which to focus his or her full attention and shares this decision with the interviewer. Once the
questioning begins, the interviewee may express a wide range of responses, including silence, speech, swearing, and expressing emotions nonverbally through crying or laughing.

The secretary writes down the interviewee's answers as accurately as possible, noting both verbal and nonverbal responses. The interviewee receives these notes at the end of the exercise. It is also possible to use audiotapes, which the secretary records and gives to the interviewee.

The group leader assigns the participants their roles, keeps time, and answers questions for the triads as they come up. The leader lets the participants know that a wide range of responses is possible and that this is desirable. The leader encourages the participants to be curious and to remain as open as possible to what comes up in response to the repeated question.

SIGNIFICANT STATIONS VISITED IN THE SEARCH

Each loss is unique, yet participants in this exercise often access similar emotions and perspectives as they respond to the repeated question, “What is the meaning of this loss?” Certain common responses come up repeatedly, both in the exercise and in the larger context of one's grieving process. I call these the stations of the search for meaning in loss. A station is a particular orientation toward loss; when a person is in one of these stations, it is the focus of his or her attention and emotion. Four stations that I have seen most people move through in the course of their grieving process are remembrance, paradox, personal mortality, and mystery.

Remembrance is a very common response to that repeated question as participants remember and describe their losses and the qualities of their loved ones. Responses of remembrance may involve a range of deep emotions including sadness, humor, anger, guilt, regret, longing, and love. When asked “What is the meaning of this loss?” one woman said,

My meaning in the moment is filled with a lot of guilt. I can't keep my house the way she did. Her house seemed to have an order about it no matter when I came to visit—an order that I loved and respected. I remember the house vividly. I remember every room, the pillows on the beds in the bedrooms, the pots in the kitchen, and the bathroom so clean.

After another repetition of the question, she had an insight: “Ah, organization, the loss has something to do with organization.” And she continued her search. After answering several more repetitions of the question, she became clear that organization served to keep her inner chaos in check so that she could avoid looking at it. Without the organized structure, she became more and more aware of her inner chaos. She found the search frightening at first, but she persevered with courage. By the end of the exercise, she was considering the possibility of individual psychotherapy. The loss helped her make a commitment to herself and to her own growth.

People visit the station of remembrance often. Remembering the deceased supports “a view of human beings as inveterate meaning-makers, weavers of narratives that give thematic significance to the salient plot structure of their lives” (Doka & Davidson, 1998, p. 227). Telling stories of the deceased is natural, and it can signal the beginning of a new relationship with the deceased. When individuals telling stories in the station of remembrance are asked about the meaning of their loss, the repetition leads to deeper searching.

This sometimes requires the psychotherapist to sustain a long holding process as the client recounts the same story over and over. For the client, this attention may become
focused intention, so that remembrance becomes a vehicle for meaning.

For example, one young woman in the bereavement group kept repeating the story of her deceased brother’s hamster. She told how she took over the hamster’s care and how she hated the sounds it made running in its cage, but she could not bear to get rid of the hamster because it represented a part of her brother. She was missing her brother deeply and suffered from depression over his sudden death. As she repeated her frustration with the hamster, she was asked again, “What is the meaning of this loss?” She broke out laughing for the first time in many months. “This is so silly. This bloody animal running around and around on that Ferris wheel. It’s really quite funny.” Her eyes lit up. She reconnected with her humor, which she had buried at her brother’s death. She remembered the humor that she had shared so frequently with her brother. She missed not only her brother but also the humor they had shared. The hamster story opened the door to her latent humor. She started joking with the group, and we all joined in spontaneous laughter. Recovering her humor was an important meaning in the loss of her brother, and it enlivened her relationship with him. What they had shared together came alive in the moment, and she could share it with others.

Another station that many participants visit is paradox, which is the experience of simultaneously holding opposites in one’s experience of loss. There is meaning and, at the same time, no meaning. There is a void, and there are multiple meanings that emerge like colors washing over an empty canvas. As one participant put it,

There is a void in my life, nothing there, nothing. [long pause] I try to find purpose in the lessons from her, but nothing comes. [long pause] I miss having her plan the wedding with me. The wedding has even more importance now. It feels strange in the moment to realize how important it has become. I am trying to take time out from business to attend to the important things.

The experience of paradox can help the individual develop deep insights about living. One client who lost an infant shortly after giving birth to him described this experience:

My child’s spirit just flew out of his body after one hour of holding him and singing to him. It was very painful. I was meeting life through birth and then through death. It might sound strange to hear, but what accompanied the pain was a feeling of exhilaration. This was several years ago, and as I say this in the moment, it is still my truth, along with many other experiences this loss has given us. In fact, when I think of this loss, I often cuddle up with my husband. The loss has taken us through many deep places in ourselves, and we are immensely closer than ever before.

Personal mortality is another frequently visited station. The death of a loved one inescapably reminds us of our own mortality. A woman who had lost her husband suddenly in an automobile accident said, “Now I know I will die, and I also get that I do not have any control over when.” Another participant lost several family members during a period of 6 months and became acutely aware of her own mortality. In answer to the repeated question, she replied,

I am so aware of the possibility of my death, and I am more fearful that everyone is going to die. Life is forever changed. It feels like a big hole. Sometimes, the hole is filled with so much kindness and care from others that I weep from amazement. I never knew people cared that much for me, and now I am letting myself care for others. I don’t know when they will die. This fact is motivating me to do and say kind things to others now.
The issue of personal mortality is a favorite literary theme: An individual confronts his or her own death and is transformed. Yalom (1998) cited Tolstoy's story *The Death of Ivan Ilych*:

Ivan Ilych, a mean-spirited bureaucrat, develops a fatal illness, probably abdominal cancer, and suffers extraordinary pain. His anguish continues relentlessly until, shortly before his death, Ivan Ilych comes upon a stunning truth: *He is dying badly because he has lived badly.* In the few days remaining to him, Ivan Ilych undergoes a dramatic transformation that is difficult to describe in any other terms than personal growth. If Ivan Ilych were a patient, any psychotherapist would beam with pride at the changes in him: He relates more empathetically to others; his chronic bitterness, arrogance, and self-aggrandizement disappear. In short, in the last few days of his life, he achieves a far higher level of integration than he has ever reached previously. (pp. 188–189)

*Mystery* is another station in the search for meaning in loss. As part of that search for meaning, the individual is moved to ask profound questions such as “Why do people die so young?”, “Why would a loving God let this happen?”, and “Is there a God?” Confronting the mystery of life and death often propels individuals into deeper searches. One participant who recently had lost both of her parents to Alzheimer’s disease responded to the repeated question as follows:

My parents were very attached to their minds. They were bright, and they were slowly losing the use of their minds. This loss was a great teaching for everyone. I have always believed the mind is a function of the spirit, but my parents did not hold this belief. In the process of their dying, we all experienced firsthand that the spirit is still present even when the mind is almost gone. Mercy and kindness became the dominant presence in our home when they died. Shortly before her death, my mother stated clearly, “Don’t label us.” I responded, “You are still you,” and she heard me. I am deeply grateful that in their process of dying a belief I hold dear also became clear to them.

In the station of mystery, that basic question “What is the meaning of this loss?” often goes unanswered. Or rather, the answer is a silence deeper than words or reason. Participants often drop into deep spaces of compassion for each other during group sharings after the exercise. After one participant shared with another, “I cannot find words to convey to you how deeply and profoundly I feel about the loss of your murdered child,” there was a long silence. The entire group held the loss in spontaneous silence. It was not a rational response but rather a compassionate holding of the loss. This holding has a mysterious capacity to open the hearts of all participants, with a profoundly transformative effect on the bereaved.

However and whenever an individual visits the mystery of death, it invites the paradox or the mystery of life. Visiting the mystery of life and death touches the mystery of being human. In the mystical paths of many of the world’s great religions (Hillman, 1975; Smith, 1976), the secret of humans’ being is acknowledged as a mystery. In Sufi mystical psychology, this secret lies at the center of the heart, and it is humans’ intimate relationship with God (Sviri, 1997). Through loss and grief, the individual’s mysterious relationship with God (or the absence of such a relationship) enters the world of psychotherapy.

**SOME PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATIONS OF LOSS**

Pioneering work by Kübler-Ross (1982) presented a model of sequential progression through grief including the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, and acceptance. A sequential model is based on an overall progression
toward some particular stage as a final integration of the experience of loss. By contrast, the stations of loss are not sequential stages. The stations are not sequential because there is no set order to the client’s movement through them, and there is no implication of final integration. The stations of loss are a fluid experience. Outside of this group exercise, in one’s ongoing daily life, all of these stations are familiar. A person might find over the years, after someone has died, that he or she might remember and might experience mystery. The person might have all of these experiences. They might repeat themselves, and the person might discover new stations to visit.

Our visits to a particular station are not delimited by time. Within the course of a single psychotherapy session, for example, a client may spend 1 or 2 minutes or the whole hour or anything in between at a given station. In the longer view, a person’s visits to the various stations may be different during the first few months after a loss from what they are as more time passes. But there is no set time frame by which we expect a person to move through a given station, such as during the second quarter hour of the psychotherapy session or 2 to 5 years after the loss.

There is no wrong or right way in which to grieve. Each person moves through the stations at a pace and rhythm uniquely determined by his or her own internal needs. It is a life process propelled by searching. This searching can become a function of opening the heart as one visits and revisits the stations over the years, accessing new meanings along the way.

INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY AND THE REPEATED QUESTION: “WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS LOSS?”

I have found it helpful to use this question during individual psychotherapy as well as in group settings. In an ongoing therapist–client relationship, the client can explore more freely without the constraints of a set number of meetings and others being present. I typically use this format toward the middle of the session. I explain the structure and take care that the repetition of the question serves the client’s inner searching process. My decision to use this question balances intuition and discernment; I do not want to objectify the client’s genuine work with a mechanically repeated question. This process has continually deepened clients’ inner searching. For example, one client who had lost her grandfather found that she wanted to go to church with her husband and child:

I’ve never taken church seriously until now. As I reflect on his death and its meaning, the rituals of the funeral service keep coming to me. I was so profoundly moved by the funeral service. I want this outer form of religion in my family’s life.

After the exercise, this woman used the remainder of the session to explore her spiritual beliefs in greater depth.

LIVING THE STATIONS OF LOSS

I now invite the reader to explore his or her own loss. Examine the wheel in Figure 35.1. Think of the stations as the spokes of this wheel. At the center of the wheel is the heart, opening more and more as it visits and revisits the stations. There is no set order or sequence to this process; how often you visit each station and how long you spend there are determined by the unique interplay of your own loss with the makeup of your own being. As you experience your loss on new levels and come to grips with its meaning in your life, you might discover new meanings and new depths to these stations. It is also possible that you will discover new stations on your own unique journey.
HUMANISTIC APPLICATIONS TO PRACTICE

Figure 35.1 Stations of Loss

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**IN PASSING**

Until the past decade, there had been a tendency in psychology to downplay the exploration of meaning in loss or even the concept of loss itself. “Death is un-American,” as Toynbee (1969, p. 131) wrote more than three decades ago. And even when grief is accepted, there are cultural expectations to consider. As Charmaz (1997) observed, “Not all grief is acceptable. Not everyone’s grief is acknowledged. Not every survivor copes with grief successfully” (p. 229).

Psychology is on the verge of exploring the mystery of life and death, and this chapter is a contribution to such an exploration. Psychology has come a long way in acknowledging grief and its many dimensions. One of the challenges facing psychology is in acknowledging the spiritual dimensions of the searching process. Can we remain open to accompanying our clients into the depths of their hearts? What if this journey becomes a mystical journey? If so, then how are we personally and professionally prepared? I invite the reader to search for his or her own answers to these questions.

I have written this chapter for all the individuals who have courageously searched for meaning in their losses. In spite of judgment from their selves and others, these individuals searched and spoke out so as to be heard. They have gained through their losses, and I thank each and every one of them.

My dog died as I was finishing this chapter. My 13-year-old son, like me and my husband, was overcome with grief. He bent over and covered his face with his hands. I had great compassion for my son, torn between the depth of his loss and the societal admonitions about men and tears, which are particularly powerful for males on the verge of adolescence. I gently took his hands in mine and said, “You love your dog and now he’s gone; it’s okay to let others see how much you care.” So my son raised his head and
opened it to a new depth of compassion that carries a wealth of meanings, some known and some unknown.

There is never an end to the search for the meaning of loss. There is a continual opening.

NOTE

1. To protect the identities of the clients mentioned in this chapter, all identities are disguised, and all statements attributed to them are paraphrased.

REFERENCES


What exactly is the relationship between existential analysis and humanistic psychotherapy? That is how I started this discussion in the first edition. I referred to a number of statements by existential writers that I felt did not do justice to the humanistic approach as I understood it and argued with them in an effort to set matters right. This was all very well, and I felt that justice had been done. Then, I read Ernesto Spinelli’s reply. It seemed clear that I had been far too much attracted to relatively trivial point scoring and was not really doing justice to the real meat of the matter.

What is this “real meat of the matter”? It seems to me now that it is a question of seeing the whole question much more fundamentally. What I want to argue now is that both the existential approach and the humanistic approach come from the same level of consciousness and are therefore siblings rather than strangers.


Existentialism gave rise to a perfectly legitimate form of psychotherapy, called variously *daseinsanalyse*, existential analysis, existential-phenomenological psychotherapy, and so forth. This approach, or these approaches, has become enshrined in the work of the Society for Existential Analysis. From this standpoint, humanistic psychotherapy is criticized by people like Emmy van Deurzen (1988, 1997) and Ernesto Spinelli (1989, 1994); indeed, Spinelli has spent many pages critiquing the approaches emanating from humanistic psychology. According to these critics, humanistic psychology is too optimistic, too prone to dilute the
pure essence of existentialism with other and baser materials.

In this chapter, I shall endeavor to reverse this critique and say that humanistic psychotherapy in all its variants (for a brief account, see Rowan, 1992; for a fuller account, see Rowan, 1998; and for a fuller account, again, see Rowan, 2001) is the sibling of existentialism as a *praxis*, doing justice to much that existential analysis has for some reason omitted.

If we were to draw a Venn diagram of the relationship between humanistic psychotherapy and existential analysis, people like those mentioned above, and also Irvin Yalom and Hans Cohn, would draw two circles side by side, with an overlap between them. For them, the overlap would be quite small. But what I want to argue here is that the overlap is so large as to put in question the whole idea of separating the two. In other words, I am suggesting that we should talk all the time about existential-humanistic psychotherapy (see also Schneider & Krug, 2010). Perhaps the reasons why they became so separate are historical: Existential writers saw the excesses that humanistic psychology got into in the 1960s and early 1970s and did not want to be tarred with the same brush. Be that as it may, today humanistic psychotherapy is as respectable as any other, and it can be approached without any qualms. Spinelli himself has said that Gestalt therapy has much to recommend it.

Since the original chapters were written, much water has flowed under the bridge: We have had Mick Cooper’s useful compendium (2003), we have had the interesting essays to be found in Barnett and Madison (2012), and we have had a plethora of contributions from van Deurzen (2002; van Deurzen & Young, 2009; etc.). In what follows, I am trying to take these contributions into account.

Most of the schools of humanistic psychotherapy claim some use of existentialism or phenomenology or both. Gestalt therapy claims to be a true existential form of therapy, and Petruska Clarkson (1989) used to say that phenomenology “is the philosophical approach which is at the very heart of Gestalt” (p. 13). Psychodrama also has claims to be existential. David Brazier (1991) says, “Psychodrama evolved from the existential approach to psychotherapy of Jacob Levi Moreno. Although it is possible to graft psychodramatic methods on to other philosophical approaches, the method is primarily attuned to an existential outlook” (p. 1).

Person-centered therapy again has existential roots, and important basic statements based in phenomenology, as both Spinelli (1990) and du Plock (1996, p. 44) have testified. Perhaps most of all we can turn to James Bugental as an exemplar, as we shall see later.

Also much influenced by existentialism is Alvin Mahrer, one of the great theoreticians of humanistic psychology but never mentioned by van Deurzen or Spinelli, perhaps because he only published his great masterwork, *Experiencing*, in 1978. So that is my first point—the way in which existentialism and phenomenology are regarded as the heartland of the main approaches within the humanistic milieu. The reason why this identity is so important is well described by Wilber (1981, chap. 8) in his discussion of what he calls the “Centaur stage of psycho-spiritual development.” He outlines what he calls a full-spectrum approach to states of consciousness and theories of the self and puts the existential and the humanistic in the same bracket. They actually share the same broad worldview. They both adopt vision-logic (dialectical logic) rather than earlier forms of formal rationality. For a full discussion of vision-logic see Wilber (1995, chap. 5), and for a full conspectus of how it related to different theoretical positions, see the charts in Wilber (2000).

Existential analysis without humanistic psychotherapy is robbed of some important resources. It becomes to a degree narrow and
dogmatic, as does *daseinsanalyse*. To abjure all active interventions is to constrict possibilities too much. To emphasize the relationship at the expense of the real self can go much too far. Humanistic psychotherapy brings a dimension of experiential depth and aliveness that seems lacking in the rather formalized existentialism of Europe. For example, suppose that a client is continually talking about his mother. An immediate response could be to point to an empty chair and say, “See if you can imagine your mother sitting on that chair, looking the way she looked, breathing the way she breathed, and wearing what she used to wear. What would you like to say directly to her?” This seems to me an existential move, bringing all the current issues into the room rather than leaving them outside. I have been exploring this issue in depth in recent years (Rowan, 2010), and it seems clear to me that this directness and immediacy is peculiar to existentialism and really belongs there. “Talk to her rather than about her” is an existential move, is it not? It brings the subject into the here and now. In light of this, Spinelli’s statement that such interventions “succeed in shifting the client to another mode of being and, thereby, express an implicit critique of the client’s dialogical way of being with the therapist” seems to me willfully wrongheaded. Rather, such interventions are attempting to help the client get closer to his or her own consciousness, his or her own responses, and his or her own deeper feelings. This is what therapy is all about, it seems to me—helping the client get closer to the existential edge of his or her own experience.

Far from being “unaccepting of the client,” this seems to me more truly accepting of the client, not just what is on the surface but also including what is hidden or not yet appearing. Not “the appropriate way to feel” but the real feeling that was there all the time.

Another humanistic response would be to say, “I notice that when you said that, you finished with a little hand gesture. What would happen if you exaggerated that?” The client then tries that experiment (although there is space for the client to refuse it if he or she is not ready) and perhaps finds a deep anger that had not come out before. This is then worked on in the session. There is nothing unexistential about any of this—in fact, I would argue that it is more existential, in the sense of digging deeper into the present moment, making the issue more acutely present. There is a paradox here: Techniques only work when they are not techniques—when they emerge naturally and spontaneously from the work itself. As Eileen Walkenstein (1975) put it so well,

I got close enough, pushed close enough, so that Arthur felt contact with another human being. I was not a robot giving him tried-and-true ready-made formulas, but pushed always toward discovering and then affirming whatever feelings or thoughts were emerging from Arthur. I was often unaware of where I was leading or where he was leading, and I was willing to follow a direction, *to make mistakes*, and to change any direction that seemed to lead to a dead end—or even to go to the dead end and see what we could discover there. (p. 96)

Surely this breathes the spirit of existentialism?

Nor are these the only types of technique used in humanistic work—there is also the approach of Mahrer and others in the experiential tradition (Greenberg, Watson, & Lietaer, 1998), involving a real attempt to enter much more fully into the psychological world of the other person. Of course, all the usual rules of human intercourse apply—not saying things before the other person is ready to hear them, and so forth.

Some existential therapists do use humanistic methods from time to time, but they do not talk about these in their theoretical pronouncements. For example, in the case study...
offered by Freddie Strasser (du Plock, 1997) about “Bernadette,” he says, “After many challenges and reiterating that my advice was not part of our contract, I asked her to put herself in my position and to try to answer her own questions” (p. 32).

This is of course a typical move in Gestalt therapy but is not often mentioned in expositions of existential-phenomenological theory. Yet I do not know why it should not be. Perhaps Spinelli could explain why Strasser was wrong to try this move.

In Yalom (1991), we find a whole range of techniques, so much so that van Deurzen (1997) reels back and accuses him of being “psychiatric and behavioural.” Yet elsewhere she and others (Milton, 1997; Roberts, 1997) acknowledge that he has made some genuine contributions to the existential understanding of psychotherapy. This double standard also applies to some other writers, such as Rollo May and James Bugental: Sometimes they are in and sometimes out. What does Spinelli think of this?

People involved in existentialism and phenomenology habitually misconstrue and dismiss humanistic psychology as consisting exclusively of the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Even then, they generally underestimate Rogers and ignore much of his work. But it is a mistake to ignore people like James Bugental (1987), Rollo May (1983), Kirk Schneider (1999), Arthur Bohart (1993), and Alvin Mahrer (1996), who have just as much right to be considered part of the heartland of humanistic psychotherapy as does Rogers. The whole school of experiential psychotherapy, an important section of the humanistic camp (Bohart, 1995; Greenberg et al., 1998), is highly compatible with Spinelli’s own views, but he does not seem to have heard of it.

Bugental told me about existential therapists before he died: “I’d add some others—Stanley Krippner, Ilene Serlin, Tom Greening, for examples.” One only has to pick up back copies of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology at random to find many such papers, making use of existentialism and phenomenology, on the one hand, and humanistic practice, on the other.

May is another founding member of the Association for Humanistic Psychology who has made particularly important contributions to our understanding of existential ways of thinking with respect to psychotherapy. His book The Discovery of Being is full of wisdom on the praxis of psychotherapy. Listen to this:

My thesis here is that we can understand repression, for example, only on the deeper level of the meaning of the human being’s potentialities. In this respect, “being” is to be defined as the individual’s “pattern of potentialities.” These potentialities will be partly shared with other persons but will in every case form a unique pattern in each individual. We must ask the questions: What is this person’s relation to his own potentialities? What goes on that he chooses or is forced to choose to block off from his awareness something which he knows, and on another level knows that he knows? (May, 1983, p. 17)

I don’t know what that sounds like to you, but it sounds to me like existentialism. In fact, it is an odd fact that although the existentialist writers (van Deurzen, 1997; Spinelli, 1994) often dismiss May as not really being a true existentialist, they often quote him as if he were.

The point is that self-actualization is an optimistic doctrine in Maslow and Rogers, but it also exists—but not as an optimistic doctrine—in May, Mahrer, Bugental, and others. Mahrer (1989) has a 42-page chapter examining the whole notion of actualization in some detail, and he says things like “From our perspective there is nothing of value in ‘expressing basic drives.’ What is of value is the actualization of deeper potentials which
are integrated” (p. 563). He also says, making links with other writers in the field,

This process, of increasing depth and breadth of experiencing has been described as the bringing into being of the person’s own complement of motivations (Maslow, 1970) or unique pattern of possibilities (May, 1958). Boss speaks of the person’s becoming in actuality what is within as a potential (1963, p. 15). (p. 566)

These are important connections to be making.

Bugental was the first president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology, and was a member in good standing until his death in 2008, and his statement is this: “Phenomenology and existentialism are, to my mind, alternative and supplementing perspectives available to humanistic psychology.” He also says,

For me, the truest existentialism is humanistic and the soundest humanism is existential. The two are not the same, but their overlap is rich in potential for greater understanding of human experience and for greater effectiveness in the effort to enrich that experience. (Bugental, 1981, p. 10)

Bugental called his approach “existential-humanistic psychotherapy.” He wrote a number of books, including The Search for Existential Identity (all about patient-therapist dialogue), Psychotherapy and Process (his main theoretical book), The Search for Authenticity, and The Art of Psychotherapy. In the latter book, he lists his own set of “givens” to compare with those offered by Yalom (1980): embodiedness (implying change), finitude (implying contingency), ability to act or not act (implying responsibility), choicefulness (implying relinquishment), and separate-but-related-ness (implying being at once a part of and apart from another person). In a later chapter (Bugental & Sterling, 1995), he adds awareness (implying self-consciousness). Bugental (1981) says this:

The existential point of view speaks of man’s condition in a fashion that transcends the dichotomy of pathology and health. Increasingly today we are recognizing that this dichotomy, while having once served a humane purpose, confounds our thinking and restricts our inventiveness. (p. 17)

Bugental is one of the most important voices in the humanistic field, and we shall refer to him often. It is intriguing to find that he was on the editorial boards of the Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis in England as well as the Journal of Humanistic Psychology in the United States.

Bugental (1978) often refers to the idea of presence in psychotherapy. It is actually the nearest thing in the English language to the German word dasein, which is so important in existentialism.

Presence is immensely more than just being there physically, it is obvious. It’s being totally in the situation. . . . Presence is being there in body, in emotions, in relating, in thoughts, in every way. . . . Although fundamentally presence is a unitary process or characteristic of a person in a situation, accessibility and expressiveness may be identified as its two chief aspects. (pp. 36–37)

However, he also cautions that it is not easy to attain. Certainly, it is not a state to be once achieved and thereafter maintained. “Rather it is a goal continually sought, often ignored, and always important to the work of psychotherapy” (Bugental & Sterling, 1995, p. 231). He claims that although it is important for any form of psychotherapy, for existential work it is absolutely central.

May agrees. He draws attention to the way in which Karl Jaspers and Ludwig Binswanger emphasize the importance of
presence and to the way in which Rogers also refers to it quite unmistakably. He goes so far as to say that “any therapist is existential to the extent that, with all his technical training and his knowledge of transference and dynamisms, he is still able to relate to the patient as ‘one existence communicating with another,’ to use Binswanger’s phrase” (May, 1983, p. 158). And he says that one of the most important things for any therapist is to be aware of whatever blocks the ability to be fully present. This is a real challenge, and one well worth meeting. “The therapist’s function is to be there (with all of the connotations of Dasein), present in the relationship, while the patient finds and learns to live out his own Eigenwelt” (May, 1983, p. 163).

People in the field of existential analysis are often ignorant of the recent work in Gestalt, which has roots in existentialism and phenomenology and lays much more stress on the paradoxical theory of change than it does on techniques as such.

The paradoxical theory of change was first brought to my notice in a chapter by Arnold Beisser (1972), written when he was Director of Psychiatric Training in the Metropolitan State Hospital. He invited Fritz Perls to demonstrate his work and became very much involved with Gestalt therapy himself. Beisser advanced the theory that change does not happen through a “coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him” but it does happen if the person puts in the time and effort to be “what he is,” “to be fully in his current position” (p. 88). When the therapist rejects the change agent role, change that is orderly and also meaningful is possible. Beisser makes, and puts in italics, this summary statement: “that change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become what he is not.” This seems to me a good statement of an existential position, and recent Gestaltists such as Gary Yontef endorse it completely.

Yontef (1976/1993) himself puts it this way:

Gestalt therapy’s phenomenological work is done through a relationship based on the existential model of Martin Buber’s I and Thou, Here and Now. By that model a person involves himself fully and intensely with the person or task at hand, each treated as a Thou, an end in itself and not as an “It,” thing or means to an end. A relationship develops when two people, each with his separate existence and personal needs, contact each other recognizing and allowing the differences between them. (p. 189)

An interesting case to look at is Ronnie Laing. Many people think of him as a classic existentialist therapist. Certainly, most people who came into contact with his work seemed to come to the conclusion that he was an amazingly effective therapist, particularly with the most disturbed people. Of course, the existentialist writers in this country have cast doubt on his existentialist credentials: van Deurzen (1997) says that he was really a Winnicottian, Michael Guy Thompson (1997) says he was really a skeptic, and Hans Cohn (1997) says that he was really an essentialist, not an existentialist. But all seem to agree that in his work he came across as a classic example of the authentic person, the person who could really be there, who had this quality of presence (as described above), which is the key to good psychotherapy. To me, that makes him an existentialist, as well as what Spinelli (1989, chap. 7) at least accepts as a phenomenologist. Actually, he took the idea of presence much further than most, as the following quotation reveals:

Near the end of his life, Laing often talked about the practice of co-presence. He defined it as the practice of non-intrusive attentiveness, a wholesome concern for each
other's life and death. He wrote, “Terror of each other spells the extinction of each other. Communion is mutual extinction of mutual terror. It is joy in, celebration of our co-existence in this world we share, co-presence, our beings being together, completely, as we are.” Co-presence, then, is being together lovingly. (Feldmar, 1997, p. 350)

This seems to take existentialist thinking one step further in the field of therapy. It is interesting, therefore, to find that he made significant links with humanistic psychology. Laing himself attended several conferences of the European Association for Humanistic Psychology, and at one point, he almost became its president. His later work on rebirthing was very close to my own practice in primal integration.

Existential principles are fully embodied in most of the forms of humanistic psychotherapy—including person-centered, Gestalt, psychodrama, and experiential therapies; primal integration; radical therapy; feminist therapy, several body therapies, dream work; and so forth. They are very much at home there, contributing essentially to the humanistic emphasis on the whole person and the authentic relationship. The humanistic view of authenticity is broader and more inclusive than that found in existential analysis, and this seems to be so because those who hold hard to existentialism in an exclusive way are much too wedded to Heidegger's notions. van Deurzen (1997), for example, says this: “Being anxious because of our acute awareness of our human limitations and mortality is therefore the key to authenticity and with it the key to true humanity” (p. 39). This one-sided emphasis on death and destruction is just what is wrong with existential analysis in its understanding of authenticity. Compare it with the formulations of Bugental, who wrote two books about authenticity. He says that authenticity is a combination of self-respect (we are not just part of an undifferentiated world) and self-enactment—we express our care or involvement in the world in a visible way. Here is a key quotation:

By authenticity I mean a central genuineness and awareness of being. Authenticity is that presence of an individual in his living in which he is fully aware in the present moment, in the present situation. Authenticity is difficult to convey in words, but experientially it is readily perceived in ourselves or in others. (Bugental, 1981, p. 102)

In other words, what we in humanistic psychology are saying is that authenticity is a living experience.

As May (1979) has said so well, “Freedom is a quality of action of the centred self” (p. 176). The humanistic view is that action is the acid test of experience. What it seems so hard to convey to existential writers is that the real self, the self that is to be actualized in self-actualization, is not a concept but something to be encountered at an experiential level. Other existentialists have gone much further, as, for example, here:

Authenticity consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it involves, in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate. There is no doubt that authenticity demands much courage and more than courage. Thus it is not surprising that one finds it so rarely. (Sartre, 1948, p. 90)

It demands so much because it involves moving beyond the confines of the familiar mental ego; but this is what Heidegger never envisaged. To get away from the abstract argument, let us take a concrete example. It comes from a book by Allen
There is an important link between authenticity and genuineness, as described by Rogers.

It is my feeling that congruence is a part of existential authenticity, that the person who is genuinely authentic in his being-in-the-world is congruent within himself; and to the extent that one attains authentic being in his life, to that extent is he congruent. (Bugental, 1981, p. 108)

Again, it takes Bugental to draw our attention to the heartland of the humanistic approach, which is also the heartland of the existential approach. Both Bugental and Rogers are clear that congruence is difficult and demanding, and recent writers like Dave Mearns (1994, 1996, 1997) have made it clear that it cannot be taught as a skill. It is really very curious to see how someone like Spinelli can go along with all this and then somehow draw back at the last moment. Consider this quote:

As authentic beings, we recognise our individuality. Further, we recognise that this individuality is not a static quality but is, rather, a set of (possibly infinite) potentialities. As such, while in the authentic mode, we maintain an independence of thought and action, and subsequently feel “in charge” of the way our life is experienced. Rather than reacting as victims to the vicissitudes of being, we, as authentic beings, acknowledge our role in determining our actions, thought and beliefs, and thereby experience a stronger and fuller sense of integration, acceptance, “openness” and “aliveness” to the potentialities of being-in-the-world. (Spinelli, 1989, p. 109)

I couldn’t have put it better myself. This statement is totally aligned with the humanistic position. It is difficult for me to see how he can go along with so much of the humanistic view of the matter and yet not quite be able to adopt the label of “humanistic.”
From my point of view, authenticity is a good word to describe the level of consciousness that is common to the humanistic and the existential. Wade (1996) makes this clear. The interesting dialogue between Cooper and Spinelli (2012) is an example of an exchange entirely based on this level of consciousness.

It is true that the older existential writers accepted notions of mental illnesses and the nomenclature of mental diseases. But those writing today do not go along with this. I remember Laing being so skeptical about the value of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fourth edition) that he gave excruciatingly funny lectures on it. Similarly, most humanistic psychotherapists do not give much weight to central notions of mental illness and the standard nomenclature and indeed question them quite vigorously. Thus, humanistic psychotherapists adhere to the same existential principles as do the orthodox existential writers. This is well brought out in the work of Cohn (1997), who deals first with the older writers but then, speaking in his own voice, states the existential and humanistic case very well in his four points on assessment:

1. The client you meet as the therapist is the client who meets you. There is no client as such. If two therapists meet the same client, it is not the same client. 2. What the client tells you as the therapist, she or he tells only you. She or he may tell another therapist something quite different. 3. There is no “history” to be taken for there is no history as such. A client’s history is disclosed in the process of interaction between therapist and client. 4. This means that there cannot be an “assessment” as this would imply an objective situation independent of time, place and the contribution of the assessing therapist. (pp. 33–34)

This excellent statement of the humanistic view seems to me authentic existentialism. And incidentally, it agrees very much with the position taken up by Mahrer (1996, chap. 1). The existential-humanistic view is that you cannot diagnose human beings, and using the word assessment does not improve matters.

People in the existential fold keep on emphasizing the “shadow” side at the expense of the joy and even ecstasy that can come from adopting an existential position. There are historical reasons for this, of course: Kierkegaard used to be called “the gloomy Dane,” Heidegger was not a cheerful person, and Sartre in his heyday was a serious intellectual. When I first came across existentialism in the 1950s, the image was of people dressed all in black having deep discussions in poorly lit cafes on the Left Bank in Paris. The quotation I remember most is one from Sartre: “Free and alone, without assistance and without excuse.” That does sound pretty bleak. But what I believe is that although we do have to face despair, we can also move through despair—we do not have to rest there. Schneider’s (2009) work on “awe” is also exemplary of this double perspective. It is not a question of putting a nice face on something nasty. It is facing the despair and moving on through the despair. I remember Joanna Macy (1983) telling us that the only valid hope lies on the other side of despair. And that reminds me of Jim Elliott’s (1976) way of looking at therapy. Elliott is one of the pioneers of the encounter group, and his model of the human being is as a layer cake. In therapy, we go down layer after layer until we touch bottom. Two layers from the bottom, we get feelings of worthlessness and helplessness, and intense pain. One layer from the bottom, we get aloneness, feelings of abandonment, painful loneliness, and isolation. But here there are two sublayers. Sublayer A says, “I’m all I’ve got, and that’s terrible,” and that is often accompanied by panic.
The experience “Since I Am, I have the right to be.”

What is this experience like? It is a primary feeling—it feels like receiving the deed to my house. It is the experience of my own aliveness not caring whether it turns out to be an ion or just a wave. . . . It is like a sailboat in the harbour being given an anchor so that, being made out of earthly things, it can by means of its anchor get in touch again with the earth. . . . It is my saying to Descartes, “I Am, therefore I think, I feel, I do.” (pp. 99–100)

Pulling the threads together, what I have tried to contend here is that there is much less difference between the existential-phenomenological approach and the various kinds of humanistic psychotherapy than is usually stated. I think it would be better to talk about the existential-humanistic tendency within psychotherapy and to admit that we are all tarred with the same brush. It is possible to be a happy existentialist. The theoretical point I have been trying to make is that the level of consciousness that I referred to at the start of this chapter, which Wilber calls centaur consciousness, is common to existentialism and to humanistic psychology and that, therefore, there should be no more point scoring from either side. Schneider has in recent years (Schneider, 2008; Schneider & Krug, 2010) been urging that this commonality should be recognized by the new term existential-humanistic therapy, and this would be consistent with the argument advanced here. In fact, it is a fact that Schneider, who has worked closely with Bugental and May, has appeared on the scene since this original chapter was written and has added considerably to the weight of opinion that says that the existential and the humanistic belong together and should not be separated. I hope and believe that this trend will continue.
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A Reply to John Rowan

ERNESTO SPINELLI

I am in complete agreement with John insofar as I, too, would conclude that there are significant points of contact and connection between existential and humanistic therapies. However, whether it is the case, as John concludes, that this relationship is so close that the similarities between the two approaches far outweigh their differences remains, for me, much more of an unresolved question. Why this is so centers on a series of what still seem to me to be important but as yet unaddressed (or insufficiently clarified) concerns. The main issues, as I see them, are as follows: Just what kind of relationship is it? What might unite the approaches? And, just as important, what might divide them?

I want to argue in this reply that although much of the impetus for the key assumptions of both existential therapy and humanistic psychology and psychotherapy originates from the same “ancestral” source—namely, various branches of phenomenology, including existential phenomenology—what humanistic thought has done is to radically reinterpret some key themes and ideas from this source while at the same time minimizing the import of others (Spinelli, 2005). Not that it should not have done so or that it has no right to do so. Of course, it can and does have a right to do so. But with each choice made, consequences follow. And, for me, one of the major consequences is that humanistic approaches have “branched out” to such an extent from the common ancestor that they have become a distinct “species” of psychotherapy.

Before going any further, I want to make it clear from the outset that I am not suggesting that one approach has an inherent superiority over the other. Nor am I arguing that one approach is in any way “better,” or better able to provoke ameliorative outcomes. I think that this is a view shared with John. Equally, like John, I am convinced that the approaches can coexist and, almost certainly, gain from one another through mutual, and respectful, dialogue. Where we fundamentally disagree is that, unlike John, I am also substantially convinced that these benefits are more likely to occur if equal acknowledgement is given to the significant differences between the approaches. To me, it makes more sense to consider them as related and distinct. Until we have sufficiently clarified, acknowledged, and assimilated these differences, it is my view that a hybrid, or even a brand new, approach that is actually, rather than just calling itself, “existential-humanistic” (or “humanistic-existential”) remains a theoretical possibility rather than an established reality.

Let me attempt to clarify my argument by turning to existential therapy. In an approach whose theoretical grounding is already overflowing with paradoxes, here is yet another: The therapist and author most commonly associated with contemporary existential therapy and recognized by many as the leading voice in the field is Irvin Yalom. Yet Yalom (2007) has
made it clear that, in his view, *there neither is nor can there be any such thing as existential therapy per se*. Instead, he contends that therapies can be distinguished by the degree to which they are willing and able to address directly various key existential *themes* such as death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness throughout the therapeutic process (Yalom, 1980). So, for him, any approach to therapy can, at least in principle, be existentially informed in various thematic and practical ways. And this being the case, such a thematically informed therapy would be what he might call an “existential therapy.” I raise this point not to argue a case *contra* Yalom’s views (even though I do strongly disagree with him on this [Spinelli, 2007a]) but rather as a “way in” to clarifying my disagreement with John.

Yalom’s view is incredibly alluring to many therapists. It permits a sort of “pick and mix” approach that appears to be integrative and that seems to benefit the client. My sense is that at the heart of my debate with John is the fact that he, like Yalom, has chosen to emphasize certain shared “themes” that can be seen to coexist within both existential and humanistic approaches and, on this basis, has concluded that their distinctiveness is minimal and far outweighed by their thematic similarities. It is this “thematic resonance,” I think, that allows John to make and expand on his argument by demonstrating, for instance, that various authors such as Rollo May, James Bugental, and Alvin Mahrer can equally be slotted into either approach. At this thematic level, it would be difficult, if not absurd, to argue against John’s conclusion. Just as, by the by, it would be, as John rightly argues, equally absurd for any existential therapist to contend that there is nothing to be gained from developing a deeper understanding of these authors’ (and numerous other humanistically identified theorists’) views and approaches to therapy.

My view, on the other hand, is this: I think that existential therapy is *much more than* a collection of themes that might or might not be shared with other approaches. I have spent a good deal of my professional life attempting to make the case that existential therapy is an approach/model/attitude/theory that can stand on its own, has its own specific “take” on the issues that remain central to therapy as a whole, and adopts a stance toward such issues that in many profound ways provides the means for a series of significant challenges that are primarily focused on a structured critique of how contemporary therapy and its aims are predominantly understood and practiced (Spinelli, 2005, 2006, 2007b). In short, once we move beyond the thematic resonances between existential and humanistic approaches, I believe we can readily discern pivotal differences between the two approaches.

As I understand it, existential theory proposes a view of being that is founded on a process-like “flow” of being-becoming. It also proposes that human beings’ reflective experiences of this “flow” reveal an inevitable act of interpretation that substantiates, structures, or “thing-ifies” this flow of being-becoming. This very same act of essentializing/substantiating/structuring the flow of being is itself the source to the universal—and inescapable—human experience of existential anxiety. Why? Because no reflective construct can fully capture/contain/stabilize the flow of being-becoming. Reflection can only, and always, allow for incomplete meanings that attempt to grasp this flow within the confines of time and space—that is to say, within reflective structures. In this way, existential thought argues that the quest for any fully realized coherence, completeness, fulfillment, and what has been termed by humanistic approaches as *authenticity* (see below for a brief account of the divergent perspectives on this) can only ever be just that—a quest, an attempt, a movement toward rather than any achievement or
dispositional stances toward being (i.e., one’s beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, expectations, feelings, and behaviors regarding who and how one is/is not or should/should not be) and one’s actual experience of being. They might also arise as undesirable or unforeseen consequences of adopting and maintaining a particular dispositional stance toward being. They might be expressions of the pain of being experientially attuned to being possibilities that cannot be fulfilled. Or they may “simply” be the outcome of the limitations of “capturing” the experience of being from a reflective standpoint. Whatever the case, they remain inevitable and insolvable dilemmas arising from one’s attempts to both embrace and remain distanced from relatedness.

As such, the alternative perspective being proposed by existential therapy does not sit easily with currently dominant modes of therapeutic thought. For one, it rejects the idea of individuals as isolated beings who can be understood and treated from an exclusively intrapsychic perspective. Furthermore, it rejects the assumption that therapists can attend to and alter or amend “parts” of an individual without such interventions affecting the whole of the being (and of being as a whole) in ways that remain currently unpredictable. Third, it rejects the view that a disorder is solely problematic and instead proposes that expressions of disorder may well also be crucial to the continued—and desired—maintenance of the current reflectively maintained, boundaried being.

In taking this stance, existential therapy shifts the focus of therapy in various ways. For one, it is much more concerned with the descriptive investigation of how it is to be in a given set of relational circumstances and conditions than it is with any directive interventionist treatment of dysfunctions. In this sense, existential therapy is more akin to research enquiry focused on understanding than it is to quasi-medical attempts to heal. For another, it is far less concerned with
highlighting any particular subject matter deemed to be appropriate (or inappropriate) for therapeutic discourse (be it verbal or action based) than it is with attempting a particular way or mode of engagement with whatever presents itself for dialogue in the way that it presents itself, without seeking to amend, amplify, or reconfigure it. This overall attitudinal stance ultimately serves to challenge both clients and therapists in their dominant mode of reflecting on being. In brief, the primary concern for existential therapy is not about establishing a relationship but about experiencing relatedness as it presents itself to reflective experience.

Stated with an eye on brevity, the enterprise of existential therapy is to engage in a mutually truthful discourse focused on the exploration and elucidation of how and in what ways the client construes being from the standpoint of a series of relations—relations to the self, to others, and to the world in general. The client’s presenting problem(s) and concerns are placed within these various relational foci so that their impact on these can be more accurately discerned. In doing so, the client (and therapist) may find alternatives, challenges, contradictions, and so forth that provoke shifts in meaning and behavior—either by directed change in these conditions or, more commonly, through a more “owned” acceptance of these conditions and their possibilities (as well as their limits). It is the existential therapist’s “skill” in being there in the encounter with the client that is critical to the enterprise. This way of “being there” is inquisitive but not judgmental, engaged but not authoritarian, and more concerned with promoting a “stillness” that remains focused on what currently presents itself experientially to the client in order to provoke a more honest awareness of who and how the client is being, rather than focused on directed change regarding who and how different the client has been or can become.

In short, from the perspective of existential theory per se, the ideas it presents on matters such as freedom, choice, identity, meaning/meaninglessness, authenticity/inauthenticity, good faith/bad faith, and so forth are always to be contextualized within the foundational assumption of relatedness. If you take relatedness out of the picture or place it on the sidelines, then all of the above ideas become subjectively focused ideals to which essence-derived individuals may aspire for their own personal self-development. Put bluntly, if the latter occurs, then what emerges, in my view, is humanistic psychology and psychotherapy (or, as John would prefer, existential-humanistic therapy).

Once again, it is not my aim here to argue that one perspective is superior to the other—only that they are different and that this difference can be obscured when one focuses solely on the surface thematic resonances to be found in the different models’ discourses on matters such as “the self,” “meaning,” “the uniqueness of the individual,” “choice and responsibility,” and so forth. It is only when one looks deeper and considers what such shared terms might mean to each approach—and how their meanings might differ—that the critical dissonances between the approaches become all too apparent.

For example, in his paper, John writes powerfully and cogently about the notion of authenticity as it is understood by humanistic theories. He also highlights statements made by some existential authors (myself included) to demonstrate the convergence of views with regard to this term. He makes a strong case. But what is missing or obscured in what he writes is the foundational context from which these seemingly similar statements are drawn. Once that context—the key assumption of relatedness—is put back in place, then it seems to me that John’s argument quickly falls apart.

Humanistic views regarding authenticity consider it within a subjectivist, or self-oriented, perspective. They consider the possibility of a truly “authentic self” from
a substantive, unitary set of presuppositions regarding the self (see below). In this way, authenticity becomes something that an individual can “work toward” or might even attain in a lasting, or final, manner. Humanistic authenticity resides within an individual, is an expression of that individual, and is achieved by that individual through various means that prompt him or her toward his or her true or genuine or real self.

This is a perfectly acceptable way of understanding authenticity, and I would not for a moment wish to castigate humanistic psychotherapy for adopting this view. However, it is also a view that is not—and, to my way of thinking, cannot be—shared by existential therapists. For one thing, the existential perspective on authenticity does not recognize it as a stance to being that can truly be “worked on” or achieved in any permanent sense. It has no implied suggestion of psychological, spiritual, or developmental superiority over other ways of being. Again, wrapped in paradox as it is, the very claim of achieving authenticity is itself a statement of inauthenticity. The notion of existential authenticity is intimately connected to the foundational existential assumption of “being-as-process” and, as such, cannot be captured within notions of a given substantive state or condition. In many ways, the experience of authenticity, from an existential standpoint, can’t really be talked about; the term serves as a reflective “pointer toward” rather than a thing, or state, in and of itself. In my view, this same debate arose in the now famous dialogue between Carl Rogers and Martin Buber (Buber & Rogers, 1990). Rogers, from a humanistic perspective, attempted to argue that person-centered therapy can provoke, or be provoked by, an I–thou relationship. Buber’s response, as I understand it, disputed this assertion and basically argued that any claim to the establishment of an I–thou relationship actually revealed an I–it relationship in that the experience of I–thou is not some “thing” that is substantive and fixed in time (much less permanent) but rather a “flow” of being-becoming.

Again, I am not arguing here for the superiority or greater accuracy of one definition over another. I am simply stating what at first might not seem obvious: The same term can, and does, have quite radically different meanings that give rise to significantly divergent corollaries. To declare unity because the same word is being utilized offers, at best, only a surface agreement that, in turn, creates more, and major, problems than would arise if the differences were to be acknowledged, considered, and contrasted.

In like manner, the different meanings arising from a term such as authenticity raise further divergences that have an impact on seemingly less esoteric terms such as self. Once again, at a surface level, both existential and humanistic approaches, as John attests, place great emphasis on the issue of the self, and in this sense, there exists a set of shared concerns that would suggest similar stances and positions. However, the moment one goes beyond this surface agreement, critical divergences begin to reveal themselves. Although John is a major contributor to the debate surrounding self (Rowan & Cooper, 1998) and his work on subpersonalities is an acknowledged classic of therapeutic literature (Rowan, 1989), his stance remains embedded in a humanistic set of key assumptions regarding self—namely, the ability to distinguish between “real” expressions of the self as opposed to “false self” manifestations, the underlying (if often fractured) unity of the self, its intrapsychic origins, and, not the least, the self as a source point to experiences of being such that the discovery of the self leads to the discovery of others and of relationship. I have not here the space to argue out the existential rationale that disputes all of these key assumptions, but in brief, I can at least state that from an existential standpoint
all of the above notions of self are viewed as expressions of a reflective, substantiating attempt to “capture” the flow of being-becoming. From this latter perspective, the humanistic self is an outcome rather than a source and is more accurately a structure or a construct. This construct can be both coherent and divided, multiple and apparently singular, open and resistant to alterations in reflective experience. But a construct it is and so remains. Existentially speaking, it makes little sense to speak of a distinction between real and false selves. When is the self ever anything but “real” insofar as it is the self that presents itself to reflection? The existential argument regarding the humanistic view of self can be briefly summarized in this way: There is a world of difference between stating “I am Ernesto” and “I am being Ernesto.” The first statement encapsulates the humanistic stance on self; the latter’s emphasis on construct and insecurity attempts to capture the existential position.

The shift in focus regarding the self reveals, in turn, further significant divergences between the approaches. Perhaps among the most obvious (and, thankfully, succinct) one is concerned with different perspectives on the related issues of freedom, choice, and responsibility. As I have argued elsewhere,

[From a humanistic perspective] notions of freedom, choice responsibility . . . are understood and interpreted from a subjective perspective which both internalises and isolates such notions and the actions associated with them. . . . If I choose to act in ways that I believe will “free up my possibilities” but which you experience as oppressive or painful or undesirable, then, from an isolationist standpoint, I can respond to your experience as being “your choice” . . . and can abdicate any sort of responsibility for it. From an existential standpoint, questions of choice, freedom and responsibility cannot be isolated or contained within some separate being (such as “self” or “other”) . . . . Viewed in this way, no choice can be mine or yours alone, no experienced impact of choice can be separated in terms of “my responsibility” versus “your responsibility,” no sense of personal freedom can truly avoid its interpersonal dimensions. (Spinelli, 2001, pp. 15–16).

There are but three, admittedly brief, counterpositions to the main thrust in John’s proposal. We could argue about lesser matters such as the avowed “gloominess” of Kierkegaard (though how anyone who has read selections from his diaries [Kierkegaard, 1990] could continue to see him in this way makes little sense to me) or whether a statement such as “Free and alone, without assistance and without excuse” is bleak or liberating or both.

But that, I think, would be missing the crucial issue: John has highlighted various similarities between existential and humanistic approaches that lead him to conclude that the relationship between them is so close that they are truly one approach that has only seemingly divided itself because each “branch” reveals differing, sometimes opposing, emphases and that it would be better for both “branches” to converge once more. What I have been attempting to argue is that although I accept that a relationship—possibly even a close relationship—may exist between existential and humanistic approaches, nonetheless, the nature and depth of this relationship currently remain insufficiently clear—as to whether it is merely a conjunction of similar terminology but quite radically different meanings or whether their shared source point reveals much deeper levels of convergent understanding and assumptions regarding the experiential possibilities and disturbances of being human.

Yes, existential therapy, like humanistic psychotherapy, is represented by a confederation of therapeutic attitudes and approaches that while sharing an acknowledged influence of various assumptions,
themes, and attitudes also tend to reveal differences in the emphasis given to those assumptions, themes, and attitudes. In this sense, and again like humanistic psychotherapy, it is unified as an approach by both its convergent and its divergent points of focus. Like John, I think it is vital that a dialogue between both approaches that addresses and respects whatever points of convergence and divergence might arise would be creative, beneficial to both approaches, and illuminating in ways that none of us is really able to proclaim as yet. But such an exercise, I believe, would best begin from a standpoint that acknowledges what is at least perceived to be an initial divide rather than one that insists, currently with very little substantive basis, on an inherent unity.

Editorial Note: For an elaboration on key philosophical issues raised in this debate between Spinelli and Rowan, see Chapter 8, “The Self and Humanistic Psychology,” and Chapter 9, “Toward a Sustainable Myth of Self: An Existential Response to the Postmodern Condition.”

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 37

Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World

MAUREEN O’HARA

The new age which knocks upon the door is as yet unknown, seen only through beclouded windows. . . . But whatever the new world will be, we do not choose to back into it. Our human responsibility is to find a plane of consciousness which will be adequate to it and will fill the vast impersonal emptiness of our technology with human meaning.

—May (1969, p. 308)

In the past few years, I have revisited what had initially excited me about the humanistic tradition in psychology, my own professional journey, the people and ideas to which I have been exposed and that I have shared with students over a long teaching career. Once again I was taken by the power and timeliness of the core ideas of the humanistic tradition in psychology. Rereading the words of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Erich Fromm, and Rollo May, I am renewed in the conviction that these core humanistic ideas about our inborn capacities for self-righting and self-healing, empathy, and authenticity; for mind-boggling innovation and creativity; and for solidarity with those in need and suffering have never been more relevant and the need for them more urgent. As the human species faces what could conceivably be its last-chance encounter with destiny—the challenges posed by global climate change, depletion of cheap but dirty energy, population overload, pandemic diseases, massive dislocation of peoples, global violence, and trafficking and exploitation of vulnerable populations, among others—these core ideas could yet provide grounds for hope. If the worldview, values, and associated ways of being and being with each other outlined by humanistic psychologists over the past half-century were to become part of the narrative of how humans

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Indeed, virtually from the outset, humanistic psychologists have mounted a vigorous critique of the medical model of mental life that reduces communities to “demographics,” persons into “patients,” suffering into “symptoms,” and healing and recovery into “treatments.” Where “medicalized” psychology has been reductionist, the humanistic tradition in psychology has been about the much bigger cultural stories—about individual fulfillment, the avoidance of war, a saner society, the well-being of humanity, and ensuring a more humane future for all. From its emergence in the 1940s, humanistic psychology was offered as an alternative to the disease-oriented focus of the existing psychology and sought in its research and practice to affirm human possibilities and explore the growing edge of human potential. Rogers’s core conviction that clients had within them the capacity to change and an inherent drive for greater wholeness that could be relied on to direct the course of therapy revolutionized the fields of counseling and psychotherapy.

Over the past decades, American clinical psychology has lost its way. It has focused too much of its energies on building its financial stake in the illness-focused health care economy. Psychologists spend time defining so-called mental illnesses at ever finer levels of distinction, such that there are now hundreds of diagnostic labels, each with its own insurance code and justification for treatment—and the new *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (fifth edition) introduces a dozen or so more. The American Psychological Association and the pharmaceutical companies that manufacture psychoactive drugs have between them spent millions of dollars seeking additional diagnostic categories to justify insurance reimbursement, parity with medicine, and lobbying for prescription power (I won’t call them privileges). This hand-in-glove mutual-aid scheme is intended to secure a piece of the “big-pharma” pie and a first-class seat on the health care gravy train for psychologists. For the pharmaceutical industry, it aims at direct access to a huge population of psychologist drug dispensers to peddle their wares. For psychiatrists and psychologists, it promises millions more potential patients.

A place in the health care industry was never the goal of humanistic psychologists. Indeed, virtually from the outset, humanistic psychologists have mounted a vigorous critique of the medical model of mental life that reduces communities to “demographics,” persons into “patients,” suffering into “symptoms,” and healing and recovery into “treatments.” Where “medicalized” psychology has been reductionist, the humanistic tradition in psychology has been about the much bigger cultural stories—about individual fulfillment, the avoidance of war, a saner society, the well-being of humanity, and ensuring a more humane future for all. From its emergence in the 1940s, humanistic psychology was offered as an alternative to the disease-oriented focus of the existing psychology and sought in its research and practice to affirm human possibilities and explore the growing edge of human potential. Rogers’s core conviction that clients had within them the capacity to change and an inherent drive for greater wholeness that could be relied on to direct the course of therapy revolutionized the fields of counseling and psychotherapy. Early humanistic thinkers saw this new positive voice in psychology as providing a counterweight to the then dominant theories of human motivation offered by Freudian psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Instead of understanding human behavior as controlled by either unconscious drives or external stimuli, the founders of the humanistic movement in psychology believed that such notions sold the human capacity for awareness, creativity, responsibility, and free choice grievously short.

Beginning in the 1930s, humanistic psychology’s chief founder, Abraham Maslow, hung out in the émigré-enriched psychological community of New York City. He met regularly with Adler, Horney, Goldstein, Fromm, and other psychological intellectuals who had fled the darkening clouds of Hitler’s Germany. The 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor brought the war home to American territory, and from that day, too old to serve in
the military, Maslow dedicated his efforts to putting psychological knowledge to the service of improving the world. Maslow said, “I had a vision of a peace table, and people sitting around it, talking about human nature and hatred and peace and brotherhood. . . . I realized that the rest of my life must be devoted to discovering a psychology for the peace table” (Hoffman, 1988, p. 148).

Maslow and those who joined him in the new humanistic psychology movement, including Carl Rogers, Erich Fromm, Rollo May, Clark Moustakas, and Gardner Murphy and the anthropologists Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, saw themselves as involved not only in an academic discipline but in a psychologically informed and explicitly moral social movement that sought to prevent repetition of the monstrous behavior that had just occurred on a global scale. With images of mushroom clouds haunting the popular psyche, in the 1950s humanistic psychologists wanted to prevent nuclear holocaust and to develop a psychology that was up to the twin tasks of healing those who were casualties of both violence and neglect and, at the same time, creating the cultural and interpersonal conditions that would lead to greater social justice and expanded opportunities for human fulfillment and advancement of consciousness.

It is fair to say that looked at through the “cup half-full” lens, many of their hopes have been realized, due to both their direct contributions to the collective psychology and the work of many others also aligned with a basically humanistic worldview. The world is a different place in 2009 than it was in 1948. The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), a radical affirmation of human dignity, has held for 60 years and over the decades has become real to ever more people; women and minorities have been gradually gaining their voices and have made progress toward social and political equality (uneven though it be); almost all children receive some level of education; infant and maternal mortality rates are down overall (though this too is uneven); average life expectancy has increased; and the notion that environmental sustainability is essential for human well-being is now universally acknowledged. Maslow’s “Being Values” (1966/1999) are showing up in international policy documents. The United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization’s report *The Treasure Within*, on the educational needs of the 21st century, identifies the four pillars of learning—“learning to be” and “learning to be with” in addition to “learning to know and to do”—as universal core competences (Delors, 1996). In the world of business, there is hardly an organizational trainer or coach who does not quote Maslow’s pyramid or hierarchy of needs and Rogers’s ideas about active listening. Companies and organizations within civil society all recognize the value of empowerment, networks, flattened hierarchies, democratic participation, good communication, listening, systems thinking, authenticity, and transparency—to a degree unimaginable in the 1960s. Granted that in many cases these innovations in management are as much style as substance (Potterfield, 1999), but the fact that these core humanistic values are credible and so widely employed across many fields of human endeavor surely reflects the heightened expectations of today’s employees that they be treated with dignity as competent and whole persons. When the *Harvard Business Review* selected articles for their 15 classic articles series in 1998, they chose a 1952 article on communication by Rogers with Fritz Roethlisberger (Rogers & Roethlisberger, 1952/1998). Perhaps even more indicative that deep cultural changes reflecting core humanistic values have occurred is President Barack Obama’s (2006) book the *Audacity of Hope*, in which he explicitly introduces the idea of the importance of empathy, authenticity, and caring when it comes to leadership,
humanity is facing challenges that are radically altering the context and prospect of human existence—challenges that if not addressed threaten a wholesale collapse of civilizations. In privileged places in the United States and Canada, the signs of this coming crisis are not yet so obvious in our daily lives. But any newspaper, web search, or TV channel offers plenty of evidence for those who are awake that just beyond our still comfortable horizons a great unraveling is well under way, and signs are everywhere that we are involved in a life-or-death struggle for the future of civilized life and perhaps the global ecosystem. Though mostly framed as challenges for governance, technology, and economics, I believe that all of these rest on the question of mental capacity or consciousness.

We humans operate within a web of interconnected physical, biological, and human-made realities, and it is within this web that we as conscious beings live out our short lives. Psychologists often refer to the “biopsychosocial context” of individuals’ lives. In my view, this is not a good term, failing as it does to capture the dynamical interplay among multiple levels. We need a more holistic term that can encompass the vastly complex interplay among stable and fluid elements, organic and inorganic, symbolic and systemic—interactive processes that make up the experiential context of human consciousness. My candidate is the new term psychosphere. By analogy to the concept of ecosphere, which describes complex physical and biological environments, psychosphere refers to the holistic, interconnected, interpenetrated, mutually influential system of narratives, symbols, images, representations, languages, metaphors, patterns of life, values, epistemologies, cognitive habits, rituals, religions, power relationships, sports, forms of commerce, governance, metaphysics, art, and technologies, which together provide the raw materials of identity and the psychological context of individual and group life.
gradual, people work through their disturbance over myriad conversations that explain the changes from within existing shared narratives. The change can be explained and understood not as a break with the old but as an expansion, innovation, or improvement to it.

When Western narratives about women and people of color changed in response to civil rights struggles and feminism, for instance, previously segregated institutions eventually accepted women and blacks by arguing to themselves that this did not destroy the original mission (identity) of the university but simply extended it to a wider population. There were struggles, strikes, demonstrations, and even riots—but no culture shock, no collapse of life as we know it. Though in the turbulent 1960s more than a few feared cultural breakdown, enough social glue was in place in Western democracies to hold the collective anxieties in check, preventing them from erupting into chaos long enough to work through the transition. This capacity to incorporate and adapt to change without collapse makes coherent cultures resilient and resistant to fundamental or revolutionary upheaval and has led to the success of human communities over millennia. The human mind cannot tolerate having to reinvent every wheel, every day. From an evolutionary perspective, it takes too much energy. We need most of the basic functions that keep us alive to run automatically without any attention from us so that we can focus our cognitive and emotional capacities on new challenges. We do better when change comes slowly and with good, believable explanations that might embellish or expand but don’t challenge our basic taken-for-granted storylines. Though a few casualties inevitably occur, given adequate time to work the new into the old, communities and civilizations can adapt and remain vital over very long periods (Toynbee, 1972).
Rapid and radical change is, however, another matter. When change occurs too fast, on too many fronts, or too fundamentally, established institutions often are unable to cope. Institutional ways of addressing difference and dissent, for instance, may be inadequate to restore “life as we know it.” In such cases, anxiety may rise to unbearable levels. Examples throughout history suggest that in these cases societies and whole civilizations can collapse into violence or chaos and may even disappear. In the introduction to his translation of Lucretius’s (1951) *The Nature of Things*, R. E. Latham observes that as the Hellenistic psychosphere disintegrated, the mismatch between the inherited wisdom of Aristotle and Plato resulted in “disillusionment, skepticism, and fatalism” (p. 7). Rollo May’s (1969) interpretation of psychic breakdown was that the “myths and symbols had broken down . . . and the human being does not know where in the world he is” (p. 295). The historian Barbara Tuchman’s (1978) portrait of the “violent, tormented, bewildered, suffering and disintegrating age” (p. xiii) that was the 13th and 14th centuries in Europe describes a “period of anguish when there is no sense of an assured future” (p. xiv). In 1920, the American sociologist Westfall Thompson (1920) compared this same chaotic period with the aftermath of the Great War, where a “whole population is suffering from ‘shell shock’ from frayed nerves [leading to a] semi-hysterical frame of mind throughout Europe” (p. 570). When empires conquer and occupy, when nations-states are defeated by invaders, when religious reforms contradict stabilizing belief systems, or when political revolutions sweep away kings or regimes, it may take generations of violence, disorder, and brutal repression before stability is restored and new coherent psychospheres are established (Toynbee, 1972).

In the West, the unquestioned value of change is core to our psychosphere. It is common for political platforms, both left and right, to promise change. It is hard to imagine a successful campaign in the progressive West that would promise “more of the same.” But human beings are slow to learn from history and are often blind or amnesiac about the darker side of cultural change.

American college students are taught that the European Renaissance, for instance, was a time of great breakthroughs in art, science, and political processes—the “rebirth” of classical culture that “laid the groundwork for modern civilization in political and social relationships as well as in the arts” (Cantor, 1970, p. 61). We reflect mostly on the gains, and our textbooks point to the immense social and cultural transition out of the chaos of the medieval era as a story with a “happy ending.” In the vernacular telling of history, we disconnect the undisputed cultural advances from the darker realities that went along with the changes, such as millions massacred (perhaps as many as 4 million deliberately and sadistically murdered as witches and heretics), lost communities, pandemic plagues, and endless wars. A deeper reading of history suggests that the psychosphere we now call modernity, which resulted in a psychology identified as “normal” by American psychologists and familiar to all of us in the Western world, was not stabilized overnight—or without victims. It took almost three centuries of turbulence, during which time accepted assumptions about reality were gradually overturned through a labored process of social learning, new conceptual insight, argumentation, scientific treatises, poetry, storytelling, architectural shifts, as well as internecine fights, epidemics of madness, bitter and brutal conflict, and persecution and oppression of dissentive views, including indigenous folkways, Islam, and Judaism—all this before the modern mind and modern ways of life became established as “the way things are.”
Psychospheric change is not smooth, not anxiety-free, not fast, and rarely happy.

You and I and most certainly our children and grandchildren are living at a time of unprecedented psychospheric upheaval—cultural change on a scale and at a speed beyond anything humanity has faced before. This time the disintegration of existing psychospheres is pandemic, simultaneously reaching the farthest tributaries of the Amazon and the rarified science labs of the West. It is not at all clear that we know how to navigate our way through this.

Driving this great unraveling is a combination of many factors. The chief among these is the process of globalization, which includes destruction of local cultures and intensification of Western hegemony; innovation in technology (genomics, robotics, informatics, and nanotechnology); accelerating urbanization—largely in slums; shifting age demographics—aging populations in the West and in Japan and drastic reduction of the median age in much of the rest of the world; radical changes in geopolitics—the end of the Cold War, disintegration of the former Soviet Union, emergence of an enlarged European Union, rise of China and India; shift from an energy-based industrial economy to a knowledge society; travel, migration, and an explosion of the number of refugees; the rise in expectations and demand for economic and political justice; the rise in fundamentalism and intensified religious fervor; instant and unmediated communication, bringing information overload and incoherence; unbridled consumerism and extrasocietal corporate domination of mass culture; degradation of human beings, who are reduced to the role of “consumers” rather than citizens; and exacerbating environmental pressures, including population increases and climate change.

The combined result of this era of a thousand revolutions is that long-standing frames of perception, cognition, and patterns of life—through which individual and group identity is preserved and existential anxieties managed—are literally breaking down on a global scale. Stable psychospheres are hard to find, and within a single generation a mismatch has opened between inherited local psychologies and the demands of the world we now must inhabit. In this “futureland” that is emerging, we are mostly immigrants, and many of us are refugees.

Across the world, individuals and societies are trying to make sense of what is happening, trying to hold on to whatever coherence they can, even while all about them life becomes more confusing all the time. This cognitive challenge is creating what amounts to a global conceptual emergency (Leicester & O’Hara, 2009), and with it rising uncertainty, high anxiety, even panic—which becomes increasingly dangerous.

The human mind did not evolve in such an incoherent context. For most of our 300,000 years of human evolutionary history, changes occurred slowly, over multiple generations, not in a single lifetime. We became human in this apparently timeless relationship between us and the natural world. Our collective psyches had time to adapt to slow-moving cultural shifts that happened without our awareness. But now that has changed. Humanity must adapt within single lifetimes to evolve in short order new kinds of persons who are at home in this totally new world and who can tolerate and even thrive in levels of complexity and change that our grandparents, and a thousand generations before them, would have experienced as intolerable.

One can reasonably argue that history seems to show that humanity has faced challenges like this before and, though civilizations have come and gone, humanity as a species has endured and, from the point of view of progressive Western thought, advanced.

But this time is different. Even if the global conceptual emergency were not enough to cast doubt on whether as a species we have the capacity to successfully learn our way
into the new all-connected, boundary-less world, the survival stakes have just been dramatically raised. Thanks to the efforts of our best and brightest scientists, who provide us with information about planetary changes in the far past, the present, and likely futures, we now have become aware of threats and opportunities that our ancestors had no way of perceiving (W. T. Anderson, personal communication, November 5, 2009). Our monitoring technologies make it clear that we face self-created, whole-system perils that if not addressed may put an end to all life as we know it. I am talking about the threat to the sustainability of the planetary systems due to climate change and the prospect that we may have damaged the earth’s self-regulating mechanisms beyond its capacity to self-repair.

The former U.S. vice president Al Gore’s film *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim, Gore, & David, 2006) attempted to break through the collective denial about the impending global catastrophe that global climate change could bring. Since then, scientists have refined their data, and the picture becomes worse and more acute. At this point, there are no scenarios being created by climate experts that in the near and midterm future do not include extreme challenges to the inhabitants of planet Earth, no matter what we do. Let me repeat that—no matter what we do. The die is already cast. Temperature increase occurring in 2010 is the result of human activity in 1980, when our carbon emissions were lower than today. We will not feel the effects of what we are doing today for at least another 30 years. In the meantime, things will continue to heat up from what we have done since 1980. Information from many sources shows that we have pumped so much carbon into the atmosphere that we have already set in motion climate changes that will inevitably result in a 1.5- to 2.0-degree rise in global temperatures.

The good news, if you can call it that, is that if the planet warms less than 2.5 degrees in the next 25 years, though provoking extreme events for those in already hot areas, including massive species die-off, famine, drought, pandemics, and more megastorms, the world’s advanced civilizations and the planetary ecosystems that support us can probably eventually adapt. Massive levels of suffering will be unavoidable (and indeed is already a reality from many people beyond the privileged safety of the developed world), but eventually a new homeostasis could be established that is sustainable.

The darker news, however, is that if temperatures rise to more than 3 degrees above preindustrial levels, a cybernetic engine would be unleashed that triggers accelerating warming to more than 10 degrees above acceptable levels (Dyer, 2009). These levels mean irreversible environmental collapse. No longer just a doomsday scenario providing fodder for special effect–laden disaster movies, planetary death is now being openly discussed in scientific meetings around the world. Geo-engineering proposals such as artificial sky darkening and deep-earth carbon sequestering—a sort of Army Corps of Engineers meets environmental activism—are now showing up regularly in articles in science journals (Wigley, 2006), in conversations among White House advisors, and on the agenda of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (Kintisch, 2009) and the British Royal Society (Shepherd, 2009). On March 8, 2013, scientists announced that their measurements of ice core samples show the earth is at its warmest in 4,000 years (Gillis, 2013).

If the nightmare scenario occurs, observers like Dyer (2009) say humanity will in “all likelihood be headed towards war: war over access to water, over arable land, over dwindling resources” (front cover), distracting us from the urgent job of discovering the escape route into a sustainable future. In
his final chapter (which he pointedly titles *Childhood’s End*), Dyer argues that in the long history of the evolution of consciousness, successful avoidance of nuclear annihilation in the 20th century was humanity’s midterm exam—which thus far it looks like we passed. But we are so far into the destruction of the planet’s capacity to restore itself that if we do nothing, planetary destruction of habitat for more advanced life-forms will be unavoidable. Dyer is not alone in this conclusion. In fact, climate scientists who look at this problem agree that simply reducing the rate of increase in carbon emissions, which is the most that international treaties like Kyoto require, is already insufficient. We need to stop further carbon dioxide emission and actually remove some of the carbon that we have already released. We as a species have so changed the ecology of the planet and damaged Gaia’s capacity to heal herself that, whether we like it or not, responsibility for the continuation of planetary life is now in human hands—yours, mine, and our children and grandchildren’s. Business as usual is not a survival option (Gribben & Gribben, 2009).

The earth has entered a new geological epoch—the Anthropocene (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000), where human activity is the main contributor to global geological changes. During the 3.5 billion–year journey from *cyanobacteria* to Earth’s current flora and fauna, including us, natural evolutionary processes gradually created the atmosphere and the ecology on which we and all other complex life-forms rely. To avoid irreversible collapse requires that we successfully steward the planetary life support systems and reverse some of the effects of 200 years of burning fossil fuels while at the same time finding renewable forms of energy to replace them. Dyer (2009) writes, “Now it’s the final exam, with the whole environment that our civilization depends on at stake. It’s not just about knowledge and technical ability; it is also about *self-restraint and the ability to cooperate. Grown up values if you like*” (p. 244).

Values are psychological phenomena—they speak to what is psychologically important to us—yet few of those trying to come to grips with the approaching global catastrophe address the question of how “grown up values” like self-restraint and cooperation might be developed. For instance, during a series of meetings of the World Business Forum on Sustainability in 2009, convened to aid business in its long-range planning, there appeared a distressing blind spot in the proceedings (R. Horn, personal communication, May 15, 2009). The project was convened to identify the key issues that are likely to be facing humanity 40 to 50 years hence. Working groups of experts deliberated at length on the likely technical challenges in economics, energy, health and disease, immigration, and other aspects of the imaginable future. Each group drew up detailed, elegant scenarios. But after describing what would need to happen for worst-case scenarios to be avoided, these specialists usually ended with a statement to the effect that “behavior and values will have to change.” When asked to imagine how this shift in human consciousness might occur, few ideas were offered. It is significant that among the team of experts carefully recruited as participants, not one was a psychologist. Al Gore (2009) has begun to recognize the pivotal importance of consciousness in how the various scenarios will play out. His book *Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis* describes talking to neuroscientists about how the human brain processes short-term and long-term threats. What is missing though—and this is more psychology’s failure than Al Gore’s—is consideration of how to translate psychological knowledge from the micro scale of brain processes to the meso scale of personal and interpersonal behavior and the macro scale of political action, governance, and collective human behavior—and, of course, vice versa.
In a detailed case study of a small town in Norway, Norgaard (2011) begins to explore the collective and individual denial processes in the face of significant climate change there in recent years and asks, “How do we break through denial into awareness? . . . How do we move forward in the face of enormous uncertainty?” (p. 227).

In all likelihood, the most difficult challenges facing planet earth in the 21st century are not technological but psychological and involve a simultaneous confluence of a whole gamut of challenges to human consciousness on a global scale.

We are facing two very messy challenges to consciousness that intersect and exacerbate each other. One is the worldwide disintegration of established, coherent psychospheres described earlier, where the resulting incoherence creates uncertainty and divisiveness and drives up anxiety levels, which frequently gets expressed in individual and societal pathologies. The other is that action based on a realistic understanding of what we face, making the necessary sacrifices, accepting finite limits, requires a new global psychology and psychosphere that will create and sustain it.

Surviving this next period in history will depend on enough of us being able to tolerate the inevitable anxieties and social disruption ahead without turning on each other in hatred and violence and, instead of sinking into self-destruction and despair, as societies have done in previous times of cultural disturbance, finding a transformational response to what confronts us. And this is why psychologists—in particular humanistic psychologists—must enter the story, and we must do it now.

In the longer term, surviving the predicted disruptions in the physical environment will require scientific advances and technological inventions. But it is our collective response to disruption and disintegration in the psychological environment that will be even more critical in the shorter term. The biophysical effects of climate change will be gradual—over a generation or two—but psychic collapse can occur much more rapidly. The psychic destruction of indigenous peoples everywhere has occurred in a few decades. Within only 20 years after the calamitous Great War, Germany once again descended into cultural psychosis and the Holocaust. Chaos followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in just a few months, and in Rwanda, the total collapse of the rule of law resulted in the deaths of more than 1 million people (half of them Hutus and half of them Tutsis) in an orgy of rape and slaughter within a period of days. Today, it is violence in the Middle East, genocide in Mali, global terrorism, mass murders between warring tribes, and religious sectarianism.

It is my hunch that if those great American humanists Rogers, Maslow, May, and Fromm were alive today they would not be focusing their energy trying to marginally improve psychotherapy outcomes for Americans, debating whether psychologists should prescribe drugs or whether one kind of therapy treatment is marginally better than another. Their agenda would be far bolder. They would frame the current mental health crisis not in terms of individual diagnoses and the need for better therapist-driven treatments but as symptoms of a broader cultural crisis. They would be urging us to put psychology at the service of the “final exam”—to emerge from the current mass denial of how serious the threat is and to try to prevent the end of life as we know it. They would draw on the transformational power of hope, creativity, and intelligence to learn, expand our consciousness, and grow our way out of the current crisis. They would be reminding us of the unfinished work of ushering in a new
stage of evolution where “us” is defined as all of life and “other” is seen not as a threat to be avoided or subjugated but as a valued opportunity for innovation and learning. They would be urging us to search for sources of meaning and fulfillment within relationships based on mutual respect and love and to find satisfaction at consumption levels the planet can sustain—developing grown-up values.

Rogers explicitly sought what he hoped might be lawlike behaviors that would enable us to avoid alienation, nuclear war, genocide, and ecological devastation and that would align with a transformative trajectory, a “formative tendency” he believed existed in nature, extending from the outer reaches of galaxies to the inner reaches of the human heart. He also recognized that a new psychology was emerging in people he dubbed “persons of tomorrow,” who were more at ease in the complex and fast-changing world. Maslow proposed that we need a new enlightenment to develop our capacities for aesthetics, compassion, creativity, ethics, love, and spirituality. Goble (1970) and May (1991) argued that we need new myths to guide the new world community.

It is long past the time to reawaken this fierce commitment to peace and social justice that propelled the early thinkers of the human potential branch of psychology and rescue their cultural leadership project. There is no time to lose. The signs are everywhere that the mental health “industry” is close to collapsing under its own ineffectiveness and can no longer cope with the level of mental anguish that people feel. There are an estimated 1.5 million military personnel and their families who have been subjected to 11 long years of war and will need some way to make their transition to civilian life. Across the spectrum—from left to right and from citizens to presidents—people are crying out for innovation in how we address the psychological well-being of individuals and communities without going bankrupt. The gravy train that fueled the rise of professional psychology in the 1980s and 1990s and made our compromises lucrative if not wise is running on empty, and if we are to avoid escalating suffering on a massive scale, we need to find new ways of thinking about psychological health. Business as usual is no longer adequate, and new ideas are in short supply.

And herein lie some grounds for hope. Psychotherapists and teachers know that it is often at the points of greatest confusion, cognitive dissonance, and high anxiety that breakthroughs occur and new levels of consciousness are achieved. In a long-forgotten volume that had a huge impact on me (and incidentally on Rogers), Stavrianos (1976) reminds us that when empires come to an end, the collapse is never total. Humankind has answered previous threats to survival by grit, invention, and creativity. Historians like Toynbee and Tuchman believe that there is nothing inevitable about human history and that the quality of human aspiration plays a central role in whether civilizations decay or remain vital. If history and psychotherapy are to provide any guidance to times of anxiety and threat, it might be in the observation that when people can contain their anxiety long enough to tolerate and actually face the dissolution of past certainties, they can often find the growing or emergent edge of insight and innovation. If instead of denial or collapse, individuals and collectives can expand their awareness and allow themselves to clearly see what confronts them, they can rise to the occasion and become more than they were before.

In my view, the most important work that Maslow and others who saw the need for a humanistic voice in psychology started back half a century ago is not yet done. The contemporary 21st-century psychosphere is more nihilistic than inspirational, more encouraging of self-indulgence than of sacrifice or self-transcendence, more focused on
aggression than on love, and framed more as “me and mine first” than as a psychology for the well-being of all of humanity and other life-forms. A psychology of resilience and transcendence is not yet what our parenting and education cultivate in our children, and the highly developed mental capacities needed to be at home in our vastly complex world are not yet what we expect of our citizenry. But that could change. And because as we know that consciousness is a nonlinear process, it could change quickly.

So here’s the good news for humanistic psychologists. Leaders and the public are finally waking up to the realization that psychological health and mental capabilities have a significance beyond individual experience. Evolution in the global psychosphere is central to our collective human capacity to face our challenges in creative and effective ways. People who work in services geared toward improving well-being are acknowledging that the dominant Western paradigm is not working—indeed it is near collapse. In a strategy workshop with health care workers facing huge spending cuts, professionals were asked the question “What are we all pretending is true that we know in our hearts is not?” (P. Hennigan, personal communication, October 15, 2008). The answers from these seasoned practitioners shook everyone and revealed a disturbing level of complicity in a failing system. Among the answers included pretending that “there is a correlation between years of training and practitioner effectiveness”; that “the despair we see every day is due to ‘illness’ that we can ‘treat’ with CBT [cognitive-behavioral therapy] and drugs, when we know it is the cumulative result of poverty, deprivation, and abuse”; and that “what I do as a counselor will lead to a better outcome for a homeless client than a job, a friend, or what they can do for themselves.” Even more shocking for a group of mental health professionals was that they admitted that they believed the mental health care system contributed more to the well-being of providers—in salaries, status, and professional identity—than it did to those seeking help, who were often subjected to dehumanizing, revolving-door pseudotreatment and subtly encouraged to become dependent on counselors, therapists, and welfare workers rather than empowered participants in their own recovery. In describing a “fifth wave” of innovation in approaches to health and well-being, Hanlon, Carlisle, Hannah, and Lyon (2012, p. 167) argue the case that if we are to meet the rising demands for mental health services, we must make a shift in worldview in a humanistic direction. As Rollo May (1969) said, “Problems must be embraced in their full meaning. . . . They must be built upon; and out of this will arise a new level of consciousness” (pp. 307–308). Policies aimed at well-being should move beyond focusing on pathology and illness and embrace the possibility for growth and transformation (O’Hara & Lyon, 2014).

Like the founders of humanistic psychology, I think that those of us who care about the future have an obligation to put transformative psychology to the service of a world in peril. As Maslow said, the whole of humanity is our client (Goble, 1970). The human community stands at a tipping point, and it needs our help to work through its conceptual emergency and to “grow up.” Though humanistic psychologists may have strayed from the emancipatory project envisioned by Rogers, Maslow, and Fromm (and compadres such as Paulo Friere, Ronnie Laing, and Leo Basaglia), we nevertheless have much accumulated knowledge, practice, and experience to offer if we so choose. In Rogers’s (1980) last book, he wrote,

If the time comes when our culture tires of endless homicidal feuds, despair of the use of force and war as a means of bringing peace, becomes discontent with the
half-lives that its members are living—only then will our culture seriously look for alternatives. . . . When that time comes they will not find a void. They will discover that there are ways of facilitating the resolution of feuds. They will find there are ways of building communities without sacrificing the potential creativity of the person. They will realize that there are ways, already tried out on a small scale, of enhancing learning, of moving towards new values, of raising consciousness to new levels. They will find there are ways of being that do not involve power over persons and groups. They will discover that harmonious community can be built on the basis of mutual respect and enhanced personal growth. As humanistic psychologists with a person-centered philosophy—we have created working models on a small scale which our culture can use when it is ready. (p. 205)

In our book Dancing at the Edge: Competence, Culture and Organization (O’Hara & Leicester, 2012), my colleague, Graham Leicester, and I have taken up Rogers’s challenge. For our study, we sought out leaders, communities, and organizations that are learning to thrive and take wise action in our “powerful times.” What we find among these people is that they share certain characteristic ways of being, being with, and being in the world. Though they would not consider themselves humanistic psychologists, they are easily recognizable as people who have a great capacity for love, collaboration, creativity, empathy, loyalty, courage, and hope even in the face of daunting challenges. Many have engaged in growth processes—psychotherapy, consciousness disciplines, group process, the expressive arts, coaching, and enlightened action projects of many kinds. Using Rogers’s term, we consider these people “persons of tomorrow.”

So I conclude with a proposal for how humanistic psychologists, in the tradition of the movement’s founders, could refocus our energies on a social transformation agenda and consider what we might do as a discipline and community to encourage the development of people who can help us cope and thrive in the new circumstances. The following steps might be a good start:

- Reframe mental health as a reflection of cultural health, and understand individual psychological structures and processes as part of a holistic “open system” that includes the rest of organic and physical reality.
- Prepare graduates to assume leadership roles in new forms of practice for the coming challenges. We need policymakers, leaders, professors, administrators, program designers, managers, and team members for new kinds of systems of care. Prepare them to be ready to work in multidisciplinary teams with diverse colleagues, clients, and lay people.
- Provide training in the form of practica and civic engagement opportunities to work with people across the globe who are displaced, violated, unschooled, traumatized, and/or destitute.
- Affirm the central role of master’s-level educators and practitioners. Most psychotherapy will be done—if at all—by master’s-level practitioners at lower market rates.
- Cut the cost of training for students. Tuition-dependent graduate schools must reexamine the ethics of their business model if humanistic psychologists are to be produced in sufficient numbers.
- Globalize our psychology. Acknowledge humanistic psychology as an indigenous psychology of 19th- and 20th-century Western societies and that it does not reflect other psychospheres or the radical new circumstances of the 21st century.
- Recognize that we are now an interconnected global society with a collective
psychology that is as yet incoherent and at risk of being dominated by hegemonic societies like the United States.

- Focus research and curriculums on theories and practices that can help create a new global psychosphere for the 21st century and, beyond that, provide psychological coherence at both local and global levels. We may live in locally specific environments—a Sudanese desert demands a different psychology from suburban Minnesota. But people are becoming increasingly aware that humanity’s destiny is shared. We need a psychology that takes this shared future as its core assumption. The Western enlightenment paradigms must be put in context—as one among many—and subjected to dialogue and engagement with other forms of knowledge, other wisdoms, and other ways of life.

- Humanistic psychologists must join the larger conversation about the future. This means developing new, transdisciplinary degree programs that apply humanistic principles to contemporary concerns—effective parenting and early interventions to building resilience, elder wellness, client self-care, community organizing, immigrant integration, facilitation of the creation of civil society initiatives for housing, conflict resolution, trauma care, child care, spiritual comfort and guidance, and a host of other human-to-human activities. These new areas of expertise should not be add-ons studied after students have mastered the diagnostic categories of the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual and the principles of psychopharmacology but should be the curriculum.²

- Students need to know how to participate in policy making. Policymakers are looking for new ideas—let us provide some. We may be able to persuade those making funding decisions to focus on approaches that liberate the self-healing potential of clients and put the professionals in the role of educators and facilitators who are there to give psychology away.

In my view, to reclaim the social transformation agenda is a “win–win” proposition. People are helped to access resources for self-healing, health care costs come down, and the population becomes more empowered. And as we address the local needs from the perspective of a world in transition, we build capacity to be hospice workers for a world that is collapsing and preschool teachers for a new world that is stumbling into being.

NOTES

1. I recognize that the ideas of these founders are the product of a particular culture. Humanistic psychology is an indigenous psychology of 20th-century Europe and North America, and I do not suggest that they should become universalized—only that they are a valuable thread in a global conversation about our future.

2. The California Mental Health Act of 2004 is a huge step in this direction, seeking to establish services that are person centered, strengths based, non-pathologizing, prevention oriented, holistic, interdisciplinary, and family and community focused. Whether this will result in a paradigm shift in thinking to support the humanizing intention of the act will largely depend on whether those leading the initiatives it covers understand the deeper shift in thinking that will be required.
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Humanistic-Experiential Therapies in the Era of Managed Care

Jeanne C. Watson
Arthur C. Bohart

Survival in an era of managed care and evidence-based treatments has forced humanistic-experiential practitioners to tailor their approaches to market demands. To ensure that their treatments remain relevant and accessible, practitioners and researchers have been engaging in research to demonstrate the effectiveness of these approaches and are focusing on delivering shorter-term treatments, as well as tailoring specific treatments to specific disorders, for example, depression, trauma, social anxiety, and eating disorders (Cooper, Watson, & Hölldampf, 2010; Elliott, Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2003; Greenberg, Watson, & Lietaer, 1998). In this chapter, we provide an overview of the work of a number of humanistic-experiential theorists and practitioners and the ways in which their works can be adapted in an environment of managed health care.

Experiential approaches traditionally have focused on facilitating clients’ experiencing in sessions and on developing safe therapeutic relationships as both these processes are seen as important ways of effecting changes in clients’ behavior and feelings (Watson, Goldman, & Greenberg, 2011; Watson, Greenberg, & Lietaer, 1998). As we move to tailoring short-term treatments, the role of the therapeutic relationship, and more specifically the working alliance, is exceedingly important (Watson, 1997; Watson & Greenberg, 2000). Research has indicated that clients who reach agreement with their therapists on the goals and tasks of therapy early on do better than clients who do not (Greenberg & Watson, 2005; Watson & Greenberg, 1998). Thus, if we are to be effective in implementing briefer treatment strategies, then we need to know how to formulate a treatment focus early in therapy and make this relevant to clients’ goals so that fruitful collaborations can ensue in a shorter time frame.

Facilitating Clients’ Experiencing Process

The work of Greenberg, Rice, and Elliott (1993) and their colleagues proposes the use of markers to guide therapists in the application of moment-to-moment interventions during the
session as well as in the formulation and development of short-term treatment plans. These clinicians have spent considerable energy and resources in identifying markers or client statements that indicate when clients are experiencing specific cognitive-affective problems and in developing the appropriate interventions to facilitate resolution of these problems. There are markers to identify conflict splits, self-criticisms (Elliott et al., 2003; Greenberg & Watson, 1998, 2005), unfinished business with significant others (Greenberg & Foerster, 1996; Greenberg & Paivio, 1997), problematic reactions (Rice & Saperia, 1984; Watson, 1996), an unclear felt sense (Gendlin, 1981; Leijssen, 1998), and loss of meaning (Clarke, 1991). In addition, other markers have been identified for empathic responding (Watson, 2002) and for work with victims of posttraumatic stress (Elliott, Davis, & Slatick, 1998; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999; Paivio & Pascual Leone, 2010). Markers that indicate possible problems with the therapeutic alliance and clients’ emotional processing in therapy have also been noted (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999; Watson, 2002).

Distinctions can be made among task markers, markers of characteristic style or more habitual ways of responding, markers of style of engagement, and moment-to-moment processing markers. To facilitate brief-treatment approaches, it is essential to identify clients’ characteristic ways of behaving in experiential terms and how these are contributing to their current life difficulties. Thus, process-experiential therapists pull together information from multiple levels to develop treatment plans for clients. Each treatment plan is custom tailored to each client’s life history, presenting problem, current life issues, and moment-to-moment process in the session.

Clients learn ways of relating to others and themselves from their interactions with caregivers early in life. They learn whether to be watchful, managing, critical, blaming, neglectful, and destructive as opposed to protective, nurturing, understanding, and supportive of themselves and the people around them (Barrett-Lennard, 1997; Bowlby, 1971; van Kessel & Lietaer, 1998; Perls, 1969; Rogers, 1965). By attending closely to clients’ early attachment histories and interactions with significant others, we are able to identify some of their more characteristic or habitual interpersonal and intrapsychic processes.

This information is important because it provides a context in which to understand clients’ presenting issues and the roots of the problems that brought them into therapy. Clients usually reveal how they treat themselves and others in their descriptions of their current problems. The identification of characteristic styles of expression is very important in alerting therapists to what is significant and poignant in clients’ experiences. If we understand clients’ histories and typical ways of responding, then we will be able to identify those markers and the types of microtasks that will be relevant to clients. This procedure is important in developing a good working alliance and facilitates the development of agreement on the tasks and goals of therapy. For example, it is important to identify whether clients invalidate their experiences and whether they are self-critical or neglectful of their own needs and values.

Once clinicians have formulated these characteristic styles, they are in a position to know what is especially poignant and salient for their clients. This enables them to attend to those task markers that are particularly relevant for clients’ current concerns. Therapists then are able to know whether to attend to markers that indicate unfinished business, conflict splits, or problematic reactions. Moreover, if they are able to formulate clients’ present difficulties in terms of the specific cognitive-affective processes identified by the markers, and if they demonstrate how these are contributing to clients’ problems,
might have for them. Sometimes, experiential therapists can further clients’ explorations of their inner experiences by offering empathic conjectures on clients’ inner states. And on occasion, experiential therapists empathically challenge their clients to think of alternative perspectives and views. Empathic challenging is very supportive and gentle in that therapists, when advancing alternative perspectives, are very careful to respect clients as the experts on their feelings. The alternatives, therefore, are proffered as other possible perspectives and views that clients can try on but should not feel coerced or pressured to adopt (Watson, 2002).

In addition to using empathic responses to facilitate clients’ experiencing in sessions, experiential therapists use a number of tasks or interventions to arouse clients’ emotions in sessions so that these can be processed (Greenberg et al., 1993). These tasks include “chair work” and systematically building the scene. Chair work is useful if clients express chronically negative feelings about significant people in their lives (Greenberg & Foerster, 1996; Paivio & Greenberg, 1995). Having clients imagine their significant others in other chairs can bring those people alive in the room and help clients access their feelings and needs vis-à-vis the others. The expression of feelings and needs to imagined others provides tremendous relief and enables clients to acknowledge and own the needs that have been frustrated. This shift in orientation frees clients to begin thinking of alternative ways of having their needs met. Clients often are able to reframe earlier perspectives, and they sometimes are able to see the others’ perspectives (Watson, 1996), thereby allowing for the integration of affect and reason. This facilitates more effective differentiation of self and other, an essential developmental task (Watson, 2011).

The markers for the two-chair task are clients’ statements indicating that they are treating their experience negatively, for
example, being self-critical; are undecided about a course of action; or imagine other people as criticizing them. The objective of this task is to have clients voice the negative self-criticisms or the imagined criticisms of others so as to get the clients to react to these statements. When clients voice the critical statements out loud, they usually react with pain, out of which state they can access a need to protect and defend themselves from the hurtful criticisms. Once they have achieved this awareness, they are in a better position to understand how to manage and regulate their affective experience and negotiate alternative ways of being that take account of conflicting needs and develop more satisfying ways of being.

Another technique for helping clients deal with reactions that take them by surprise, or that seem overwhelming or out of control to them, is systematic evocative unfolding (Rice & Saperia, 1984; Watson, 1996). This technique uses vivid, concrete, imagistic language to help clients retrieve their episodic memories of events. Once the memories of these events have been brought to life in sessions, clients are more easily able to identify the specific triggers that prompted the reactions to better understand the specific meanings or significance of the triggers. Helping clients to rebuild images of different scenes and events using words is very useful in trauma work because it enables clients to reprocess some of the feelings and reactions that they might have suppressed or denied at the time (Elliott et al., 1998, 2003; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999).

In summary, experiential therapists have developed a number of different techniques to facilitate clients’ experiencing in sessions. These interventions provide models of functioning that enable clinicians to identify clients’ characteristically negative ways of treating themselves (Watson, 2011). With this knowledge, they are able to formulate clients’ problems more efficiently and suggest ways of working in brief therapy to help clients resolve certain life difficulties more quickly. The emphasis continues to be on facilitating clients’ emotional processing so that they can develop alternative ways of regulating their affective experience and lead more satisfying lives.

FACILITATING THE RELATIONSHIP IN BRIEF-PROCESS EXPERIENTIAL THERAPY

In short-term and brief-therapy approaches, therapists need to be more concentrated on their efforts to establish good working alliances. It is useful to think of the relationship in terms of early, middle, and late phases, with each period having different tasks and goals. At the beginning of therapy, experiential therapists make assessments of how in tune clients are with their inner experiences. Rogers defined experience as all that is going on within an individual or organism that is potentially available to awareness. The dictionary defines it as anything observed or lived through as well as feelings and individual reactions to events (Merriam-Webster, 1989).

One of the ways in which experiential therapists assess how in touch clients are with their inner experiences is by attending to their vocal quality and the contents of their disclosures (Elliott et al., 2003; Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999). If clients are able to turn their attention inward—as revealed by changes in their vocal tones such that they soften their voices, their speech patterns become ragged, with unusual pauses, and their reactions and descriptions of events become more vivid and idiosyncratic—then it can be assumed that clients are able to be in touch with their inner experiences and use them as reference points in their explorations of themselves and the world. In this case, therapists can move
directly to stimulating clients’ experiencing process so as to facilitate their explorations and resolutions of negative emotional material.

In cases where clients speak in rehearsed and carefully modulated tones and focus their attention solely on events outside of themselves using conventional, well-worn terms, it can be assumed that they are not in touch with their experiences. In these cases, the first task that must be accomplished is for therapists to have clients agree to focus on their inner experiences and to bring them into conscious awareness so that they can be processed. Therapists can explain to their clients that an important task in experiential therapy work is to help them gain access to the parts of their experiencing of which they are unaware. Simultaneously, therapists can be directing their reflections and other interventions toward clients’ experiencing as they try to help clients flesh out their feelings and reactions. Therapists also might need to help clients see how attending to their reactions and feelings will help them feel better, so that clients see the task of disclosing their feelings as relevant to their goals in therapy (Watson, 2002; Watson & Greenberg, 1998).

Once clients are agreeable to focusing on their inner experiences, therapists and clients move into the middle phase of therapy. During this phase, experiential therapists are alert to the specific cognitive-affective problems that their clients are experiencing, such as self-critical splits, difficulty in accessing their inner experiences, and chronic negative feelings about significant others. This alerts experiential therapists to moments when intervening would be most productive. As they move into this working phase of therapy, experiential therapists need to be very carefully attuned to the balance between direction and responsiveness (Greenberg & Watson, 2005; Watson, Kalogerakos, & Enright, 1998).

Therapists need to be attentive to moments when their clients feel overstimulated during this period or when they become overwhelmed by their feelings and need to distance themselves from their experiencing. These moments may be signaled when clients say that their mind is blank, change the subject, or question their therapists’ suggestions. Sometimes therapists might have to very deliberately help clients focus on their inner states (Elliott et al., 2003; Gendlin, 1981; Leijssen, 1996) and help them develop vocabularies for their inner experiences.

**GENDLIN’S FOCUSING-ORIENTED THERAPY**

Facilitating experiential change is the core of Gendlin’s (1996) focusing-oriented therapy. For Gendlin, experiencing is an ongoing process that includes both cognition and emotion. Experience is more finely ordered and intricate than are any of the words and concepts that we use to describe it. Gendlin (1997) said, “A situation [and the experience of the situation] is so finely ordered that almost anything we say about it is too simple” (p. 32). He held that when one puts experience into words, one does not merely report on something already formed; instead, the very act of putting it into words changes and carries experience forward.

There is always a “more” that lies beyond the words and concepts that we use to represent experience. The experienced complexity that underlies words and concepts implicitly contains the situations in which we live. Experience is concrete and situational. Past learning and words, concepts, philosophies, or rules that have been carried forward into the current situation “cross” with the current situation to both influence our experience of the situation and be influenced, so that their meanings subtly change and are carried forward. Therefore, as we encounter each new situation, there is an implicit potential for new development or the “carrying forward” of old concepts, rules, words,
or ways of being. In each situation, we are “making ourselves anew.” Gendlin (1997) suggested that “a living body is a self-organizing process” (p. 27) and that one’s experience is always “open for further living and action and often demands further steps” (p. 7). There is always room for a new step. Furthermore, and most important to us as therapists, there are situations in which new steps are demanded. These are just the situations where our old rules, concepts, or ways of being are not working and we must go further. Often, implicitly, we know what a next productive step is or will look like. If we try to intellectually manufacture a step and it does not fit, then we can feel our bodies resisting. We know that it is not right, just as we know when we have chosen a word or concept to express an idea and it is not quite right. When we find the right step, there is a sense of relief or release (Gendlin called it a “felt give”). For Gendlin, the process of change is a creative one of tuning into the implicit experienced complexity of the problem, from which new implications or new steps arise. Psychotherapy is just this process of helping people “think and experience forward” from where they are to new ways of being and behaving.

Gendlin’s focusing-oriented psychotherapy is an integrative therapy designed to facilitate this creative carrying forward process. The basic process is one of facilitating attention to experience in a receptive, inwardly focused manner that helps carry it forward. Therapists might do nothing but listen in a traditional, Rogerian way. For some clients, it is very difficult to represent their inner experiences, so that it is particularly difficult for therapists to respond empathically. With these clients, it can be useful to teach them the technique of focusing.

Focusing is an exercise developed by Gendlin (1981) to promote clients’ experiencing process in sessions. The steps of focusing ask clients to locate those places in their bodies where they experience their feelings and then to pay attention to those places while they let their feelings take shape in words or images. Leijssen’s (1990) research into the steps of focusing identified four components as necessary for the successful resolution of the exercise: (1) a bodily felt sense, (2) an image, (3) a label to describe the felt sense, and (4) a sense of relief. Focusing can be useful for clients who are very distant from their feelings as well as for clients who are overwhelmed by them. In the latter case, focusing on feelings can often diminish them and provide some structure and a way of looking at them. In the case of people who are very distant from their inner experiences, focusing frequently provides them with a way of getting in touch with what is happening, even if initially that is limited to an awareness of bodily sensations (Leijssen, 1990).

In addition, Gendlin may use concepts and procedures from many different therapies if they are meaningful and relevant to where clients are experientially. The key difference is that therapists always make sure to help clients check the concepts against their own experiences. They are useful only if they fit experientially. Gendlin (1996) discussed the integrative use of different approaches and procedures within his approach. He suggested that different procedures be thought of as different avenues of therapeutic change, and he identified a number of them, including the use of imagery, role-play, words, cognitive beliefs, memories, feelings, emotional catharsis, interpersonal interactions, dreams, and habitual behavior. Each can be used in an experiential way. Therapists are not limited to the use of any specific avenue, however. Gendlin advocates learning how to use each avenue. Any avenue might lead to a felt sense, and any avenue can be used to carry it forward. For example, a therapist can engage in a process of challenging dysfunctional beliefs. However, from an experiential perspective, the therapist might also
ask what the experiential felt sense says and then use that to work toward change. The cognitive challenge might be to the dysfunctional cognition “I’m no good.” This negative evaluation may be challenged by asking for contrary evidence, such as memories of times when the client has done good things. Subsequently, the felt sense can be consulted. The therapist might ask, “So how does that feel inside?” And the client might reply, “Well, that feels sort of right, but there is more to what I mean by ‘I’m no good’ than that. It is more like ‘I never accomplish anything.’” This further differentiation then can be addressed therapeutically.

Gendlin’s focusing-oriented therapy has the potential to be used in a wide range of contexts. What is added to traditional approaches is that nothing is ever tried or any truth ever accepted unless it is first checked with the client’s felt sense. Checking with the client’s felt sense is used as a compass for keeping on the right track. In its pure form, the focus is on empathic listening as the primary “technique,” with other procedures from other therapies used relatively sparingly.

MAHRER’S EXPERIENTIAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

Mahrer’s (1996) experiential psychotherapy postulates that experiencing potential is at the core of human functioning (see Chapter 33, this volume). The goal of experiential therapy is to access the deeper experiencing potential so that it is possible for the person to become “a qualitatively new person whose potentials for experiencing now include the integrated deeper potential. The person has become a qualitatively new person, perhaps only for a few moments or for a while or from now on.” In addition, “the person is now free of the scenes of bad feeling that had been front and center in the beginning of [the] session. These bad-feelinged scenes are no longer a part of the qualitatively new person” (p. 82). Other than this, there is no specified outcome of experiential therapy. It is not meant to specifically reduce anxiety, depression, schizophrenic symptoms, obsessive-compulsive disorder, drinking problems, anorexia, or any other set of symptoms.

Experiential therapy consists of four steps, and the therapist and client go through each of these in all the sessions. Each session is considered complete in and of itself. Mahrer (1993) believes that some clients can make major changes in even one session. The four steps are as follows: (1) being in the moment of strong feeling and accessing the inner experiencing, (2) developing an integrative good relationship with inner experiencing, (3) being the inner experiencing in earlier scenes from one’s life, and (4) being and behaving as the inner experiencing in the present. In the first step, the client imagines himself or herself in a scene of strong feeling (e.g., a recent conflict with the boss). The therapist tries to allow the client’s experiencing to flow through his or her own experiencing. The therapist’s job is to “be” the experiencing of the client as much as possible. As the person accesses strong feeling, he or she is stuck within the operating potential. However, the therapist is in a position to access the deeper experiencing. So, for example, while the overly dutiful client is horrified at having cheated on her taxes, the therapist is accessing the deeper experiencing potential, which is the pleasure in getting away with something and defying authority.

In the second step, the goal is to help the client develop an integrative good relationship with the inner experiencing. This includes helping the client be aware of the inner experiencing, savor the bodily sensation, let it be, and welcome and appreciate it. In the third step, the client is asked to think of an earlier scene when he or she was the inner experiencing, such as enjoying getting away with something and defying authority.
during childhood, and then to relive it. The second and third steps help the client accept and incorporate a potential that can enrich his or her personality if integrated in a productive way.

Finally, in the fourth step, the client is to live imaginatively in the present world while being the inner experiencing. For example, the client might reframe scenes of getting away with something and defying authority in his or her present world. Done in a type of “brainstorming” way, these scenes can be wild and far-fetched. Eventually, the therapist and client narrow it down to a scene that is realistic, for example, a client standing up to his or her boss on an important issue.

This is an existential-humanistic therapy in that the goal is to expand the person’s potential for functioning. How the person integrates the new potential into his or her life is up to the person. In one case, for example, a woman came in complaining of neck pains (Mahrer, 1989). Therapy did not explicitly focus on the neck pains; rather, it focused on the client’s deep experiencing potential for being “devilish.” On the surface, her operating potential was that of being overly responsible. As she accessed and accepted her more devilish side, she made a major career change and, incidentally, the neck pains vanished. This approach to therapy integrates strategies from other therapies for use in carrying out the steps. Mahrer includes psychodynamic elements in the form of reliving earlier scenes as well as behavioral elements in the form of rehearsing new behavior in the extratherapy world. Paradoxical interventions can also be found in some of the things done to help the person appreciate and accept inner experiencing.

Mahrer’s approach to therapy is short term insofar as he treats each session as an end in itself, thereby making it very compatible with working in a managed-care environment. However, the goal of treatment is not symptom reduction but rather expansion of each client’s potential. Consequently, at times it might conflict with the objectives required by managed-care providers.

EXISTENTIAL-INTEGRATIVE THERAPY

The basic purpose of existential-integrative therapy is to maximize clients’ freedom (Schneider, 1998, 2008; see also Schneider & Krug, 2010; Schneider & May, 1995; and Chapter 39, this volume). Freedom is defined as (a) the cultivation of choice within the natural and self-imposed limits of living and (b) the capacity to constrict or expand across a range of conscious and subconscious aspects of human existence. These aspects include the physiological, the behavioral, the cognitive, the psychosexual, the interpersonal, and the “being” or experiential. The existential-integrative framework incorporates a range of therapeutic stances—medical, cognitive-behavioral, psychoanalytic, relational, and experiential—to deal with each of these aspects.

Schneider and May (1995) argued that human experience is organized along a constrictive–expansive continuum. Dread of expansive or constrictive polarities promotes extreme or dysfunctional counterreactions to that dread. Hyperconstriction characterizes dysfunctions such as depression, anxiety, dependency, agoraphobia, paranoia, and obsessive-compulsiveness. Hyperexpansion characterizes disorders such as mania, antisocial personality, hysteria, and narcissism.

Dysfunction involves compulsive (or polarized) expansion or constriction in each of the aspects of human existence. For example, at the physiological level, persons may be compulsively constrictive (e.g., inhibited, sedated) or compulsively expansive (e.g., excitable, frenetic). At the environmental level, they may be polarized by their conditioning. At the cognitive level, they may be polarized by
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Constricted, dichotomous (either/or) scripts or expansive, overgeneralized scripts. At the psychosexual level, they may be polarized by their histories and the lack of effective integration of psychosexuality into their personalities. They may be constricted from being physically or sexually abused. Or they may be expansive in the form of physical or sexual acting out. At the interpersonal level, the issue is one of achieving a balance between being an autonomous self and being able to be interpersonally connected. Finally, at a core experiential/being level, they may feel either unmanageable smallness and obliteration or unmanageable greatness and chaos.

The goal of therapy is to maximize access to, and integration of, each of the aspects of being as warranted. At the physiological level, the goal may be to help clients become more autonomous by freeing them from substance abuse or by helping them manage their physiology better. At the environmental level, it may be to alter inappropriately expansive or constrictive reactions to reinforcement contingencies. At the cognitive level, it may be to help them think more discerningly. At the psychosexual level, it may be to help them integrate their affects and drives into adaptive experience and behavior patterns. At the interpersonal level, it may be to help them become less fearful of people so that they can relate more intimately, or it may be to help them become more sensitive so that they are not overly intrusive. Finally, at the being level, it may be to help them overcome and integrate basic fears of smallness or obliteration or of chaotic expansiveness.

Therapeutic techniques are, accordingly, seen as liberation strategies. They are relevant on the basis of deep attunement to clients’ desire and capacity for change. The therapist works with the aspects that the client is most comfortable with or that are in accord with his or her particular mode of living. The therapist, therefore, may use physiological procedures such as medication or detoxification (if appropriate), cognitive-behavioral techniques, psychodynamic exploration, and interpersonal techniques to help free the client in the relevant mode of being. The therapist works at the deepest level that he or she can, contingent on (a) what the client wants and needs and (b) what is possible given the therapeutic contract and constraints. Ultimately, however, the existential-integrative therapist attempts to be available to the client at the fuller or being level of his or her experience. (This level is characterized by immediacy, kinesthesia, affect, and profundity.) Some clients might not want to move to the being level. For many, however, it is at this level that fundamental issues of authenticity are addressed.

Existential-integrative therapy can address the needs of a wide range of clients by using procedures and ideas from a variety of perspectives but without giving up the dimensions that existential-humanistic therapists value. Therefore, it can be practiced in a diversity of settings. In many settings, however, limits may preclude existential-integrative therapists from pursuing the deepest levels of change even with clients who are capable of and ready for such change. In these cases, it may be necessary for therapists to arrange to continue to see these clients outside the managed-care environment (perhaps for reduced fees) or to make other arrangements. (See Schneider, 2008, and Schneider & Krug, 2010, for the latest elaboration on the existential-integrative approach to therapy.)

Bohart and Tallman’s View of the Client as Active Self-Healer

In contrast to the other humanistic and experiential approaches, Bohart and Tallman (1999) provided an empirically supported metatheoretical perspective that
serves as a platform for integrative therapy practice. It is based on the proposition that the client is the real “therapist” in therapy. The therapist is the client’s aide or assistant. Therapeutic theories, structures, and procedures are tools that the client uses. Many clients can use virtually any approach to self-heal, and this is why it is so difficult to find differences among the different approaches to therapy.

Bohart and Tallman (1999) reviewed a large body of research showing that (a) therapeutic procedures and techniques play only a modest role in producing outcome, (b) different approaches work about equally well on average, (c) self-help procedures work about as well as professionally provided therapy, (d) the relationship between the therapist and the client is more important than procedures, (e) client involvement is the single most important predictor of outcome, and (f) there is a considerable body of evidence that humans are resilient and have a capacity for self-healing. These findings suggest that it is the client’s involvement that makes therapy work. The therapeutic relationship and procedures contribute primarily to the extent that they invite and sustain involvement and provide some viable structure for learning and problem solving. If the client is actively involved, then he or she can use the structure of many different therapy approaches (or even self-help procedures) to self-heal.

Bohart and Tallman’s (1999) thesis of the client as active self-healer provides a metaperspective in that the therapist and the client can choose a procedure from any therapy that is plausible and acceptable to the client. As a metaperspective, it stands in contrast to the medical model, which significantly influences both therapy research and models of therapy. In the medical model, the therapist is the expert on what the client needs. Procedures are “interventions” or “treatments.” Both terms imply that healing is generated from an external force (the procedure) that is applied to the client. Research designs equally imply that it is the therapist’s interventions that precipitate change in clients. The typical model of therapy is as follows:

Therapist interventions → Operate on clients → Produce effects.

The medical model also dissect the client. Therapy is described as a process that works by operating on the dysfunctional parts of the client. Interventions (depending on the orientation) are said to restructure cognitions, modify fear structures, restructure emotion schemes, deepen processing, precipitate insight, strengthen egos, access emotions, eliminate self-criticism, recondition proprioceptive responses, strengthen self-structure, access deep-experiencing potential, and/or heighten experiencing. Descriptions of therapy through these lenses typically represent clients as having things done to them, not unlike patients in surgery being operated on.3

By contrast, the client-as-active-self-healer perspective assumes that interventions have no power to effect any type of change independently of the client. Interventions have no “life” in themselves; their life, energy, and intelligence come from the client’s investment in them. They are more properly viewed as tools that the client can use to shape his or her own outcomes. According to this view, the way in which therapy works is as follows:

Clients → Operate on therapists’ interventions → Produce effects and outcomes.

Clients can creatively use procedures to serve their own productive ends. For example, Bohart and Boyd (1997) found that clients could interpret empathic reflections as providing support and validation (if that is what they needed to grow) or as providing insight (if that is what they needed). Tallman
(1990) noted the following after interviews with former clients:

I had taken my interventions and my words much too seriously. Patients reported following suggestions that I could not remember having made. They created their own interpretations, which were sometimes quite different from what I recollected and sometimes more creative and suitable versions of my suggestions. (p. 60)

Therapy is a dialogue between two whole, intelligent humans. Through the dialogue, the therapist and client genuinely collaborate on the best ways for the client to self-heal. The therapist offers ideas. The client offers ideas. Client creativity is prized. Procedures and interventions are not mechanistically “applied to” the client’s dysfunction based on some formula or manualized procedure. This view recognizes that the arbitrary application of procedures—even those based on markers—cannot occur without the client’s agreement and cooperation. The therapist can use marker information to suggest that a procedure might be helpful to the client at a given point in therapy, but the therapist does not “prescribe” it. Working together, the client and therapist decide on the usefulness of the procedure. The therapist is neither “process directive” nor “content directive” (Greenberg et al., 1993). In fact, the whole issue of whether the therapist should be directive or nondirective is rejected. The very posing of the issue represents the “therapist-centrism” (Bickman & Salzer, 1996) of the field and totally ignores the fact that there is another person present in therapy—the client. Thinking of the client as a genuinely equal partner in a collaborative relationship, the issue becomes one of therapist and client codirectivity.

Therefore, therapy is not an operation but rather the provision of a set of learning opportunities. The five learning opportunities provided by different therapies include (1) a provision of an empathic workspace within which clients can creatively think through their problems (e.g., client-centered therapy), (2) an effective interpersonal learning environment (e.g., therapist as good model as advanced in existential and modern psychodynamic therapy), (3) a context for stimulating dialogue leading to new insights and perspectives (e.g., psychodynamic interpretations, Socratic questioning), (4) exercises to promote creativity (e.g., two-chair work, paradoxical interventions), and (5) programs for teaching new skills and reducing fears (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy). Through the collaborative synergy of two intelligent beings working together, in a given session, procedures from therapies as diverse as cognitive-behavioral and experiential might be used.

This metaperspective allows for a great deal of flexibility in practice based on a fundamental respect and trust in the client’s self-healing potential. Different procedures may be used so long as they are offered instead of prescribed and the relationship is genuinely dialogic and collaborative. Because what makes therapy work are clients and not procedures, in a managed-care context the therapist would focus on dialogue with the client in regard to whatever procedure is being used, just as a good coach or mentor would dialogue with his or her students on what they are learning. If the therapist feels compelled to use one set of procedures either because of an external review board’s directives or because of an agency’s requirement to follow empirically validated treatments (Task Force on Promotion and Dissemination of Psychological Procedures, 1995), this is not a problem given that it is how the procedure is used that is the issue. If it is a cognitive-behavioral procedure, for example, then the therapist would be interested in the client’s reactions to it, the client’s possible creative modifications of it, and the client’s use of it to learn in ways not officially
prescribed by cognitive theory (e.g., exploring experience or the past). Any procedure can be “humanized” once one realizes that it is clients and therapists working together creatively that creates the life and meaning in procedures.

CONCLUSION

Five alternative approaches to treatment under the umbrella of humanistic-experiential psychotherapies have been presented. From this review, it can be seen that some approaches are more or less able to be adapted for brief treatments. Process-experiential therapy has been manualized for brief-treatment approaches to depression, trauma, anxiety, and eating disorders (Greenberg & Watson; 2005; Paivio & Pascual-Leone, 2010). Gendlin’s focusing approach can be used productively in a short-term treatment setting. Moreover, one of the advantages of this approach is that it is a self-help technique that clients can easily learn and take away with them to use later when necessary. Like the other experiential approaches, those of Mahrer and the existentialists, although not yet part of the managed-care repertoire, could easily be adapted for short-term therapy. The approach put forward by Bohart and Tallman, which views clients as active self-healers, is a more metatheoretical or philosophical approach that easily embraces treatments provided within a managed-care environment.

Irrespective of which approach is used, therapists offering brief treatments need to be aware of the time schedule that is imposed by managed care. To be most effective, it seems important to identify a specific focus early on and to identify a piece of work that can be accomplished in a short period of time. In brief treatments, therapists need to pay special attention to helping their clients resolve specific problems and develop new ways of coping and being in the world prior to termination. They also need to be aware that the short period of time can both enhance their work with clients and detract from it. Some clients respond very favorably to the knowledge that there is a specified time limit to their work. These clients are very goal directed. They are able to focus on their problems and experiencing and are able to resolve personally troubling material quickly. For other clients, however, the short period of time might inhibit them from opening up. These clients would benefit from longer periods of therapy. Their own sense of vulnerability at the prospect of a brief treatment should be trusted and respected. It is important to help these clients identify and define the problem areas so that they can begin to think of solutions and alternative ways of dealing with their problems. Exploration of these clients’ experiencing process tends to be superficial, and their capacity to integrate feelings usually is deliberately shut down as they try to cope with early termination. In these cases, therapists need to come up with alternatives so that clients can continue to work on their problems if they so choose once therapy is terminated.

NOTES

1. Parts of this description have been borrowed and reworked from Bohart (1999).
2. There are many ways in which approaches to therapy can be empirically supported, besides the “empirically supported treatments” of Division 12 of the American Psychological Association (Task Force on Promotion and Dissemination
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of Psychological Procedures, 1995; see Chapters 19–25, this volume, for examples). The approach advocated here does not view therapy as a treatment. Therefore, empirical support takes on a different meaning. In this case, it means that the basic postulates of the approach all have empirical support.

3. This is despite the acknowledgment by virtually all approaches that the client must be an active participant. In effect, however, such activity consists of compliance with the treatment. But it is the treatment or intervention that does all of the modifying of the particular part of the client that, as the theory says, needs to be modified.

REFERENCES


An Existential-Integrative Approach to Experiential Liberation

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER

OVERVIEW
This chapter summarizes my existential-integrative (EI) model of therapy, with an emphasis on the experiential level of contact. The experiential (or being) level of contact comprises four basic dimensions—the immediate, the affective, the kinesthetic, and the profound (or cosmic). The engagement of the experiential level of contact is contingent on clients’ readiness and capacity for intensive, whole-bodied awareness; it may or may not be relevant for clients requiring more externalized (e.g., cognitive-behavioral) levels of change. The value of the experiential level of contact resides in its promotion of a profound capacity for choice. This whole-bodied capacity is elaborated, and a therapeutic case is provided to illustrate.

INTRODUCTION
Existential therapy, as I view it, is an integrative therapy. Indeed, each of the conventional therapies, for example, pharmacological, behavioral, cognitive, analytic, and interpersonal, can be seen as liberation strategies within an overarching ontological or experiential context. Although each of the aforementioned strategies liberate at corresponding levels of consciousness, I view the ontological or experiential domain, for most clients, as the most liberating context (see Schneider, 2006, 2008). In this chapter, my primary focus will be on the experiential domain of therapeutic interaction. The clients about whom this chapter is primarily written, in other words, have the desire and capacity for immediate, kinesthetic, affective, and profound therapeutic change. For those readers interested in the full explication of this model, and the

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coordination of a diversity of approaches within this integrative framework, I recommend *The Psychology of Existence* (Schneider & May, 1995, chap. 5) and the updated version in *Existential-Integrative Psychotherapy* (Schneider, 2008) and *Existential-Humanistic Therapy* (Schneider & Krug, 2010). I also recommend the American Psychological Association’s video series “Existential-Humanistic Therapy Over Time” (2009), which can be accessed at apa.org/videos.

**THE CONSTRUCTIVE–EXPANSIVE CONTINUUM OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Within this existential-integrative framework, there are three phenomenologically based characteristics that help guide my work. They are constriction, expansion, and centering.

These characteristics guide my understanding of clients' freedom, as well as limitations, at each of the previously intimated levels and regions of consciousness (e.g., pharmacological, cognitive-behavioral, etc.). Put another way, constriction, expansion, and centering help me understand functional and dysfunctional physiology, behavior, cognition, psychosexuality, social interaction, and experiential contact.

Within the EI framework, constriction is understood as the perceived drawing back and confinement of thoughts, feelings, and sensations, whereas expansion is signified by the perceived bursting forth and extension of thoughts, feelings, and sensations. Constriction is characterized by a sense of retreating, diminishing, isolating, falling, emptying, or slowing; expansion is associated with a sense of gaining, enlarging, dispersing, ascending, filling, or accelerating. Centering, finally, is the capacity to be aware of and direct one's constractive and expansive potentialities.

Constriction and expansion lie along a potentially limitless continuum. The term potentially here is a key one. I believe, with William James (1904/1987), that consciousness is perpetually surrounded by a “more” that it can but vaguely apprehend (p. 1173). The capacity to constrict or expand, therefore, is delimited. One may achieve provisional integration of the polarities but probably not absolute or ultimate integration (Schneider, 1990/1999).

Elaborating, then, only degrees of the capacity to constrict or expand are accessible to consciousness. Constrictive or expansive dream fantasies, for example, where victimization or, on the other hand, perpetration plays a role, may be subconscious. At the furthermost horizons, constriction and expansion appear to be associated with the groundlessness of the infinitesimal and the infinite, respectively (see Grotstein, 1990). The further one constricts, in other words, the more one feels wiped away, obliterated. The further one expands, the more one perceives explosiveness, chaotic derangement (Laing, 1969). These polar eventualities, obliteration and chaos, smallness and greatness, contextualize a vast range of behaviors, symbols, and experiences (Schneider, 1990/1999, 1993, 2008).

When therapy clients are traumatized, for example, I often find obliterator smallness or chaotic greatness at the trauma’s core. Rigid, demeaning family structures, for example, or repressive bosses, spouses, peer groups, and cultural contexts conjure up dissolution fears for many clients; whereas unpredictable and disorganized family structures or reckless, indulgent associates foster anarchy fears for other clients. There are also, of course, many genetic, economic, and ecological correlates of these obliterating and chaotic scenarios (see May, 1981).

My point here is that because of trauma (see Schneider, 1990/1999, 2008, for a discussion of its acute, chronic, and implicit forms), constriction and expansion, smallness and greatness, become associated with
their furthest expressions of dread—obliteration and chaos, respectively.

In turn, these dreads set entire psychological dysfunctions into swing. The dread of constriction (obliteration), for example, appears to foster an equally extreme countereaction to that dread, that of relentless expansion. The dread of expansion (chaos) tends to promote the equally extreme countereaction of constriction. One will do everything one can, including becoming extreme oneself, to avoid the polarity that one dreads.

These hyper reactions, moreover, figure in the variety of defensive configurations commonly labeled psychopathologies. Depression, for example, is often a defense against the expansive risk taking or responsibility that proved unmanageable to one at some critical juncture; antisocial personality and narcissism are often defenses against some form of terrifying smallness or invalidation (Schneider, 2008).


The second tenet of this model is that the confrontation with or integration of one’s constrictive (obliterating) or expansive (chaotic) dreads fosters vital, invigorating functioning. This functioning can also be described as maximally centered, fluid, and discerning. One who achieves such integration experiences a deeper sense of presence within oneself and toward others. There is, at this juncture, an enhanced ability to occupy the side of oneself that one had formerly split off. There is an enhanced capacity to pause over this formerly estranged side of oneself and, as a result, to creatively respond to, as opposed to reflexively react against, constrictive or expansive possibilities. There is also a beneficial physiological component to such integration. This component has been variously termed physiological resilience and hardiness (Antonovsky, 1979; Kobasa, 1979).

As straightforward as this theoretical formulation may be, it is not until we examine the real-life circumstances under which it operates that we fully appreciate its relevance. Accordingly, let us consider the following case formulation to illustrate the aforementioned experiential model. To protect confidentiality, this case—which is a typical clinic or private practice case—is a composite drawn from my practice. Any similarity between the proceeding and actual clientele is purely coincidental.

EMMA: HYPERCONSTRICTION AND COMPLEXITY

Typically, there is a tenuous link between a client’s initial presenting behavior and core (constrictive or expansive) dread. Generally, it takes months, even years, to unpack the layers of fears and defenses overlaying a client’s core terror and basic defensive stance. This core condition, however, may suggest itself the moment therapy begins. Such was the case with Emma, a dynamic and multifaceted woman.

Emma entered my office on a bright and cloudless day. She was of medium build, approximately 40 years old, and Caucasian. Emma was also charming. She was vibrant and articulate—and it was clear that she had “been around.” She dressed with style, spoke in clear, firm tones, and got right to the point (as she understood it at the time). “There is something terribly wrong with my life,” she exclaimed. “I am at the end of my rope.”

As I sat with this last statement and with Emma herself, I saw a person of solid conventional resources. She knew the societal game and how to play it. There was a hardness to her look, and her makeup was formed by sharp and careful lines. It was clear that
Emma—if she so desired it—had weight in the world.

There were, however, signs of strain beneath Emma’s tough veneer. There was a fearfulness in her eyes and a melancholy about her face. Her otherwise resonant voice was interrupted by moments of urgency and breathlessness. It became increasingly evident to me that somewhere, deep in the recesses of her world, Emma was in turmoil.

When I invited Emma to elaborate on what was “wrong” in her life, this is what I discovered: She hailed from a family of four—her mother, her father, herself, and her slightly younger brother. When Emma was 3 years old, her father deserted the family, never to be seen again. It was at this point that her paternal uncle, roughly the same age as her father, gradually began to replace his brother as head of the household. Although Emma’s mother was devastated by the desertion of her husband, in her weakened state she accepted and even encouraged the uncle’s evolving new role. The mother and uncle exchanged some romantic feelings, according to Emma, but this was short-lived. Basically, theirs was an arrangement of convenience, which everyone in the family grew to recognize.

Although Emma’s memories of those early years were vague, by age 4, she knew something was askew. She felt like she experienced something with her uncle that no one else in the family had experienced and that to the degree they did experience it, they suppressed it. According to Emma, the uncle possessed a terrifying demeanor. He was very tall—well over 6 feet—of stocky build, and bullish. Her main memory of him at this early age was that of his booming voice and rancid breath.

Emma’s memory clarified significantly as she recalled her late childhood (e.g., age 9) and early adolescence. In no uncertain terms, Emma conveyed that she had been brutalized by her uncle at these ages. She literally recalled him throwing his weight around with her—bellowing at her, pushing her, shoving her on her bed. She had a clear memory of him forcing a kiss on her and of being enraged when she rebuffed him. Although she did not recall being overtly sexually molested by her uncle, her dreams teemed with this motif and with many other sinister associations.

As I and others have found typical, Emma’s reaction to these heinous scenarios was complex. The terms helpless or hopeless are too facile to describe this reaction. Indeed, virtually all words—much to the consternation of modern psychology—fail to address her layers of response. The closest she could come to describing her earliest feelings was a sense of paralysis. Beyond being an oppressor, her uncle acquired a kind of metaphysical status before Emma, and she, in turn, felt virtually infantile before him.

Yet Emma was no shrinking violet. By adolescence, she became “wild,” as she put it, displaying a completely new character. She became heavily involved in drugs, smoking, and seducing young men. She would leave home for days, periodically skip school, and associate with a variety of “bad boys.” Speed and cocaine became her drugs of choice because they made her feel “wicked”—noticed, special, above the crowd. She didn’t “take any shit,” as she put it, and she occasionally exploded at people (usually men) if they got in her way. She even began raging at her uncle for brief periods, despite his continued dominance of her.

Emma’s hyperexpansions, however, were short-lived. They were blind, semiconscious, and reactive. Beneath them all, her world was collapsing—narrowing, spiraling back on itself. The clearest evidence for this was the essential vacuity of Emma’s life. She concealed herself behind makeup and laughter. She felt ashamed around peers and classmates. Although she was popular for a period, her substantive relationships were
There are four therapeutic subconditions or stances that promote experiential liberation. They are presence, invoking the actual, vivifying and confronting resistance (or “protections”), and rediscovery of meaning and awe (see Schneider, 2008, for an elaboration). Depending on clients’ readiness and capacity for change, these stances may be sequential (as ordered previously), or they may be in varying order. Generally, they follow the aforementioned pattern.

**Presence**

Presence is the sine qua non of experiential liberation. It is the beginning and the end of the approach, and it is implicated in every one of its aspects. Presence serves three basic therapeutic functions: (1) it holds or contains the therapeutic interaction; (2) it illuminates or apprehends the salient features of that interaction; and (3) it inspires presence in those who receive or are touched by it. Let us consider this definition in greater depth.

Presence is palpable. It is a potent sign that one is here for another. “I will be with you,” the archetypal therapist-guide Virgil intimates to his charge, Dante, “as long as I can be of help to you” (Schneider & May, 1995, p. 25). Being with another, “clearing a space” for another, and fully permitting another to be with and clear a space for himself or herself are all hallmarks of presence (see Hycner & Jacobs, 1995). Another way to define presence is by its absence. When a therapist is distracted, when she is occupied by matters other than the person sitting before her, there is a distinct weakening of the relational field. From the standpoint of the client, the field feels porous, cold, and remote. However, when a therapist is fully present, the relational field alters radically. Suddenly, there is life in the setting. The therapist acquires a vibrant, embracing quality. The therapeutic field becomes a sanctuary, to use Erik Craig’s (1986) fine term, and the client has a sense of

Emma was condemned by her past. As desperately as she endeavored to escape that past, she chronically reentered it. She repeatedly sought out boys and men like her uncle, repeatedly hoped that something—perhaps she or some magic—could save them from remaining like her uncle, and repeatedly felt let down by such men and fantasies.

In sum, Emma was traumatized by hyper-expansion. The godlike power of her uncle made Emma feel wormlike. He came to symbolize her world—perpetually alarmed, perpetually confined, perpetually depreciated. Emma found ways—albeit transient and semiconscious—to counter this wormlike position, but her basic and unresolved stance remained wormlike, permeated by dread.

Emma’s chief polarization, therefore, clustered around hyperconstriction. Her secondary polarization clustered around hyper-expansion, and many gradations in between. In keeping with my theoretical stance, I attempted to help Emma confront her polarized states as they emerged, gradually proceeding to their core. Before describing my approach with Emma further, however, let us turn now to the applied portion of my model—the healing conditions of experiential liberation. We will then return to the results of my encounter with Emma.

**THE HEALING CONDITIONS OF EXPERIENTIAL LIBERATION**

The aim of experiential liberation, it will be recalled, is to optimize constrictive/expansive choice. Choice at this level is characterized by immediate, kinesthetic, affective, and profound (or spiritual) dimensions of oneself. It is further characterized by vigor, creativity, and purpose.

There are four therapeutic subconditions or stances that promote experiential liberation. They are presence, invoking the actual, vivifying and confronting resistance (or “protections”), and rediscovery of meaning and awe (see Schneider, 2008, for an elaboration). Depending on clients’ readiness and capacity for change, these stances may be sequential (as ordered previously), or they may be in varying order. Generally, they follow the aforementioned pattern.
Finally, the presence of the therapist to her own fears and anxieties serves as a model to clients. To the degree that therapists can tolerate and accept a wide variety of experiences within themselves, clients, too, are inspired to acquire such abilities. As a result, therefore, clients are able to deepen as therapy proceeds, to become more accessible, expressive, and intentional (Bugental, 1987; May, 1969), which is very different, typically, from that which clients derive by pharmacological means, behavioral or cognitive reprogramming, or intellectual explanations alone.

In sum, presence holds and illuminates that which is palpably (immediately, kinesthetically, affectively, and profoundly) relevant within the client and between the client and the therapist. Presence is both the ground and the eventual goal of experiential work.

**Invoking the Actual**

The next stance of experiential liberation is *invoking the actual*. Invoking the actual invites and encourages clients into that which is palpably (immediately, kinesthetically, affectively, and profoundly) relevant within the client and between the client and the therapist. Presence is both the ground and the eventual goal of experiential work.

As previously suggested, that which is frequently going on cuts beneath the client’s (or therapist’s) words and discursive content. The therapist’s job is to be attuned to these
my client, Emma, to vent her animus toward her uncle in a role-play, she was not initially able to do so. However, she learned a great deal about herself from that invitation, and in a subsequent role-play, she exploded at her uncle.

Invoking the actual can be understood in terms of a spectrum of intensity. I view the invocations I described previously as orienting invocations. They spur clients to be present to their sufferings, but they frequently require supplemental offerings to deepen and consolidate that which has been achieved. In this regard, I have found silence, gentle prompts to hang in with the pain, embodied meditation, and interpersonal encounter to be vital.

Embodied meditation is one of the most transformative forms of invoking the actual of which I am aware (see Schneider & May, 1995; Schneider, 2008, for a full explication of this modality). Embodied meditation entails concerted invitations to clients to enter embodied, meditative states. I try to be flexible about how I structure embodied meditation. Sometimes I suggest a sequence of simple breathing exercises, attunement to and identification of a somatic tension area, and invitations to physically self-contact the identified tension area. I follow up this sequence with an invitation to clients to associate to the feelings, fantasies, and images aroused by the tension area. At other times, I directly invite clients to attend to bodily tension areas and to free associate to these areas. At still other times, I invite clients to solely make physical (e.g., hand) contact with their anxiety and experience what emerges. In short, I cannot overstate the impact of this style of experiential immersion for certain clients—it cuts to the core.

The field that occurs between client and therapist is another salient opening for invoking the actual. The interpersonal encounter, as I (and other existential theorists) call it,
of utmost importance, therefore, to bracket our attributions of resistance and to clarify their pertinent roots. Second, it is crucial to respect resistances. Resistances are lifelines to clients, and as miserable as clients’ patterns are, they are the scaffolding of their existence, both known and familiar.

Resistances, moreover, demarcate the monumental battle that clients experience. This battle consists of two rivaling factions: (1) the side of the client that struggles to emerge (i.e., become whole) and (2) the side of the client that struggles to suppress that emergence, that remains entrenched (i.e., partial, polarized). It is crucial, in my view, to name this battle with clients; it is the most important battle with which they contend.

Resistance work is mirroring work. Whereas invoking the actual mirrors clients’ struggles to emerge, resistance work, as previously indicated, mirrors clients’ barriers to that emergence. Resistance work must be artfully engaged. The more that therapists invest in changing clients, the less they enable clients to struggle with change. By contrast, the more that therapists help clients clarify how they are willing to live, the more they fuel the impetus (and often frustration!) required for lasting change.

Vivifying resistance is the amplification of clients’ awareness of how they block themselves. Specifically, vivification serves three therapeutic functions: (1) it alerts clients to their defensive worlds, (2) it apprises them of the consequences of those worlds, and (3) it reflects back the counterforces aimed at overcoming those worlds. There are two basic approaches associated with vivifying resistance—noting and tagging. Noting acquaints clients with initial experiences of resistance. The following are some examples of noting: “Your voice gets soft when you speak about sex”; “You were sad, and suddenly you switched topics”; and “It is difficult for you to look at me when you express...
anger.” Tagging alerts clients to the repetition of their resistances. The following are some examples: “Whenever we discuss this topic, you draw a blank”; “Every time you explore your career goals, you look resigned”; and “You repeatedly appear to want to blame others for your misery.” In addition to noting and tagging, there are also a variety of other verbal and nonverbal vivifications of resistance (see Schneider & May, 1995, pp. 168–170; 2008). It is even sometimes helpful to simply support clients’ resistance, particularly when such clients are immovable. This support alleviates the pressure on clients to self-disclose and can, paradoxically, accelerate renewed self-disclosures (see Schneider, 1990/1999, pp. 194–198).

In exceptional circumstances, clients need more than a mere acknowledgment of their defensive patterns; they need a confrontation with those patterns. Whereas vivifying resistance alerts clients to their polarized stances, confrontation alarms them about those stances. Although confrontation has its benefits, usually toward the latter stages of therapy, it is imperative that therapists be selective about using it.

If confrontation is too intense, the therapist may rob the client of responsibility for facing a life decision, or, correspondingly, he may lose the client altogether. Perceived correctly, confrontation is an amplified form of vivification. It still mirrors clients’ self-sabotage, but it does so dramatically, with life or death significance.

Although there are no clear-cut criteria for confronting, two elements are generally present: (1) chronic client entrenchment (or polarization) and (2) a strong therapeutic alliance.

The following are some examples of confronting: “You say you can’t confront your wife, but you mean you won’t!”; How many times are you going to keep debasing yourself with men?”; and “You’d rather argue with me than get on with your life!”

**The Rediscovery of Meaning and Awe**

As clients face and overcome the blocks to that which is palpably relevant, they begin to discern the meaning of their odysseys. This meaning is not abstract or intellectual, but embodied—the result of a hard-won self-encounter. The meaning (re)created by experiential liberation, furthermore, yields new shapes, textures, and priorities to clients’ lives. Whereas formerly a given client such as Emma may have hidden herself in the world, now she is capable of standing forth in the world and pursuing her aspirations. Other clients find meaning in scholastic or athletic pursuits, religiosity, or romance. The key here is not the discovery of particular meanings but what clients bring to those meanings—their passions, creativities, and imaginations. Whereas before clients were precluded from those avenues of motivation, now they are able to occupy them, fully range within them, and implement them in their lives. It is not that all symptoms or problems are eradicated through such a process; it is simply that the major barriers to choice in a given area are removed. The result for such clients is that they experience more centeredness, less panic, and a greater capacity to respond to rather than react against their fears. For some clients, moreover, and for many at varying degrees of intensity, there is a whole new orientation toward life following EI therapy; I call this orientation awe inspiring: a renewed sense of humility and wonder, indeed, amazement, before the whole of life (Schneider, 2004, 2008).

What is the therapist’s role in this experiential rediscovery of meaning and awe? Beyond what she has already provided with her presence and invitations to aliveness, the therapist’s role is a relatively small one. However, that small role can be integral. The therapist, for example, can provide a timely sounding board to echo and refine
The core of Emma’s dysfunction was the dread of standing out. The closer we came to this core, the more Emma fought to deny it. This was understandable; not only did Emma fear standing out before her uncle, she feared the fuller implication of that fear—standing out before life.

Although the former fear was explainable and discussible, the latter fear exceeded explanations and words; it had to be experienced. By tussling with and remaining steadfastly present to this fuller fear, Emma was able to enter a new part of herself. She was able to hold that which was formerly unmanageable. As a result, she became more resourceful, trusting, and bold. She was also able to declare herself—not merely before me and her abusers—but before life itself. Today, Emma is in a nourishing and committed relationship, is active in her community, and asserts firm boundaries with her uncle. She also has found new resources to realize her avocations: travel, collage making, and singing; but, most important, she has found new resources to realize—and marvel at—life itself. She still suffers, but she does not equate herself with that suffering. She equates herself with possibility.

NOTE

1. My use of the term guide in this sentence is noteworthy. I view my framework as a touchstone or guideline and not as a cookbook or manualized formula. My implicit position is not whether a given person fits my framework but whether my framework accords with that of a given person.

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Part V

HUMANISTIC APPLICATIONS TO BROADER SETTINGS

INTRODUCTION TO PART V

A mélange of updated humanistic applications and emerging trends is presented in the eight chapters that constitute this part of the volume. They exemplify the broad range of settings in which the humanistic perspective is expressed and those in which it is currently making consequential advances. The central threads that tie them together are the principles that have been at the core of humanistic studies for more than 30 years: “an allegiance to meaningfulness in the selection of problems for study” (Bühler & Bugental, 1965–1966), the “aim to be faithful to the full range of human experience” (American Psychological Association, 2000), and concern “with those aspects of the human experience which have importance in daily life” (Bugental, 1967, p. 7). The reader should keep in mind that although the provocative topics considered in these chapters have long been within the purview of the humanistic perspective, some have not always been welcomed in mainstream academic psychology (e.g., romantic love, the psychotherapist as artist, somatic medicine, social activism, the transpersonal). Even today, some of the topics to come might be considered refreshingly nontraditional.

Constance Fischer’s engaging chapter opens the “Contemporary Themes” section. In Chapter 40, “Collaborative Exploration as an Approach to Personality Assessment,” her fresh view of personality assessment incorporates traditional psychological measures and projective techniques, but with a decidedly humanistic twist. Fischer describes the collaborative interpersonal relationships created with her clients in every stage of her approach to the process, from establishing the goals of assessment to interpreting scores. Excerpts from assessment sessions
and an example of a portion of a written report further illuminate the potential therapeutic benefits of the collaborative approach. Anticipating commonly asked questions about the approach, she concludes with a clarifying question-and-answer format.

As emphasized in Part IV, Humanistic Applications to Practice, the cultivation of the therapist as a person is central to the preparation of existential-humanistic therapists. In Chapter 41, “Cultivating Psychotherapist Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs,” J. Fraser Pierson, Orah Krug, Jeff Sharp, and Troy Piwowarski detail historically significant and exciting current developments in existential-humanistic training (E-H) programs. Beginning with their personal experiences of the germinal Art of the Psychotherapist training and then its successor curriculum, the Existential-Humanistic Institute certificate program, as well as similarly disposed offerings, the authors shed welcome light on the power of existential-humanistic training in the contemporary era. Following their personal perspectives, Pierson et al. provide fresh survey data on the aforementioned training programs. These survey data confirm two basic points: The existential-humanistic training programs not only stress contemporary standards of effective therapist facilitation, they affect students in profound and lasting ways. For example, a number of the students surveyed reported feeling personally and spiritually nourished by these programs, in addition to improvement at their craft.

In Chapter 42, “Humanistic Psychology, Mind–Body Medicine, and Whole-Person Healthcare,” Eleanor Criswell and Ilene Serlin provide a comprehensive update of approaches to healing that integrate mental and physical well-being. They provide an enlightening examination of the origins of the split between psychological and physical methods, the nature and practice of mind–body medicine, and the contributors to this broadening field. Humanistic psychology, with its emphasis on human potential and its focus on the whole person, is credited with playing a key role in the development of this contemporary mind–body, whole-person perspective. Actualization of the individual’s fullest potential and overall health and vitality are the ultimate goals. In the process, the authors suggest, the individual patient or client and the health care professional enter into a partnership that benefits both parties; the individual potentially enjoys increased autonomy and responsibility for his or her own health, and medical costs and demands on an overtaxed system are reduced. This chapter shows why humanistic psychology is at the vanguard of mind–body medicine and whole-person health care.

“The allure of romance flickers as both an enduring predicament and a recurring opportunity of the human spirit,” writes Kenneth Bradford. In Chapter 43, “Romantic Love as a Path: Tensions Between Erotic Desire and Security Needs,” Bradford explores the mythic ideal of romantic love, a legacy from the courtly love ethic of the Middle Ages, and the conflicts inherent within this idealization—the tensions between erotic desire and security needs. He illuminates a path of genuine romantic love for the 21st century, a path of potential transformation that requires discipline and practice, a path toward deep, wholehearted loving, where each person in the relationship is liberated and further opened to the awe of being.

In Chapter 44, “Beyond Religion: Toward a Humanistic Spirituality,” David Elkins provides an intimate humanistic reflection on spirituality. Although “spirit” and “humanism” might at first seem antithetical, he shows how they intricately meld. Drawing on his own hard-won experiences as well as those of existential-theological scholars, Elkins evokes a spirituality of awe. This is a time-honored spirituality that is regaining attention
today—(e.g., see Chapter 6, “Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society”; Chapter 32, “Awe Comes Shaking Out of the Bones”; and Chapter 33, “If You Are Ready to Undergo These Awe-Full Moments, Then Have an Experiential Session”—this volume)—but is still too often overlooked. Like Martin Buber, Rudolf Otto, Paul Tillich, and many others before them, Elkins responds to the question “What does it mean to be fully experientially human?” with both humility and boldness and both conviction and doubt. He translates this sensibility to his philosophy, his theology, and his practice.

Chapter 45, “Authenticity, Conventionality, and Angst: Existential and Transpersonal Perspectives,” extends Elkins’s overview with an invigorating dialogue between Roger Walsh and Kirk Schneider on transpersonal and existential perspectives on spirituality. Walsh begins this wide-ranging discussion by stating that the “existential and transpersonal disciplines have similar concerns and much to offer each other.” He then proceeds to compare and contrast the existential and transpersonal perspectives relative to four intriguing topics. In the process, he identifies important distinctions between the traditions. A particularly stimulating point of departure concerns the transpersonal perspective on “transconventional” stages of development. Walsh and Schneider engage in a lively exchange of comments and comparisons that serve to further clarify the philosophical positions of both perspectives. They agree that a more collaborative path would be fruitful. Although Schneider believes that Walsh presents a comparatively balanced view, Schneider takes the opportunity to challenge an idea often stressed by transpersonal writers: “that transpersonal contexts eclipse or encompass the existential.”

In Chapter 46, “Humanistic Psychology and Social Action,” Donadrian Rice opens the “Emergent Trends” section by clarifying the power of humanistic psychology to challenge convention both within and outside the field of psychology. He shows how humanistic psychology has a long and time-honored social justice tradition and embarks on a trenchant description of humanistic psychology’s activism throughout the past half-century. He weaves this reflection with many fascinating examples of humanistic protest, from those of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Rollo May to more recent activists in the arenas of multiculturalism, gender, and politics—the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street notwithstanding. Rice’s thrust throughout is to show not only that humanistic psychology has already done much to challenge the oppressive status quo but also that it is capable of doing more to live up to its impassioned aims to transform and enhance the well-being of humanity.

In Chapter 47, “Humanistic Psychology in the Workplace,” Alfonse Montuori and Ron Purser update trends in humanistic psychology in the workplace. They begin by tracing the history of humanistic psychology’s influence on organization development theory and practice, particularly highlighting the contributions of Maslow and Rogers. Although they have witnessed a decrease in humanistic psychology’s role in organization development in recent decades, they are considerably optimistic about current humanistic trends and contributions yet to be made. As organizations such as Google and Apple illustrate, social and economic trends augur a resurgence of interest in humanistic and existential offerings at the workplace. Montuori and Purser also explore several emerging trends toward “cross-pollination” between theoretical orientations, spotlighting the work of Pauchant and Associates (1995) on “organizational existentialism” as a continuing inspiration. Montuori and Purser conclude with several suggestions for humanistic psychologists who want to “seize this opportunity” for making more potent contributions in the workplace.
REFERENCES


First, a series of rhetorical questions. How could it be that a chapter on personality assessment, especially one that makes substantial use of traditional psychological tests and projective techniques, appears in a handbook of humanistic psychology? Aren’t testing and assessment tied to logical positivism, and more or less to realism and materialism, as psychology’s traditional philosophy of science? Isn’t their purpose to classify and explain, from a distanced, laboratory-type pursuit of objectivity? Isn’t this framework antithetical to humanistic values?

This chapter does indeed present an approach to psychological assessment that is thoroughly consistent with the values and goals of humanistic psychology. Together, the client and the professional formulate the goals of the assessment, and throughout several sessions, they explore how the client has gone about the aspects of his or her life. The professional shares direct impressions as well as hunches from score patterns, and the client corrects and refines these offerings and provides examples from his or her life. Mutual specification of contexts and exceptions (“when nots”) is essential to the development of individualized understandings; collaborative assessment is about the individual as a particular individual. In addition to these activities, with the assessor’s encouragement, the client may try out alternative ways of dealing with the assessment tasks and may practice tailored and personally viable ways of dealing with concrete life situations. As is implied, the assessment process is profoundly interpersonal, with each participant’s life presenting both limits and resources for productive exploration of presented assessment issues. Both the assessor and the client are liable to be surprised at the new understandings; both may laugh in delight or mist in sadness at the implications of the new understandings.

Although the assessor has made use of test materials, research, and norms that were fashioned primarily within the laboratory tradition of psychology, he or she has utilized these resources from another philosophical frame. Traditional test materials can afford access to tasks that are similar to lifeworld pursuits. Clients’ scores relative to one another, and compared with the scores of various groups, can provide useful starting points for exploration of their ways of taking up and moving through their worlds.
INTRODUCTORY EXCERPTS FROM A COLLABORATIVE EXPLORATION

This client is a 48-year-old woman referred through her company’s employee assistance program with regard to being noncooperative with her supervisor, Mr. Willow. Additional activity and discussion occurred between these excerpts.

Assessor: Mary, you’ve explained to me how fortunate you’ve been that your parents were family oriented. And you let me know how much you miss them, even though your dad died 11 years ago and your mom died 6 years ago. [Mary nods several times. We sit quietly, in affirmation, for a moment.] But I was thinking about how complicated families are. Here [the sentence completion form, which I place between Mary and myself], where the beginning says “What I wanted but didn’t get from my father . . . ,” you wrote “words that I was as capable as my brothers.”

Mary: Yes, but for the times—that was quite a while ago—he offered me as much encouragement as most fathers did for their daughters.

Assessor: Yes. And he did seem to have cared a lot about you, even though he didn’t say so expressly in words. It would have been nice . . . .

Mary: Yes . . .

[After Mary’s completion of the Bender-Gestalt and some initial discussion]

Assessor: So you’re surprised that I think that your copies are quite precise, especially for how quickly you did them?

Mary: Well, yeah. I was pretty self-conscious, what with your watching me. I was even a little sweaty.

Assessor: Yes, I was aware of your glancing up at me several times as you worked. I even felt a bit uncomfortable myself, thinking that you might be seeing me as being unfair—not giving you the extra instructions you wanted. I even wondered if you were going to stop and refuse to finish. But you didn’t!

Mary: I always do my part, even if others don’t.

Assessor: I’m wondering if this is like what happens with Mr. Willow?

Mary: I’m not sure what you mean. . . . But I always do my job, even when he doesn’t let me know if I’m doing okay. See, that’s where you were different. At least when I finished [the Bender-Gestalt], you discussed with me how I did.

[Later, looking at the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2) profile together]

Assessor: This won’t surprise you. This scale [L raw score = 7] reflects what you’ve told me about how you really do try to live by your “morals.” And, as you told me, there’s no indication that you’re “depressed.”

Mary: I told you. Yes, I told you that.

Assessor: Help me with this part [pointing to Scale 4 = 69 and Scale 8 = 65]. When these scales are about at this height, it sometimes reflects that a person is pretty vigilant—on guard. I’d guess that that could be so of you, probably being vigilant with yourself that you do things right and at the same time having your radar on to detect anyone being critical?

Mary: Not all the time. [I nod encouragingly.] I’m pretty relaxed with my friend Marion. She understands me, and when she makes a suggestion it’s just a suggestion, not a criticism.

Assessor: Right. And could you tell me some other examples?

Mary: Radar examples come more to mind. My ears are my radar. [Mary provides further examples, such as her listening for signs that Mr. Willow is reading her reports in his
office or ignoring them to make calls and her listening to a bank

teller’s tone of voice to determine

whether she (Mary) is being

respected.]

Assessor: [Returning to the MMPI-2 profile,

noting that Scale 0 = 50] One other

aspect of this profile stands out for

me and kind of surprises me. Your

score here is similar to that of people

who see themselves as kind of self-

contained, held back, not particu-

larly outgoing. But with me, you’ve

been very direct. . .

Mary: People tell me that I’m an introvert,

and I guess it’s so. But some people
don’t know that about me because I

stand up for what’s right. [At my sug-

gestion, Mary gives examples from

work.]

Assessor: Mary, I’m beginning to under-

stand something of what it must be like

for you to deal with Mr. Willow. You

have done your very best to carry

out assignments in top-flight form,

but he hasn’t said much about your

performance except to ask some

questions. Those questions seem like

criticism, like you should have

included that material? [Mary nods,

questioningly.] I’ll bet you must

have felt blocked, unappreciated,

frustrated [Mary nods in agree-

ment], perhaps like you’d like to

show him how angry you are?

Mary: Well, I’m just angry inside. I would

never express it inappropriately.

Assessor: I think we’re onto something here!

You remember how I felt uncom-

fortable during the Bender [pointing

to the cards in their envelope] and

was wondering if you might refuse
to finish? As I think of it, I experi-

enced you as becoming angry. [Mary

protests that she might have felt

angry but would not have walked

out—that is not the kind of person

she is.] Right. But I felt it anyway.

I’ll bet Mr. Willow has experienced

that too. You and I went ahead and
talked about how you had done just

fine, even if everything wasn’t

exactly perfect, and you told me

about how you did want more

instruction [e.g., how precise to be,

whether she could use a straight

even if everything wasn’t

exactly perfect, and you told me

about how you did want more

instruction [e.g., how precise to be,

whether she could use a straight

even if everything wasn’t

exactly perfect, and you told me

about how you did want more

instruction [e.g., how precise to be,

whether she could use a straight

edge] but that you thought that I
didn’t want you to ask more.
Anyway, I’ll bet Mr. Willow picks up
your unspoken frustration with him
too and may mistakenly feel that
you’re basically uncooperative.

Mary: Marion says I should go talk to him,

but I don’t see what I could say that

he wouldn’t take offense at.

Assessor: Well, maybe you could tell him about

our work and say that we discovered

that you would be much more com-

fortable if he would provide you with

more instruction—and lots more

feedback! [We also talk about how

she could tell Mr. Willow that we

discovered that Mary is an extremely

loyal employee and has not wanted

to appear to be challenging his super-

visory style.] One more thing I’d like

for us to do: Let’s right now do a

role-play of your sharing with Mr.

Willow some of these ideas we’ve

developed. [We do so with false

starts, laughter, congratulations, and

reminders. Then, we role-play Mary

going in to ask Mr. Willow about

how he liked her last report and

whether he has suggestions for the

next one.]

Written accounts include descriptions just

like these excerpts. For all parties (assessor,

client, and other readers), the performance

tasks in particular evoke referral-relevant

situations at more than verbal/conceptual

levels. I hope that the excerpts illustrated

that the use of formal assessment tools

helped both Mary and me to bring more of

our explicit and implicit knowledge into the

sessions and to move more efficiently than if

we had relied on talk alone.

For the reader who is not familiar

with traditional personality assessment,

let me point out that, for the most part,
psychologists’ reports still follow the laboratory model of providing objective findings in the form of scores and symptoms and of placing the client within categories and diagnostic systems. However, when we want to know about the person, assessments and reports would do well to explore and describe that person’s actual life, regarding scores as tools for accessing that life rather than as “results.” This approach might seem like common sense, but it is not yet all that common.

HUMANISTIC VALUES AND A HUMAN SCIENCE PSYCHOLOGY FRAMEWORK

I wound up on the faculty of the psychology department at Duquesne University, which during the 1960s came together to develop the philosophical foundations, research methods, and clinical practices of a psychology adequate to humans. We named this approach human science psychology in Dilthey’s (1894/1977) tradition, in explicit contrast to natural science psychology, which had developed methods appropriate for studying our physical and biological aspects but had ignored the fuller human. We looked to phenomenology and existentialism for guidance in developing the philosophical foundations.

We found the philosophical work of phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger to be especially fruitful, particularly their notion that humans know “truth” only in human ways and always in terms of our various interests in the subject matter, our methods, and so on. We can no longer regard nature as entirely separate from the perceiving, biographical, motivated investigator. Hence, specification of contexts, including researcher involvements, necessarily accompanies the “findings,” which are always presented as situated understandings. Similarly, as psychologists attempt to understand individuals, they address the individuals’ lived worlds. Those worlds include persons’ pasts as lived in the present toward the future. Psychologists acknowledge that their understandings of clients are both accessible through and limited by their own lives, assumptions, purposes, and other related contexts. Psychologists do not look for causes or determinants; rather, they look for mutuality and coherence among constituents that are discernible within holistic understandings. An example is the understanding of Mary that unfolded in the preceding excerpts. Mary became understandable in terms of her everyday goals, perceptions, situations, and reactions; we did not have to explain her behavior with Mr. Willow in terms of personality constructs.

The work of the phenomenological psychologist Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962, 1942/1963) was particularly helpful to us in finding ways to address the mutuality of humans being simultaneously physical, biological, and uniquely human. He described these realms as orders, illustrated by a pyramid with the physical order at the base, the biological order growing from there, and the human order from there, with each of the more complex orders influencing those on which it is dependent.

Existential writers helped us to respect individuals as always acting in terms of personal meanings. Faculty member Von Eckartsberg (1971) coined the term experieaction to express this condition and to indicate that experience and action are not separate. Existential writers also encouraged us to acknowledge that individuals even actively participate in what “happens to” them. We shape our worlds even as we are shaped by them. We are responsible for acknowledging both constraints (“givens”) and choice.

At Duquesne, our empirical-phenomenological research findings are presented as holistic descriptions. The method is
Collaborative Exploration as an Approach to Personality Assessment

practices, and write about my ventures. The following sample of my own publications in relation to collaborative individualized assessment variously presents philosophical foundations, teaching exercises, and excerpts: Fischer (1979, 1980, 1989, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2000). “The Testee as Co-Evaluator” (Fischer, 1970) was the first article that I know of to call for full collaboration, including clients’ writing commentary on reports. Individualizing Psychological Assessment (Fischer, 1985/1994) is a textbook that includes three chapters of sample reports, tables of examples of wording to enhance individualized description, a chapter comparing Andrew Wyeth’s representational art with representational description, and a closing chapter of frequently asked questions.

In short, I think that a human science approach encourages systematic, philosophically sound practice, whereas humanistic values encourage hopefulness and respect for the client’s agency and individuality.

PRACTICES: LIFEWORLD EXPLORATIONS

The Beginning

When the client is referred by a third party, I ask that party about the concrete issues behind the assessment request. For example, the assessment request “Differential diagnosis: borderline personality disorder vs. anxiety disorder” turned out to have been formulated in puzzlement about Ms. Trook’s frequent, agitated, and sometimes angry outbursts during the initial therapy sessions. When I meet the client, I ask for his or her understanding of what we are going to be doing and offer clarifications. Ms. Trook said, while making our appointment over the phone, that she had no idea. I explained that her therapist was wondering about the outbursts—whether they were a strategy evolved
long ago to handle threats or whether they were related to Ms. Trook’s currently being anxious. She immediately acknowledged being unusually anxious. When we met, she spontaneously said that she also wondered whether the therapist was afraid that she could not be helped. I replied that, to the contrary, he wanted to know how best to be of help. We then talked of what she knew about her being anxious these days, what aspects she was uncertain about, at what other times she responded with outbursts, and when she did not.

At this point, we have contextualized the referral issue in terms of the client’s actual life. And by this time, we have established common ground—mutually developed understandings of our goals and of the client’s situation. I think of assessment explorations, which are task oriented, as occurring within a respectful “I–thou” relationship. The client might not be relating to me in that manner, but both of us wind up relating to the client’s life in that manner—with respect and with openness to new understandings. We also are aware of our joint responsibility for working toward new understandings; collaborating means colaboring!

Somewhere along our way, I have asked the client what questions about himself or herself would be of additional interest to explore as we pursue the third-party questions. After discussion, Ms. Trook and I agreed to look into the question “How is it that people think I’m angry when I’m just trying to do my part?”

**Exploring**

As I listened to Ms. Trook’s Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) stories, I noted to myself that she seemed to be putting the main character in a position of waiting for others to provide initiative, direction, or solutions. When I asked Ms. Trook whether she was noticing any themes, her only comment was that the cards seemed to evoke sad stories. I affirmed that many people agreed with her. We went on to the next card, a scene depicting a young man facing away from an older woman, both seeming quiet and serious. Just as Ms. Trook was about to tell her story, I interjected a story, trying to exaggerate her style. I said, “They’re in some kind of disagreement. Why doesn’t she just tell him what she wants him to do?!” Ms. Trook, of course, was taken aback. But then, seeing my grin, she burst into giggles. She corrected me and said that she actually was thinking of the story from the woman’s perspective and was seeing her as becoming irritated that he was not fulfilling his role. This led to a brief discussion of friends having told her that she is quite old-fashioned. I went on to ask whether she could tell a different story for the card. Ms. Trook struggled, saying that she could not seem to free herself from her initial perception. I suggested that the woman might ask directly what the man’s inclinations were. We were quiet for a while, and then she said, “But what if his inclinations are contrary to what she wants? What if he ignores her?” I nodded and gestured for more. After further silence, Ms. Trook said, “You know, I am feeling angry with you, even though you did help with a story.” Her tone struck me as irritated, but the irritation seemed to be toward both of us.

**MS. TROOK:** Aren’t you allowed to just explain this to me?

**ASSESSOR:** Well, I’m trying, just like you are, to understand what’s going on. I need your help. [Long pause] Has something like what’s happening with us happened with Dr. Zeller [the therapist]?

**MS. TROOK:** I was thinking that before. You pay people money to help, and then they just sit there waiting for you to do the work. You probably look pretty stupid to
them. I think that's when I do my “outbursts,” as Dr. Zeller calls them.

ASSESSOR: Help me with this. Does it seem that you've tended to think that Dr. Zeller, Irene [her supervisor], and I all know the answers but just are leaving you on your own on purpose?

MS. TROOK: [Irritated, but sad] That really does make me sound stupid. I know you don't have all the answers, but somehow I want you to. And you do have some answers!

ASSESSOR: But in the past, you've been hesitant to ask directly for opinions or advice? [We then talk about the dangers of seeming pushy, of alienating the people one needs, and of deeply wanting the other person to just help.]

MS. TROOK: I guess I did have a general sense of an underwater scene, but it didn't occur to me to pull it together. Was I supposed to? You didn't tell me to.

ASSESSOR: No, I was interested in your own inclinations. But your choice to be sort of passive [Ms. Trook, introjecting: Yes, safe . . .] meant that you didn't make use of as much information as you could have. You certainly didn't try to formulate “the big picture.” Say, are you irritated with me now? Would this be a time when you might have “exploded”? Does it seem that I'm criticizing you?

MS. TROOK: No, I don't think so. By now, I'm used to you taking me seriously. But if you were Irene, I'd probably feel criticized. Is it okay to ask you where I should go from here? [We both laugh.]

ASSESSOR: Exactly! What you just did would work with Dr. Zeller and Irene, I'll bet. You found yourself wondering, and you took the initiative to ask if I might have some direction for

Finding Landmarks and Pivot Points

The preceding excerpt illustrates that a collaborative assessment intervenes into test giving and into the client's customary style to bring that style into focus and to explore alternative ways for the client to reach goals. Most of the enumerated suggestions reviewed at the end of a report are reminders to the client of discovered landmarks that can serve to remind the client that he or she is moving into a problematic situation and that he or she might want to consider an alternative route (pivoting, like a basketball player, from the current path into another).

Following are further examples of Ms. Trook's exploration that led to later suggestions:

ASSESSOR: [On the Rorschach, noting an active/passive index weighted on the passive side, no cooperative movement responses, and a low level of integrating aspects of a blot \(zd = -5\)] I think the Rorschach, after I scored it, put me in touch with some related possibilities. As you know, I was positively impressed with your level of problem solving with the blocks and with that information subtest [Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III]. We agreed that when you know the standard to be followed, you have been quick, sharp, complete. But here with the inkblots, which provide no standard, it turns out that you held back and didn't really engage the task as fully as I had expected. For example, here [pulling out Card X] you just named animals but never put them into a scene.

MS. TROOK: I was positively impressed with your level of problem solving with the blocks and with that information subtest [Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III]. We agreed that when you know the standard to be followed, you have been quick, sharp, complete. But here with the inkblots, which provide no standard, it turns out that you held back and didn't really engage the task as fully as I had expected. For example, here [pulling out Card X] you just named animals but never put them into a scene.

MS. TROOK: I guess I did have a general sense of an underwater scene, but it didn't occur to me to pull it together. Was I supposed to? You didn't tell me to.

ASSESSOR: No, I was interested in your own inclinations. But your choice to be sort of passive [Ms. Trook, introjecting: Yes, safe . . .] meant that you didn't make use of as much information as you could have. You certainly didn't try to formulate “the big picture.” Say, are you irritated with me now? Would this be a time when you might have “exploded”? Does it seem that I'm criticizing you?

MS. TROOK: No, I don't think so. By now, I'm used to you taking me seriously. But if you were Irene, I'd probably feel criticized. Is it okay to ask you where I should go from here? [We both laugh.]

ASSESSOR: Exactly! What you just did would work with Dr. Zeller and Irene, I'll bet. You found yourself wondering, and you took the initiative to ask if I might have some direction for
you. I think it’s precisely when you find yourself confronted with an ambiguous situation, like the inkblots, or a new task at work, or Dr. Zeller being noncommittal that you could ask for guidance. I imagine you would feel less criticized and helpless when you initiate discussion instead of waiting dependently. The trick will be to recognize when you’ve encountered an ambiguous situation and then shift gears or course to be more assertive so you’ll be more sure of the situation, of what’s wanted. After the shift, you won’t feel like you’re stuck waiting to be rescued, and you’ll be much less likely to be resentful.

Of course there are also points about which the assessor and client agree to disagree or about which they agree that they have not yet reached an adequate understanding. The client knows that there is no secret information that the assessor is withholding, that his or her experiance pretty much makes sense to both of them, and that he or she can continue to make sense and to take action after the assessment.

PRACTICES: WRITTEN ACCOUNTS OF ASSESSMENT EXPLORATIONS

General Practices

In the assessment courses at Duquesne, we write in the first person and the active voice (e.g., “Ms. Trook and I explored these issues through use of the TAT and Rorschach” rather than “The TAT and Rorschach were administered”). We generally write concretely and in the past tense to indicate that past comportment can change (e.g., “Jim announced that he wanted to quit working on the block design tasks, saying that they were too difficult” rather than “This boy quits difficult tasks” or “Inferiority feelings interfere with this student’s motivation to strive”). We provide an initial visual picture of the client in motion so that readers can picture the descriptions that follow. We stress verbs and adverbs, and we eschew constructs. Reports read much like the preceding excerpts do; they describe by re-presenting representative scenes. All parties (client, assessor, helpers, and decision makers) can read the report, which is written about the client’s actual life. All readers are “on the same page” and can use the reported assessment explorations as reference points in their discussions.

Not all assessments require full reports. Sometimes, a brief letter to the client and/or referring party may overview the assessment procedures and then go directly to landmarks/pivot points and related suggestions. Fables or stories may be written for children, their families, and other helpers. Sometimes, the assessor meets with the client and the referring party and then writes a summary of that discussion (which was based on the assessment explorations); in such cases, an initial report is not necessary. Where called for, formal diagnoses are provided referencing concrete events. When readers might find technical data (e.g., test profiles, actual TAT stories) helpful, they are attached as an appendix. Clients are invited to write comments directly on a written report that is to be sent to the referring parties; they record clarifications, elaborations, corrections, and disagreements. Reports of whatever form are in terms of the client’s actual life. A refrain in our Duquesne assessment classes is “If you can’t write it in everyday terms, then you literally do not know ‘what in the world’ you’re talking about.”

Excerpts

The following excerpts, from a report written by graduate student Yael Goldman,
illustrate re-presentational/representational description as well as the power of exploration through tests to affirm a client’s striving. Chantel’s written comments on the report indicate that, through the assessment process, she found that her efforts were indeed not just talk and that “after reading my assessment, I have learned even more about when being open to others helps a lot. Thank you.” Chantel was a 35-year-old resident of a drug treatment facility. She was then past 6 months in the program, on a second admission.

**Introductory Description**

Chantel dressed casually in jeans, a plaid button-down shirt, and sneakers. In contrast to her casual dress, she wore large silver hoop earrings and wore her hair ornately arranged in a bun high on her head with strands of dark curls framing her face. On the DAP [draw a person (human figure drawings)], Chantel spent more time on details of her hair weave than on anything else. The care with which she did her hair suggested a desire for orderliness and beauty.

During the assessment, Chantel leaned all the way back in her chair as she spoke with us [Yael and her graduate student partner, Rebekah]. Her arms rested firmly on the chair, and both feet remained solidly planted on the floor. When Chantel drew or wrote, she leaned forward and rested both arms firmly on the desk. Her posture lent her an appearance of being grounded and straightforward. Chantel is of average height and is sturdy in build, which added to an impression of solidity.

**Presented Problem:**

**Feeling Versus Running**

For the assessment’s focal issue, Chantel chose to concentrate on how to “stay clean” from drugs and alcohol. For Chantel, staying clean—that is, remaining free from abusive substances—was directly related to staying with and working through her feelings, such as loneliness and despair, as opposed to “running” from them. She explained that she ran from her uncomfortable feelings to drugs and alcohol as an escape... Throughout the assessment situation, Chantel, Rebekah, and I observed and discussed moments when Chantel descended from the surface and opened up and shared her feelings with us. We thus related the here and now of the testing situation to Chantel’s focal issue and other aspects of her life.

**Chantel as Seen Through the Testing Process**

*Caring about precision and order*. On the Bender-Gestalt, Chantel took her time, (re)counted the dots, and retraced the circles. Her drawings fit neatly on the page. We noted that she was quite careful and precise; on Figure 5, she counted the dots and specified on which dot the line intersected the curve. On the DAP, Chantel drew all three figures in the bottom left corner of the same page. They were roughly the same size, although her self-portrait was slightly larger because the first two drawings portrayed children (the first was fashioned on her daughter). Chantel explained that the reason she drew the first figure in the left corner was because she thought she was going to fill the page, like she did with the Bender-Gestalt. She said she drew Figures 2 and 3 in the same fashion so that they would all be uniform. It was important to her to have a unified pattern rather than disarray. She said the other residents considered her a “perfectionist,” particularly her roommates because of the care she took cleaning her room. However, when she was using drugs, Chantel cared neither about tidiness nor about order and threw things anywhere... We related the care she took on the Bender-Gestalt to the work she has done at Smithfield House...
Chantel expressing feelings. On the comprehension subtest, Chantel answered in reference to her own beliefs, behaviors, and feelings rather than providing the more standard answers. . . . On Question 6, she replied that she personally would rather borrow money from a friend than from a bank as interest rates would be lower. She prefaced her answers with “For me.” . . .

Chantel employed the TAT cards to reveal more about herself and her feelings. For example, Card 3BM portrays a person sitting on the floor hunched over a chair. It reminded Chantel of herself, her mother, and her grandmother. Chantel often found her grandmother collapsed on the floor drunk, hung over, or needing another drink. Chantel also recalled her mother stressed out, tired, and contemplating how to leave her abusive husband. Finally, Chantel saw a combination of her lineage and an image of herself hung over or depressed. She remarked that it took a long time for her mother to fight back; we agreed that now is Chantel’s turn to fight.

Suggestions for Chantel

During the testing exercises, you “let go” of many of the issues on your mind, about yourself, your past and future. You did not “run” from us. You mentioned that “last time around” at Smithfield House you might have spoken to us more superficially to avoid going “deep down.” Chantel, just as you volunteered for this assessment and fully participated by revealing yourself to us, you can continue taking advantage of such opportunities to discuss your feelings and experiences with others. However, sometimes you may find that relating events to yourself is neither necessary nor appropriate. In the future, choose when and when not to express yourself as you deem appropriate.

Even reports utilizing the MMPI, the Rorschach, and other complex instruments with people for whom a referral is about differential diagnosis, suicidality, or psychopathy, among others, are written in a similar manner.

CLARIFICATIONS
(FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

What Is the Difference Between Collaborative Assessment and Psychotherapy?

The assessment addresses a particular presenting issue in a few sessions, develops understandings of how and when the person contributes to problematic situations, and suggests individualized means for the client to participate differently in those situations. This type of assessment is “therapeutic,” first, in the sense of offering a corrective to or transformation of a problem and, second, in the sense that the client finds that his or her experience has been affirmed, that his or her agency/power has been demonstrated, and that his or her revised pathways to personal goals have been tried out successfully. The person has developed foundations for continuing growth and deepening through his or her own efforts.

But collaborative assessment is not psychotherapy in its older sense of thoroughgoing exploration of a life over an extended period of time, and especially not when the goal is transformation of personality structure. I suppose that collaborative assessment is similar to some forms of “brief therapy.” In assessment, however, we can also provide a printed record for the client and helpers of understandings of test events and their relation to life events, along with individualized suggestions for further exploration and trying out.

A caveat: If the assessor focuses on “being therapeutic” rather than on conducting a collaborative, individualized assessment, then the
assessment and its potential benefits might be compromised.

**Does Individualized Assessment Bypass the Need for Training in Cultural Diversity?**

Not at all. It is true that as the assessor explores the other person’s life-world, cultural, religious, familial, economic, gender, and age dimensions are likely to arise. However, one should be schooled in the general customs, assumptions, constraints, and attunements of the populations with whom one works (colabors) as well as with some of the issues in cultural and gender studies (e.g., Butler, 1999). Beyond academic sources, novels can raise awareness (e.g., Naipaul, 1988). Dana (1998a, 1998b), who broadly identifies with humanistic psychology, has effectively addressed many aspects of cultural context with regard to assessment.

Conducting a segment of an assessment in a client’s home or neighborhood can go a long way toward awakening us to our assumptions and ignorance and toward encouraging a fuller appreciation of the person-in-context.

**Is Collaborative Assessment Limited to Reflective, Motivated, Fairly Well-Functioning Clients?**

This approach, like all others, certainly is most productive with and for those clients who are least restricted. Nevertheless, collaborative exploration with persons we label as mentally disabled, brain damaged, schizophrenic, and so on, as well as with persons in forensic settings, is as informative as standard assessment while also presenting such persons as individuals, identifying the “when nots” of the problematic experiential process, providing tailored suggestions, and often enhancing clients’ self-direction.

**Why Not Develop Existential Tests Instead of Using Standardized Instruments?**

Existential projects and meanings are a part of any situation in which we participate, including assessment sessions in which we are clients or assessors. Clients encounter the Wechsler subtests in much the same way as they encounter other similar challenges in life. There have been some efforts to develop life values inventories that might be useful for research, but again, clients’ relevant values become apparent in discussions of problems and successes in life, to which we gained access through the existing tests.

**A Major Purpose of Psychological Assessment Has Been to Provide an Objective Picture of the Client; Isn’t Your Approach Awfully Subjective?**

Yes, it is decidedly intersubjective. The lives of the assessor, readers, and client all come into play in understanding the client and his or her situation. Of course, that is the case for traditional assessment as well, although this is not usually acknowledged. Obviously, an assessment never should be merely subjective in the sense of being just the assessor’s personal impressions. The human science assessor remains rigorously empirical, using directly observed and reported events/contexts as primary data. Personality constructs and diagnostic categories are regarded as tools for reflecting about the client but not as findings. The client is asked for multiple examples of any assessor-offered conceptions, and the examples often lead to revision of those understandings. The assessor’s impressions must be both documented as to their sources and illustrated through examples.

In addition, the ambiguity that is inherent in many human affairs is respected rather than regarded as deficient knowledge. False precision is eschewed.
Speaking of the Intersubjective Character of Assessment, Shouldn’t Assessors’ Training Emphasize Interpersonal Sensitivity?

Definitely. Beyond training in test construction, standardized administration, use of norms, and theories of personality and restricted existence, assessors should be trained as therapists. To me, that implies exploring one’s own motives, assumptions, and impact as well as developing empathic attunement to others. Moreover, exposure to the arts and humanities broadens and deepens interpersonal presence.

But Don’t Tests Get in the Way of the Interpersonal Relationship?

The interpersonal character of the assessment is inevitable; it is not a goal. We should, of course, be mindful of the inherent uneven power in any professional engagement. Working within a humanistic/human science frame, with its emphasis on understanding rather than on explanation and its emphasis on the lifeworld rather than on constructs, goes a long way toward maintaining the assessor’s integrity. Engaging the client as a responsible participant and asking for concrete examples of the issues being discussed also orient the assessment toward the client’s world, requiring the assessor to use tests as an access to that world rather than as an access to a privileged abstract notion of truth.

How Do You Address the Question of the Validity of Your Assessments?

We bypass the issue of validity of instruments (whether the instrument measures what it is said to measure) by regarding life events as our data and regarding useful, revised understandings of them as our results. For me, the validity question shifts to a question of how helpful the assessment proves to be for all parties. Is the client more fully understood? Is the client now more effective in pursuing goals? Do the helpers know how to enter the client’s world and to work toward mutually desired goals?

When You Are Asked by a Third Party to Conduct an Assessment, Aren’t You in a Conflict of Interest When You Are Also Working With the Client to Develop Less Problematic or More Productive Strategies?

No, not if my reports describe initial ways of functioning and spell out their contexts and then go on to describe my interventions and any ensuing alternatives already available to the client. Of course, the assessor is upfront with the client throughout the assessment about the third party’s interests and what will be reported.

Surprisingly, Aren’t Many of These Practices Similar to Those of Many Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists?

Yes, insofar as both assist the client to recognize specific situations as occasions to initiate a change of direction or action. However, I think that working within a humanistic/human science frame, even when using cognitive-behavioral techniques, encourages a more thoroughgoing respect for the client while simultaneously discouraging adopting a technological attitude toward the client.

CONCLUSION

When an individual’s lifeworld is the focus of psychological assessment and the assessor works within a human science frame,
the work is decidedly humanistic. The assessor–client relationship is interpersonal and collaborative. Scores and test behavior are understood as tools for developing holistic mutual understandings of the client’s situations. The client and assessor explore personal meanings and positive options. The process encourages spontaneity, creativity, and personal responsibility. (For updates on the collaborative assessment method and its varied applications, see Aschieri, 2012; Gorske, 2007.)

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The education and training of depth psychotherapists is multifaceted and lifelong, an ethic esteemed by those who espouse an existential-humanistic (E-H) orientation. Such an orientation represents an integrated theoretical, philosophical, and value system—a compass rose or point of reference—to navigate through the complexities of psychotherapy and life. Heeding the call to this vocation requires successful completion of a substantial body of formal coursework and supervised field experience consonant with the prevailing scientist-practitioner or professional school models of graduate training in clinical and counseling psychology and mental health counseling. In equal measure, its whole-person perspective requires an ongoing commitment to personal and professional development as well as the pursuit of meaningful work, relationships, and avocational interests—in other words, a commitment to being a “pro” (Bugental, 1978, p. 35). The existential-humanistic-integrative perspectives encourage the practitioner to creatively weave together the science, philosophy, and art of psychotherapy; the capacity to do so is the trademark of the “virtuoso” (Bugental, 1987, p. 264).

Authors’ Note: With deep gratitude, we thank our beloved mentor and friend James F. T. Bugental for his vision and verve in creating “The Art of the Psychotherapist” (Arts) courses. He stoutheartedly offered this innovative five-course series on an existential-humanistic approach to psychotherapy for more than a decade to younger colleagues, who now carry the torch of this illuminating perspective. Jim, we salute you for being a wise and spirited pioneer who opened new territories in psychotherapy and in the holistic education of psychotherapists. Your legacy ripples through us to our students and through them to future generations who value the art of life-changing psychotherapy.
The initial phase of adopting an E-H orientation begins when the student is first introduced to the wellspring of inspiration provided by the existential philosophers (e.g., Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty) or practitioners identified as drawing on a humanistic, existential, phenomenological, or E-H orientation, from Carl Rogers to the present (e.g., Charlotte Bühler, James Bugental, Clark Moustakas, Viktor Frankl, Rollo May, Sidney Jourard, Kirk Schneider, and Irvin Yalom). However, actualizing one’s interest in the E-H perspective may be fraught with challenges pertaining to the acquisition of advanced education and training. Although humanistic proponents appear to be represented within academic institutions across the United States, there are currently relatively few programs leading to master’s or doctoral degrees (Churchill, 1994) “centered around a humanistic orientation” (Arons, 1996, p. 5).1 Traditional clinical or counseling training programs do not tend to foster “third force” attitudes such as education of the whole person, value placed on client and therapist subjectivity, and egalitarianism in the therapeutic relationship (Gendlin, 1994, p. 339) characterized by participants who embark on the journey as “fellow travelers” (Yalom, 2003, p. 6). Furthermore, academic textbooks often represent humanistic psychology in limited and historically encapsulated ways (Churchill, 1994). For example, Elkins (2009) observes that Rogers’s theoretical and research contributions on client-centered psychotherapy are often marginalized or even ignored in clinical training programs. Our observation of introductory psychology and survey courses at the undergraduate level is that they typically do not provide the student with examples of the diversification that exists within the E-H orientation or its dynamic evolution. Although graduate students at the master’s level are encouraged to read original sources, they may not be required reading on course syllabi. Course texts typically cover substantial amounts of material designed to meet the standards set by accrediting bodies, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Well-written overviews of a variety of theories and practice perspectives are offered in the typical graduate text with the hope of tempting readers to study at greater depth on their own.

Another challenge for the student is that faculty members, clinical supervisors, and mentors identified as primarily drawing on an E-H perspective can be difficult to find in mainstream psychology graduate programs. For the graduate student enrolled in an APA- or CACREP-approved program, course offerings in humanistic, existential, phenomenological, constructivist, and transpersonal psychology are likely to be scant (e.g., see Heatherington et al., 2012, p. 365, lamenting the 80% “allegiance” to cognitive-behavioral therapy among the faculty in APA-approved doctoral programs). To compound the problem, there is a dearth of E-H–oriented practicum and internship placements (Gendlin, 1994), although individual supervisors may offer modeling and mentoring in the approach. Consequently, postgraduate training programs become an essential resource for psychotherapists who wish to integrate E-H perspectives into clinical practice, teaching, and research. Ensuring the availability of courses and training programs at the graduate and postgraduate levels is a mission for those who support this orientation and its current renaissance within the field of psychotherapy, especially in light of the exciting new research that suggests that “humanistic practice principles are a pivotal (and needed) dimension of therapeutic training” (Schneider & Längle,
Mounting research evidence affirms (Norcross & Wampold, 2011; Wampold, 2013) what E-H–oriented practitioners have long articulated (see Bugental, 1978, 1987; Elkins, 2009; May, 1983; May & Yalom, 1995; Rogers, 1980; Schneider & Krug, 2010): An effective therapeutic relationship requires something more profound than technical skill or theoretical understanding. Effective psychotherapy, regardless of orientation, is predicated on a humanistic relationship (Wampold, 2012). Elkins (2009) notes that “psychotherapy is more than science, and mechanistic techniques. It is also poetry and art” (p. 124). He advocates for less emphasis on the science of psychotherapy in training programs and more on the art of psychotherapy because it is the creative aspects of the work that support the “experience in which the client begins to feel the flow of her own creative becoming” (p. 120). Similarly, Elkins (2009) describes psychotherapy “that is more mysterious, circled about with awe, an experience in soul, one that touches the heart, nourishes the soul, and makes both client and therapist more human” (p. 119). To engage in such life-changing psychotherapy, the therapist must “prepare” by cultivating “subjective readiness” in tandem with acquiring traditional academic and applied training (Bugental, 1987, p. 269).

The call for balanced training is supported by research dating back to the landmark comprehensive reviews of therapy outcome research conducted by Bergin and Lambert (1978) and Lambert and Bergin (1994) and the fascinating “comparative study of psychotherapy” and the healing arts across orientations and cultures by Frank and Frank (1991). Groundbreaking, current psychotherapy outcome research challenges the prevailing notion that particular modalities and techniques are primarily responsible for therapeutic effectiveness (Duncan, Miller, Wampold, & Hubbell, 2010; Norcross, 2002; Wampold, 2001, 2007). After reviewing a substantial number of meta-analyses concerning the therapy relationship, the interdivisional second Task Force on Evidence-Based Therapy (Norcross & Wampold, 2011) came to the conclusion that “the therapy relationship makes substantial and consistent contributions to psychotherapy outcome independent of the specific type of treatment [and that it] accounts for why clients improve (or fail to improve) at least as much as the particular treatment method” (Norcross & Wampold, 2011, p. 98). Norcross and Wampold (2011) go on to state that “practice and treatment guidelines should explicitly address therapist behaviors that promote a facilitative therapy relationship” (p. 98), which points to the need for training programs that cultivate the evolution of the therapist’s capacity for presence, mindfulness, and attunement (see Siegel, 2010).

The training programs highlighted in this chapter are grounded on the notion that the development of the therapist as a person and the acquisition of the skills and techniques of psychotherapy should be given equal emphasis. Elkins (2012) advocates for training that helps students develop superior personal and interpersonal skills by valuing empathy, acceptance, attunement, and connection. Elkins’s views on training dovetail with the skills demonstrated by master therapists in the APA-sponsored film Qualities and Actions of Effective Therapists (2011). Throughout the film, Bruce Wampold beautifully describes and illustrates the core capacities of effective therapists as illuminated through current psychotherapy outcome research. He relates that effective therapists demonstrate the ability to (a) facilitate a robust therapeutic alliance permeated with...
empathic attunement; (b) help the client expand emotional engagement and modulation; (c) provide an explanation for the client’s distress that is compatible with his or her worldview and provides avenues for change; (d) convey hope for the efficacy of the therapeutic plan and optimism about improved outcome for the client; (e) identify and focus on clients’ strengths and assets and help clients harness them to facilitate the desired changes; and (f) continuously cultivate self-awareness through reflection, supervision, and personal therapy. Wampold also notes that distinctly skillful therapists seek continual improvement in a variety of ways throughout their careers.

Psychotherapist preparation from an E-H perspective is incomplete to the extent that it neglects the development of the therapist as a person—the wellspring and instrument of creativity and artistry. Bugental (1987) posited, “The most mature psychotherapists are more artists than technicians [in that] they bring to bear a wide variety of sensitivities and skills so that their clients can release their latent potentials for fuller living” (p. 264). The seasoned therapist deftly integrates a sound knowledge base acquired through formal academic study and extensive supervised clinical experience with finely honed perception, interpersonal sensitivity and attunement, intrapersonal awareness, and intuition (see Duncan, Chapter 29, “The Person of the Therapist: One Therapist’s Journey to Relationship,” and Edelstein, Chapter 27, “Frames, Attitudes, and Skills of an Existential-Humanistic Psychotherapist,” this volume). The subjective realm is trusted, and access to this sensitive resource within is increasingly fluid and reflexive (Bugental, 1987). The “intimate journey” (Bugental, 1990) that constitutes life-changing depth psychotherapy requires such artistry.

In this chapter, we describe The Art of the Psychotherapist (or Arts) Workshop Series and the Existential-Humanistic Institute’s (EHI) certificate programs in E-H therapy: training programs designed to both explicitly and implicitly teach an E-H approach to psychotherapy. The courses immerse the psychotherapist in an environment permeated with the humanistic values of compassion, courage, creativity, love, spiritedness, intellectual and personal growth, and “I–thou” relationships as characterized by Buber (1970). The programs provide learning environments that invite authenticity, cultivate attunement to subjectivity, and stimulate the capacity to be more fully present, moment to moment, to what is most alive within oneself and within the client and to what is emergent in the therapeutic relationship. We believe that the Arts series, the EHI certificate programs, and the other programs and organizations highlighted in this chapter provide valuable models for educators and clinical supervisors interested in designing experientially based psychotherapist preparation programs. The highlighted programs and organizations also provide valuable examples for students, interns, and practitioners interested in further developing their artistry as psychotherapists.

The philosophy, content, and process of the Arts series and EHI certificate programs are described in the next sections of the chapter. This summary is followed by highlights of the results of informal surveys of participants in both programs conducted to explore the influence of the courses on personal and professional development and to illuminate the factors that make the courses attractive. We then briefly discuss and illustrate the most prominent themes observed in the survey respondents’ narrative answers to our questions. We include a brief discussion of the relationship of the Arts series and EHI certificate programs to other E-H institutes and organizations and share our reflections on the importance of E-H training programs in today’s world.
THE ART OF THE PSYCHOTHERAPIST COURSES

The Arts program was an intensive five-course series based on an E-H approach to depth psychotherapy. The courses were conceived and developed by Bugental and several associates (J. F. T. Bugental, personal communication, February 2000). Participants, many of whom were seasoned psychotherapists, came from throughout the United States and Canada and dedicated 6 or more days each year over a 4-year period to these trainings. Although the Arts series is no longer offered, we believe that Bugental’s vision of postgraduate E-H education content and process will be of inspiration to both educators and students.

Reflecting Bugental’s ongoing scholarship and more than 40 years of clinical practice, the Arts courses incorporated and enhanced values, beliefs, and practices from the rich traditions of existential and humanistic psychologies (Bugental & Kleiner, 1993; Bugental & Sterling, 1995; Sharp & Bugental, 2001). The emphasis of the Arts courses was on illuminating the subjective experience and attitude of each participant’s evolving self-and-world construct system (i.e., his or her “implicit vision of [his or her] own identity and the character of [his or her] envisioned world”) rather than on prescribing a rigid set of techniques (Bugental, 1999, p. 109). From humanistic psychology, there was an emphasis placed on possibilities, hope, and potential; from existential traditions, there was an emphasis placed on awe, limits, anxiety, terror, and the tragic aspects of life (Sharp & Bugental, 2001). The courses evolved from Bugental’s lifelong practice and study of depth psychotherapy, particularly as elucidated in the following texts: Psychotherapy and Process: The Fundamentals of an Existential-Humanistic Approach (Bugental, 1978), The Art of the Psychotherapist (Bugental, 1987), and Psychotherapy Isn’t What You Think (Bugental, 1999). A gifted educator as well as a psychotherapist, Bugental elegantly translated his reflections on psychotherapy into a highly effective curriculum with original teaching materials and experiential exercises.

Context and Atmosphere

The content, structure, and atmosphere of the Arts courses reflected the philosophy and values described previously. The structure of the retreats, held in rural settings, not only facilitated focused, intensive clinical training sessions but also allowed time for reflection, relaxation, hiking, the expressive arts, and various group activities that typically fall outside of professional roles. Clinical training included lectures, demonstrations, role-plays, group exercises, review of audiotapes and videotapes, and the practice of journaling to capture the evolving personal integration. Emphasis was placed on listening closely to one’s ongoing subjective experience and one’s evolving sense of self, others, and possibilities.

A central goal of the Arts program was to create an atmosphere in which participants felt encouraged and safe to explore their subjective reactions to various aspects of clinical work, including what it means to be a psychotherapist in our contemporary world (Sharp & Bugental, 2001). That is, participants were encouraged to fully experience and convey to others as they felt comfortable the hope, awe, fear, dread, excitement, confusion, frustration, and exhilaration that are inherent aspects of conducting psychotherapy—and that are considered by some to be unprofessional, unacceptable, or unsafe to discuss with colleagues.

Time was also allotted during the evenings for singing, dancing, poetry reading, storytelling, creative presentations, and (given that the Arts courses evolved in California)
relaxing with one’s peers in a hot tub. Thus, participants reaped the benefits not only of working closely and collaboratively but also of laughing, crying, imagining, playing, and otherwise fully sharing their humanity.

Another powerful element of the Arts courses was the ongoing opportunity to study and work closely with Bugental, a highly respected mentor, elder, and sage. His presence added an immense richness to the Arts programs. He shared his extensive knowledge of the history of psychology and demonstrated consummate skills in fostering trust, awareness, and growth. In addition, he disclosed aspects of his humanity that stirred the heart—his courage, humor, struggles with aging, and ongoing commitment to life as a quest. He remains a profound inspiration to Arts participants.

Overview of Course Content

Arts I introduced Bugental’s (1987, 1978) E-H perspective on depth psychotherapy. Through a mixture of didactic presentations and experiential exercises, participants developed greater sensitivity to the process dimensions of psychotherapy. Participants extended their range of communication skills, particularly in relation to monitoring, paralleling, and engaging client presence. Therapeutic resistance was described and worked with as an essential obstacle and window to change. Bugental’s perspective on fundamental concepts such as presence, subjective awareness, searching, resistance, and the self-and-world construct system was presented (Bugental, 1987). Participants were encouraged to continually reflect on the meaning and influence of these dimensions in their work and lives.

Arts II and the ensuing courses built on and enhanced the material of Arts I. The ebb and flow between the courses in nonlinear fashion allowed material to be expanded and deepened within the context of each presentation. Arts II initially focused on the primacy of the subjective—the therapist’s inner experience, client readiness and reluctance, and intersubjectivity. Familiar difficulties, such as specific client patterns that concern therapists, were examined (e.g., therapist responses to clients with hair-trigger anger patterns, clients who collect and embrace injustice perceptions, clients who consistently express disproportionate dependency, and clients who seem unwilling to take responsibility for their actions or life). Attention was paid to clarifying and mobilizing implicit elements of psychotherapy such as client concern and intentionality and the therapist’s *pou sto* or philosophical stance (Bugental, 1999, p. 85). Core tenets of Bugental’s E-H perspective were expanded and interwoven throughout the remainder of the Arts courses. The structure and process of the program emphasized that each therapist must incorporate and amend these ideas in accord with his or her values, beliefs, and cultural and historical context.

Arts III focused on discovering one’s own needs as a therapist and a person and on how these needs affect one’s work. Included was emphasis on exploration of the therapist’s self-and-world construct system, sexuality, and unwitting tendencies to keep the work shallow. Participants were encouraged to examine tendencies to objectify clients, to resist being present, and to become preoccupied with theory, technique, or diagnosis. The crucial importance of deepening the therapeutic alliance was addressed, as was client or therapist efforts to collude in sabotaging this process. Participants continually refined and maintained the therapeutic “container” through addressing the ongoing business, legal, and ethical aspects of therapy. Arts III through Arts V could be taken in any order.

Arts IV was specifically adapted to the needs and interests of the participants. A menu of possible topics was presented to enrollees in advance of the program, and
coverage of the various topics was based on participants’ requests. The general goals of Arts IV were to explore and extend the scope of one’s E-H orientation, to recognize special circumstances in which one’s work may require adaptations, and to acknowledge personal limitations. Topics included assessing and taking into account client ego function, working with special populations (e.g., children, elders, and mandated clients), teaching and supervising, developing shorter-term models of E-H psychotherapy, and working with couples. In addition, technical skills were refined (e.g., establishing the therapeutic contract, coping with acting-out impulses, modulating intimacy and eroticism, and preparing for termination).

During Arts V, the master course, an even more significant shift in the teaching orientation occurred. The emphasis of Arts V was on further developing and refining individual styles and interests. Consequently, not only was the content based on the needs and interests of the enrollees, but the participants also did most of the teaching. Participants volunteered to present conceptual materials, learning exercises, or related artistic productions. Current issues in the profession were the subject of debates or the focus of exercises during this retreat. One cohort group incorporated a process group into its training, with the goals of refining participants’ skills in group facilitation, expanding awareness of group dynamics, and deepening interpersonal and intrapersonal attunement.

An integral element of Arts V was the acknowledgment and integration of the fundamental change from primarily following the teachings of a revered mentor to taking more initiative and responsibility for the content and direction of the ongoing Arts courses. It was testimony to Bugental’s wisdom that he designed the Arts courses in such a way that autonomy and authority were increasingly transferred to the group. He made it abundantly clear that a fundamental task at hand in Arts V was to develop an ongoing program that sustained the growth and development of the participants rather than bolstering the authority or power of its creator.

A tremendous sense of community emerged out of participation in the Arts series. Two groups have continued to meet independently for more than 20 years. Participants develop deep friendships and provide mutual support for the growth and emergence of one another. This includes support for ongoing professional development, such as providing an opportunity to present a paper in progress, coteaching, writing for publication (Bugental & Bracke, 1992; Bugental & Heery, 1999; Bugental & Sapienza, 1994; Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001; Sharp & Bugental, 2001), and taking part in peer consultation groups (M. Heery, personal communication, August 2000; M. M. Sterling, personal communication, August 2000).

SURVEY OF ARTS PARTICIPANTS

A survey conducted by Pierson and Sharp (1999) was designed to investigate what it is about participation in the Arts courses that repeatedly beckoned friends and colleagues, what participants considered to be their most valuable learning experiences, and how the Arts courses influenced participants’ work as therapists, their overall professional development, and their lives in general. The responses of our “coresearchers” (Rogers, 1985/1989, p. 285) reflected their personal experiences and, as such, provide the reader with an immeasurably enriched view of the courses. They also serve to illuminate important aspects of the series that others might wish to consider in the design of similar programs for the training and continuing education of E-H psychotherapists. What follows is an abbreviated presentation of the
survey and discussion of the results. For an expanded version with narrative examples of participant responses, please refer to Schneider et al. (2001, Chapter 40), the first edition of *The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory and Practice*.

**Method**

Everyone (N = 45) who had completed five or more Arts courses by June 1999 was invited to participate in our survey. We developed a questionnaire that consisted of seven open-ended questions and five questions that requested demographic information. E-mail was selected as the primary medium for our survey. Heuristic and phenomenological methods were employed to analyze the survey responses (Pierson & Sharp, 1999).

**Results**

**Participant Characteristics**

Nearly half (49%, n = 22) of those queried responded to our survey. Demographic information provided by the 12 women and 10 men represented in the sample yielded a general picture of those who elected to participate in the Arts series and the ongoing autonomous cohort groups that continue to meet on a yearly basis. Respondents ranged in age from 41 to 59 years, with a mean age of 51 years. (Keep in mind that the majority of the respondents completed their first Arts course 10 or more years prior to the survey.) The highest academic degree completed for half of the group was the PhD, and for the other half, it was the master’s. Years of experience as a counselor or psychotherapist ranged from 5 to 32 years, with a mean of 12 years and a median of 18 years. A majority of respondents (73.0%) indicated that they draw on the Arts courses in their work as therapists in private practice settings. Other settings mentioned included social service agencies (18.2%), university counseling centers (13.6%), and academic departments (4.5%). In addition, 1 person indicated work in another profession.

**Themes Observed**

Distillation of the collection of narrative responses to each of the survey questions yielded one or more themes that seemed to capture the essence of what the respondents conveyed. For clarity and brevity, in this section, we present the most prominent themes observed (Table 41.1) among the answers to three of the survey questions:

1. **What compels you to continue to participate in the Arts program?**

2. **What impact does participation in the Arts program have on your (a) work as a therapist, (b) professional development, and (c) nonprofessional life?**

3. **What stands out for you as the most significant learning experience that you have had at an Arts training?**

**DISCUSSION**

Our survey respondents impressed us as being men and women who demonstrate a lifelong commitment to becoming master therapists—artists engaged in “the constant challenge to move past where one is and to explore where one is becoming” (Bugental, 1987, p. 5). They expressed that they deeply value the synergistic company of others on the same quest.

**Cultivation of Therapist Artistry**

The Arts courses were perceived to cultivate the personal qualities and skillful artistry that characterize therapists who seek to effectively practice life-changing psychotherapy from
I find that I can sit with people with more respect; less judgment; [and] more honesty, hope, and willingness to follow their growth. I also find myself going to places [and] levels of pain and despair that challenge me personally. I really care deeply for my clients. I am challenged to grow constantly in order to match the growth they exhibit in my presence. As I am increasingly in touch with deeper, subtler layers of my own experience, I can model that for my client and facilitate the client's deepening awareness as well.

Table 41.1 Prominent Themes Observed Among Arts Participants’ Answers to Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Focus</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to participate</td>
<td>1. Sense of connection and belonging to an intentional community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Opportunity for professional and personal development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Opportunity to learn directly from Bugental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of the Arts courses</td>
<td>1. Increased understanding of the theoretical perspective, its efficacy,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and its power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Clarification and solidification of professional identity</td>
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<td>3. Increased confidence in the ability to practice from an E-H</td>
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<td>perspective</td>
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<td>4. Heightened sensitivity to one’s subjective experience in the flow</td>
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<td>of therapy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Generalization of the sensitivities and skills cultivated in the</td>
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<td>courses to daily living practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Significant learning experiences</td>
<td>1. Experiences that stimulated professional and personal</td>
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<td>development (e.g., brought out potentials, enhanced effectiveness,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and evoked fresh ways of being)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Experiences that enhanced specific aspects of the therapeutic</td>
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<td>process and revealed or cultivated qualities related to the self as</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a therapist-artist</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Experiences that occurred in the context of relationship with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bugental</td>
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NOTE: Arts = The Art of the Psychotherapist. Refer to the Results section of the text for the actual survey questions posed to the participants.
Identification With the Perspective

A hallmark of the professional is “a sense of personal identity with the work” (Bugental, 1978, p. 35). Survey respondents expressed that the Arts series helped them articulate and draw on the E-H theoretical base on which they ground their work as psychotherapists. This was conveyed in several ways. One person wrote,

The Arts courses have formed the base of my professional growth from 1987 to the present. Prior to that, I had a rather loosely developed framework. The Arts courses helped me [to] articulate my basic beliefs and to integrate them more consciously into my professional life.

Personal Outgrowths

The personal dimension of respondents’ lives was clearly influenced by participation in the Arts series. Beautifully exemplifying this notion, one woman expressed, “Learnings from my work with Jim Bugental and as part of the [Arts] group transcends psychotherapy in that the art of psychotherapy is also an art for living.” Another example illustrates this theme: “I think that this perspective has smoothed my life, [smoothed] my thinking, and has given me tools to be a better family member and community citizen. . . . The emphasis on authenticity seeps into my daily life.”

A nutrient-rich environment for stretching and experiencing oneself and others in fresh ways and for becoming more aware of or enlarging one’s self-and-world construct system was provided.

My relationships with my wife, daughter, and son have changed in the sense that I am much more willing to be expressive of my feelings. . . . The Arts program has helped me [to] accept and value who I am more than any other life experience. . . . [It has] helped me to see that what I call my “self” is not a static unchangeable aspect of my life experience.

Significance of Community

In the midst of the increasingly technocratic and often fragmentary discipline of psychology, the Arts courses were perceived as offering participants a home base or an intentional community. More than half of the men and women who responded to our survey specifically mentioned that the feeling of connection with others in their Arts cohort and of belonging to a larger E-H community was an important factor in their choosing to participate in the Arts courses.

Participants in the Arts courses develop tremendous group cohesiveness. As is true in the working stages of productive groups, this sense of cohesiveness and the trust on which it is predicated created a climate conducive to profound intrapersonal and interpersonal exploration and to giving and receiving the type of constructive feedback that extends therapist sensitivities and skills. The environment fostered an ethic of shared commitment to one another’s personal and professional development. This experience was particularly pronounced in the survey responses from those who participated in the two longest-running cohort groups. Members felt encouraged to move beyond previously held creative boundaries in areas such as their work as therapists, educators, writers, and workshop presenters.

[The Arts program] inspires my professional development. I look at our group as the leaders of the next generation of existential psychotherapists, so it pushes me to contribute on a wider, bigger, broader scale [in the form of] professional writing,
presenting, [and so on] to our group and to the public at large.

The trainings give me a forum to . . . discuss my own perceptions and try out new ideas with a supportive, nonjudgmental group of colleagues. Since it is imperative to try to live the stance I am trying to teach, our Arts meetings are a hothouse in which to practice what I preach. I get to watch people I know and respect try out new material on me, which in turn encourages me to take new risks.

The invitation to live more authentically and at one’s growing edge was implicit in every activity within the Arts curriculum, from participation in therapeutic skill-building exercises to late-night discussions in the hot tub. As one writer pithily reflected, “Because of some of the self-confrontation that has been my experience of Arts [courses], I feel like I live a bit more existentially in my life, which is to say more authentically.”

**Relationship With the Mentor**

Bugental’s presence as a mentor, teacher, or elder was specifically mentioned as being an essential element of the Arts series for a number of people in our sample. The opportunity to study and work with him was cited as both a compelling reason to participate in the series and the catalyst for outstanding learning experiences. Bugental was highly esteemed and, frankly, loved by those who participated in the Arts series. This quality of personal regard was clearly reciprocated and permeated the atmosphere at the Arts retreats. The spirit of generativity (Erickson, 1982) was consistently demonstrated in Bugental’s way of being in relationship. He offered younger colleagues profound respect for their individuality and individuation processes as psychotherapists.
and practice to interested individuals from around the country. Many EHI members are also affiliated with APA’s Division 32 and the Association for Humanistic Psychology.

Inspired by the work of EHI, the Existential-Humanistic Northwest Professional Organization (http://www.ehnorthwest.org) was catalyzed by the Portland, Oregon, psychotherapist Bob Edelstein and a 12-member development board in 2010. Edelstein served on the board of EHI for several years and is a member of Arts Omega, an independent group of psychotherapists with roots in Bugental’s Arts series. The Existential-Humanistic Northwest (EHNW) Professional Organization’s goals and values include education for clinicians, advocacy for E-H psychotherapy, peer support and outreach, and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. This energetic organization offers an array of activities and events designed for those in the healing professions and others interested in the E-H perspective. Currently, this association offers monthly peer consultation and study groups; a bimonthly, networking luncheon accompanied by a psychotherapy-related focal presentation; practice-oriented workshops; and plans to regularly offer conferences showcasing E-H psychotherapy practice.

The International Institute for Humanistic Studies (http://www.human-studies.com), under the direction of Myrtle Heery, PhD, who originally co-taught with Bugental, provides a series of courses in existential-humanistic mindful psychotherapy, with a focus on individuals and groups. The institute also offers a variety of trainings oriented toward “personal growth through self-discovery” to professionals in the helping professions and to lay persons. Like EHI, its sister San Francisco Bay Area institute, the International Institute for Humanistic Studies offers programs in E-H therapy to international audiences.

Interest in E-H practice appears to be growing around the globe (Schneider & Längle, 2012a). Notable among observations of this trend are the exciting East–West dialogues that occurred during the First International Conference on Existential Psychology in Nanjing, China, in May 2010 and the Second International Conference on Existential Psychology at Fudan University, Shanghai, China, in May 2012. A third conference is planned. Schneider and Längle (2012a) report that humanistic and existential training programs are offered throughout Europe, as well as in Japan, China, and Latin America (see also the special section Chapter 26, “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion,” this volume).

THE EHI CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

Heartened by the recent groundbreaking research on contextual factors, the faculty of the EHI in 2012 launched a yearlong training program leading to a certificate in “Foundations of Existential-Humanistic Practice.” It is the first formal training program in E-H therapy designed for licensed therapists and graduate students yearning to learn therapeutic principles of practice that go beyond behavioral techniques and treatment protocols. The powerful and effective teaching by their mentors Bugental, Yalom, and May inspired the EHI faculty and guided the development of the certificate programs. The faculty wanted to bestow on the next generation of therapists their interpretation of the unique education and training that Bugental, Yalom, and May had given them.

The EHI currently awards two certificates, one through EHI exclusively and the other in partnership with Saybrook University. In the fall of 2013, students who have completed the “Foundations” certificate will begin a 2-year advanced training program, culminating in certification as an existential-humanistic therapist.
The primary faculty members of EHI are acknowledged leaders in the field of existential and humanistic practice. They include Orah Krug, PhD, Director of Clinical Training and Certificate Programs and adjunct faculty, Saybrook University; Kirk Schneider, PhD, Vice President and adjunct faculty, Saybrook University; Nader Shabajangi, PhD, President and CEO, AgeSong Inc.; and Sonja Saltman, MS, Executive Director. They have been practicing, teaching, and writing about E-H therapy for more than 25 years.

Focus and Intention of the Certificate Programs

The programs are intended to steep participants in the principles of E-H therapy, but unlike most training programs, they also focus on the development of the trainee as a whole person, appreciating not only that psychotherapy is an art as much as a science but also that personal development is encouraged by mentoring experiences. Most of the students have expressed a deep resonance with the existential worldview, having read existential philosophers or practitioners like May, Yalom, Bugental, and Schneider.

The learning objectives are grounded in the principles of practice. Consequently, students learn (a) to be present to the process dimension of therapy—presence to process encourages what is most alive in the moment to emerge; (b) to work with contextualized meanings and protective life patterns, understanding meaning making as an aspect of human nature grounded in one’s particular context and understanding life protections as a means to cope with overwhelming experiences; (c) to work relationally with transference and countertransference enactments, cocreated by therapist and client, understanding that within a safe and intimate therapeutic relationship disowned painful experiences can be faced, resolved, or managed; and (d) to work not only with explicit existential issues but also with implicit, unrecognized existential issues underlying the presenting problems. The advanced training deepens this learning and also explores how to use the E-H principles as a foundation on which to employ particular modalities or techniques such as cognitive-behavioral approaches or trauma techniques (see Schneider, 2008; Schneider & Krug, 2010).

As mentioned above, the programs differ from many other training programs in their emphasis not only on the principles of practice but equally on the development of the therapist as a whole person. Of course these learning objectives are interrelated. The principles of practice often become guideposts for participants’ personal and professional ways of being in the world if they are valued and incorporated. Bugental (1987) emphatically believed that psychotherapeutic education must focus as much on the person as on the principles of practice. Recent research reaffirms his position, as discussed in earlier sections of this chapter. Therapy is much more than treatment modalities and techniques. Therapy is a very personal encounter between two people, requiring the therapist to possess sensitive attunement to underlying processes emerging in the self, in the other, and in the relationship. To this end, the mature therapist must cultivate personal and interpersonal qualities such as presence, empathy, and compassion. Consequently, we focus the trainees on their subjective and intersubjective experiences, including reflections on their historical contexts, their personal narratives, and their attachment styles. Participants are encouraged to continually attend to how these constructs affect their personal and professional lives.

Structure of the Certificate Programs

In all of our programs, the learning is multifaceted, combining distance and residential
moments, students access their particular emotional reactions, opening themselves to significant, embodied learning experiences. Participants experience how they may rescue clients, avoid intimacy, focus on content, problem solve, and so on. They begin to appreciate that the way they work with clients is a reflection of their own contexts, attachment styles, and protective patterns of being. This type of learning is, we believe, unique and rare. It challenges students to shift their focus from “learning to do” to “learning to be.” It requires a willingness to have an unknowing attitude, to accept, to risk, to be vulnerable, and to look deeply within oneself. Not all students are able or willing to swim in these waters, but those that are have reported life-changing experiences, as the results from the training questionnaires, described below, reveal. The learning environment of this educational program invites this openness because the faculty values and cultivates safety, intimacy, acceptance, collaboration, and play.

Overview of Course Content

The online courses are intended not only to provide the participants with a survey of E-H psychotherapeutic theory but also to provide in-depth studies of prominent practitioners such as May, Bugental, and Yalom. The advanced online courses also include courses on existential philosophy and literature and on more specific topics determined by students’ interests. The experiential, skill development courses bring the theories to life. An overarching assumption of E-H therapy is that it is the client’s in-the-moment experiencing that forms both the underlying and the actual process in therapy. For this reason, we focus our students on the process dimension of therapy, through a mix of didactic presentations, relevant videos, faculty demonstrations, experiential exercises, and role-play practice.

The students not only view and practice how to work with process by cultivating interpersonal and intrapersonal presence but also are encouraged to experience and reflect on their own in-the-moment subjective experiencing. By bringing a focus to these moments, students access their particular emotional reactions, opening themselves to significant, embodied learning experiences. Participants experience how they may rescue clients, avoid intimacy, focus on content, problem solve, and so on. They begin to appreciate that the way they work with clients is a reflection of their own contexts, attachment styles, and protective patterns of being. This type of learning is, we believe, unique and rare. It challenges students to shift their focus from “learning to do” to “learning to be.” It requires a willingness to have an unknowing attitude, to accept, to risk, to be vulnerable, and to look deeply within oneself. Not all students are able or willing to swim in these waters, but those that are have reported life-changing experiences, as the results from the training questionnaires, described below, reveal. The learning environment of this educational program invites this openness because the faculty values and cultivates safety, intimacy, acceptance, collaboration, and play.

SURVEY OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

The training questionnaires were intended to assess the efficacy of the training program and its value to the participants, both professionally and personally. Pre- and posttraining questionnaires were developed that consisted of 6 open-ended questions and 12 evaluative questions. Before the start of the Foundations certificate program, the incoming students were given the pretraining questionnaire, and on completion of the yearlong program, they were given the postraining questionnaire. There were eight students in the Foundations certificate program. One student was unable to take the second experiential due to illness and was consequently unable to complete the program and the postraining
understanding, as well as for level of personal integration and depth.

The next section presents themes gleaned from the open-ended, qualitative questions, which represents what students valued about the program. The following section examines the evaluative aspect of the research, which shed light on specific areas of student learning.

Open-Ended Questions

From the postquestionnaires, five main themes emerged: (1) relationship to the unknown (3 instances), (2) personal growth and shifts (12 instances), (3) professional growth and shifts (10 instances), (4) deeper relationship to E-H concepts (10 instances), and (5) influential qualities of the experiential training (9 instances).

Relationship to the Unknown. During the check-in of the second experiential training, this theme emerged almost unanimously among the students. It appeared that the first training had stirred existential anxiety and a sense of groundlessness that stemmed from the “big questions” posed by the existential perspective. Students reported reexamining patterns of relating and core life choices, such as their place of residence, their relationship to career, and their given names.

In the postquestionnaire, this theme remained present, though it appeared with significantly less angst than in the check-in. One participant wrote, “The paradox of knowing and not knowing is much more present in my everyday life. . . . I am humbled and excited by all the unknowns.” Similarly, another participant wrote, “I feel more comfortable with the unknown.”

Personal Growth and Shifts. The person of the therapist has a pervasive presence in E-H therapy. E-H therapists understand the importance of self-development as a conduit
to deeper work with one’s clients. A number of students reported experiencing personal shifts and growth as a result of the certificate program.

Some of the students found shifts and growth through confrontation with the program. For example, one student wrote, “The program has challenged me to walk my talk, to open to some of the existential questions myself.” A number of others commented on the value of examining their own context. One student’s statement captured well the sense of confrontation within a holding space: “The program illuminated and deepened my internal conflicts, while the group served as a place of safety.”

Another subset of responses focused on an increased comfort with vulnerability. “The awareness of how much more growth I have ahead is no longer intimidating, and I am more willing to take risks.” Another student reported, “I think I have . . . dropped some of my own protections. . . . My heart is more open.” An integral part of these statements was their partnering with the sense of feeling affirmed and strengthened, which served as a ground from which to take risks toward exploring new territory.

Finally, a third subset simply celebrated the depth and breadth of personal change from the program. “It would not be a stretch to say I am a completely different person than I was before . . . more secure, present, willing, and mostly, alive.” Or, as another student pithily remarked, “I am experiencing my Being more fully.”

Professional Growth and Shifts. Several students commented on the ways in which they were already incorporating skills learned at the training into their professional environments. Generally, these statements fell into categories of overall confidence with the E-H orientation and more specific shifts in students’ clinical work.

There was a resounding increase of confidence in the E-H perspective for most students. Examples included “E-H is the personal and professional perspective I want to take,” “I have increased my confidence and reliance upon the E-H orientation—I have restructured my entire private practice,” and “I have a deep enough foundation to continue developing myself as an existential practitioner.” Other comments were directed toward therapy as a whole—“I feel a greater capacity to create healing conditions with the experience of the training”—or simply expressed gratitude for feeling validated in their preexistent ways of working with clients.

More specifically, students remarked on “learning to be in the moment with clients, rather than in my head.” Students reflected on “relating in and from the moment” as a new option in their work, even as many expressed feeling “halfway to trusting this.” Others spoke of the profound effect that grounded presence had on clients they typically worked with from a more analytical stance. Finally, a profound shift took place for one student, who learned “not to conceptualize my client’s struggle as a problem to be solved.”

In sum, these responses reflected an emerging appreciation of the profundity of moment-to-moment process and presence. Interestingly, the theoretical constructs of presence and process emerged as two of the areas of greatest evidence of integration in the evaluative portion of the research. Perhaps this is an unsurprising coincidence, given the previous theme of the personal nature of learning.

Deeper Relationship to E-H Concepts. Every student pointed toward a shift from a dryer, more theoretical knowing to a livelier, embodied kind of knowing. The following examples illustrate the various colorations of this fundamental movement: “I felt the concepts come alive,” “We moved from words and theory to a lived experience,” and “There
Cultivating Psychotherapist Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs

EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

Students were provided 12 prompts to “provide 1–2 sentences describing your current understanding of the following concepts, as they apply to E-H psychotherapy.” The 12 concepts included (1) process, (2) presence (intrapersonal vs. interpersonal), (3) freedom, (4) responsibility, (5) experience, (6) paradox, (7) meaning/meaning-making process, (8) choice, (9) being, (10) relational style, (11) self-and-world construct, and (12) life-limiting protections.

The process of evaluating the questionnaires developed somewhat organically. The researchers first independently examined one sample student’s pre- and postquestionnaire responses to determine their degree of agreement over what constituted changes in the understanding, depth, and integration of the concepts described above. After discovering a very high degree of agreement across all 12 of the sample answers, one researcher proceeded with independently evaluating the rest of the students’ responses.

Once an entire reading of all the questionnaires was completed, the researcher read each of the responses a second time, comparing the students’ pretraining answers with their postraining answers. Each was assigned a “yes,” “somewhat,” or “no” to denote a significant increase in depth, understanding, and integration; some evidence of an increased depth; or no change from pre to post answers, respectively.

Following assignment of these three codes, each concept was tallied for the number of instances. For the sake of simplicity, all “somewhat” answers were placed under the “yes” category. Table 41.2 gives the rank order that emerged for significant or at least some evidence of deepening.

Given the context of such a small sample size, it may be helpful to look at this rank order as a 50:50 split: The items that were ranked in the top half were presence, life-limiting qualities of the Experiential Training. Much like the previous four themes, there seemed to be an undercurrent of appreciation for the personal touch to the training experience for students. This emerged in several ways.

First, students highly valued the instructors’ ability to model the concepts. One student observed, “The experientials were reflections of true encounters among like-minded people...willing to relate to one another at a much deeper level.” Several commented that the instructors allowed the moment to lead and modeled ways of being that eluded description but were deeply valuable.

Within the theme of modeling, students pointed out a cultivation of presence throughout the experiential trainings in particular. One student summed it up well: “This program was a living laboratory of presence.”

Finally, students commented on valuing the live demonstrations, being able to experience E-H work “in action,” and having chances to try it out from several different vantage points—as clients, therapists, observers, and students in a trial run that included specific instructor feedback. Overall, students commended the instructors on “balancing theory and relationship” with great mastery.
There does appear to be a shared quality to the lower half as well. A number of these concepts—freedom, choice, experience, meaning—might be considered rather large, difficult-to-describe concepts. It is entirely possible that the process of writing about these particular concepts was not the best way to capture students’ understanding.

**CLOSING REFLECTIONS**

In this chapter, we have presented the Arts courses and the contemporary EHI certificate programs in E-H practice as model E-H training programs. The experienced psychotherapists who contributed to our surveys repeatedly underscored the vital role that the courses play in their development as E-H practitioners. The courses are perceived to strengthen professional identity and, as once articulated in an Arts course flyer, the ability to put “this perspective into clinical actuality” (J. F. T. Bugental, personal communication, April 1996). They also appear to further stimulate participants’ capacity for experiential freedom—“the freedom to profoundly feel, sense, and think” (K. J. Schneider, personal communication, September 1999)—the lifeblood of artistic expression.

**Table 41.2** Prominent Themes Observed Among EHI Certificate Program Participants’ Answers to Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Yes”—Significant or Some Evidence of Deepening</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Presence (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2–3 Life-limiting protections and being (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 Process, responsibility, and paradox (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Choice (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–11 Freedom, experience, relational style, and self-and-world construct (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Meaning and meaning-making process (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

protections, being, process, responsibility, and paradox. At least half of the students left the experiential with a deeper understanding of these concepts. Interestingly, these concepts, with the exception of responsibility, are readily apparent throughout the entirety of the open-ended themes above.

This co-occurrence may be viewed a couple of ways. First, it could be viewed as a validation of personalized learning, which states that things are best learned when the student creates an emotional bond with the subject. Second, it demonstrates a profound connection between what students actively value and the degree to which they integrate it into their understanding. In essence, the open-ended data state, “This is what I wanted, what I valued.” The evaluative data added, “What I valued, I learned with greater depth.”

From the instructors’ standpoint, the lower half is as informative as the upper half. Where the upper half appears to illuminate the true emphasis of the training, the lower half speaks to aspects that may need strengthening or supplementation.

This finding is especially intriguing given the latest development of a “Part Two” of the certificate program for those who wish to advance their E-H training. It may also inform future “Part One” trainings by finding ways to make concepts like choice, freedom, experience, relational style, self-and-world construct, and meaning/meaning-making process more accessible and experiential.

There does appear to be a shared quality to the lower half as well. A number of these concepts—freedom, choice, experience, meaning—might be considered rather large, difficult-to-describe concepts. It is entirely possible that the process of writing about these particular concepts was not the best way to capture students’ understanding.
We have discovered that there is a critical distinction between knowing about an E-H perspective from a theoretical or scholarly standpoint and “knowing” the perspective because it has been repeatedly modeled and personally experienced and affirmed, not only in one’s work as a psychotherapist but also in one’s way of being.

Becoming an E-H psychotherapist-artist is predicated on such multidimensional comprehension. It is also predicated on an internalized ethic that Bugental (1976) expressed beautifully in *The Search for Existential Identity*:

> Psychotherapy is an art form. An art form seriously practiced by an artist worthy of that name calls for cultivated sensitivity, trained skills, disciplined emotion, and total personal investment.... Psychotherapy demands discipline from its responsible practitioners above all else. Only after one has mastered the fundamentals, steeped [oneself] in the diversity of human experience, and explored more advanced possibilities can [one] improvise and create meaningfully and responsibly. (pp. 297–298)

The mission at the heart of the Arts and the present-day EHI certificate programs is to facilitate the actualization of this ethic. Within a contemporary psychotherapy climate heavily influenced by the managed-care industry, the medical model, and the press for positivistic, natural science–based, “empirically supported treatments” (APA, 2000), today, perhaps more than ever, we need psychotherapists who can “create meaningfully and responsibly” in collaborative relationships with their clients. Experiential training programs that honor both the art and the science of our profession are essential.

**NOTES**

1. At one time, the interested graduate student could contact schools included in the informative *West Georgia Directory of Graduate Programs in Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology in North America* (Arons, 1996) and the Consortium for Diversified Psychology Programs (Taylor, 1999). Currently, excellent resources for postgraduate or continuing education can be found through Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association, the Association for Humanistic Psychology, and the EHI. Students may also identify E-H oriented graduate faculty by exploring department websites at institutions of higher learning across the United States, Canada, and the European nations.

2. Elizabeth Bugental, Myrtle Heery, Molly Sterling, and David Young have all made substantial contributions to the development and implementation of the Arts programs.

3. Analysis and discussion were restricted to three questions due to space limitations.

**REFERENCES**


Mind–body medicine is as old as human existence. Archaeological evidence shows shamanic methods in use at least 20,000 years ago (Achterberg, 1985), but one might imagine that the use of mind–body practices to alter oneself and one’s environment is much older. It is a natural human tendency, as can be seen in the early developmental stages of childhood. Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, observed that in the preoperational stage of cognitive development the child engages in magical thinking and pretend play. For example, during this stage the child might engage in imaginal actions to try to heal a beloved pet. Folk healing methods have persisted over time throughout the world. Alternatively, contemporary mind–body medicine is as recent as the past 40 years. Psychological methods have been combined with modern medicine to form mind–body medicine and whole-person health care (WPH). Because humanistic psychology has been dedicated to the development of the person’s potential—mind, body, and spirit—it has played a key role in the formation of contemporary mind–body medicine and WPH. This chapter examines the nature of mind–body medicine; the history of mind-body medicine; the principles of mind–body medicine; humanistic psychology and mind–body medicine; approaches to mind–body medicine; the contributors to mind–body psychology and mind–body medicine; applications of mind–body medicine and WPH; and the future of mind–body medicine and WPH.

THE NATURE OF MIND–BODY MEDICINE

Mind–body medicine refers to approaches to healing that include mental and physical practices. Healing means to return to wholeness, from an Old English word meaning to “make whole or sound.” Mind–body medicine combines a variety of mental and physical disciplines
While the ancient Greek medical practices were originally holistic, ways of viewing the body began to change with the influence of the philosophic pragmatism of Aristotle (c. 384 to c. 332 BCE) and his desire to know and categorize all aspects of the material world. (Allison, 1999, p. 65)

This began the separation of mind and body, which was reinforced later by the medieval Christian church. Descartes (1637/1972) wrote about the mind/body split during the 1600s. He was not the only one of his era to speak of this divide, but he is the one credited with having done so. Descartes believed that the soul entered the body through the pineal gland, a small brain structure. This meant that the mind and body were separate; the body was not sacred. The split between the mind and body enabled us to study the body as a nonsacred object. Medical advances were fostered by this consideration of the body. Over the nearly 400 years since, Western culture has considered the mind as separate from the body. This separation allowed psychology to develop and explore its realm and permitted medicine to explore its realm. The separation of mind and body was characteristic of Western culture, but it was not characteristic of the rest of the world. For example, Native Americans and Eastern cultures held a more unified conception of the human.

The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world. The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world. The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world. The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world. The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world. The discovery of the unconscious by Freud, Jung, and others during the 1800s demonstrated the impact of the mind on the body. Research in anthropology helped us understand folk healing traditions throughout the world.
Humanistic Psychology, Mind–Body Medicine, and Whole-Person Health Care

organs, gastrointestinal ulcers, and loss of body weight” (p. 55). Selye’s research led to numerous studies on the effects of stress on health and the teaching of the principles of stress management to millions of people throughout the world.

Psychophysiology, especially applied psychophysiology, is an important contributor to the development of mind–body medicine. Psychophysiology is an approach to understanding the mind–body functioning of the person through changing psychological states and measuring the resulting physiological changes. Applied psychophysiology uses this information and approach clinically. What is unique about applied psychophysiology is the emphasis on bringing the mind and body together in a clinical or educational setting. Applied psychophysiology is a research-based field and illustrates wonderfully how research can inform the development of the practices. For example, psychophysiological studies of meditation greatly enhanced its acceptance by the general public.

During the late 1960s, the field of biofeedback was born. This domain began with the work of Neal Miller, Joe Kamiya, and others, who demonstrated that humans could control physiological functions with information provided about physiological states. Other studies demonstrated the effects of mental practices on physiology, such as the studies done to look at the impact of meditation on psychophysiology. Menninger Foundation biofeedback pioneers Elmer and Alyce Green demonstrated that advanced yoga practitioners could voluntarily change physiological functions—brain waves, cardiac function, and temperature. Biofeedback research rapidly expanded, and biofeedback soon began to be used clinically to treat a wide variety of presenting complaints.

Humanistic psychology and the human potential movement helped popularize biofeedback training, yoga and meditation, psychic or spiritual healing, parapsychology, consciousness research, and other aspects of mind–body medicine because of their emphasis on the actualization of full human potential.

The field of psychoneuroimmunology emerged during the 1980s. Numerous studies have demonstrated the connection among psychological states, neurology, and immune system function (Locke & Horning-Rohan, 1983). The fluctuation in immune system function that accompanies psychological states is measurable either by correlational studies or by actual measures of blood chemistry.

Sparked by research findings showing that millions of people are choosing to spend their own “out-of-pocket” money to use what was originally called alternative medicine (now called complementary medicine because of the partnership that has been developing between the alternative approaches and mainstream medicine), mind–body medical programs are emerging in many hospitals and clinics throughout the world. For example, the work of Kabat-Zinn (1990), who teaches mindfulness meditation to patients, has enabled a wealth of mind–body programs to enter into many medical settings.

PRINCIPLES OF MIND–BODY MEDICINE

There are both dualistic and nondualistic approaches to mind–body medicine. The dualistic approach conveys that there is a mind and a body and that the mind can be used to influence the healing tendencies of the body, and vice versa. This approach sometimes facilitates a return to a greater sense of wholeness or mind–body integration. The nondualistic approach begins with the understanding that we are already whole and that there is a return to or remembrance of wholeness inherent in mind–body practice. In nondualistic mind–body medicine, the causes of
diseases inevitably entail mental, physical, emotional, and environmental factors.

What are the basic principles of mind–body medicine? First, mind–body practitioners and clients/patients believe that there is a connection between the mind and the body.

Second, they hold that the mind influences the body and the body influences mental states. Third, they contend that changes in mental states can be used to change physical states, and vice versa. The mental states and therapies can be either conscious or subconscious. For example, conscious approaches can include cognitive strategies for changing attitudes that have an effect on body states. Biofeedback training is another conscious approach to changing physiology toward homeostasis and healthier functioning. Subconscious approaches include hypnosis or guided visualizations to alter physiology.

Mind–body approaches and WPH emphasize the client taking personal responsibility for the healing process. This responsibility begins with the client’s informed choice regarding the approach to healing. An understanding of healing processes is important because one can mobilize the healing potential of the client more readily when the client is personally informed and motivated. The relationship between the client and practitioner/educator is important. Rapport between the two is essential. The practitioner needs to relate to the client as a person of worth and dignity at the center of the process. The practitioner helps the client access his or her inner resources toward healing and health. The contributions of the mind, body, and spirit are honored in the healing process. These principles are inspired by humanistic psychology.

The many approaches to mind–body medicine also include the spiritual dimension. Spiritual may be distinguished from religious (see Chapter 44, “Beyond Religion: Toward a Humanistic Spirituality,” by Elkins, this volume). Herbert Benson’s group at the Mind/Body Institute of Harvard Medical School report that when they engage in mind–body experiences, they frequently experience the spiritual dimension. This has been observed often by biofeedback trainers and somatics practitioners. The transpersonal dimension, seen by some humanistic psychologists as the farther reaches of human nature (Maslow, 1971), embraces this aspect of human existence.

HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY AND MIND–BODY MEDICINE

Humanistic psychology is concerned with the development of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. The field of mind–body theory, practice, and research has been aided greatly by humanistic psychology. This support came from the value that humanistic psychology placed on the whole person, and the actualization of potential—which includes the embodied person—was integral to that value. Jourard (1976) contributed to this early appreciation, as did Hanna (1970) and others.

The Association for Humanistic Psychology (AHP) was founded during the early 1960s to provide a meeting ground for psychologists and others who believed that they were not represented in the prevailing preoccupation with psychoanalysis and behaviorism. AHP members included psychologists, educators, philosophers, other professionals, and educated laypersons. Somatics, the integrated mind–body disciplines, was one of the early developments of humanistic psychology. Some AHP members went on to become professionals in the field of somatics. The philosophical stance of the organization was to recognize the worth and dignity of the person and to explore concerns such as love and creativity, which were left out of mainstream psychology. Some of the founding voices in
the AHP who were very concerned with the actualization of human potential included Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, and Sidney Jourard.

From the humanistic psychology movement came the realization that it would be valuable to apply humanistic principles to other human endeavors. During the 1970s, the humanistic medicine initiatives emerged. These initiatives had a particular impact on nursing—for example, self-care nursing, which draws heavily on humanistic philosophy and practices. Later, the holistic health movement arose. Humanistic psychology was holistic before it became popular; humanistic psychology had a larger perspective very early. Currently, approaches from this lineage include mind–body medicine and integrative medicine.

The AHP was a spawning ground for somatics. During the early 1970s, the AHP was the first American organization of its kind to embrace the mind–body disciplines. Historically, the AHP’s conventions provided a place to demonstrate some of the mind–body techniques. For example, early convention presenters included Moshe Feldenkrais, Ida Rolf, Illana Rubenfeld, and Thomas Hanna. It was the original safe haven for holistic health, humanistic medicine, and alternative/complementary medicine. Many innovations in psychology and related fields began under the AHP umbrella and moved out to form specialized organizations.

Somatics is a term coined by Hanna (1976). He used the term to describe the developing field of mind–body integration disciplines. He used the term soma, the Greek word for the living body, to characterize this mind–body combination. He defined the soma as the body experienced from within. It was his brilliant solution for the mind–body problem. Historically, somatology was the name for the field that later was differentiated into anatomy and physiology. This differentiation served to separate the study of the structure of the body from the study of its functions. From the perspective of Hanna’s definition of the soma, there is no mind/body split. The soma is process, that is, function rather than structure. It is the result of the original creation of the universe and the evolution over time to our current expression of that organic foundation (Hanna, 1980). The AHP’s Somatics Community helped carry forward the message.

Somatics practitioners and educators come from different traditions and disciplines. They have common principles and practices. Their concepts have multicultural and multidisciplinary origins. As they pioneer the somatics realm, they discover a language or a vocabulary that is purely somatic. They share a perspective that is very much a sense of a body–mind. The body perceives and responds. It has needs, intentions, and wisdom. Somatics practitioners explore the body wisdom within their own somas and in their interactions with others.

Since the 1970s, the field of somatics (the mind/body integration disciplines) was born and has exploded. It now includes Eastern and Western traditions. Any practice that includes mind/body integration as a focus is somatic. Examples of Eastern traditions include martial arts disciplines such as aikido, judo, and karate (Murphy, 1992), yoga (Criswell, 1989), zen, t’ai chi chuan, Tibetan Buddhist practices (Criswell, 1989; Murphy, 1992), and many others. Western traditions include the Alexander Technique (Alexander, 1932), Feldenkrais’s Functional Integration® (Rywerant, 1983) and Awareness Through Movement® (Feldenkrais, 1972), Somatic Exercises™ (Hanna, 1988) and Hanna Somatic Education®, Ida Rolf’s Structural Integration and related methods (Rolf, 1977), Charlotte Selver’s Sensory Awareness (Brooks, 1986), somatically oriented dance and athletics (Murphy,
enhanced state of suggestibility, it may be induced by another person or situation or by oneself. The first step toward a hypnotic state is usually bodily relaxation, although hypnosis can also be induced during a crisis, for example, in a hospital emergency room. The second step is concentration on a narrow set of stimuli, a restricted focus of attention. When a sufficient trance level is reached, one or more suggestions are made. These suggestions concern changes in the attitude, emotion, physiology, or behavior of the patient during the posthypnotic period.

Medical hypnosis has been used for relief of a variety of symptoms. There is a rich hypnosis research literature that is full of useful insights for mind–body medicine.

Biofeedback is the feeding back of a biological signal to the person or producer of the signal. “The biological signals are recorded by electronic devices. Through the information provided, you become able to change your physiological state in a desired direction. The information fed back is significant with regard to a predetermined goal” (Criswell, 1995, p. xv). The voluntary control of internal states or self-regulation is the outcome. The field of biofeedback is very solidly research based. A number of presenting complaints have been successfully treated with biofeedback. Because of the nature of biofeedback, humanistic principles are very significant, and their presence is apparent.

The mind–body interface was explored extensively within the field of biofeedback and applied psychophysiology. The field of biofeedback was founded by Joe Kamiya and others. Kamiya was a social scientist who segued into psychophysiology through dream research electroencephalography. Others joined to explore other psychophysiology such as electromyograph, skin temperature, and electrodermal activity. This research was supported and encouraged by members of the AHP, the Esalen Institute, massage therapy (Knaster, 1996), body-oriented psychotherapy (Kepner, 1987), biofeedback training (Criswell, 1995), and many other disciplines. Medicine, chiropractic, physical therapy, and other disciplines may be considered somatic when they integrate mind and body. (Criswell-Hanna, 1999, p. 47)
Meditation is a valuable part of mind–body medicine. Many cultures have highly developed meditation traditions, for example, Zen Buddhism, other Buddhist traditions, yoga, and many other religious and nonreligious traditions.

Meditation generally includes clearing the mind, quieting the body, concentrating on a central focus, and maintaining that mind/body state for a length of time. It usually includes repetition of a stimulus input. The central focus of concentration can be internal or external. (Criswell, 1995, p. 135)

According to meditation research, one of the benefits of meditation is a shift toward parasympathetic nervous system dominance. The parasympathetic nervous system is the rest, maintenance, and repair system of the body that is so necessary for healing (Criswell, 1995, p. 92).

Visualization, or the use of the mind to create an image separate from input from the environment, may be verbal (as in visualizing a word) or nonverbal (as in visualizing an image, picture, design, symbol, or scene). Visualization in mind–body medicine can be used in a variety of ways to influence brain function and, therefore, body function. Visualization can be used to listen to the body for information about particular situations. The former approach creates relaxation for healing, whereas the latter approach involves becoming aware of the body’s wisdom. Creative visualization is the use of the visualization process to bring new experiences into one’s life, for example, anticipating a return to wellness.

The spiritual dimension allows one to experience oneself as related to the larger whole, that is, to experience a sense of connectedness with the all of existence or God. There are different spiritual traditions that foster this experience. It can be engaged outside a spiritual tradition as well. It is a natural process. In this sense of connectedness, there
is a healing process that transcends what the individual is able to do on his or her own. Distant healing is a force that is fostered by the intention of others in the direction of the healing recipient. Dossey (1999) looked at how we influence one another from a distance or nonlocally. The role of the spirit in healing has been appreciated by the religions of the world and has a long history of involvement with mind–body medicine.

CONTRIBUTORS TO MIND–BODY MEDICINE

Some of the contributors to the development of contemporary mind–body medicine include the following.

The late Jeanne Achterberg, author of *Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine* (Achterberg, 1985), was an associate professor and director of research in rehabilitation science at the University of Texas Health Science Center and codirector of the Professional School of Biofeedback, Dallas, Texas. She was also on the faculty of Saybrook University. She and her husband, G. Frank Lawlis, gathered together the research and practices in the ancient and modern use of imagery. In addition, they have researched and practiced imagery in healing.

Herbert Benson, a physician specializing in mind–body medicine, began his career in mind–body medicine with a study of the psychophysiology of transcendental meditation during the 1960s (Benson, 1975). The research sparked his awareness of what he later called “the relaxation response.” The relaxation response is a shift toward parasympathetic nervous system dominance. The parasympathetic nervous system is the rest, maintenance, and repair system of the body, as compared with the sympathetic nervous system, which is the fight or flight system. He is currently Director Emeritus of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine and Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School.

Joan Borysenko cofounded a mind–body clinic with Dr. Benson and Dr. Kutz in the early 1980s. She expanded on Benson’s findings to include psychological well-being, meditation, relaxation, and stress reduction as part of a healing regimen. Her original book *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind* (Borysenko, 1988) was a best seller and was republished in 2007. She is the founding partner of Mind/Body Health Sciences, LLC and the director of The Claritas Institute of Interspiritual Mentor Training Program.

Larry Dossey, an authority on spiritual healing, pioneered the return of prayer to healing through research on “the effects of prayer and spirituality” on healing (Dossey, 1999). His endeavors are concerned with the nonlocal mind and its therapeutic effects. His books include *Beyond Illness: Discovering the Experience of Health* (1984) and *Space, Time, and Medicine* (Dossey, 1982). His book *Reinventing Medicine: Beyond the Mind-Body to a New Era of Healing* (Dossey, 1999) explored the nonlocal, transpersonal dimension of the self.

Dean Ornish, president and director of the nonprofit Preventive Medicine Research Institute, Sausalito, California and clinical professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, pioneered a combination of stretches (yoga), a vegetarian diet, progressive relaxation, breathing techniques, directed and receptive imagery, meditation, and group process (communication skills and group support) with cardiac patients (Ornish, 1990). He calls his regimen the Opening Your Heart Program, and it is an adjunct to conventional medical therapy. Participants in the program are able to demonstrate an improvement in cardiac function by following its procedures and making lifestyle changes. The program also emphasizes opening the heart through expansion
David Spiegel is the medical director of Center for Integral Medicine, Stanford School of Medicine; a professor of psychiatry and behavioral science; and psychosocial mentor at Stanford Cancer Institute. He has worked in the Stanford University area providing group therapy experiences for breast cancer survivors and noted that the survival rate was higher for those who participated in group therapy combined with their other medical treatments (Spiegel, 1993). One of his areas of expertise is professional hypnosis.

There are many more contributors to the development of mind–body medicine—researchers, medical personnel, practitioners of the mind–body disciplines, and courageous patients/clients. The research, practice, and publications of these contributors help bring mind–body medicine into increasing societal acceptance and availability.

APPLICATIONS OF MIND–BODY MEDICINE

The mind–body medical disciplines have been helpful for people suffering from migraine headaches, insomnia, hypertension, asthma and other respiratory conditions, ulcers and other gastrointestinal disorders, incontinence, cardiac and vascular irregularities, muscular problems caused by strokes or accidents, arthritis, anxiety, attention and learning disorders, depression, chemical and emotional addictions, and phobias and other stress-related disorders. (Allison, 1999, p. 67)

Achterberg (1985) reported that she and Lawlis have used their body–mind imagery techniques with patients with “chronic pain, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, diabetes, severe orthopedic trauma, burn injury, alcoholism, and stress-related disorders such as migraine headaches and hypertension, and during childbirth” (p. 101). Biofeedback has been
used effectively with asthma, essential and labile hypertension, insomnia, migraine headaches, Raynaud’s disease, cardiac arrhythmias, muscle contraction headaches, addictive behaviors, anxiety disorders, attention-deficit disorder with and without hyperactivity, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobic behaviors, paralysis and stroke rehabilitation, chronic pain, Bell’s palsy, and a host of other presenting complaints. The other mind–body medicine approaches have an equally impressive list of applications.

WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH CARE

WPH “integrates the best of medical and psychological practices into a biopsychosocialspiritual mode” (Serlin, 2007, p. xviii). These practices relate to “the whole person in his or her setting, rather than in terms of isolated disease entities or body parts” (Serlin, 2007, p. xvii). The whole-person approach considers patients/clients as part of the world in which they live. WPH encourages patients/clients to seek to understand the meaning of their symptoms as well as their physical and psychological causes. “Whole person healthcare embraces diversity of technique and approaches that include nonverbal and multimodal modalities such as the expressive therapies and mindfulness meditation” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, pp. xi–xvii). While mind–body medicine set the stage for, and shares critical elements with, WPH, it is also distinct from WPH. Generally, mind–body refers to the interaction of mind on body and body on mind. WPH, on the other hand, adds a psychological dimension—for psychologists, WPH brings in mind–body practices like mindfulness or imagery into the complex clinical situation of each moment in a therapeutic relationship. It adds the centrality of the healing relationship and a process, open approach to therapy—priorities gained during psychotherapy training and experience. WPH also adds the treatment of the whole person—mind, body, medicine, and community—using a person-centered approach. It helps practitioners integrate mind–body–spirit practices into their therapeutic work with clinical sensitivity and sophistication.

WPH is based on an understanding of the nature of the human being as body, mind, and spirit. It follows the philosophy that treatment needs to be approached individually and holistically. This is true regardless of where the person is on the wellness continuum. This attitude/approach needs to be followed by every member of the health care team. WPH includes the best from allopathic medicine and complementary/alternative medicine. Evidence-based medicine is used where possible, bringing together peer-reviewed research findings (qualitative and quantitative research) with good clinical judgment.

From this understanding, being healthy includes the absence of disease plus growth and development of the person throughout life. It takes into consideration the nature of the patient/client, life course, family, community, and environment. To practice WPH requires that one address the different aspects of the person—body, mind, and spirit. Balance is a key factor.

Humanistic psychology values the worth and dignity of the individual and his or her societal contexts, the actualization of the positive potential of the person (mind, body, and spirit) and self-actualization, person-centered education and other person-centered endeavors, and self-direction and self-regulation. When humanistic principles are brought into health care, it becomes obvious that a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary approach alone is not adequate. One must actually work from a person-centered model of health care. The humanistic principles enable the person to fully utilize the
psychological, social, physical, community, and environmental resources that are available. It is an educational and self-directed process. Furthermore, “whole person healthcare goals include achieving a gender and culture balance of emotional empathy, self-awareness, assertiveness, instrumental problem solving, and expressiveness” (Levant, 2001).

The WPH team needs to be as comprehensive and integrated as possible. Mutual respect and cooperation among team members is essential. The care providers also need to be as personally healthy as possible for their own sakes and because of the effect that the states of their minds, bodies, and spirits have on patients/clients. The care providers operate from humanistic principles in every aspect of their work. The therapeutic relationship is key.

Humanistic principles foster a greater attention to the needs of the person. WPH becomes person or patient/client centered. Because it is person centered, first-person centered, you are more likely to truly address the whole person. The person is the center of the process. It is the person who will be responding to the treatment, adhering to (complying with) the recommendations, and becoming self-directed in continuing self-care. It is the person who does the healing—body, mind, and spirit. Treatment can only make healing more likely. Rapport between the care provider(s) and the patient/client is very important. From the perspective of the work of Rogers and WPH, therapists need to practice accurate empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence.

The whole-person approach to healing follows the following principles:

1. WPH practitioners believe that healing comes from within, that everyone has a healing potential and the modalities used help mobilize the healing response.

2. The healing process is individualistic.

3. The relationship heals. Psychotherapy research shows that it is the personality of the therapist (“nonspecific” variables, placebo approach, etc.) that makes the difference. It is the person, not the technique, that heals (Rogers, Gendlin, Kiesler, & Louax, 1967; Wright, 2010, pp. 154–161).

4. WPH is process oriented. Practitioners may have a tool kit, but they follow the emerging process—themes and images as they unfold. They don’t impose “fixes” from preconceived ideas of what they think things mean.

True integrative medicine requires that there is integration of the person’s experiences. The therapies need to be as integrated as possible, but finally, true integration occurs within the patient/client. This is true whether we are talking about assessment or treatment. Integrative medicine as it is currently being practiced is a step in the right direction, but integration needs to happen on many levels.

WPH includes prevention, health maintenance, disease management, successful aging, and end-of-life considerations. When we look at the following elements of WPH, we can see how these elements come together within the person. The health condition is considered from the perspective of the person/patient. The person is considered in his or her uniqueness. Each person has a story or sense of life. Each has an opportunity to change the course of his or her development in a self-regulated way with the tools that are learned. The person is at the center of his or her health care and is empowered by that. Diagnosis or assessment is done through a whole-person perspective. The client/patient’s understanding of the situation and information is very important. WPH encourages the patient to be as self-caring, self-directing, and self-regulating as possible. The person is empowered in the healing process. WPH gives clients the knowledge, skills, and tools to be able as much as possible to be their own health care providers, their
own health advocates. Outcomes of WPH include enhanced health and self-care, the ability to help others—family, friends, community members—and so forth. A healthy lifestyle is the goal. There is a big emphasis on self-responsibility of the person. Diversity is appreciated and embraced in humanistic psychology and WPH; for example, diversity awareness allows the WPH practitioner to draw from a variety of perspectives to benefit the patient/client.

WPH is now occurring in a variety of settings: WPH is concerned with healing environments; holistic health care in hospitals, the community, and the world; holistic health care in rehabilitation settings; working with marginalized populations; and holistic health care and education for children. Many of these programs involve integrative psychology; the use of imagery; finding meaning in illness; exploring the role of spirituality in health and mental health; using meditation, prayer, and intention from a distance; doing yoga and yoga therapy; practicing qigong, tai chi, and other Eastern disciplines; exploring spiritual disciplines from different cultures; using rituals; exploring creativity and the arts; and learning stress management techniques (Serlin, 2007).

THE FUTURE OF MIND–BODY MEDICINE AND WPH

The cover story in a recent issue of the American Psychological Association’s Monitor on Psychology announced that “today’s psychologists are increasingly integrating complementary and alternative [mind/body] medicine techniques into their work with clients” (Barnett & Shale, 2013, pp. 48–56). Although mind–body medicine is ancient, the contemporary field is still young. Continued research, appropriate clinical applications, and motivated medical consumers will help the field make tremendous progress. The recognition of the role of humanistic psychology in mind–body medicine and WPH can greatly enhance the fields. We need to listen to the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. Health is fostered by healthy mind–body–spirit interactions. The future of medicine requires greater autonomy on the part of the patient. Medical costs and demands for medical care are taxing our medical systems. For the sake of patients, patients’ families, and the community, it is increasingly important that patients be in charge of their health care. This means that patients need to practice preventive health measures that include many of the mind–body medicine disciplines as part of their general lifestyle. When accidents or illnesses occur, patients need to be as knowledgeable as possible (Internet medical resources will play a key role) about their conditions and treatment/training options. They also need to participate fully in the development of treatment plans that include the appropriate blend of mind–body medicine. Mind–body medicine and WPH will be used at every step of the way throughout life. Through these means, patients will learn and grow with their improved health conditions and healthier lifestyles toward the fullest possible actualization of their potentials.

A growing number of psychologists are bringing complementary and alternative medicine techniques into the practice of psychology in private practice, in clinical settings, and in the community. There is an evolution in health care taking place, encouraged by technology, economic constraints, and consumer needs and motivations. For example, the Internet is enabling patients to become more informed about their health conditions. The Internet has made possible closer communication between patients/clients and care providers. In the coming years, the rapidly expanding findings from neuroscience will contribute greatly to humanistic psychology, mind–body medicine, and WPH.
REFERENCES


**CHAPTER 43**

**Romantic Love as a Path**

Tensions Between Erotic Desire and Security Needs

G. KENNETH BRADFORD

*Gamble everything for love if you’re a true human being.*

—Rumi (1994)

If one’s thoughts toward the Dharma
Were of the same intensity as those toward love,
One would become a Buddha
In this very life. (Sixth Dalai Lama; cited in Stevens, 1990)

Romantic love is one of the most emotionally charged, morally complex, and psychologically challenging issues of our time. More than almost anything, we long to be “in love” and to have our love relationships “work.” Romantic love promises a refuge from life’s loneliness and the fulfillment of personal happiness through the dream that such love will, paraphrasing the immortal words of Elvis Presley, “make my life complete... all my dreams fulfill.” At the same time, falling in love carries with it dire threats. The dread of being misunderstood, rejected, betrayed, engulfed, or casually ignored by a beloved can seem worse than death. As much as we want it, we commonly resist the slippage into romance and the vulnerability it brings, disparage it as “immature” love, and avoid its turbulent waters, choosing instead a safer and more placid course through life.

The profusion of romantic themes in film, literature, art, and music confirms our unremitting entanglement with love’s attractions and repulsions as well as its blessings and curses. We are compelled to make sense of love, to exult in it, to shudder and cringe because of it, to be swept away by it, to renounce it in an ascetic gesture, or to avoid it altogether, sweeping love itself away. However it is we respond to the draw of intimacy, sexuality, and the desire for
union, one thing is certain: There is no way around it. The allure of romance flickers as both an enduring predicament and a recurring opportunity of the human spirit.

Being in love, we are awakened to an other, an ecstatic otherness, and thereby to the larger vibrancy of life. Senses come alive, colors are more splendid, and the world becomes more inviting and less harsh. Joy and confidence abound as we are enlivened with a “lightness of being” and an expansiveness of spirit. Still more, a romantic wildfire may spread beyond the strictly personal to inspired expressions of poetry, artistic creation, or selfless acts of human kindness—to “the grandest cultural achievements,” as suggested by Freud (1912/1959, p. 216).

When a love relationship is going well, in addition to ecstatic flight, we are likely to feel a sense of contentment, tranquility, and security that “all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well” (Eliot, 1971, p. 59). The pacifying side of being in love brings with it the hope that this blissful state will endure. Before we know it, we begin to make plans for the continuation of the relationship. Perhaps we begin to anticipate that we will see each other more often or at least with some predictable regularity. Or we might imagine how we will move in together and perhaps buy a house or even get married. It is natural to imagine more developed scenarios, such as having children and a family, traveling to special or exotic places, or perhaps retiring together in a comfortable companionship. Along with romantic attraction comes the idyllic hope that this marvelous relationship will attain a type of permanence and so complete our life in some substantial way. Being in love is not only about the joy of the heart and the bliss of sexual exchange; it is also about a deep longing for peace and contentment and for enduring domestic, material, and even spiritual security. As an arena in which we seek stable happiness and existential solace, the romantic urge reaches its completion as the beloved other joins us in feathering a safe cozy nest, in however particular way the lovers define it.

The mythic ideal of romantic love combines the unbound ecstasy of erotic desire with the happy satisfaction of security and dependability. Remarkably, we remain but dimly aware of the inherent conflicts in such a union. However “unromantic” it seems in the current cultural climate, we must recognize that the joyous heights of romance have a corresponding tragic depth. As the 12th-century Sufi poet Rumi (1994) put it,

Love comes with a knife, not some shy question, and not with fears for its reputation! (p. 27)

Witness how the overwhelming majority of the world’s great romances wind up darkly or at least contain a considerable degree of emotional anguish in the course of their unfolding. Tristan and Isult, Lancelot and Guinevere, Heloise and Abelard, Romeo and Juliet, Dr. Zhivago and Lara, and Scarlet and Rhett are just a few of the many famous lovers who experience love’s ecstatic flight accompanied by a painful descent of some type—that is, a collision with social forces or inner demons that tear them apart. It seems to be the case that the actual experience of falling and being in love brings with it the knife. Just as it makes our spirit soar, falling in love brings us to our knees and wounds us, and perhaps those around us, in ways that we have not bargained for.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND JOY

Rollo May (1981) pointed out that differences exist between happiness and joy that must be appreciated before any effort to combine them will be possible. Happiness tends toward a state of satis—the Latin root of
aggression ("getting") and possessiveness ("keeping") that are part of the desperate urgency we often feel to secure personal happiness and contentment in a love relationship. At the same time that we feed the hope that a relationship will satisfy our need for security, we also unwittingly feed corrosive anxieties and the fear of losing it. Love freely given and received thereby narrows into an anxious struggle to avoid possible loss. A relationship that feels like heaven can turn into a veritable hell.

It is not the longing for happiness in itself that is the problem. Indeed, the felt need for comfort and security is an inescapable part of our mammalian nature and parasympathetic nervous system. It is not longing that corrodes and frequently destroys relationships; rather, it is the rigid insistence on having things our own way and the fear that we will lose out that give way to a cloying and potentially destructive volatility. The drive to quench longing and attain a happy satisfaction for ourselves can dominate the desire to remain open to the other and to the possibility of renewed joy or deepened poignancy in our relationships. It is the compulsive striving for a particular self-satisfied outcome that is, as the Buddha taught, the essential cause of disappointment in love relationships and in neurotic suffering of all kinds.

The path of romantic love requires that the tension among the desires for ecstasy, release, and transcendence must be acknowledged—and lived—in conjunction with the equally strong needs for safety, satisfaction, and dependability. Even as our hearts pound to be taken higher, to break free of the narrow shells of the self and open tangerine style to the heavens, there is a profound longing for continuity and the earthy settledness of domesticity and psychological security. It turns out not to be enough to simply love and be loved by the other. We also tend to look to that person to meet several of
our material and emotional needs, whether or not we admit that to our lover or even to ourselves. Needs that solidify into hopes, calcify into agendas, and become armed as demands can cripple the exhilaration of love freely exchanged.

For example, the attachment that readily grows out of being in love can ignite feelings of possessiveness, jealousy, loathing, and hatred, which routinely lead to acts of violence toward others. From classical literature to this week's television fare, we witness how the loss of love or unrequited love can drive a frustrated lover to acts of aggression—from petty acts of bickering or angry withdrawal to insulting acts of verbal abuse or sexual harassment, to more serious acts of physical violence, or even to the atrocities of aggravated assault, rape, and murder.

In addition, it is all too clear that disappointments in love turn us against ourselves, shake our self-esteem, and evoke feelings of hopelessness, meaninglessness, and self-pity, including fits of anxiety and deep despair. When love does not work out, we might believe that there is something substantially missing or wrong with ourselves. This can cause us to retreat from life and to engage in harsh self-criticisms, reckless acts, or even suicide (witness the desperate example of Romeo and Juliet).

To come to a better understanding of the tensions between erotic desire and security needs, we must consider the historic assumptions from the age of chivalry that form and inform our ideas of romance and commitment.

THE KNIGHT AND THE LADY: FOUR MARKS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Whereas romantic enchantment may be a potentiality for any human in any culture, the relationship of romantic love as an ideal for marriage, and the romantic couple as the ideal imago to which any couple might aspire (and indeed is compelled to aspire), is a peculiarly Western phenomenon. The roots of this ideal and its compelling hold on the Western psyche date from the Middle Ages and come from a spiritual sanction that is now only dimly recognized and most gravely misunderstood. The price of our misunderstanding has been a steady degradation of the true meaning and challenge of romantic love, resulting in considerable confusion and personal misery. Having lost touch with the original purpose of romantic love, we are often discouraged by what seems to be the futility of love affairs. However, once romance as a spiritual path is properly understood and the discipline it demands is rediscovered, love's futility transforms into opportunity.

Contemporary romance is based on the cult of courtly love that emerged in 12th-century Europe. The essential motif of this relationship has a knight, such as Sir Lancelot, and a lady, such as Queen Guinevere, who fall for each other. This is no ordinary couple, and what they share is no ordinary love. The knight is in actuality wearing a shining armor. Widely revered and respected, he is a virile warrior of exceptional bravery and selflessness, and exemplary moral character. The lady's beauty is ravishing, her demeanor is kind and generous, and she rules with innocence, dignity, and grace. She is widely beloved and admired. Everything about the couple is "so-o-o romantic"—simply extraordinary. Each partner is just perfect or as close to perfection as imagination allows while still remaining human.

So the first mark of romantic love is that we fall for an idealized other. We see what is best in the beloved, at least to our eyes, and fall for those marvelous qualities. At the same time, we see ourselves as the beloved reflected through the eyes of the other, and thereby, our own better qualities are evoked. Self-confidence, patience, attentiveness, joyfulness, generosity, vivacity, and good humor
arise effortlessly. In being loved, we become lovable, desirable, and somehow special. We appear to the other, and thereby to ourselves, at our absolute best.

Not only is each beloved somehow ideal, but the love that dawns between lovers also is of an ideal sort, defining love's second mark. Romantic love is unconditional—that is, free of self-centered agendas that would use the beloved to meet one's own emotional needs and social or economic aspirations. Knight and lady typically are already spoken for, perhaps married to other people and with families and domestic situations of their own. Because they already have some degree of material and emotional security, they place no utilitarian or territorial demands on the relationship. By making no claims on the other, knight and lady bestow on each other the greatest gift in their power to give, and thereby, the essence of "true love" is revealed, marking the third characteristic of authentic romance: delight in the freedom and uniqueness of the other.

As the poet Paz wrote, "Love is the revelation of the other person's freedom" (cited in Kernberg, 1995, p. 44). Whereas simple lust seeks possession of a sexual object to satisfy itself, true love recognizes the other to be an autonomous free subject with his or her own desires. The recognition of the otherness of the other is a victory of love that "creates the transition from the erotic object to the beloved person" (p. 44). It is an autonomous person who has the freedom to return one's love or not. The courtly lover might be delighted to find that the beloved returns his love, yet he delights still more in her freedom to choose to do so. Even if a beloved should decline one's advances, the courtly lover still is bidden to delight in the freedom and uniqueness that choice reveals. Such a nonpossessive attitude, which may entail numerous trials of relinquishment and pains of personal loss, is not easy to sustain. It is an attitude adopted and strengthened through engaging in various courtly disciplines such as self-restraint and generosity (caritas) of spirit.

The fourth mark that distinguishes romantic love is its nature as a transcendental discipline to be engaged in as a decidedly unconventional relationship and unbound by the usual norms and mores of society. For example, the spiritual nature of true love was seen in the medieval court as independent from and incompatible with marriage. Whereas marriage is certified by the conventions of civil or institutional religious authority, true love is convened by a spiritual authority, one that transcends conventional social contracts. The romantic law of the heart was seen as different from and superior to the common law of societal regulation. A famous judgment delivered by a court of the Countess of Champagne in 1174 made this clear:

Love cannot extend its rights over two married persons. For indeed, lovers grant one another all things mutually and freely, without being impelled by any motive of necessity, whereas husband and wife are held by their duty to submit their will to each other. May this judgment, which we have delivered with extreme caution and after consulting with a great number of other ladies, be for you a constant and unassailable truth.

(Cited in DeRougemont, 1956, p. 34)

Marriage is the most fundamental social unit on which the family, clan, and all other social groupings depend. It is a cornerstone of the society that convenes it and that it functions to serve and conserve. A fundamentally conservative institution, marriage typically binds the wills of husband and wife to the deployment of those duties defined by sociocultural necessity that function in the service of security arrangements, be they of a material, emotional, or financial nature. True love cannot be "impelled by any motive
of necessity”; rather, it is an exercise in unconditional freedom. In this way, true love is bound by its unique purposes, obeys its own laws, and follows its own morality. It cannot be subsumed under conventional roles, privileges, or obligations without losing its singular integrity.

Today, we ask that marriage bridge a gap that was seen as unbridgeable eight centuries ago. Following from the political and social revolutions of the past 200 years, we ask marriage both to fulfill the necessary conventions of the social order and to serve as a relationship of spiritual awakening governed by principles that diverge from that order. This paradox is the principal source of our confusion and the inevitable disappointments in both married life and nonmarital love affairs. Whereas it is a reasonable expectation that a committed relationship should meet some of our basic security needs, we do not always appreciate that it is in the nature of romantic love to break free from such necessities so as to serve a transcendental purpose. Thus, there is an underappreciated conflict at the core of committed (marital) relationships based on a lack of understanding of the actual demands that true love makes on us.

THE PRICE OF LOVE

Genuine romantic love serves not to meet our personal needs: It functions less to satisfy passion than to be inspired by it and purified through it. In its ideal form, the courtly love relationship was to remain chaste as the erotic energy between lovers was sublimated into heightened cultural or spiritual pursuits. Being in love inspires the knight in particular to deeds of greatness, including the slaying of evil dragons and the undertaking of profound quests. Less is known of how the lady sublimated her desire, although her ardent participation in chivalrous “courtesy” at times found expression in the composing of erotic poetry (e.g., Bly, 1995, p. 142). The crucial point is that knight and lady are not bound to each other by the institutions of marriage and family and the security arrangements that these forms provide; rather, their bond is based on a commitment to eros itself and the commands that eros might make of them. The Indian poetess Mirabai was so bound:

I was going to the river for water, the gold pitcher balanced with care upon my head, and Love’s knife entered my heart. Now God has bound me tightly with that fine thread, he takes me wherever he will. (Cited in Bly, 1995, p. 187)

In these lines, Mirabai acknowledges the power of love and submits to its call, not to achieve a life of security in a snug home but rather to be led by God on an unforeseen path.

To follow the path of love, it is necessary to willingly open ourselves to love’s ecstasy and to be held in its mysterious thrall. Although we may tell ourselves and genuinely feel that it is love that we hunger for, to actually submit to the enchantment of the other can be a bewildering and terrifying experience that is often averted. Being in love can shatter our composure. Knees go weak, words are hard to find, and we can feel exposed, silly, intoxicated, or in other ways “not ourselves.” Of course, such rending also may be an ecstatic release, but the price of ecstasy is the breaking open of the safe, familiar, habitual self to which we have become accustomed. The self here should be understood as the protective covering, the self-image or persona, that insulates us from a more naked encounter with the otherness of the world. The cracking of the ego shell is no light matter, and it is commonplace
for us to prefer to “live a quiet life of despera-
tion” than to risk the threat of an emotional
upheaval. Acquiescing to a long-term rela-
tionship that is without passion or in which
passion has become blunted and sexual con-
tact has become routine is not an uncom-
on occurrence, where one or both partners
manage to establish a sense of personal
at the expense of ecstatic aliveness. Of
course, avoiding the turbulences of love
either by avoiding intimate relationships
altogether or by engaging in serial superfi-
cial sexual relationships also enables us to
maintain an insulated, ego-bound existence.

Whereas the price of avoiding love is
the living of a life haunted by that which
remains unlived, the price of giving in to
love is, to some degree, the loss of one’s illu-
sions about oneself and one’s world. Love’s
knife penetrates the illusion that our “I” is
the center of the world, ushering us into an
increasingly unpredictable, insecure, and
selfless existence, one to be lived in the full-
ness of mortal actuality. Fantasies of perma-
nence and self-centered security give way to
a life lived with greater awareness of the
transient, interrelated nature of things and
the blissful and poignant subtleties of being
human. Eros serves to heighten the capacity
of lovers to be more sensitive and responsi-
ble both to each other and to the world. As
Saint Augustine put it, “Eros . . . is the
power that drives men to God” (cited in
May, 1969, p. 72). Through submitting to
the ecstasies and undergoing the trials of
romance, the ego is decentered, and this is
both the price and the gift of love’s quicken-
ing. “[You] discover that you are not master
in your own house . . . and there are spooks
about that play havoc with your realities,
and that is the end of your monarchy”
(Jung, 1996, p. 54).

“Falling” in love means that we lose our
footing. Our habitual self-conscious atti-
tude slips as we are slipped up into a less
defined, more numinous manner of being in
the world. We fall into the joys of love and
into our as yet unlived life, which includes
“spooky” unintegrated impulses and con-
flicts. Passionate intimacy penetrates sup-
ferciality and cleaves through the insulating
layers of self-image, laying bare the core of
our subjectivity. In love and naked to the
other, and thereby to ourselves, all types
of fear, possessiveness, exhilaration, and
unreasonable longings are evoked. What has
been hidden is exposed, and what has lain
dormant is aroused. The trials of chivalry
symbolically describe this situation. A state
of heightened awareness, being in love can
undercut the egocentric attitude, thereby
awakening slumbering dragons and beck-
oning inner quests. Unreasonable moods,
aspirations, demands, jealousies, hatreds,
confusion, and whatever other emotional
knots of the past lie unresolved in our heart
are evoked, and we are compelled to address
this undigested life.

Although courtly lore depicts the knight
as the member of the courtly couple who
confronts dragons and undertakes quests, we
must not let the gender of the knight distract
us. The psychological evocations and inner
ordeals of intense love occur to woman and
man alike, and the self-discipline and gentle-
ness required by the code of chivalry chal-
lenge lovers of either gender. Trials on the
path of love enable both knight and lady to
more fully embody the chivalric ideal of the
“gentleman” or “gentlewoman.”

GENTLENESS AND SELF-DISCIPLINE

Because the simple act of falling in love
involves little or no effort and might even feel
like an act of grace, we naively assume that a
lasting love should likewise be easy. Yet poets
and sages of many ages knew different. Rilke
(1975) stridently declared, “For one human
being to love another: that is perhaps the
most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate,
the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but preparation” (p. 31). Fromm (1956) further suggested that this ultimate task is an art that must be learned and practiced so as to develop “mastery” in it. The working of such an art takes more than “just a strong feeling” (p. 47); it takes a decisive commitment and resolve to face oneself, especially one’s inability to love more fully. Specifically, “the main condition for the achievement of love is the overcoming of one’s narcissism” (p. 99).

The “gentleperson” is someone who has subdued, or is on the path of subduing, those possessive, aggressive, and destructive impulses that are rooted in self-interest alone. Becoming “gentle” is not to be understood as becoming passive or “nice” or as avoiding confrontation. It also does not refer to a specifically female attribute, as in the “gentle sex.” To be a knight or lady in the chivalrous sense is to become increasingly sensitive (gentle) to the actual condition of oneself, the other, and the living situation of the moment. Through settling into the situation as it is rather than seeking some form of escape, we invariably come up against those aspects of ourselves that have been disowned or unrecognized. Allowing ourselves to be opened by a difficult or appealing life situation challenges the small-minded attitudes and self-limiting beliefs we hold about who we think we are, who we think the other is, and what we think we “need” in life in general and in a love relationship in particular.

Taming impulsivities and regaining self-composure is an important discipline, valuable in itself and invaluable as a foundation for the increased deepening of love. Certainly, relationships become more satisfying when conflictual issues are resolved; contented relationships are, after all, a worthy ideal for committed relationships in general and for married couples in particular. But for lovers on the mystical path of romance, pacifying the passions alone is not the final goal. It is only one leg of genuine romantic practice. The other leg is a lightning rod. Longing, and the tension it brings, must remain vibrant and alive for a relationship to be romantic.

The path of romance suggests that true love flourishes when the two apparently contradictory impulses of erotic desire and need satisfaction remain intertwined but not necessarily resolved. The longing for union with the beloved must be released to its full flame while the insistence on satisfying that desire is relinquished. Toward this end, lovers of authentic romance deliberately submit to practices of sustaining longing. Rumi (1994) put it succinctly:

Longing is the core of mystery.
Longing itself brings the cure.
The only rule is, Suffer the pain.
Your desire must be disciplined, and what you want to happen in time, sacrificed. (p. 72)

This path of the heart invites us to willingly and fully long for our heart’s desire while at the same time abandoning our insistence that things turn out the way we want. Longing may emerge from a sense of inner lack as we seek in the other that which we need to make ourselves feel complete and our life secure. We commonly experience a strong enough desire for material comfort or sexual release, but we have a still deeper and more subtle longing for spiritual union and psychological wholeness. The romantic lover deliberately cultivates this more subtle longing, which is not distinct from our grosser desires but rather is essential to them.

Our undisciplined desire seeks to possess that other who we think can put an end to the ache of our longing. We think that to “have” the beloved other will complete us, extinguish our loneliness, and thereby pacify our inner ache of separateness. Indeed, delicious hours spent in the company of the
Romantic Love as a Path: Tensions Between Erotic Desire and Security Needs

The heart naturally opens, while the desire to admire and care for the world spontaneously eclipses the need to be adored and taken care of by the world. The sense of not having enough, and so insisting that others fulfill us, gives way to the experience of already being saturated with sensitivity, gratitude, and compassion. The inner emptiness that we might want filled up by a special someone turns out to be a space of genuine freedom, revealing an inherent vitality and wholeness. The Zen master Sengai brings home this point:

Falling in love is dangerous,
For passion is the source of illusion;
Yet being in love gives life flavor,
And passions themselves
Can bring one to enlightenment.
(Cited in Stevens, 1990, p. 108)

Because the way to awakening is found by releasing self-centered demands, these very demands are essential to the path of love. Without the aggressive passions to possess, dominate, manipulate, evade, or ignore the other, there would be nothing to release. And without a gnawing sense of incompleteness, and thereby “neediness,” there would be no desire to be completed through being in an intimate love relation. The pain of relationship is not bad news for anyone on this path; neither is it indicative of a lesser or mistaken path. Emotional conflicts are the juice of the journey. As the Vajrayana Buddhist master Chogyam Trungpa (1973) declared, “There’s no enlightenment without confusion” (p. 32). Through longing for our deepest desires, we lay bare our deepest attachments, most dreaded fears, and most hidden hypocrisies.

As the grip of personal grasping for or against something is brought into awareness and loosened, we are released into a more...
essential gratis and satis. Gratification unbound from rigid self-interest blossoms into the feeling of gratitude. We not only become grateful for having a particular need met but also can feel grateful for being part of the vibrancy of life itself and for being opened and made more sensitive by and through this liveliness. Satisfaction so freed may come to be enjoyed as the feeling of being saturated with joy, contentment, and belonging. The beloved may or may not return our love and may or may not gratify us in the way we want. The freedom of the other and the unpredictability of otherness elude our control and return us again and again to an intrinsic emptiness. With this, a type of sadness may be experienced (Trungpa, 1988), exposing the fundamental gentleness and permeability of the human heart. Through accepting love as an art or spiritual discipline, we may come to see that our “completion” lies beyond “us” and our ideas of how it ought to be. The narrowness of our sense of personal deprivation, and thereby our insistence on being completed by an other, gives way to a wider awareness and appreciation of our essential relatedness to the otherness of the world.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COURTLY LOVE AND TANTRA

Although chivalry provides a general view of love as a path of spiritual transformation, it does not present a coherent set of practices to guide and facilitate the process. It might be that there never was a systematic praxis to courtly love, but in any case, we are left today with only the sketchiest of outlines regarding what practices a courtly lover might undertake to make romantic love an authentic spiritual path. One practice that has endured the ravages of time directs a courtly couple to lie naked in bed and spend the night together without making love (DeRougemont, 1956, pp. 349–351). The lovers are to resist the temptation to “have” each other, even as their desire rises to a fever pitch. Through sustaining the intensity of the longing provoked in this way, the lovers might develop their capacity to tolerate passionate longing.

This type of erotic practice is reminiscent of some aspects of Tantrism, which is not surprising given that it is thought that the tradition of courtly love was imported into Europe from India (DeRougemont, 1956). Still, what developed as chivalry in 12th-century Europe is a far cry from what has been recognizable as the tantric spiritual disciplines of Asia. As might be expected, during the course of such an epic journey, tantra was uprooted from its cultural, philosophical, and religious contexts, and its subtleties probably did not survive the journey intact. Certainly, the medieval European psyche was ill prepared to understand Asian spiritual disciplines in general and the radical tantric principles in particular. In addition, it is widely recognized—in Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu traditions alike—that tantric yoga involves advanced practices that require significant meditative preparation in addition to personal instruction from a qualified master (guru). Although it is plausible that knowledge of tantra was carried from India to Europe during the 12th century, there is no record I am aware of indicating that any tantric master made such a journey. Thus, it is not surprising that elements of medieval romance, although retaining a distinct resemblance to tantra, contain only remnants of the principles and practices specific to Tantrism. In any case, whatever tantric/courtly practices that might have existed during the Middle Ages have largely eroded during the intervening centuries and are virtually lost to us today. Even the general suggestion that romance places demands on lovers to be involved in a discipline strikes us as rather odd.
The spiritual potency of chivalry has been reduced to elements of conventional social etiquette. Behaving with civility, politeness, and good manners, which are examples of honoring the specialness of the other, still are bare echoes of what once might have been a rigorous transcendent discipline. We are left with only a vague understanding that it is within the power of erotic love to lead men and women to God and even less understanding of how to address the rigors encountered on such a path. Instead of cultivating a love whose aim is to renounce self-centeredness while practicing gentleness and self-discipline, we are left with a romanticism that has as its dominant goal the finding of emotional and material happiness by finding an ideal mate so as to get one’s needs met. This is virtually the opposite of the original focus of courtly love, which aimed not at self-satisfaction but rather at self-transcendence. Therefore, we must reconsider and reimagine what the practice of true love would be. Thus, a consideration of the fundamental orientation of tantra invites our attention.

Both the principles and the praxis of tantra are highly developed, involving a number of yogic and meditative disciplines for training the mind, focusing the energy (prana [Sanskrit] or chi [Chinese]), and relaxing the body. It might be added that these practices typically involve extensive solitary training. Contrary to popular belief, practicing with a sexual consort and working intimately within an erotic relationship is something reserved for those who either already are well trained or have the requisite capacity for being able to handle the intensity of such a relationship.

In Tantrism, the phenomenon of eros is understood as kundalini, a concentrated force of prana that, when not dissipated in mindless distraction, can be aroused to awaken psychic centers, or chakras, thereby dissolving psychic blockages and increasing awareness and bliss. In the tantric relationship, lovers—yogis and yoginis—are bidden to see in their beloveds the embodiment of the divine. In both tantra and the romantic tradition, the beloved other is seen as an emanation of divinity. The passion aroused toward this blessed other is nothing less than the ecstatic love of God or, in Buddhist terms, “releasement” into the open presence of being (sunyata) and its intrinsic cognizance (rig-pa).

During the past 20 to 30 years, tantra has become popularized in our culture as a sort of sexual enhancement technology. The emphasis of this popular focus draws on specific yogic techniques aimed at prolonging and intensifying sexual pleasure. Although the benefits of having “better sex” through controlling ejaculation or developing an increased capacity for enjoying and tolerating sexual tension might be considerable, they only scratch the surface of the power of tantric yoga to awaken latent spiritual capacities. As the kundalini ascends the spine during yogic practices, it ignites the chakras, which release neurohormonal secretions, often accompanied by great bliss, profound clarity, and pervasive peacefulness. Sovatsky (1998) spoke of kundalini-based psychic awakenings as “postgenital puberties” that inaugurate maturational leaps as the kundalini travels from chakra to chakra. He contended that each chakra-awakening puberty is of an experiential magnitude comparable with that of the genital puberty occurring during adolescence.

Western psychology and religion, for the most part, have remained ignorant of the vast psychic potentialities that lie dormant in our human nervous system and that can be activated through erotic encounter. The capability of anyone to not merely “believe” in God but to actually be ignited in God is a possibility typically reserved for mystics, musicians, artists, and lovers. Tantric practice reminds us that our potentiality for being more fully human is far greater than
we think and that the recognition of our Buddha nature, freed from pettiness, arrogance, and narcissistic foolishness, is well within reach. We need only practice with diligence disciplines that train our distractible mind and open our insensitive heart. Tantric yoga of both Hindu and Buddhist traditions provides many methods for such training. However, neither tradition has developed specific intersubjective psychological methods pertinent to what we would recognize today, and cannot avoid recognizing, as the personal relationship aspects of such intimate practices. It is up to contemporary psychological explorers on the path of love, perhaps informed by the sensibilities of the courtly tradition, to integrate the profound, clear teachings of Asian tantra into transcendentally focused love relationships of the 21st century.

It may be argued that I am overstating the case and that many love affairs do not turn out tragically and might just as well turn out “happily ever after.” There is much literature, including Shakespeare’s *The Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as well as the legion of contemporary romance novels and Hollywood romantic comedies, with happy endings, with each lover satisfied in the arms of the beloved. Yet, as a test and an exaltation of romantic love, such an “ending” is, as Eliot reminds us, only the “beginning” of the committed relationship. In most “happily-ending” stories, the couple, perhaps against great odds, might get together, but only after coming together do the two begin to face the actual challenges of living with each other and unconditionally loving each other, the outcome of which remains unwritten.

The idyllic fantasy of living “happily ever after” reveals not the path but rather the myth of romantic love. It is this “oh so romantic” myth that distracts us from the true challenge at hand and gives rise to the accurate understanding that romance is an “impossible love” in that it refuses to accord with the idealized fantasy of uninterrupted contentment. Deep love typically does not make life easier; rather, it usually makes it far more difficult. As things do not turn out as we hope, we might find ourselves discouraged, disappointed, and no longer in love. This is a sure sign that we are caught in a passive myth of romance. The way in which to break free from love’s myth is to engage love as a path, that is, to open more fully to the tensions—both gross and subtle—of intimate relationship, permitting oneself to be stretched in the process.

It is only as a path, or discipline, that love can be “true” in the ecstatic sense intended when we say “true love.” Mitchell (1997) put it the following way:

> Authentic romance, in contrast to its degraded forms, is not split off from a
longing for security and predictability but is in a continual dialectical relationship with it. Authentic romance cannot arise where there is a willed, contrived separation between safety and desire, just as authentic spirituality cannot emerge in the context of a willed, contrived separation between the sacred and the profane. (p. 40)

The willingness to be in love and to rejoice in the freedom of the other, while simultaneously permitting the emergence of self-centered needs, desires, and impulses, creates the crucible within which to realize the nature of a love that is true and whole. Without splitting security needs from erotic desire or numbing one in favor of the other, we are left in a state of exquisite agony, longing for a completeness that is beyond the power of our will alone to produce. In surrendering to the tensions that remain unresolved in our hearts, we open simultaneously to the other and ourselves, and in those very moments, we are released from the inner dividedness through which we feel estranged from the world and incomplete as we are.

It is not merely by tolerating inner and interpersonal tensions but rather by embracing them wholeheartedly that love becomes a path. As Welwood (1996) put it, the lover’s choice is “to turn toward our true nature or away from it, to live in accord with the soul’s desire to awaken or with the ego’s tendency to remain entrenched behind its defenses” (p. 96). To open our hearts and minds to what we lack or suffer and so long for is the secret and true essence of romantic love. The willingness to long for our hearts’ desire while relaxing the insistence that things turn out in some preconceived way—and to thereby be stretched beyond reason—is in itself the essence of the path of true love. Egotism is thinned as the capacity for selflessness expands.

As the Buddha taught, intentions and actions based on clinging and emotional impulsivities only deepen our confused entanglement in the world. Getting caught up in power struggles, infatuations, and animosities is exhausting and frustrating. Of all the passions, sexual passion is commonly recognized as the most powerful and entangling one. Following a path of renunciation, monks and nuns routinely take vows of celibacy so as to avoid sexual temptation and its inevitable entanglements. By contrast, the genuine path of the romantic is one of transformation, where one embraces passion, confusion, and love’s tensions as liberating opportunities. Self-centered tendencies that have remained dormant are evoked through the intense emotional stimulation of erotic intimacy. Once evoked, a lover is in a position to relate to the psychological tensions or conflicts that have arisen and to release them with awareness.

In releasing our preconceptions, limiting beliefs, and petty hold on the other and ourselves, and in allowing ourselves to be moved and claimed by an otherness that returns us to who we most essentially are, a variety of liberated and liberating qualities emerge. With the collapse of our inner dividedness, joyfulness, gratitude, forgiveness, clarity, happiness, and compassion emerge spontaneously. These and other intrinsic qualities of human wakefulness are born from the freedom that comes with being truly in love and loving truly, wholeheartedly, and without reserve. Any conditional love has some remnant of bondage in it as some claim or demand is placed on the relationship. Romantic love, properly understood, is a relationship for releasing the bonds we have placed—perhaps inadvertently—on ourselves and others and for opening, or reopening, ourselves to the unconditioned tremulous wonderment of being. An inspired retranslation of Psalm 1 poignantly describes the liberated qualities of the true romantic, who succeeds in releasing the self-centeredness of possessive love for the selflessness of a love that is increasingly unconditional.
Blessed are the man and the woman who have grown beyond their greed and have put an end to their hatred and no longer nourish illusions. But they delight in the way things are and keep their hearts open, day and night. (Cited in Mitchell, 1989, p. 5)

NOTE

1. Whereas the titles of these books reflect our cultural desperation with “getting” and “keeping” love, their contents contain much valuable and sage advice for curtailing power struggles and deepening intimate relationships in ways that can lessen relational aggression and possessiveness.

REFERENCES

humanistic psychology has no manifesto and, therefore, no official position with regard to spirituality. For more than 40 years, the humanistic movement has provided an open arena for discussions about spirituality, refusing to institutionalize any particular point of view. In my opinion, this open attitude is one of the movement’s greatest contributions to the study of spirituality. This chapter, despite its appearance in a humanistic psychology handbook, is not intended to be a statement of humanistic psychology’s position on the topic. Rather, it is simply my personal contribution to these ongoing discussions.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE HUMANISTIC MOVEMENT

Importance of Spirituality

Spirituality always has been an important topic in the humanistic psychology movement. Humanistic psychology writers have published numerous books on the subject, articles on spirituality frequently appear in the journals and newsletters of the movement, and spirituality is a common theme at professional conferences and other gatherings of humanistic psychologists. A recent survey by Elkins, Lipari, and Kozora (in press) provided empirical confirmation of this widespread interest. A 71-item questionnaire, which contained one section of items related to spirituality, was mailed to all 615 members of Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association (APA). Of the 230 members who completed and returned the questionnaire, 77% said that spirituality is “important” or “very important” in their lives. In addition, 75% said that they believe in some type of higher power or transcendent force, and 43% professed faith in a personal god. When asked to select the statement that best describes their spiritual orientation, 55% chose “I am spiritual but not religious” and 32% chose “I am both religious and spiritual.” Only 6% chose “I am neither religious nor spiritual.”
HUMANISTIC APPLICATIONS TO BROADER SETTINGS

Abraham Maslow and Spirituality

Abraham Maslow, whose writings helped to lay the theoretical foundations of the humanistic psychology movement, considered spirituality to be a major component of the humanistic vision. Instead of pathologizing religious needs, Maslow (1962) said, “The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion surrogate to live by and understand by, in about the same sense he needs sunlight, calcium, or love” (p. 206). Maslow (1976) also said, “Humanistic psychologists would probably consider a person sick or abnormal in an existential way if he were not concerned with these ‘religious questions’” (p. 18).

Maslow made a distinction between organized religion and personal spirituality. In Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences, Maslow (1976) stated his position as follows:

I want to demonstrate that spiritual values have naturalistic meaning, that they are not the exclusive possession of organized churches, that they do not need supernatural concepts to validate them, that they are well within the jurisdiction of a suitably enlarged science, and that, therefore, they are the general responsibility of all mankind. (p. 33)

Maslow was not opposed to organized religion per se, nor did he believe that a nontheistic view was the only viable philosophical perspective. In fact, Maslow (1976) said that the “essential core-religious experience may be embedded in either a theistic, supernatural context or a nontheistic context” (p. 28). Nevertheless, he viewed spirituality as a universal human phenomenon that did not belong exclusively to any church or religious group. By emphasizing its human character, Maslow placed spirituality in the domain of the human sciences, where it could be studied naturalistically.

For Maslow, spirituality was intimately connected with “peak experiences” or mystical encounters characterized by feelings of intense awe, reverence, bliss, and ecstasy. He believed that religion had its origin in such mystical experiences. Maslow (1976) wrote, “The intrinsic core, the essence, the universal nucleus of every known high religion . . . has been the private, lonely, personal illumination, revelation, or ecstasy of some acutely sensitive prophet or seer” (p. 19). However, as Maslow pointed out, this mystical vision tends to become institutionalized as the prophet’s followers codify the teachings and standardize the religious practices. Ironically, orthodox religion may then suppress those claiming direct religious experiences. As Maslow put it, “Conventional religions may even be used as defenses against and resistances to the shaking experiences of transcendence” (p. 33).

Maslow believed that peak experiences, although universal, always are interpreted within the framework of a particular cultural or personal belief system. For example, a Christian will describe the experience using the language and symbols of Christianity, a Hindu will use Hindu terms and symbols, and a Buddhist will use the language of that tradition. An individual who does not subscribe to any religious system may use psychological or neurological models to explain the experience. So, whereas peak experiences constitute the universal core of religion, these experiences always are dressed in the symbolic and linguistic clothing of a particular time, place, culture, and belief system.

Maslow believed that peak experiences transport us out of ordinary consciousness into a higher dimension of being, providing us with glimpses of a transcendent reality and allowing us to touch ultimate values such as truth, beauty, goodness, and love, which Maslow called “being-values.” Mystical moments give us a taste of what it would be like to live at the highest level.
of actualization. The poet William Blake (1977) said, “If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite” (p. 188). This is the way things look in the realm of being.

Maslow viewed peak experiences as an important component of psychological health. In his psychological theory, he divided human needs into basic needs and higher needs. Basic needs have to do with our physical survival and include our need for food, shelter, security, and social connections. Higher needs have to do with being-values, including our need for truth, beauty, goodness, and love. If deprived of these higher values, we tend to fall into what Maslow called metapathology, a pathology that is a direct result of deprivation at the spiritual level. The best cure for this malady is renewed contact with the realm of being, to which peak experiences are the “royal road.” Although Maslow recognized that we cannot have peak experiences at will, he nevertheless believed that it was possible to learn what he called “being-cognition.” Being-cognition is the capacity to open one’s heart to the sanctity of everyday experiences or to view one’s mate, children, friends, and daily life under the aspect of eternity.

**Transpersonal Psychology**

The emergence of transpersonal psychology is a major part of the history of the humanistic movement. In *Shadow Culture*, Taylor (1999) pointed out that from 1941 to 1969, humanistic psychology thrived as a respected alternative point of view within the academic community, but that during the late 1960s, the intellectual focus of the movement was overshadowed by the political and social ferment of that period and humanistic ideals were preempted by the counterculture. Taylor described what happened at that point:

Within this flood tide, between 1967 and 1969, humanistic psychology split into at least three parts. The first was transpersonal psychology, with its emphasis on spiritual practice, meditation, and higher states of consciousness. The second was experiential encounter, which emphasized emotional relationships, cultivation of sensory experience, and a greater awareness of the body. Finally, there was radical therapy, a catch-all term referring to the marriage of psychology and radical political action in such divergent areas as militant feminism, the antipsychiatry movement, critical thinking, and what has come to be called human science. (p. 274)

Taylor (1999) went on to say that the emergence of transpersonal psychology was due, in large measure, to the influence of Maslow, who was convinced that mystical states represented a new frontier for psychology. Anthony Sutich, the first editor of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, shared Maslow’s enthusiasm. According to Taylor, at a workshop at the Esalen Institute in 1966, the two friends became convinced that a major new thrust was needed in the humanistic movement, one that would focus on mystical states and spiritual values. In 1967, Maslow first announced the emergence of a “fourth force” in American psychology in a lecture he delivered in San Francisco for the Esalen Institute. In 1969, Sutich turned over the editorship of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* to Miles Vich and launched a new publication called the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. In the first issue, Sutich (1969) defined transpersonal psychology as

an emerging force in the psychology field by a group of psychologists and professional men and women from other fields who are interested in those ultimate human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place in positivistic or behavioristic theory (“first force”), classical
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domains given that it is a point of view that can be applied to various disciplines related to human behavior. Nevertheless, these three domains help organize the field of transpersonal psychology and provide a way in which to examine the contributions that have been made in each area.

As Hastings (1999) pointed out, humanistic psychologists tend to place transpersonal psychology under the general umbrella of humanistic psychology. By contrast, those associated with transpersonal psychology tend to view it as a distinctive fourth force and seek to have its independent status acknowledged. This disagreement took on a concrete form during the 1980s, when transpersonal psychologists sought to form a Transpersonal Psychology division in the APA. Rollo May, along with some other humanistic and existential psychologists, opposed the forming of the new division, arguing that the proper home for transpersonal psychologists was Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) of the APA. This issue came up again during the late 1990s, when some members of the Division 32 executive council suggested that the name of Division 32 be changed from Humanistic Psychology to Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. However, when Division 32 members were surveyed on this issue, 69% opposed the name change (Elkins et al., in press).

Humanistic and transpersonal thinkers also have had their share of disagreements in the theoretical arena. For example, Schneider (1987, 1989, 2004) raised concerns about transpersonal models that seem to imply that individuals struggling with humanistic and existential issues are at a lower level of spiritual development than those who are at the transpersonal level. Schneider disagreed with such hierarchical thinking and argued that such transpersonal theory is at risk of losing its earthly grounding in human experience. (For an example of this debate, see the

Sutich (1969) went on to describe this new movement as the fourth force in psychology and gave a long list of topics with which it was concerned. The list included things such as ultimate values, unitive consciousness, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, cosmic awareness, and the sacralization of everyday life. In 1971, Sutich organized the American Association of Transpersonal Psychology, later renamed the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. For the past 30 years, transpersonal thinkers such as Tart (1975a, 1975b, 1989), Wilber (1977, 1980, 1981, 1995, 1997), Vaughan (1979, 1986), Walsh (1990, 1995), and Washburn (1988) have made major contributions to our understanding of spirituality, demonstrating the relevance of the spiritual dimension to clinical theory and practice and to a fuller understanding of the human.

Frager (1989), acknowledging his debt to Hastings for the model, suggested that the field of transpersonal psychology can be divided into three major domains: “the psychology of personal development, the psychology of consciousness, and spiritual psychology” (p. 289). According to Frager, the psychology of personal development has to do with the theoretical formulations and practical applications of therapeutic approaches designed to promote individual growth; the psychology of consciousness is concerned with various states of consciousness, including meditation, dreams, drug states, and parapsychology; and spiritual psychology includes the study of the world’s religious traditions and the integration of spiritual knowledge into psychological theory. Frager emphasized that transpersonal psychology should not be limited to the content of these three

psychoanalytic theory (“second force”), or humanistic psychology (“third force”). (pp. 15–16)
Before turning to the more theoretical aspects of my views. I was born in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in northeastern Arkansas. This area of the country is part of the Bible Belt, and my family was very religious. As a young boy, I decided that I wanted to become a minister. After graduating from high school, I attended a church-related college near Little Rock, and in 1966, I was ordained a minister. Shortly thereafter, my young family and I moved to Flint, Michigan, where I became the minister of a church composed primarily of transplanted Southerners who had gone north to work in the automobile factories. My church was conservative, holding fundamentalist views on most Christian topics. As a result of my theological training and my own studies as a young minister, I began to question some of the conservative doctrines of my church. Eventually, I came into conflict with the leaders of my congregation. In 1968, I was fired and excommunicated by the board of elders of my congregation because of my “liberal” views. With my ministerial career at an end, I returned to graduate school to study psychology, eventually graduating with a PhD. This is where I first was exposed to humanistic and existential psychology. Viktor Frankl was one of my doctoral professors.

After being expelled as a minister, I was wary of organized religion and sometimes thought that my spiritual life had come to an end. Then, in 1976, I went into therapy with a Jungian analyst, who helped me see that religion and spirituality are not the same. Serving as my spiritual mentor, this elderly gentleman showed me how to nourish my soul and develop my spiritual life outside the walls of traditional religion. The seeds that were planted during that therapy experience, cultivated by my own studies of spirituality during the past 20 years, now have grown into my own vision of spirituality.

MY PERSONAL STORY

Although I respect the work of transpersonal psychologists, my own approach to spirituality has been informed not so much by contemporary transpersonal thinkers as by individuals such as Otto (1923), Eliade (1959), James (1902), Tillich (1957), Buber (1970), Frankl (1963), Fromm (1950), Hillman (1975), Jung (1933, 1964), and Maslow (1962, 1971, 1976).

Because I believe that knowledge always is embedded in a personal context, I would like to describe my own spiritual journey...
AN ACCESSIBLE MODEL OF SPIRITUALITY

I am a clinician at heart, and my own theoretical work has focused on developing an accessible model of spirituality that can be used to show clients and others how to nourish their souls and develop their spiritual lives. My approach to spirituality comprises three major constructs: the soul, the sacred, and spirituality itself. I provide a brief discussion of the three constructs and show how they relate to one another. (For a more complete discussion of this model, see my book Beyond Religion [Elkins, 1998].)

The Soul

The word soul comes from the Old English word sawol or the Anglo-Saxon sawal, words that referred to the breath or life force. In Latin, the word for “soul” is anima; in Greek, it is psyche. It is not easy to define the word soul. As Hillman (1975) said, “The soul is immeasurably deep and can only be illumined by insights, flashes in a great cavern of incomprehension” (p. xvi). The word soul is not intended to point to a tangible reality.

Rather, soul is a construct or an abstract word that serves as an umbrella term for certain aspects of human experience, helping us identify and organize those experiences. As Moore (1992) said, “‘Soul’ is not a thing but [rather] a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance” (p. 5). Soul points to the mystical and imaginal dimensions of human experience. It has to do with awe, wonder, and reverence. These experiences can occur in almost any setting but seem especially associated with things such as music, literature, poetry, ceremony, symbol, religion, being in nature, intimate relationships, and other activities that open our hearts to the mystical, imaginal world. If individuals in all cultures look up in wonder and awe, then the word soul points to that within us that makes such experiences possible. The soul is that dimension of the human capable of being touched, stirred, and nourished by the sacred.

The Sacred

In The Idea of the Holy, Otto (1923) said that throughout history, humans have had encounters with the sacred. These encounters, mystical in nature, have a profound impact on those who experience them. Otto said that in these experiences, “the soul, held speechless, trembles inwardly to the farthest fiber of its being” (p. 17). Otto, who called these encounters “numinous” experiences, did a careful phenomenological analysis of their nature. He concluded that sacred experiences are characterized by various elements including a feeling of being overwhelmed, a sense of mystical awe, a feeling of fascination, and an experience of intense energy.

Eliade, who served as chair of the Department of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago for 17 years, built on Otto’s earlier work. He agreed with Otto that humans always have had encounters with the sacred. For these manifestations, he suggested the word hierophany, which literally means “something sacred shows itself to us.” In his classic work The Sacred and the Profane, Eliade (1959) defined the sacred as follows:

The sacred is equivalent to a power, and, in the last analysis, to reality. The sacred is saturated with being. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacy. The polarity sacred-profane is often expressed as an opposition between real and unreal or pseudo-real. . . . Thus, it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power. (pp. 12–13)
James also recognized the sacred dimension. His book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (James, 1902), is filled with examples of mystical encounters. Discussing the extension of the subconscious self, James (1902) wrote, “The further limits of our being plunge, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely understandable world. Name it the mystical region or the supernatural region, whichever you choose” (pp. 515–516).

**Spirituality**

The word *spirituality* comes from the Latin *spiritus*, which has to do with “breath” or the animating principle. Kurtz and Ketcham (1992), tracing the history of the word, pointed out that in ancient times it was used in contrast to materialism. Then, the word fell out of general use for 1,600 years. Today, in postmodern times, it has been revived and now often is used in contrast to religion. Thus, when humanistic psychologists and others say that they are “spiritual but not religious,” they are using the word in this contemporary sense. (See Weiner, 2010, for an overview of the rapidly rising population of spiritual seekers in the U.S. population.)

Most scholars have recognized a difference between religion and spirituality. For example, James (1902) divided religion into institutional and personal. Allport (1961) spoke of extrinsic and intrinsic religion, with extrinsic referring primarily to the public and institutional aspects of religion and intrinsic referring more to one’s personal devotion. Maslow (1976) made this same distinction, calling institutional religion “big R” religion and personal spirituality “little r” religion.

It is understandable that some continue to confuse religion and spirituality. For some 2,000 years of Western history, religion held a monopoly on spirituality, and the two were intertwined and almost inseparable. But in our day, this seems to be changing. Millions of people, recognizing that religion and spirituality are not the same, have left organized religion to pursue alternative spiritual paths. Roof (1994), a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, documented this trend. Roof surveyed 1,600 baby boomers and found that large numbers of this generation left organized religion during the 1960s and 1970s. Of those with religious backgrounds, 69% of mainline Protestants, 61% of conservative Protestants, 67% of Catholics, and 84% of Jews had dropped out. Although 25% of those who dropped out have since returned to church or temple, an estimated 32 million baby boomers show no signs of returning to organized religion. Yet many of these individuals have turned to Eastern religions, Twelve Step programs, New Age thinking, Native American traditions, Jungian psychology, transpersonal psychology, Greek mythology, shamanic practices, meditation, yoga, massage, and a host of other traditions and practices in an effort to nourish their spiritual lives. There is a growing recognition that religion and spirituality are not the same. The movement away from traditional religion to other forms of spirituality is one of the major sociological changes of our time.

Spirituality, because it manifests in so many different forms around the world, is difficult to define. I am well aware that some warn against looking for universal definitions. Yet it seems to me that in every culture humans look up in wonder and awe and that somewhere in this universal response to the mystery of existence there is common ground. Huxley (1945/1970) called this universal perspective the “perennial philosophy” that manifests in different forms across time and culture. In my book *Beyond Religion* (Elkins, 1998), I summarized my own views on spirituality as follows:

First: Spirituality is universal. By this, I mean that spirituality is available to every human being. It is not limited to
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described it through the centuries. The soul comes alive when it is nurtured by this sacred energy, and one's existence becomes infused with passion, power, and depth.

Sixth: The aim of spirituality is compassion. The word compassion literally means “to suffer with.” Spiritual life springs from the tenderness of the heart, and authentic spirituality expresses itself through loving action toward others. Compassion has always been the hallmark of authentic spirituality and the highest teaching of religion. Loveless spirituality is an oxymoron and an ontological impossibility. (pp. 32–33)

Spiritual Growth: Nourishing the Soul Through Sacred Experiences

These three constructs—the soul, the sacred, and spirituality—provide a foundation for an accessible model of spirituality. In essence, their dynamic relationship is this: When the soul is nourished through regular contact with the sacred, the result is spiritual growth or spirituality.

Spirituality is a process as well as a state of being in which our hearts open to the sacred dimension of life. We grow spiritually when our souls are nourished by sacred experiences. The term sacred experiences may sound a bit esoteric, perhaps conjuring up images of the mystics and their intense encounters with the holy. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that sacred experiences exist on a continuum of intensity, the lower end of which is accessible to all of us. In other words, ordinary people can have access to the sacred and its soul-nourishing power. The following diagram illustrates the different levels of intensity of sacred experiences:

| Poignant moments: low intensity | → | Peak experiences: average intensity | → | Mystical encounters: high intensity |
Poignant moments are the most common sacred experiences. These are not earthshaking events but rather everyday experiences that touch our hearts and nourish our souls. Perhaps one has been moved by the beauty of a sunset, by the stirring music of a symphony, or by the comforting touch of a friend. Such experiences are poignant moments, times when the sacred brushes against us. Poignant moments are small oases in the desert of our ordinary lives, times that refresh our souls and deepen our spiritual awareness. They often are characterized by feelings of gratitude, humility, and awe.

Peak experiences are more intense than poignant moments. Maslow used this term to apply to the entire range of mystical experiences, but I use it to refer to sacred experiences in the middle of the intensity continuum. Compared with poignant moments, peak experiences tend to affect us more strongly, touch our souls more deeply, and often produce significant changes in our lives. Yet peak experiences lack the overwhelming impact of full-blown mystical encounters. A graduate student told me about the following peak experience. When her baby was born, the doctor placed it gently on her stomach. She said that at that moment, she felt the most profound ecstasy she had ever known. For several minutes, her joy remained so intense that she was hardly aware of the others in the room. This experience had a profound impact on this young woman, and it remains one of her most precious memories.

Mystical encounters are the most powerful sacred experiences. They are characterized by overwhelming impact, sometimes leaving the individual psychologically disorganized for a period of time. Mystical encounters often are “border events” or calls to a new way of life. These are the events described by mystics, prophets, and seers. In fact, the world’s religious literature is filled with stories of such encounters. In Western religious literature, two of the most famous are the story of Moses and the burning bush and the conversion of the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. Although most of us never will experience the shattering intensity of a mystical encounter, we can learn to nourish our souls through poignant moments and perhaps even peak experiences.

**CLINICAL APPLICATIONS**

The preceding model is quite relevant to the clinical situation. We live in a time of spiritual disorientation, and many clients are spiritually hungry. For example, Frankl (1963) held that meaninglessness is the major existential problem of our time and believed that psychotherapy must address this spiritual issue. Fromm (1950) believed that care of the soul is an important part of psychological healing. Yalom (1980) wrote a comprehensive textbook demonstrating how pathology can rise from struggles with existential issues. The list could go on, but the point is this: Many respected psychologists and psychiatrists agree that psychopathology is not simply the result of problems in the mental and emotional sphere and that some problems are associated with the spiritual dimension.

If we wish to integrate a spiritual perspective into our therapeutic work, the following considerations are important. First, to be helpful to clients in the spiritual arena, the clinician must be in contact with his or her own soul. If we have not done our own spiritual work as therapists, then we will not be able to heal at the level of the soul. Thus, learning to nurture our own souls and develop our own spirituality is central to our work as therapists.

Second, while the therapist provides direct care of clients’ souls, it also is important for
clients to learn how to do this for themselves. In this sense, therapy is an apprenticeship in which clients learn how to care for their own spiritual lives. As we provide therapeutic guidance, it is important to remember that clients differ in terms of what nourishes them at the spiritual level. Some touch the sacred through music, literature, poetry, and other arts. Others find that daily meditation, journaling, and certain religious or spiritual practices nourish their souls. One of my clients, a woman in her 40s, loved to go camping in the desert. She said that the expanses of the desert and the brilliant night sky touched her at a spiritual level. Another client loved the theater and found that certain plays nourished his soul and gave him a new perspective on life. There are countless activities that can nourish and heal the soul. One of the major therapeutic tasks is to help the client discover those experiences that truly meet the spiritual needs of his or her own unique soul.

Third, once clients have identified activities that nourish them spiritually, it is important for them to begin a regular program of soul care. The word *program* might seem antithetical to spirituality, and it certainly is true that simply going through the motions of a program will not nourish the soul. On the other hand, when clients identify activities that truly nourish their souls and then engage in these experiences on a regular basis, the results can be highly beneficial. In this sense, I believe that clients need a regular program of spiritual development.

Fourth, spiritual interventions should not replace traditional psychotherapy. Although showing clients how to nourish their souls and care for their spiritual lives can be an important part of effective therapy, the therapist must remember that spirituality is only one dimension of clients’ lives. Other spheres must not be overlooked. For example, that which a client initially views as sacred and life altering might actually be a protective maneuver against pain or vulnerability. It generally is important, therefore, that the therapist neither discredit nor overly reassure clients about their initial spiritual perceptions; instead, the therapist should empower *them* (i.e., the clients themselves) to evaluate their meaning. Integrating spirituality into traditional therapeutic work can be highly effective, but using spiritual interventions to the neglect of other effective therapeutic approaches might prove to be ineffective and even dangerous to the welfare of clients. Thus, those of us who include a spiritual perspective in our work must proceed with humility and caution.

**CONCLUSION**

Spirituality always has been an integral part of humanistic psychology and will, no doubt, continue to generate interest as humanistic psychology moves into the future. In this chapter, I gave a brief overview of the topic from a historical perspective and provided a sketch of my own approach to spirituality in the clinical arena. My hope is that this chapter will be another verse in the ongoing poem of humanistic spirituality.

**REFERENCES**


Existential and transpersonal disciplines have similar concerns and much to offer to each other. Both emphasize a practical focus on those matters of deepest life importance, especially the causes and relief of suffering and what it means to live fully. As such, they pay particular attention to the fundamental nature of our human condition, the ways in which we fall short of our possibilities (especially through entrapment in social illusion), the problem of suffering, and how we can most fully and fundamentally respond to these issues.

In this chapter, I explore four topics that are centrally related to these issues:

- The idea that our usual human condition is in some way deficient, lacking, and imbued with suffering
- The seduction of conventionality (i.e., the herd or the consensus trance)
- The claim that our usual ways of living are somehow inauthentic or somnambulistic
- Strategies and responses for authenticity or awakening

In this chapter, I do not summarize the existential and transpersonal movements, nor do I provide the theoretical, phenomenological, contemplative, and experimental data underpinning them. Rather, I simply enunciate and compare their relevant principles and refer the reader to reviews of the two fields (some of the more readable ones include Barrett, 1958; Cooper, 1990; Vaughan, 1995a; Walsh, 1993; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 1981, 1995, 1996; Yalom, 1981).

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THE UNSATISFACTORINESS OF OUR USUAL HUMAN CONDITION

Both traditions recognize a bewildering ambiguity and unsatisfactoriness at the heart of everyday life. For Martin Heidegger, we are “thrown” into a situation of ambiguity and alienation, which for Karl Jaspers constitutes “the shipwreck” of our human condition—homeless in an alien world. There, we confront “boundary situations” of aloneness, meaningfulness, responsibility, and death (Yalom, 1981). Consequently, it is no surprise that existentialists claim that our underlying feeling tone is one of angst and that, as Nietzsche (1968) put it, “as deeply as man sees into life, he also sees into suffering” (p. 269).

The transpersonal perspective is in full agreement with the existentialists in acknowledging the pervasiveness of ambiguity and angst, and it suggests that the existentialists have made a profound and accurate diagnosis of the fundamental feeling tone of unenlightened existence. In fact, transpersonalists have much to learn from the sophisticated accounts that existentialists offer. The two schools differ, however, in their views of the origins of this unsatisfactoriness.

At the core of the transpersonal movement, one finds a consistent claim that we suffer from a case of mistaken identity. We see ourselves as “skin-encapsulated egos,” to use Alan Watts’s somewhat imprecise but picturesque term. This ego or self-sense is, just as the existentialists have argued, neither given nor fixed but rather partly chosen and constructed, not substantial and essential but rather illusory and (for transpersonalists) transcendable. Thus, both existentialists and transpersonalists agree that our usual views of the self are erroneous and that careful, systematic phenomenology and contemplation reveal these errors.

The two schools differ, however, in their understandings about the nature and necessity of the usual egoic self-sense and about the deeper nature of identity. Existentialists tend to assume that “every experience is ‘owned’ in that it can and must be attributed to an ‘I.’ In Kant’s terminology, each experience is accompanied by an ‘I think’” (Cooper, 1990, pp. 97–98).

Transpersonalists hold a different view based on contemplative experiences. They regard the view that “every experience is owned” as an example of what Buddhists call the “wrong view.” This is a common process in our usual state of consciousness, where imprecise awareness fails to recognize the ego constructive process and mistakenly assumes that there is some self to which experiences are occurring (Engler, 1993; Epstein, 1995).

With meditative training, however, awareness becomes more precise and sensitive, a classic claim now borne out by experimental testing (Shapiro & Walsh, 1984). Then, the ego constructive processes begin to be recognized and deconstructed, and the egoic separate self-sense begins to dissolve (Goldstein, 1983). A rapid flux of images, thoughts, and feelings is seen to underlie the assumption of a continuous ego (just as, through the process of flicker fusion, a series of movie frames appears to create continuous images). This recognition was made famous in the West by David Hume, who when looking for his self could discover “nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in a perpetual flux and movement” (Jones, 1969, p. 305). Likewise, in the East, the Buddha proclaimed the doctrine of anatta, or “no-self” (Collins, 1982).

The deeper self-senses that are uncovered during meditative training and maturation are said to be increasingly transpersonal—that is, extending beyond the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, the psyche, and the cosmos.
The identity that eventually is unveiled has been described variously as the self, mind, spirit, Geist, Atman, Tao, pure consciousness, sat-chit-ananda, Buddha nature, and true nature. This identity is said to be experienced as one with, or co-essential with, the ground of existence. These claims of a realizable transpersonal identity that is united with the “all” are, of course, central to the perennial philosophy—that common core of wisdom at the contemplative heart of the great religions (Huxley, 1944). What is crucial to recognize, however, is that these claims are not presented as tenets of faith or “mere metaphysics”; rather, they are reports of direct experiences that can, and should, be tested for oneself in meditation. The transpersonal movement has been described as a blending of perennial philosophy and contemporary knowledge, and it is deeply committed to the testing of these and other claims through all appropriate phenomenological, contemplative, intellectual, and scientific means.

In light of these ideas about our usual egoic self-sense and our underlying transpersonal identity, both perennial philosophers and contemporary transpersonalists suggest that our usual condition is one of profound self-alienation (Wilber, 1995). Not surprisingly, transpersonal theorists suggest that this self-alienation is central to understanding our condition and suffering and that growth and awakening to our deeper identity can relieve us of much of our angst, alienation, and Atman project.

**The Atman Project**

Much of our individual and collective self-inflicted suffering, above and beyond our existential angst, can also be understood in terms of our mistaken identity and the unfortunate motives it spawns (Walsh, 1999; Wilber, 1980). We are said to yearn to recover our true identity, and this yearning is said to be an expression of the eros of Plato, the developmental drive to overcome this alienation as explained by Joseph Schelling and Friedrich Hegel, the pull of the upper chakras of yoga, and the meta-motive of self-transcendence described by Abraham Maslow and Ken Wilber.

But when we do not know of our transpersonal nature, the motive to uncover it goes unrecognized and unfostered. This motive then may be denied, distorted, or pathologized. Consequently, we hurl ourselves into a desperate search for substitute gratifications, a search that Wilber (1980) called the Atman project. This is the hopeless quest to find full and enduring satisfaction through the gratification and aggrandizement, rather than the outgrowth and transcendence, of our phase-specifically appropriate, but ultimately stunted and illusory, self-sense.

The Atman project is a hopeless one since ultimately we never can get enough of what we do not really want. Yet billions of lives and countless cultures are driven—and driven insane—by it, and the poisoned, polluted, and plundered earth around us attests to its insatiable fury. Growth and awakening to our deeper identity can relieve us of much of our angst, alienation, and Atman project, although bottomless mystery remains, of course.

In summary, both disciplines have profound concern with, and analyses of, the limitations and unsatisfactoriness of existence. Existentialism seems to have provided an unusually deep account of meaninglessness and unsatisfactoriness. Both disciplines regard alienation as central and see it not simply as a product of cultures or economics (as do social critics and Marxists) but rather as a core element of human existence. However, existentialism and transpersonalism tend to differ in their views of human nature and the self, and hence in their views of self-alienation and possible and appropriate responses.
THE LIMITATIONS AND SEDUCTION OF CONVENTIONALITY AND CONVENTIONAL SLUMBER

Both disciplines recognize and criticize the limitations of conventional worldviews and lifestyles. The existential emphasis is on a critique of unreflective submersion in mass existence and conventional living—"the public" of Søren Kierkegaard, "the herd" of Friedrich Nietzsche, the "mass existence" of Karl Jaspers, "the masses" of José Ortega, and "the they" of Martin Heidegger.

The result is that the usual way of living is regarded as defensive and superficial, a condition that Fromm referred to as "automation conformity" and Heidegger called "everydayness." Everydayness refers to the tendency to look at things superficially, to accept conventional views, and to conceal the truth about ourselves and the world from ourselves. When this drive to conceal becomes prepotent, everydayness exacerbates into full-blown inauthenticity (Zimmerman, 1986).

Transpersonal perspectives agree entirely with this sober assessment of conventional lifestyles and societies. However, they tend to frame this situation, and solutions to it, in terms of states of consciousness and development.

The usual condition is seen as a conventional slumber, in which development has proceeded from the preconventional to the conventional but has ground to a halt in what Maslow (1971) called "the psychopathology of the average." Developmentally, this conventional condition is regarded as a form of collective developmental arrest, with its own stage-specific and stage-limited characteristics, such as a conventional worldview, social structure, self-sense, morality, and set of mores (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 1980, 1995).

Although the conventional condition or stage represents a significant advance over preconventional magic thinking, it still falls far short of our transconventional transpersonal capacities. Therefore, the conventional condition (and its limitations) has been labeled in many ways. In the East, it has been referred to as *maya*, a dream and an illusion (Radhakrishnan, 1929). In the West, it has been called a consensus trance, a collective psychosis, a conventional slumber, a shared hypnosis, and a form of unconsciousness (Tart, 1986; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993). However, we do not usually recognize this trance because it is self-masking, we have been hypnotized since infancy, we actively defend it, we all share in it, and we live in the biggest cult of all—culture.

The Seduction of Conventionality

Both existentialists and transpersonalists agree that the power of the conventional majority to control beliefs, attitudes, and desires is awesome. This power can be brutally obvious and coercive, as in legal, military, and penal institutions. However, this power usually is more insidious and seductive. For most people, the conventional worldview compels not merely by coercion but also by seduction, and it is this seductive attraction that has been most intriguing and distressing to existentialists and transpersonalists alike.

Because this seduction by the conventional majority is so effective, there must be something in individuals that is strongly attracted. Obviously, this attraction can be analyzed at many levels, for example, in terms of security needs or social belongingness needs. Not surprisingly, however, existentialists focus on existential dynamics as the forces that pressure individuals to succumb to conventional slumber. Heidegger, in particular, spoke of "falling," which is the almost inescapable tendency to hide from the truth about ourselves and the world. And what is this fearful truth that we go to such lengths to
avoid? It is the essential ungroundedness of our existence, values, and choices, along with the angst that this generates.

Transpersonalists are in general agreement with this existential view but again tend to add a developmental perspective, in this case coupled with the concept of “coercion to the biosocial mean.” This type of coercion was identified in personality research with the finding that people with a strong genetic tendency to deviation from the social mean, such as extreme shyness or assertiveness, tend to be pushed by societal shaping toward the mean. Transpersonalists have suggested that a similar dynamic can occur developmentally, such that the average social level of psychological development functions like a magnet, pulling individuals up toward this level but retarding growth beyond it (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 1995).

Like developmental theorists in several other areas (e.g., faith development, moral development), transpersonalists recognize three major developmental phases: prepersonal, personal, and transpersonal (or preconventional, conventional, and transconventional). Development up to conventional levels is expected and nurtured by society both informally and through formal educational institutions. On the other hand, development beyond conventional levels is an individual matter that can be very threatening to both the individual and conventional society.

Development at any level is rarely all sweetness and light; difficulties exist at all stages. However, there are extra difficulties in transconventional development, and they come from both within and outside of the individual.

In addition to the usual panoply of defenses that work to thwart growth at any stage, there appear to be additional barriers that swing into play at more advanced stages. These barriers, defenses, or meta-defenses have long been recognized in spiritual traditions, as, for example, the seduction of the siddhis (powers) of yoga or the pseudo-nirvana of Buddhism. More recently, Robert Desoille referred to the “repression of the sublime,” and Maslow (1971) described the “Jonah complex” or the fear of our potential and greatness. In addition, people working at these levels must be willing to relinquish attachments to social approval and the consensual worldview because this worldview must be overcome and social approval for doing so is far from likely.

Approval and applause are hardly likely given that transconventional development threatens conventionality and the consensus trance. The conventional worldview, illusion, or maya, together with the values and lifestyles that both express and perpetuate it, is called into question. From the perspective of Becker (1973), this can be seen as a threat to conventional people’s immortality projects. Not to share a belief system is to weaken it, and because everyone identifies with his or her belief system, alternate systems are experienced as threatening to one’s present (way of) being and future immortality. Herein lies a source of coercion to the biosocial mean and suppression of transpersonal development.

In summary, both existentialism and transpersonalism share a deep concern about the limitations and seductiveness of the usual or conventional worldview, state of consciousness, and lifestyle. Both see unreflective surrender to conventionality as a forfeiture of potential and authenticity, and transpersonal theorists tend to see this seduction and surrender in developmental terms.

**Deficiencies of Our Usual Way of Living**

Both disciplines acknowledge that our usual ways of living are deficient and that this deficiency includes a moral component.
For existentialists, it is not just that we escape the reality of our individual and human situation through succumbing to mass existence and becoming one of the herd but also that we deliberately deceive ourselves in and about the process. We freely choose to succumb, but we then obliterate our condition, our freedom, and our choice from awareness.

Enormous amounts of time and energy—indeed, whole lifestyles and social collusions—then go into maintaining our semiconsciousness. For Kierkegaard (1849/1954), this is a lifestyle of “Philistinism [that] tranquilizes itself in the trivial,” resulting in a state of “shut-upness” and “half-obscurity” (pp. 174–175). Although the full panoply of defenses presumably play their hypnotizing part, it is the twin tranquilizers of habit and diversion that, according to Pascal, are particularly potent and that “are great veils over our existence. As long as they are securely in place, we need not consider what life means” (Barrett, 1958, p. 135).

The net result is inauthenticity or bad faith. This is, in part, the self-deceiving unacknowledged choice to see ourselves as choiceless victims who fail to live our lives open to both our common existential dilemma and our unique individual situation. The latter failing seems analogous to the trap for Indian yogis of failing to recognize their svabhava (“unique character or nature”) and to follow their corresponding svadharma (“unique personal path of practice”) (Aurobindo, 1976).

Transpersonalists are in full agreement with this existential view, but again, they add a perspective based on development and states of consciousness. Inauthenticity is seen as defensive clinging to conventionality when one could transcend it. Along with bad faith and other forms of moral immaturity, it can be viewed as expressing, stabilizing, and reinforcing our usual distorted consensus trance. For example, unreflective busyness and habits can be seen as forms of “loading stabilization,” a process in which a state of consciousness is stabilized and maintained by loading it with input and activity (Tart, 1983).

STRATEGIES AND RESPONSES

Given all of this—our moral immaturities, our deficient ways of living, the limitations and seductive power of conventionality, the unsatisfactoriness and groundlessness of existence—how are we to respond? Both disciplines agree in emphasizing the importance of detribalization and moral heroism, practices that might be essential for any significant degree of psychological maturity.

Detribalization is the process by which we escape from some of the distorting, constricted, and erroneous beliefs of our cultural worldview (Levinson, 1978). Through detribalization, we are able to step back from these beliefs, so that we no longer look through and identify with them. Rather, we begin to look at them and, in looking at them, to disidentify from them. In disidentifying from them, we are able to work to transform both them and ourselves.

For existentialists, the central moral recommendation—in fact, perhaps the central recommendation of all existentialism—is the adoption of a heroic attitude (Yalom, 1981). This attitude, together with its corresponding behavior, has been described variously as courage, engagement, resoluteness, and authenticity. It involves an unflinching openness to the reality, ambiguities, and difficulties of life and is accomplished through a clearing away of concealments and obscurities, “as a breaking up of the disguises with which Dasein [italics added] bars its own way” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 167).

These attitudes suggest a decidedly willful and actively heroic stance. Yet the mature Heidegger hinted at something beyond
resoluteness—something less willful, more allowing, and more Taoistic. He called this attitude or way of being “releasement” and described it as standing open to being (Zimmerman, 1986).

Of course, significant parts of Heidegger’s thinking seem to include decidedly mystical elements, as is the case with Husserl, the founder of phenomenology (Caputo, 1978; Zimmerman, 1986). Hanna (1993a, 1993b) suggested that this inclination is a natural consequence of profound phenomenological inquiry and that when this method is practiced rigorously and deeply, it will naturally merge into a type of contemplation and begin to yield mystical insights. Careful exploration of the relationship between phenomenology and contemplation/meditation could be very valuable and might open a methodological bridge between existential and transpersonal domains. Clearly, one of the major deficiencies of Western (as opposed to Eastern) philosophy, religion, and psychology has been the lack of a readily available and effective introspective/contemplative discipline.

Although existentialists emphasize a type of moral heroism, it is a far cry from conventional ideas of morality, so much so that there has been debate over whether existentialism can offer any ethical guidelines or moral philosophy (Cooper, 1990). Consider, for example, Kierkegaard’s argument for “suspending the ethical” and Nietzsche’s “overman,” who supposedly was “beyond good and evil.”

Yet the existential arguments make perfect sense from a developmental perspective. The existentialists seem to be arguing for a transconventional morality that goes beyond or transcends conventional views of good and evil, as transconventional morality indeed does (Kohlberg, 1981). Such morality seems to be a means to, as well as an expression of, individual transconventional development.

However, it is primarily an emphasis on individual transconventional development. There is some discussion of reciprocal freedom, acknowledging that the quest for freedom and authenticity requires collaboration and “intersubjective solidarity” (Jean-Paul Sartre), in which one “frees the other” (Heidegger). However, there is also Nietzsche’s idea that “free spirits” need and “live off” the opposition of the herd (Cooper, 1990). Hence, there is little discussion of the establishment of a transconventional community (or sangha) or of transpersonal emotions and motives such as encompassing love and compassion. This emphasis on the individual transcender beyond good and evil seems to be one reason why some existentialists have been susceptible to charges of elitism.

A developmental transpersonal perspective, therefore, seems to throw new light on existential ethics (Walsh, 1999). Transpersonalists agree with the necessity for a form of transconventional moral heroism and approve the Buddha’s call for a stringent communal ethical life “beyond good and beyond evil” (Byrom, 1976, p. 100). In contemporary developmental terms, the goal is maturation beyond conventional dualism toward Kohlberg’s (1981) highest stage (Stage 7), in which morality is grounded in direct unitive experience where others are experienced as part of one’s self and are so treated.

Transpersonalists, however, tend to see ethics as but one component of a multi-pronged discipline designed to foster development to transpersonal/transconventional stages and corresponding states of consciousness. Their language tends to include not only heroic metaphors but also metaphors such as opening, unfolding, awakening, liberation, and enlightenment (Metzner, 1998; Walsh, 1999). It also tends to acknowledge the importance of both communal and individual development (Vaughan, 1995b; Wilber, 1995, 1996).
The preeminent developmental theorist within the transpersonal field has been Wilber (1980, 1995, 1996). He has employed developmental structuralism to compare contemplative traditions across centuries and cultures and has identified six developmental stages beyond the conventional one. Wilber specifically has identified the second of these transconventional stages with the existential perspective and worldview, and he has suggested that existential psychologists may have plumbed aspects of the human condition more deeply than nearly all other Western schools. He has described four further stages and corresponding perspectives beyond the existential one. Not surprisingly, these are increasingly difficult to attain and rarely are realized without the aid of some type of intensive contemplative discipline.

Cross-cultural examination of authentic spiritual disciplines suggests that although they may contain enormous amounts of peculiar cultural baggage, they also may contain common effective processes and practices. To date, seven common elements have been suggested: (1) ethical behavior, (2) attentional stabilization, (3) emotional transformation, (4) perceptual refinement, (5) redirection of motivation, (6) cultivation of wisdom, and (7) service (Walsh, 1999). Almost invariably, authentic disciplines (i.e., disciplines capable of effecting significant transpersonal development) include contemplative or meditative training. This might seem at odds with Heidegger’s (1982) warning against “extravagant grubbing about in one’s soul” (p. 160), but introspection can involve either obsessive rumination or disciplines of mental development, and the two are light years apart.

These claims for the existence of transpersonal stages and potentials beyond the conventional obviously are of enormous significance. But the obvious question remains: Are they true? Are transpersonal experiences, stages, and capacities valid and valuable potentials within us all? Or, as critics (including some existentialists) have suggested, are they merely the products of pathological, regressed, or deluded minds engaged in desperate defensive maneuvers to avoid the harsh realities of mortality and meaninglessness? A considerable body of theory and research now supports some claims for the value and validity of transpersonal experiences and potentials (Laughlin, McManus, & d’Aquili, 1992; Shapiro & Walsh, 1984; Walsh, 1993; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Wilber, 1980, 1995, 1996).

In this arena, however, just as important as laboratory findings and elaborate theories is direct experience. For thousands of years, the great wisdom traditions have argued that the best way in which to assess such claims is to test them oneself through exploring and cultivating one’s own mind. On this, existentialists and transpersonalists are in agreement; the most profound and important answers are to be found in one’s own life and experience.

COMMENTS AND COMPARISONS

In his reply, Schneider provides thoughtful comments on some of the ideas expressed in this chapter (see also the rejoinder in Schneider, 1996). Although I find a few of his points questionable, for the most part, I am in whole-hearted agreement.

Questions

First, to address some of the questions. Schneider, in his reply (“A Reply to Roger Walsh,” this volume), suggests that transpersonalists critique existentialists erroneously for “being shortsighted about our conscious potential and for being unwarrantedly
anxious as a result . . . and for being gloomy and unenlightened” (pp. 704–706). Actually, there is mighty little true enlightenment in either existential or transpersonal circles, and several transpersonalists (myself included) have expressed admiration for the existential openness to the anxiety and dread that an unwavering look at our human condition generates (e.g., Wilber, 1980). The two groups do indeed differ in their estimation of our conscious potential. As mentioned earlier, some transpersonal claims regarding this potential are now supported by research findings, but the most important testing might come from exploring and cultivating one’s own mind.

In his reply (“A Reply to Roger Walsh,” this volume), Schneider warns transpersonalists against underestimating and undervaluing “the unfathomability of our condition, awe and amazement” (pp. 704–706). But the discovery, and even the realization, of transpersonal potentials does not necessarily diminish awe, amazement, and radical mystery. It might even sharpen them because, as Lao Tzu observed,

> From wonder into wonder
> Existence opens. (Bynner, 1944/1980, p. 25)

**Agreements**

Schneider’s central theme is a cry for humility—that is, intellectual and existential humility and awe in the face of the unfathomable infinity and mystery of the universe. Who could not agree?

Schneider also prudently warns against claims for ultimacy. Although I am not sure that one can say that ultimate claims never should be made—that would itself be an ultimate claim—Schneider’s warning is well taken. Existentialists probably have done better here than have transpersonalists.

Schneider correctly points out the danger of members of one school claiming to fully comprehend another school. In my experience, many examples of internecine psychological warfare actually reflect attacks on the misunderstandings of other schools. All of us would benefit from a deeper study of other perspectives and from becoming skilled in their epistemological methods. Both schools draw on scientific methods and studies where these are appropriate and available, although both are wary of the risks and distortions of scientism—that is, the pseudophilosophy that holds that science is the best, or even the only, way in which to acquire valid knowledge. The appropriate response to scientism is “Show us your scientific proof that science is the best or the only way in which to acquire valid knowledge.” To this request, there can only be stunned silence.

Many of the differences between the worldviews of existentialists and transpersonalists reflect the divergent effects of their different epistemological methods. For existentialists, the central methods probably are philosophical and psychological reflections—what Saint Bonaventure and (more recently) Wilber have called the “eye of reason.” Whereas transpersonalists employ the eye of reason, they also rely on insights provided by meditative and contemplative practices—the “eye of contemplation” (Wilber, 1990). These different epistemologies may underlie many of the existential/transpersonal intellectual differences, given that worldviews reflect epistemologies.

Both existentialists and transpersonalists, therefore, may benefit from a fuller practice of both epistemological methods. The result may be a more comprehensive, more adequate, and more satisfying understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe as well as a greater convergence between the two schools.


A Reply to Roger Walsh

Kirk J. Schneider

I applaud Roger Walsh’s chapter exploring the commonalities between transpersonal and existential perspectives in psychology. It is a welcome presentation, comparatively balanced, and mutually beneficial to the respective positions. However, this case strikes me as an exception in Walsh’s, as well as others’, writings on these matters, and what follows is my attempt to redress this situation.

Contemporary transpersonal writers stress one major point when comparing their perspective with that of existentialists: that transpersonal contexts eclipse or encompass the existential (Walsh & Vaughan, 1994; Washburn, 1995; Wilber, 1986). As balanced as Walsh’s chapter is, even he implies this position when referring to Wilber’s developmental stages. In what follows, I attempt to dispel, or at the very least cast doubt on, such a stance.

This entire issue can be framed by one simple question, attributed to Albert Einstein: Is the universe friendly (e.g., assimilable, consoling) or unfriendly (e.g., unassimilable, “other”)? Transpersonalists such as Walsh and Vaughan (1994), Washburn (1995), and Wilber (1981a, 1981b, 1986) seem confident that the universe is friendly—that is, consciously unifiable and ultimately consoling. They critique existentialists for taking the opposite position—that is, for being shortsighted about our conscious potential and for being unwarrantedly anxious as a result. Although it is true that some existential theorists emphasize the unfriendly and absurd dimension of self–cosmic relations, the existential theorists whom the former transpersonalists rarely address—the so-called existential-theological thinkers such as Buber (1965a, 1965b), Heschel (1951), and Tillich (1954, 1963)—do not stress the universe's unfriendliness. By contrast, they take the agnostic tack that people do not know whether or not the universe is friendly. Yet transpersonalists continue to upbraid existentialists for being caught within the dualism of self/not self, for being on a “lower” level of consciousness, and for being gloomy and unenlightened as a result. Transpersonalists accuse existentialists of having a limited understanding of spiritual disciplines (Puhakka, 1991; Walsh & Vaughan, 1994). But transpersonalists themselves claim to fully apprehend the existential view and to assure us of its subordinate understanding of consciousness (Walsh & Vaughan, 1994; Wilber, 1986).

Yet my thesis here is that such transpersonalists do not fully apprehend the existential worldview, given that if they did, then they would see that it is the very uncertainty and ungroundedness of existentialism that lend it its vast breadth (Schneider, 1999, 2004, 2012). Let me explain.

Author's Note: This reply is adapted from my article “Transpersonal Views of Existentialism: A Rejoinder,” which appeared in The Humanistic Psychologist (1996), 24(1), 145–148.
Existential theology places infinity, indefiniteness, and the more, as James (1904/1987, p. 1175) put it, over worldviews that attempt to totalize (or universalize) consciousness. It does this precisely because of the centrality of freedom in existentialists’ outlook. To indicate otherwise—to close or dissolve the indefiniteness or to intimate (as did Wilber, 1982) true realities and false realities or erroneous views and correct views—is precisely to delimit freedom (e.g., becoming, emergence). It is precisely to neglect the ongoingness and unencompassable evolution of creation. Moreover, despite what some transpersonalists have suggested, an indefinite worldview does not automatically imply anxiety toward our condition. It does, however, imply a humility toward and fundamental puzzlement about ourselves. It implies a refusal to absolutize, reify, or infer an unqualified universality in human experience, and it attributes a vivid poignancy to each passing moment. I am moved by life precisely because it is a radical puzzlement to me. I am moved by birth, death, love, and nature precisely because they cannot be completely assimilated, and when they are—momentarily—it is marvelous. But there are always more assimilations possible, more unravelings, and more reconstructions yet again.

What, then, does it mean to speak of transcending the existential? Does it mean transcending existence? Being? Groundlessness? What is so delimiting about being in awe of existence, about being shaken, stunned, or radically amazed? One could, of course, take the tack of the aforementioned transpersonalists and respond that such expressions are the products of a split self—a self that has yet to encompass otherness and achieve its final blessed state (Washburn, 1995). On the other hand, one could embrace the reverse stance. On this view, awe and amazement unveil the shortsightedness not of those who experience them but rather of those who subordinate such sensibilities. By underscoring the unfathomability of our condition, awe and amazement also, by implication, highlight the constriction, sterility, and blandness associated with minimizing that unfathomability.

Now, it is precisely this latter view—the response of agnosticism to Einstein’s query—that has not been explored enough in transpersonal circles. Yet many of the most respected mystics, including the Buddha, appear to have adopted it (Schneider, 1987, 1989, 1993). Such mystics view enlightenment in provisional, eminently pragmatic terms. It is no accident that a respected Buddhist scholar, Batchelor (1990), chose to title his book on the basis of Tillich’s credo, The Faith to Doubt. There is great courage in this credo as well as in Walsh’s individual and collective “opening, unfolding, awakening, liberation, and enlightenment.”

To conclude, if the transpersonal vision culminates in moments, glimpses, and qualified cosmic fusions, then it is subsumable within an existential framework. If, on the other hand, transpersonalism culminates in totalities, ultimates, and unqualified fusions, then it, by implication, must overlap the existential. Either view may be “correct,” and either may be illusory. Only the marketplace of experience, as Walsh prudently notes, will decide this question. In the meantime, it would behoove transpersonal and existential theorists to tread carefully on questions of ultimacy. Einstein’s question is far from resolved, and either response to it may be legitimate.

POSTSCRIPT

I am deeply appreciative to Walsh for his thoughtful closing remarks on my reply (see also my rejoinder in Schneider, 1996). I am also in agreement with the thrust of
Both existentialists and transpersonalists have much to learn from each other, and there are marvels awaiting us on the collaborative path. The question is can we look through each other’s eyes of reason and contemplation—for they are present in each of our perspectives—and find our mutual way?

REFERENCES

Humanistic Psychology and Social Action

DONADRIAN L. RICE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how humanistic psychology has influenced directly or indirectly the initiation of social action on the part of individuals, groups, organizations, and political movements. At first glance, this may seem a rather grandiose claim given some of the criticisms leveled in the past against humanistic psychology for its alleged lack of awareness and sensitivity to social issues (Csikszentmihalyi & Seligman, 2000; see also Chapter 4, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements,” by Louis Hoffman, Heatherlyn Cleare-Hoffman, and Theopia Jackson, this volume). Primarily, these criticisms have centered on humanistic psychology’s emphasis on the “self” and “self-growth.” As Davidson (1992) states, “While humanistic psychology may appreciate culture as an expression of the human spirit, it has been perceived as underestimating the importance of social and political context in concretely shaping people’s lives” (p. 147).

Likewise, during the latter part of the 1960s and into the 1970s, much attention, particularly from the popular media, focused on the “human potential movement,” which was inextricably bound to humanistic psychology and was indeed an outgrowth of one interpretation of Maslow’s concept of “self-actualization.” Films such as Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice, which depicts the experience of two couples who participated in an “Esalen like” weekend seminar “exploring and getting in touch” with their feelings, helped foster this image of humanistic psychology as catering to the overly self-indulgent part of the human personality. Contrary to this depiction of humanistic psychology, Bohart and Greening (2001) have argued that humanistic psychology has always had a focus on issues of social welfare. I argue that humanistic psychology has been at the forefront of social action and change from its beginning. Also, over the past 50 years, humanistic psychology has matured and refined its theoretical positions, research methods, and practice, influencing a variety of areas of psychological study (Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001). To be sure, in a review of the first edition of The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory, Research and Practice, I stated that
humanistic psychology is putting mainstream psychology on notice, that it is no longer your 1960s, baby boomer, northern California, hot tub psychology, but rather an established psychology with its own theories and methods that is making an impact on the field of psychology. (Rice, 2003, p. 32)

I stated further, regarding humanistic psychology’s attention to social issues, that humanistic psychology has often been criticized for being overly concerned with self. In fact, some have accused humanistic psychology of playing a significant role in the development of the “me generation.” Whether this moniker is deserved or not, it is a stigma humanistic psychology has had to bear. (Rice, 2003, p. 34)

However, I noted that the volume included chapters on humanistic psychology’s contributions to multiculturalism, women’s issues, ecology, and social action. This is a claim that other major forces (e.g., psychoanalysis and behaviorism) in psychology cannot make. In fact, it is important to realize historically that psychology writ large, as a discipline, is deficient in its contributions to social action. Of course, there are notable instances where the research of individual psychologists has led to some meaningful change on a social and/or political level. Here in the United States, witness, for example, the experiments on racial attitudes conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1950) in their black–white doll study, which demonstrated that segregated schools were unequal and unconstitutional and had a negative impact on the psychological development of African American youth. This study profoundly influenced the 1954 Supreme Court decision in the case of Brown vs. The Board of Education, which ruled that segregated schools are unconstitutional. Zimbardo’s (1971) Stanford prison experiment brought attention to how our behavior can be influenced strongly by the social context of the situation. And Stanley Milgram’s (1963/2009) experiments on what leads one to blindly obey an authority figure, even if it means inflicting pain, have given us valuable insights into human nature and prompted reevaluation of how we treat human subjects while conducting research projects. Prominent civil rights leaders Martin Luther King in 1967 and Jesse Jackson in 1999 have challenged the American Psychological Association twice in speeches before the organization to become more relevant in response to social changes in our society (Lyons, 2001).

Humanistic psychology, on the other hand, has always been open to and accepting of a variety of kindred psychological theories, methods, and practices that honor the primacy of human experience and that recognize the innate goodness of humankind. As Wertz (1998) observes, humanistic psychology has attempted to “critically incorporate” alternative approaches. In referencing a 1992 article by Churchill, Wertz states, “Churchill has convincingly made the point that humanistic psychologists consistently dialogued with, and holistically integrated all the available knowledge claims concerning a particular subject matter. This stands in contrast to the many more monolithic approaches to the field” (p. 59).

In her 2009 presidential address to Division 32 at the annual American Psychological Association convention, Maureen O’Hara (2010) states,

Rereading the words of the likes of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Erich Fromm, Rollo May, I was renewed in the belief that as the human species faces what could conceivably be its last-chance encounter with destiny—the challenge posed by the threat of planetary catastrophe in the wake of global climate changes—these core humanistic ideas about our
Inborn capacities for self-righting and self-healing, empathy, authenticity, for mind-boggling innovation and creativity, and for solidarity with those in need and suffering—still have enormous relevance. Better still, they can yet provide grounds for hope that we can address these challenges before it becomes too late. If the worldview, values, and associated ways of being and being with each other, outlined by humanistic psychologists over the last half century were to become part of the shared story of how humans might journey through the next critical period in our history, this might provide a philosophy and praxis for the development of a new psychology suitable for a sustainable and livable global society. (p. 102)

In that same address, O’Hara noted too that in President Obama’s book *Audacity of Hope*, he recognizes the core humanistic values of empathy, authenticity, and caring in leadership, governance, and foreign policy. The ability of humanistic psychology to “journey through the next critical period,” as O’Hara states in her address, and develop a livable, sustainable, global society can be seen through the efforts of several theoretical positions in psychology on which humanistic psychology has had a direct impact. To be sure, it is because of humanistic psychology’s flexibility and agility that its influence on society in general and social action in particular is subtle, and yet powerful. However, before moving into the various ways humanistic psychology has been and is involved in social action, it is important to acknowledge humanistic psychology’s primary philosophical foundation, existentialism.

**EXISTENTIALISM’S GUIDING FORCE**

The intent of this section is not to recap the historical influence of existentialism on humanistic psychology, as there is much to be found on this topic. Instead the focus is on four basic tenets found in existentialism that have significant implications for positioning humanistic psychology as a catalyst for social action. In its largest sense, existentialism as a philosophy recognizes in human nature freedom, choice, responsibility, and authenticity. Unlike the positivistic philosophies that are the guiding forces behind psychodynamic and behavioral psychologies, which impose biological and environmental constraints on human nature, existentialism asserts that humans have free will, are capable of making choices, and can assume responsibility for those choices. While these three notions may seem commonplace in today’s world, and actually rise to the level of what the younger generation might characterize as a *Duh*, this has not always been the paradigm of thought through which humans viewed themselves in the Western world.

Anyone taking a cursory look at the predominating religious and political systems over the past millennium will find structures in place that constrain the ability of humans to see themselves as having the capacity for free will, choice, and responsibility. Since a major part of the process of socialization requires internalizing the cultural norms of one’s milieu, humans are already primed from birth for a particular kind of thinking that will support the environment they have come to occupy. This idea may seem obvious when one refers to totalitarian and dictatorial political systems or the infallibility of the “Church fathers” and other forms of religious order. Nevertheless, the same rings true in democratically run nations and in the most “liberal” of religions. That is because even under those circumstances, the notions of free will, choice, and responsibility go against the grain of the process of socialization. However, mainly because of the philosophical and literary writings of the existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre
While humanists highlight the role of human freedom, creativity, spontaneity, will, and intentionality in the genesis of human action, this ambition clashes with the goal of many mechanistic approaches to psychology which strives to explain as much of human action as possible through nonagentic, causal mechanisms (whether the causes be environmental, genetic, physiological, social, psychodynamic, etc).

(p. 261)

He continues by quoting from the sociologist Peter Berger’s 1963 book, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective, where he makes the statement that “freedom is not empirically available” (p. 261). Howard points out that while such a statement might have been “factually true” in 1963, over the past 30 years, a number of methodological procedures have been developed to access self-determination and recognize agency in human behavior. Howard, Myers, and Curtin (1991) have published a number of studies demonstrating self-determination—however, with one caveat in the methodological procedure: The active cooperation of the research participant is required (Howard, 1992, p. 262). Even psychologists who do not share the humanistic philosophy have arrived at the same conclusion: that humans are capable of autonomy in actions and self-determination (see, e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000). To be sure, in a 2010 interview for the Rochester University Review, the experimental psychologists Deci and Ryan had this to say about their research on self-determination: “We came at motivation from a humanistic perspective. . . . at that time, there were virtually no experimental psychologists who took that approach” (p. 19).

Thus, existentialism provides the impetus for humanistic psychology’s natural inclination toward social action. Moreover, from a humanistic perspective, the actions taken by individuals or groups are not actions that are ostensibly elicited by deep-seated “neurotic”
needs or because one is blindly swept up in a mob but, rather, are actions that come from a conscious sense of purpose, meaning, and authenticity.

**Humanistic Psychology, Human Potential, and Social Action**

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that humanistic psychology was often characterized in the popular media as being associated with the human potential movement. And the human potential movement was frequently cast as a kind of narcissistic self-indulgence. However, I would like to offer a different perspective on the human potential movement that is not necessarily incompatible with the moniker it carries, but arguing that an underlying focus of the movement, *consciousness raising*, has had direct influence on a variety of important social issues. The term *consciousness raising* has its roots in the feminist movement beginning in the late 1960s, when consciousness-raising groups were formed by women who were leaders in the feminist movement to raise awareness of the oppression women were experiencing in all segments of American society (Brownmiller, 2000).

The term quickly became part of the lexicon of the human potential movement whether one was referring to becoming more aware of one’s self or broader social and political issues. More important, humanistic psychology and the human potential movement were emerging at a time in the 1960s when dramatic social and political change was taking place in the United States as well as other countries around the world. The social scientists in general and psychologists in particular found their current paradigms inadequate for understanding social movements. As Eldeman (2001) describes it,

> The worldwide political effervescence of “the long 1960s” (Isserman & Kazin, 2000) contributed to a paradigm crisis in social scientific thinking about collective action. This prolonged decade of extraordinary upheaval in New York, Chicago, Berkeley, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Tokyo, Mexico City, Prague, Beijing, and elsewhere was the most intense period of grassroots mobilization since the 1930s. Civil rights and antiwar movements, youth and student rebellions, mobilizations in defense of regional autonomy and the environment and for the rights of women, gays and lesbians, the elderly, the disabled, and a host of other emergent groups, identities, and causes converged with an unprecedented wave of anti-colonial and anti-imperial insurgencies in poorer regions of the globe. Social scientists of various orientations concerned with geopolitics and revolution had ready-made categories (“national liberation,” “subversion”) for analyzing events in the “Third World.” But the turmoil in the developed North highlighted the inadequacy of existing social scientific frameworks and gave rise to new and rich debates. (p. 285)

This is not to imply that humanistic psychology had a paradigm in place to understand these various movements but to argue that many of the principles found in humanistic psychology laid the groundwork for social action. The human potential movement was one part of that process, as it was generally believed that “raising one’s consciousness and realizing one’s potential could lead to positive social action” (Murphy, 1993). In fact, consciousness raising has taken on a more sociopolitical application in the form of “conscientization, or critical consciousness.” This term is attributed to Paulo Freire’s (1973) work with the poor and the working class in Brazil. He believed that if people who are oppressed are made aware of the social, political, and economic conditions that affect their lives, they would then be enabled to take action and advocate for themselves. As Comas-
Diaz (2012a) states, “Critical consciousness is a liberation approach. A process of personal and social transformation, conscientization aims to foster individuals’ awareness of their oppressive circumstances, helps them to critically analyze the causes of their oppression, and engages them in transformative actions” (p. 439).

The multicultural and feminist movements both have emphasized how sociopolitical factors contribute to clients’ problems in the therapeutic context. The multicultural and feminist perspectives helped to change our understanding of mental illness, for example, from being an internal problem to a social problem (Sue & Sue, 2008; Worell & Remer, 2003). Although many psychotherapists assume a social justice stance, it is not always evident in their practice. “Therefore, to continue its development, psychotherapy needs to embrace global, empowering, and holistic perspectives” (Comas-Diaz, 2012b, p. 474).

Another fundamental principal in humanistic psychology that has importance for social action derives from Carl Rogers’s recognition of the power relationship in psychotherapy. Elkins (2009) has noted that early on in Rogers’s career as a clinician and researcher, he rejected the “therapist-centered” approaches to psychotherapy that “relied on techniques such as guiding, suggesting, and persuading clients” (p. 17). Rogers found that his clients did much better when they were supported to rely on their own abilities to understand themselves and were not subjected to the paternalistic machinations of the therapist. Elkins goes on to point out that Rogers was challenging the “authoritarian and paternalistic” views that originated with Freud from the Victorian era and that these are the same views that supported beliefs in racial, national and cultural superiority, as well as subjugating women and blacks and other minorities to second-class citizenship (p. 17). Rogers was keen to recognize the powerful political influence that prevalent forms of therapy wielded over the lives of individuals and realize that supporting clients in their growth process was equally powerful in helping the client reach her or his fullest potential. Hence, the concept of empowering people to develop and grow on their own terms with the gentle support of the therapist has wide application for groups, communities, and societies when confronted with issues that demand change. As an example, social justice movements typically focus on empowering communities at the grassroots level, with their primary emphasis on building resources for social entrepreneurship. Their main strategy for accomplishing this goal is the utilization of social capital in order to improve quality of life for individuals, and by extension their communities, through increasing well-being, social control, and self-democracy. Other principles are found in the writings of Maslow (1968, 1969a). Maslow (1993) differentiated between the “healthy society” and the “sick society,” the “good society and the poor society” (p. 204). His vision was for a societal structure that could meet the basic needs of each individual and allow him or her to contemplate the attainment of “being or B-motivation” that is associated with self-actualization. He saw a value in extending psychotherapy to populations that would not normally have access to this service.

Unlike traditional mainstream psychology, Maslow’s ideal would promote authenticity and positive growth while at the same time freeing the individual from “false consciousness.” As the individual moves toward positive growth, other characteristics begin to develop that allow the individual to become more socially aware. For example, as consciousness is raised, there is an increase in the experience of empathy. This increase in empathy has the potential to lead to an arousal in one’s affective states when confronted with social injustice. As Russo (1995) states,
A holistic, humanistic perspective leads one to social concern and commitment as acts of the total person, and not simply as a matter of the application of knowledge and reason. This idea of the development of empathy as necessary for the development of personal and social responsibility has been a long-held principle of humanistic educators. (p. 76)

**Examples of How Humanistic Psychology Has Contributed to and Influenced Social Action**

Earlier, I mentioned that one of the qualities of humanistic psychology is its ability to incorporate kindred theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding human beings. Some of these approaches include transpersonal psychology, critical psychology, and multiculturalism and social justice. Currently, there are a number of academic institutions that are supportive of these traditions. Among them are University of West Georgia’s master’s program in humanistic psychology and the PhD program “Consciousness and Society”; Saybrook University’s programs in humanistic psychology, mind–body psychology, health care, and transformative social change; Duquesne University’s program in phenomenological clinical psychology; and Sofia University’s emphasis on transpersonal psychology, to name a few.

**Transpersonal Psychology and Social Action**

Transpersonal psychology grew out of humanistic psychology’s acknowledgment of the emergence of a “trans-humanistic psychology dealing with transcendent experiences and with transcendent values” (Maslow, 1993, p. 270). Maslow (1969a) proposed a transpersonal psychology as a “fourth force” in psychology, in contrast to behaviorism and Freudian psychology, and an outgrowth of the “third force,” that is, humanistic psychology, concerned with “real human experience and human needs, goals and values” (pp. 4–5). As a relatively young discipline, transpersonal psychology focused attention on secular spiritual states, meditation, and self-realization. However, some researchers have applied transpersonal psychology to social action.

A transpersonal approach to social action is found in the term **subtle activism**. Subtle activism is described by Spangler (2010) as a procedure for dealing with this psychic pollution and poison. It is a way of working with your own subtle energies and spiritual resources to create a clear, clean, positive, vibrant and healthy energy environment in places of trouble and difficulty in the world. When this procedure is used to deal with psychic pollution within and around yourself, then it becomes energy hygiene. Energy hygiene is simply subtle activism at a personal level. (p. 3)

However, Spangler (2010) cautions that “subtle activism is not a substitute for taking action and doing good in wise and compassionate ways in the physical world.” He goes on to point out that physical activism is necessary for we live in a world where pain and suffering, hunger and disease, oppression and injustice, pollution and environmental degradation have real physical manifestations and consequences. Subtle activism is not instead of but in addition to work and effort to heal the world and ourselves. (p. 4)

Another transpersonal psychologist who has conducted research in the area of subtle activism is David Nicols. Nicols (2008) has researched a variety of examples of how subtle activism (the use of prayer, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines) has been used to bring about change and unite
Critical Psychology

Goodley and Parker (2000) describe critical psychology as standing at the margins of psychology, philosophy, sociology, politics, history, literary theory, anthropology, education and social policy. Proponents are brought together under this counter-paradigm rubric to challenge the Western psy-complex. This complex at best trivializes human experience (through, for example, adhering to the taken-for-granted assumptions of a positivistic approach to research) and at worst controls and oppresses (through, for example, conceptualizing mental distress as the product of a disorder of the unitary individual subject). In this sense then, critical psychology is inherently political, though it is often presented as yet another postmodern and anti-foundationalist intellectual project. (p. 3)

The points of focus for critical psychology are to examine how mainstream psychology privileges some approaches to research and psychotherapy over other approaches, the tendency for mainstream psychology to limit itself to predicting and controlling behavior, and the way mainstream psychology accepts commonsense assumptions about action and experience (Goodley & Parker, 2000). Just as humanistic psychology was influenced by and influenced the various movements in the 1960s and 1970s, critical psychologists too became aware of the political nature of psychology. More specifically, they became aware of what was wrong with the politics of psychology. As Goodley and Parker (2000) state,

It has been feminist psychologists actually, and to an extent Lesbian and Gay psychologists, who have been largely responsible for keeping politics on the agenda in alternative research debates. Sometimes they too have been recruited...
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Hence, in its application to research, critical psychology shares with humanistic psychology its emphasis on the importance of the well-being of the person.

Likewise the critical psychologists Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) point out that critical psychology is concerned with “the health of disadvantaged groups such as children, low-income women, gays, lesbians, people with disabilities and citizens in developing countries” (p. 107). Moreover, it is concerned further with those practices used by service agencies that promote health and well-being and those that lead to deleterious outcomes. As Prilleltensky and Nelson state, “Even with the best intention we can cause harm. A primary challenge then, is to reflect on our own existing practices and scrutinize their effects. A subsequent challenge is to incorporate lessons about power, injustice, well-being and liberation in everyday practice” (p. 17).

Multiculturalism and Social Justice

Multiculturalism emerged as a legal and political tool to address the needs of minorities—specifically in the sociopolitical realm. This called for replacing the old structures of ethnic and racial hierarchy with new structures that are democratic for all. Comas-Diaz (2012a) asserts that “multicultural psychotherapy is embedded in humanism. Similar to humanistic psychology, multicultural psychotherapy fosters people’s capacity for choice, freedom, and transformation” (p. 437). Patterson (2004) points out that Carl Rogers’s client-centered qualities for the therapist—empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard—are core qualities that may transcend culture. Similarly, Comas-Diaz (2012a) acknowledges the liberation effect of multiculturalism. She states, “Freedom and liberation constitute inherent humanistic values. Within a multicultural psychotherapy, practitioners promote freedom at both
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themselves from speaking out against the obvious abuses, rights violations, discrimination, and social injustices faced by people who are diagnosed and treated for madness” (p. 11). In describing the consumer/survivor/ex-patient movement (c/s/x), he states,

Within the c/s/x movement, the once frightened and beaten down, the voice-hearers, the traumatized, the victims of tardive dyskinesia have banded together with their peers to advocate and lobby for rights, create self-help alternatives, share successful coping strategies, and inspire and instill hope through the personal examples of their lived lives. C/s/x activists speak of empowerment and liberation.

We are refusing to allow others to speak for us and are reclaiming ownership of our experience. When we look for therapy or help, we are looking for active collaborative relationships where power inequities are minimized. We have learned that we thrive on choice, hope, and possibility. And we wither and atrophy from force and coercion. Having learned from personal experience that all of our rights can be taken away from us, we know that we must fight to keep our rights, and thus we may be suspicious of those who offer themselves as helpers. We resonate with the insight of an unknown aboriginal woman who said, “If you’re coming to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, let us work together.” (p. 24)

Bassman’s perspective harkens back to the writings of R. D. Laing (1968), who understood the political control of one’s experiences.

Embedded Humanistic Values in Today’s Global, Geopolitical World

In an article published in Tikkun titled “A Spiritual Way of Seeing,” the author, Peter Gabel (2013), states,
The central aspect of this new post liberal, post-Marxist way of seeing is to begin from the interior of our awareness to grasp the “within” of the intersubjective lifeworld into which we have been thrown and into which we are, in the words of philosopher Martin Heidegger, always already in-mixed. What we find by this interior-to-interior method—from beginning inside ourselves and from that interior self-transparency going forward by intuition and understanding to the inside of the world we are trying to see—is that human beings actually exist in a psycho-spiritual world in which they seek not primarily food, shelter, or the satisfaction of material needs, but rather the love and recognition of other human beings, and the sense of elevated meaning and purpose that comes from bringing that world of intersubjective connection into being. Of course the satisfaction of material needs is indispensable to our physical survival, but please see that our survival is different from our existence—our survival is the background, the indispensable precondition of our existence, and if it is threatened we can be driven to whatever extreme is necessary to preserve this existence. (p. 3)

It is clear from this passage that Gabel has been influenced by humanistic psychology with reference to Maslow’s basic needs and to Heidegger, whose writings have served as a philosophical base for humanistic psychology. Moreover, the Tikun (Hebrew for “repairing the world”) online magazine publication is dedicated to social and political justice through spiritual understanding. Correspondingly, recent movements on a large scale such as the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and environmental activism are just some examples of how the values of humanistic psychology have influenced society and led to social action. What we see in activism like the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, and environmental awareness are people who have had their “consciousness raised” and are realizing their potential to bring about change.

Aanstoos (2011), in a presentation on how the 1960s influenced social science research, points out that “the mentality of the 60s served as a rich soil to nourish three corresponding major themes of the human sciences” (p. 4). According to Aanstoos, the three influences are “the 60’s project of consciousness raising as a way to free oneself from the alienation of false consciousness, which supports the human science project of bracketing the objectivistic bias such as is meant by the epoche in phenomenology”; “the emphasis on authenticity, trusting one’s own lights, and doing one’s own thing [which] supports the human science emphasis of returning to the primacy of lived experience”; and “the 60’s vision of ecology, communalism, solidarity, togetherness, and love [which] supports the human science vision of holism and nonduality” (p. 4). Hence, much like the movements in the 1960s, the movements today have embraced the values embedded in humanistic psychology to bring about positive social change and action.

A prime example of this influence is the research of Jeannette Diaz (2007). Diaz is the cofounder of “Harvest for Haiti,” which is a nonprofit organization focusing on sustainable agricultural development in Haiti. In an article titled “Humanistic Psychology and Social Transformation: Building the Path Toward a Livable Today and Just Tomorrow,” she states that

if humanistic psychology is to make a significant impact on the processes of global change as related to poverty eradication and to the improvement of the quality of life for peoples throughout the world, it must do so through the application of humanistic psychology principles and practices to development work, defined as community building, environmental and economic development, and restoration.
Within these domains, the practice of humanistic psychology will most likely take place in the offices of rural development, the ministries of education, the meeting halls of faith-based organizations, and the offices of community-based organizations. (p. 58)

She goes on to say that humanistic psychology provides a theoretical perspective on humanity that challenges us to focus on the expansive potentiality of each person. Oftentimes, when working in areas of extreme poverty, it is too easy to ignore, or be blind to, the fact that each person, regardless of life experiences, is replete with the potential to grow and expand to meet his or her ultimate physical, mental, and spiritual potential. With its focus on the healing nature of human relationships, humanistic psychology provides us with tools to develop human relationships that can provide a sustainable foundation for development work. Finally, humanistic psychology challenges us to create connections between our inner work and our outer work. (pp. 58–59)

Diaz has taken and applied these ideas to her work in Haiti confronting the mental health issues of women in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake. Instead of using traditional modes of “trying to help,” and imposing techniques on her population, Diaz begins by listening to discover the needs as experienced by the women in this situation. As a community psychologist, she has reinterpreted Maslow’s definition of “self-actualization” in the context of the community. As Diaz (2007) states, “The process of self-actualization is, therefore, the process of working in community to elevate the community as a whole—the self cannot be separate from the community, and the self cannot be advanced unless the entire community is advanced” (p. 64).

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to show that humanistic psychology has had a tremendous impact on our society in various forms of social action. Unlike psychodynamic and behavioral approaches, which are constrained when it comes to social action, humanistic psychology has the flexibility and agility to mold itself in ways that are responsive to social needs. The co-emergence of humanistic psychology with the movements of the 1960s allowed it to inform and be informed by the social changes that were rapidly taking place. Although humanistic psychology has been criticized for not attending to social needs, a closer examination reveals that humanistic psychology, in ways that are both subtle and overt, has always had social action as a primary focus.

The human potential movement, which is inextricably bound with humanistic psychology, has been an important part of humanistic psychology’s influence on social action. The human potential movement’s adoption of Maslow’s theories related to psychological growth and reaching one’s potential has led to an assortment of growth techniques designed to “raise consciousness.” While some of these were purely for self-gratification, others were used to promote self-awareness in populations who were marginalized or disenfranchised in one way or another. Correspondingly, humanistic psychology was influential in the development of transpersonal psychology, critical psychology, and the multicultural and social justice movement. In other words, these areas share many of the values inherent in humanistic psychology. Likewise, many theorists and researchers in these areas have found a friendly audience in humanistic psychology.

Thus, the impact of humanistic psychology on social action is indeed powerful and
effective. I would argue that in today’s global society, humanistic psychology is poised to continue to answer the call for a more humane way to address social concerns such as oppression, injustice, poverty, and issues around the social dynamics of mental health and illness. Likewise, as globalization becomes more and more a fact of our reality, the inherent flexibility of humanistic psychology allows it to seamlessly navigate the multifarious ways to apply humanistic social action.

REFERENCES


Humanistic psychology has had considerable influence on the fields of organizational development and management theory. During the 1960s, humanistically oriented values informed the core of organizational development theory and practice (Tannenbaum & Davis, 1967). During this period, organizational development practitioners advocated a normative view of organizations, moving away from the bureaucratic model to design organizations. This view explicitly embodied humanistic and democratic values. Humanistic values were apparent in organizational development interventions that were grounded in normative behaviors such as openness, self-awareness, feedback, and personal growth (Greiner, 1980). Some pioneering theorists of organizational development such as Chris Argyris, Douglas McGregor, Richard Beckhard, Warren Bennis, Herbert Sheperd, and Edgar Schein were heavily influenced by the writings and works of Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Kurt Lewin, and Rollo May. The encounter and training group (or “Tgroup”) movement, what Rogers often called a “therapy for normals,” was the precursor to organizational development theory and practice. Like humanistic psychology, the new field of organizational development could be seen not only as consisting of a set of theories and techniques for intervening in organizations but also as a new philosophy and social movement (Mirvis, 1988).

The pioneering works of Lewin, Argyris, and McGregor were widely influential in disseminating humanistic psychology–based approaches by addressing the relationship between the individual and the institution from a humanistic rather than a rational-economic perspective. One of Argyris’s (1957) first works was titled Personality and Organization: The Conflict Between System and the Individual. Earlier, Lewin's work, with his $B = f(p, e)$ formula (i.e., behavior is a function of person and environment), set the stage for an inquiry captured in the subtitle of Argyris’s book. Lewin also challenged the view popularized by Frederick Taylor that men in groups (or “gangs,” as Taylor referred to them) were not to be trusted and, therefore, had to be controlled. Lewin looked at the positive dimensions of groups, and his influence in the field of organizational development is extremely far-reaching—from systems change,
In the 21st century, we find, on the one hand, a continuing strong focus on metrics and “evidence-based” approaches and, on the other, a new focus on dimensions of the workplace that have been addressed by humanistic psychology. Daniel Goleman’s work on emotional intelligence, the great interest in creativity and innovation, a renewed interest in creative collaboration, as well as the burgeoning fields of executive development and, more generally, “coaching” are areas that can have been influenced by humanistic psychology. Having said that, the way these topics are addressed now is often heavily influenced by neuroscience (arguably treated in much the same “whizz-bang” way as quantum physics was in the 1980s) and a somewhat instrumental approach to emotions. The underlying values and philosophy of humanistic psychology have been replaced by a more pragmatic, “hard science”–based approach and a return to positivism.

It should also be pointed out that the new and very popular field of positive psychology, which has clear roots in humanistic psychology that are often not recognized or referenced, addresses many of the same issues that originally led to the development of the Third Force, from happiness to the higher reaches of human nature. It has benefited from grounding itself in research data drawn from a very active research agenda that is then translated into specific guidelines from improving one’s life and work. A more transpersonal orientation is also emerging in the management literature (Senge & Society for Organizational Learning, 2005), and once again, it seems to bypass the work of humanistic psychologists.

In the field of organizational development, the literature has shifted toward more utilitarian tools and techniques—the rhetoric of paying attention to the “human side of enterprise,” the importance of having good “people skills,” and similar humanistic-sounding concerns were mixed in the overall message.
Despite the hard-nosed turn in the field, humanistic voices continue to be heard. The roots of organizational development theory and practice still draw their nourishment from the lifeblood of humanistic psychology.

**MASLOW’S INFLUENCE**

Maslow is unquestionably the central figure in bringing humanistic psychology to the workplace. His theories on the hierarchy of needs, motivation, synergy, creativity, self-actualization, and “enlightened management” continue to be enormously influential. (See, e.g., *Maslow on Management* [Maslow, 1965/1998; originally titled *Eupsychian Management*], a recent volume based on notes on his research at Non-Linear Systems during the early 1960s.)

Why is Maslow’s work still so popular and relevant? Answering this question may afford us an insight into the future not only of organizational development but also of humanistic psychology. Maslow believed that the industrial situation could serve as the new laboratory for the study of psychodynamics, high human development, and the ideal ecology for the human. Early on, Maslow realized that the world of work offered an important locus for both the study of humans and the realization of human potential. The whole prospect of fostering “human potential in the workplace” was a radical dramatic shift from earlier times when workers were treated simply as “cogs in a machine.” Under Taylor’s so-called scientific management, workers were not expected to think or be creative; rather, they were expected to perform their tasks in a precise and prescribed manner as determined by industrial engineering standards. Since the early 1900s, scientific management (or “Taylorism”) was the dominant management philosophy. Hourly workers were viewed as having to adapt to the requirements of the technology. Indeed, humans in the industrialized, Taylorized workplace were viewed as extensions of the machine.

In contrast to viewing workers as automatons, Maslow considered that employees aspired to more than simply working for paychecks. After “lower-order needs” for security were satisfied, the design and management of the workplace would have to change so as to become a locus for human development and to promote the possibilities for self-actualization. Maslow viewed individuals holistically—as full humans in all their complexity—rather than simply reducing them to interchangeable “hired hands” designed to perform specific tasks and only those tasks. Such a radical reformulation of human needs, and indeed of the nature of the relationship between work and humans, turned the entire Taylorist mentality upside down, creating a major paradigm shift (at least in theory) toward the way in which the workplace was conceptualized. The shift is parallel to the revolution in psychology ushered in by humanistic psychology, which focused away from pathology and the achievement of “normalcy” to the exploration of the farther reaches of human nature and exceptional functioning.

The inspired focus of Maslow and humanistic psychology can be seen in the recent attention to enhancing creativity and innovation in industry. **Synergy**, a term that Maslow borrowed from Margaret Mead, is now a popular buzzword and captures the potential of a creative and mutually beneficial collaboration. The importance of listening in managerial communication, a point stressed in an often cited article by Rogers and Roethlisberger (1982), is still at the heart of most work on communication and keeps being resurrected in a variety of forms. Maslow’s stress on holistic and organic ways of thinking rather than atomistic ones predates the trend toward “systems thinking” in management.
But whereas these areas are still vibrant, the impact of humanistic psychology has been lessened as references to the originators of these concepts have become fewer. This is also due to the fact that fewer original contributions from new generations of humanistic psychologists have appeared, and the theoretical innovations and contributions in humanistic psychology have diminished considerably since the heyday of Maslow, May, and Rogers. Humanistic psychologists can both reexplore the contributions of seminal figures such as Maslow, Rogers, and May—addressing both their strengths and their weaknesses in the organizational context—and develop innovative new theoretical perspectives explicitly based in humanistic psychology. As we will see, the concerns addressed by humanistic psychology and the existential-humanistic tradition are very much at the forefront of social and economic trends today, so a vital contribution remains to be made.

Maslow (1965/1998) offered a very important and still neglected insight regarding the importance of searching for the “far goals” of the enterprise:

I’ve seen very few of these managers or writers on organizational theory who have the courage to think in far terms, in broad-range terms, in utopian terms, in value terms. Generally, they feel they’re being hard-headed if they use as the criteria of management success or of healthy organization criteria of smaller labor turnover or less absenteeism or better morale or more profit and the like. But in so doing, they neglect the whole Eupsychian growth and self-actualization and personal development side of the enterprise. (p. 49)

In many respects, Maslow’s work on the need to search for these metagoals for the enterprise was extremely prescient given that a number of progressive organizations are starting to engage their members in developing long-range and shared visions for the enterprises (Porras & Collins, 1997; Senge, 1990). Indeed, Maslow’s call for searching for the higher purposes of the enterprise is now actually being practiced through many of the popular “large-group intervention” methods in organizational development (Bunker & Alban, 1996). The “search conference” (Emery & Purser, 1996), for example, is designed to elicit “ideal-seeking” behavior in organizational participants as articulate images of the most desirable futures for their enterprises. The popular work of Peter Senge, Otto Scharmer, and their associates explicitly address the more psychological and even spiritual dimensions of work but bypasses the humanistic psychology literature almost entirely.

IMPORTING HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

The works of the pioneers of humanistic psychology, such as Maslow and Rogers, have been imported into the theory and practice of management and organizational development. But this process has not been unproblematic. Rogers, for example, was concerned from the start that his work might be trivialized, and Robert Kramer (1995) showed convincingly that it has been. For Rogers, active listening was not a tool to improve productivity; instead, it was a way of establishing a different type of relationship between managers and workers, one that was authentic, nondirective, and a way of releasing the creativity of the relationship rather than a way of exercising supervisory power over someone. As Kramer aptly pointed out, in many cases the idea has been taken to mean that listening can be a way of establishing control, maintaining managerial prerogatives, and engaging in inauthentic “image management.” In so doing, it gives the appearance of listening without actually
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The creative fire of transformation is quickly extinguished to the ashes of manipulation and technique. The technique is encapsulated within the limits and safe boundaries of instrumentalized discourse, which is narrowly concerned with finding the best and most efficient means of achieving some preestablished managerial end.

The implications of Maslow’s thinking about organizations, and the implications of the application of humanistic psychology to organizations, go far beyond the application of tools and techniques. They require the development of an entire management philosophy that goes radically against the grain of Taylorism, as we have seen. For humanistic psychology to make any profound inroads into organizations, it also must address the relationship of the human side of enterprise with the technical and bottom-line concerns. But it cannot pit itself against those concerns either. It cannot isolate itself in a separate compartment, with values that are not somehow reconciled with the economic survival of the organization. In other words, “hard” and “soft” values must be coherent so as to avoid the typical pitfall whereby the soft humanistic concern operates within the context of rational-economic strategies that permit the soft only as a form of concession to “the human factor” rather than as an essential part of organizational life and performance. And this stance requires a fundamental rethinking of the nature of the enterprise, one that does not subsume human issues under rational-economic concerns and, therefore, eliminate all organizational development programs, for example, at the first sign of economic trouble.

This brings us to the larger issue of the trivialization of important concepts derived from humanistic psychology. Transformational theories and concepts become trivialized when they are reduced to being merely tools, techniques, or rhetorical slogans, especially when they are used unreflectively within organizational settings. Rather than promoting an honest, reflective, and open inquiry into the nature of organizational problems or human possibilities for self-actualization, doing so, let alone exploring the profound implications of what Rogers intended.

Although Rogers intended active listening to be a transformative vehicle for moving toward greater democracy, participation, and actualization, in actual practice active listening was reduced to yet another management “tool” in the service of maintaining and upholding existing power relations and bureaucratic organizational structures. Within this context, it became almost impossible to truly practice active listening given that the fundamental presuppositions regarding information flow, roles, and power differentials were not addressed. Active listening, therefore, had implications that went far beyond a mere technique or a psychologizing of relationships. The humanizing aspects of organizational development and human relations programs did not explicitly or even implicitly address the nature of authority, the business environment, organizational structures, and other factors that went beyond the scope of psychology. Even many well-meaning efforts to apply active listening were often ineffective when they occurred within an inhospitable organizational context and in conjunction with inconsistent norms and organizational structures that were antithetical to the idea of developing greater individual creativity and responsibility. It should come as no surprise why so many humanistic organizational development initiatives at the microlevel were doomed to failure from the start.

This situation suggests that the field of organizational development and the implications of humanistic psychology need to move beyond the level of tactical intervention and take on a strategic role as part of a larger integrated management philosophy and organizational theory. This task
requires a transdisciplinary approach that is contextual, multidimensional, and transformative in the sense of making explicit and challenging fundamental assumptions. Already, some of the so-called best companies to work for, such as Southwest Airlines, SAS, and Semco (in Brazil), are demonstrating the power of “putting people first” while thriving economically.

RESEARCH

In the realm of organizational development theory and practice, Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) questioned a fundamental premise of action research, arguing that the behavioral sciences had ignored the potential to tap the “generative capacity” of theory. Inspired by humanistic psychology, they stated,

If we acknowledge Abraham Maslow’s (1968) admonition that true science begins and ends in wonder, then we immediately shed light on why action research has failed to produce innovative theory capable of inspiring the imagination, commitment, and passionate dialogue required for consensual re-ordering of social conduct. (p. 131)

They went on to develop a new organizational development intervention method, “appreciative inquiry,” in what amounts to an alternative to the traditional problem-finding/problem-solving orientation of the action research method. However, Cooperrider and Srivastva argued that appreciative inquiry is not just another organizational development method or technique but rather is more akin to a “mode of inquiry” that is oriented to eliciting fresh and imaginative possibilities for organizing, in their words, “images of what might be.” Their approach, which pays a great deal of attention to the socially constructed nature of organized meanings, could be seen as an emergent process of dialogical “self-system actualization.”

Qualitative research methodologies drawing on humanistic psychology that stress the value of individual experience, subjectivity, and meaning making are making significant inroads. They include collaborative, cooperative, and heuristic research methods, drawing on phenomenology pioneered by Peter Reason, John Rowan, John Seely-Brown, William Torbert, Clark Moustakas, and others. Here, the role of the researcher becomes participative and collaborative rather than that of an outsider manipulating variables “objectively” in imitation of the methods of natural science. The purpose of these methodologies is to gain an understanding of the lived experience of the coresearchers rather than to quantify and measure. With the new emphasis on customization rather than mass production, and with an emerging focus on individualized management rather than on generic approaches, an understanding of the subjective experience of managers, workers, and customers will become increasingly important. Qualitative approaches grounded in humanistic psychology are set to make an important contribution to the development of new knowledge in business.

THE FUTURE

Humanistic psychology has always focused on organic holistic approaches and understandings of the human. Therefore, it is surprising that there has been little (if any) attempt to reconcile and synergize humanistic psychology with general systems theory and its offshoots (e.g., systems dynamics, critical systems theory, living systems theory, soft systems theory), beyond the work of Krippner, Ruttenber, Engelman, and Granger (1985), who wrote an exploratory article addressing the potential implications of this
Humanistic Psychology in the Workplace

The whole person, the integration of reason and emotion, and real lived experience, as opposed to rational-economic abstraction, offers further opportunities for the development of an alternative, more inclusive perspective on organizational life.

The relationship between the individual and the organization is a further issue that needs to be addressed by humanistic psychology and organizational development. Revisiting this thorny philosophical issue should add important debate and new theoretical developments to humanistic psychology. Historically, humanistic psychology practitioners and some theorists who have been psychologists rather than practitioners in the field of organizational development have resisted any attempts to develop a theoretical perspective on the individual that explicitly recognizes social systems as anything but forces militating against the individual’s authenticity and creativity and have viewed the individual as defining himself or herself in opposition to social forces (Montuori & Purser, 1995, 1996).

Humanistic psychology theorists would benefit from the lessons learned in organizational development, starting with the work of Lewin, to reassess the nature of this relationship, explore its potential for creativity and human betterment, and develop a theoretical perspective that recognizes the socially embedded nature of the individual without relinquishing the vitally important elements of choice, authenticity, and personal growth. Organizational development would benefit from a closer look at the focus of humanistic psychology on precisely those elements and from stressing the importance of human dignity in the face of potential manipulation and the trivialization of concepts such as creativity and growth strictly for the benefit of the organization. Efforts in this direction are being made by, among others, Ogilvy (2002) and Spretnak (2011).
The work of Pauchant and Associates (1995) on “organizational existentialism” has been a particularly intriguing development. It explicitly grounds thinking about, and acting in, organizations in humanistic-existential psychology and philosophy. In this collection of essays, Pauchant and Associates addressed topics ranging from the legacy of Otto Rank and Victor Frankl to trenchant critiques of the concept of “excellence,” which, interestingly enough, they traced back to the influence (and misreading) of Ernest Becker in the classic work by Peters and Waterman (1982). Of particular importance here is challenging fundamental assumptions in the management literature from a humanistic-existentialist perspective, addressing the philosophical underpinnings of the positions, and challenging the humanistic rhetoric. This is a particularly welcome perspective precisely because, as we have seen, there is so much use made of overtly humanistic language in much management literature. In the case of the “excellence myth,” it is a rhetoric designed to appeal to “heroic” instincts, to the “be all that you can be” mentality channeled into the workplace, and to the striving for an unattainable “excellence.”

The purpose of this critique of excellence is not simply to illustrate a philosophical misreading or, for that matter, to expose the potentially manipulative aspects of the rhetoric. It is also to illustrate how such philosophically problematic positions eventually may be self-defeating and hurt not only the “human side of enterprise” but also the bottom line. Here is the important difference in the thrust of organizational existentialism. As Pauchant and Associates (1995) carefully pointed out, their objective was not only to address the human side of enterprise but also to contextualize it within organizational realities. Their work points to an exciting application of humanistic-existential thought that grounds it fully in its historical and philosophical complexity and in the realities of organizational life. This would place it at the heart of an emerging trend in what can only be called “practical philosophy,” or the application of philosophical insights to everyday life and, consequently, also to work.

Social trends indicating a renewed interest in meaning and values and a move toward a “postmaterialist” society (see Inglehart, 1997) suggest that the time is right for a new wave of humanistic psychology and existential-humanistic theorizing and practice. In a postmaterialist economy, concepts such as “meaning,” particularly in the context of work, become increasingly important and have far-reaching consequences not only for areas from mental health to motivation but also for the potential emergence of new values and new ways of working and organizing.

The emerging literature on, and interest in, creativity has explored how in an ever-changing, uncertain, postmaterialist, complex environment individuals need to become more flexible, adaptive, and creative, and also want to explore new identities and possibilities. Once again, Maslow’s work is significant here. Maslow (1959) made a useful distinction between special-talent and self-actualizing creativity. Special-talent creativity refers to creativity that manifests in the form of a specific gift or talent. It is most clearly exemplified in the musical prodigy who can play piano beautifully at age 7 or the individual with remarkable mathematical skills. There are people who have a special talent in one specific area, whether painting, singing, or chemistry. Many of the creative geniuses of historical record, such as Picasso or Mozart, were special-talent creatives. Self-actualizing creatives do not necessarily have one overriding talent, although they may. Creativity for them is more “distributed.” It manifests throughout their whole life rather
than exclusively in a talent in one particular area. Self-actualizing creativity is an attitude that sees the whole of life as an opportunity to be creative and a process of creating oneself and one’s life. Their creativity is channeled into their self-actualization. Illustrating this emerging trend, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2008) writes that

our lives, whether we know it or not and whether we relish the news or bewail it, are works of art. To live our lives as the art of life demands, we must, just like the artists of any art, set ourselves challenges which are (at the moment of their setting, at any rate) difficult to confront point-blank. We must choose targets that are (at the moment of their choosing, at any rate) well beyond our reach, and standards of excellence that vexingly seem to stay stubbornly far above our ability (as already achieved, at any rate) to match whatever we do or may be doing. We need to attempt the impossible. (p. 20)

In the workplace, this trend is seen more specifically in the use of coaches and workshops to help individuals develop the necessary “soft skills,” but it also appears in the broader context of questions regarding what one is to do with one’s life, whether work is truly satisfying, articulating and living one’s values, and so on.

New technology in forms ranging from social media to the cell phone must also be addressed. Our global interconnectedness, for example, has the potential to create a global village and bring people from different cultures and with different belief systems together in dialogue. At the same time, that very connectivity can be used as a way of ensuring that a worker is never outside the sphere of influence of the organization, with a consequent blurring of spatio-temporal boundaries. Workers can literally be “on call” 24 hours a day, with substantial potential for exploitative practices.

Humanistic psychology, because of its existential-phenomenological tradition, is in a unique position to explore the lived experience of work today during such an incredible period of transition. Because of its strong philosophical roots (e.g., the works of Martin Heidegger and William Barrett on technology), humanistic psychology can be interpretive, descriptive, and critical and can offer potential alternatives grounded in humanistic principles (Lanier, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Humanistic psychology has made significant contributions to the discourse and practices of organizational behavior and development. The opportunity has arisen to make further contributions in this area. As we have seen, social and business trends point to a new interest in and relevance for the concerns addressed by the humanistic and existential traditions. For these contributions to be made, and for humanistic psychologists to seize this opportunity, we make the following suggestions.

First, reexamine the history of humanistic psychology ideas in the workplace—their applicability, their trivialization, and their philosophical perspective. Maslow and Rogers both were concerned with the possibility of trivialization and exclusively experience-focused anti-intellectualism. We therefore urge organizational development and humanistic psychology theorists and practitioners to study this history and return to the original works of the founders of humanistic psychology—Maslow, Rogers, May, and others—to reacquaint themselves with the depth and scope of their work. We also suggest the need to go into the philosophical precursors of these authors—Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard,
Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others—and assess their contributions in light of the present economic and social environment. In an age when much of the discourse is driven by neuroscience, mathematical sociology, and similar approaches, the importance of articulating the voice of humanistic psychology and its philosophical perspective, with its deep concern for the lived experience of individuals, cannot be overestimated.

Second, humanistic psychologists must contextualize efforts at organizational change and personal development in larger social and economic environments. One of the problems with early human relations efforts was their separation from the economic and organizational structure and their bureaucratic dimensions. Following Maslow’s stress on organic and systemic thinking, humanistic psychology practitioners and theorists must become transdisciplinary and aware of the embeddedness of individual and psychological change in large systems that may, more often than not, mitigate against the changes that are being suggested and sought.

Third, humanistic psychologists need to inject theoretical innovation explicitly grounded in the roots of humanistic psychology. Much of humanistic psychology’s contribution to organizational and behavior and development discourse has been diluted beyond recognition, with little or no reference to, or at times even awareness of, its sources. This suggests not only the extent of humanistic psychology’s inroads into the discourse but also the manner in which it has become marginalized, to some extent, as the sources were discarded. Humanistic psychology needs an injection of new theoretical perspectives that address some of its achievements and shortcomings and also some of the inherent tensions in humanistic psychology that have been continually problematic and have prevented it from making more powerful contributions both to psychology and in the workplace.

Fourth, humanistic psychology needs to develop a more nuanced approach to the relationship between the individual and society. While retaining its focus on the lived experience of individuals, particularly in what is being called a “networked society,” it is becoming increasingly necessary for humanistic psychology to understand how this lived experience occurs in a network of relationships and in a larger planetary context. Humanistic psychologists can begin to dialogue with social constructionists and complexity theorists to develop a less hyper-individualistic approach. As the discourse of creativity, for instance, moves toward a more interpersonal focus, with more attention to group creativity, humanistic psychologists can avoid the futile dichotomy of individualism versus collectivism. The work of Frank Barron (1995), whose last book was appropriately titled No Rootless Flower: Towards an Ecology of Creativity, made considerable steps in that direction, as has that of Ogilvy (2002), who argued for the development of a “social existentialism.”

The opportunities for humanistic psychology to make sizeable contributions in the workplace are considerable. Humanistic psychology, with its rich history and philosophical depth, has a lot to offer as we grapple with the complexities and anxieties of what has been called a “liquid” or “post-normal age” (Bauman, 2008; Sardar, 2010). The challenge for humanistic psychology will be to move forward by returning to the philosophical depth of inquiry that informed its founders, to engage with other perspectives in ways that are both critical and constructive, and to re-create itself for the 21st century.
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Part VI

EPILOGUE: LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD
The following are three intimate reflections on this volume. In keeping with the humanistic spirit, these reflections are personal yet shared, distinctive yet collectively appreciated. Although somewhat unsure about how best to close this volume, we ultimately allied with the personal—as we encourage you, the reader, to do as you engage our meditations.

KIRK J. SCHNEIDER

We remain at an incredible threshold in our discipline, and this volume is a direct reflection of that crossing point. The question is no longer whether humanistic psychology will be at the vanguard of this new and evolving psychological epoch but how and to what extent.

The term humanism in psychology continues to be anachronistic. As this volume suggests, and as many humanists insist, psychology and humanism should be synonymous, just as the “science of persons” should be synonymous with the “science of behavior” (see Schneider, 2011). Unfortunately, these respective standpoints still do not coalesce—and they are not even compatible in selected quarters—hence the necessity for this volume. Yet the signs of a humanistic revival are stronger than they have been in half a century, and the courtship with psychological reductionism (or, on the other hand, extreme psychological relativism) is foun-dering. Countertrends notwithstanding, the number of decidedly humanistic developments in the profession of psychology over the past decade is remarkable. To recap from the pages of this volume, consider the following:

Textbooks. The American Psychological Association (APA) published two unprecedented textbooks on humanistic therapy (Cain & Seeman, 2002) and existential therapy (Schneider & Krug, 2010), along with the publication of a companion video series on the topics called Psychotherapy Over Time (Cain, 2010; Schneider, 2009). The APA also published two major texts featuring humanistic philosophy and social psychology within the same year (Bohart, Held, Mendelowitz, & Schneider, 2012; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). Finally, the fact that this Handbook itself is going into a second edition speaks boldly about the continued impact of humanistic psychology.
Psychotherapy. Humanistic principles of practice are having a sustained and growing influence on conventional psychotherapeutic theory, training, and research (see Chapter 26, the special section on “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion”; Chapter 29, “The Person of the Therapist: One Therapist’s Journey to Relationship” by Barry L. Duncan; Chapter 38, “Humanistic-Experimental Therapies in the Era of Managed Care” by Jeanne C. Watson and Arthur Bohart; Chapter 39, “An Existential-Integrative Approach to Experiential Liberation” by Kirk J. Schneider; and Chapter 41, “Cultivating Psychotherapist Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs” by J. Fraser Pierson, Orah Krug, Jeffrey G. Sharp, and Troy Piwowarski, this volume). This influence is intensifying in spite of, and perhaps even in light of, the countervailing forces of therapeutic manualization and standardization. The latest therapy guidelines from the APA (APA Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice, 2006) explicitly recognize the value of personal-contextual factors across all bona fide therapies, along with the relevance of qualitative investigative modalities.

Humanistic Activism. As Chapter 4, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements” by Louis Hoffman, Heatherlyn Cleare-Hoffman, and Theopia Jackson; Chapter 6, “Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society” by Kirk J. Schneider; Chapter 26, the special section on “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion”; Chapter 37, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World” by Maureen O’Hara; Chapter 46, “Humanistic Psychology and Social Action” by Donadrian Rice; and Chapter 47, “Humanistic Psychology in the Workplace” by Alfonso Montuori and Ronald Purser (this volume) have noted, humanistic psychology continues to play a critical role in social activism—from advocacy for social justice and multiculturalism to struggles for the well-being of the environment, the work setting, and interpersonal relationships. Recently, humanistic psychology has also played a major role in efforts to reform the new Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (fifth edition; DSM-V). These efforts have been particularly vigorous with regard to (a) DSM-V’s lowering of diagnostic thresholds and (b) its incorporation of dubious diagnoses (see Chapter 15, “Humanistic Neuropsychology: The Implications of Neurophenomenology for Psychology” by Brent Dean Robbins and Susan Gordon, this volume; Clay, 2012).

Humanistic Research. Thanks in large part to the advocacy of humanistic psychology, Division 5 of the APA (the Division of Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics) has for the first time adopted a Section for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology. As the methodology section of this volume has illustrated, qualitative research is now becoming a frequent complement for an array of psychological investigations and is key to the advancement of our profession.

Humanistic Multiculturalism. There is a mounting interest in humanistic theory, practice, and research both within diversified segments of the humanistic community and in the world at large. As pointed out in Chapter 41, “Cultivating Psychotherapist Artistry: Model Existential-Humanistic Training Programs” by J. Fraser Pierson, Orah Krug, Jeffrey G. Sharp, and Troy Piwowarski, Saybrook University, the Existential-Humanistic Institute (EHI), and the International Institute for Humanistic Studies (IIHS), all of which are in the San Francisco Bay Area, are exchanging
humanistic and existential practices with a growing regional and worldwide audience. Recently, EHI, in partnership with Saybrook University, has launched a certificate program on the foundations of existential-humanistic practice, and Saybrook University has begun an existential-humanistic exchange program with China. These are some of the first attempts to formalize such training on a national and international scale. In recent years, moreover, the Society of Humanistic Psychology (Division 32 of the American Psychological Association) has made a concerted effort to include and recruit a more diverse constituency both at its annual meetings and through its journals and governing board. Finally, humanistic and existential psychotherapy training is being conducted on a widening international stage. Among the most active regions engaging in such training are the United Kingdom, Central and East Europe, Eastern Asia, and Latin America (see Chapter 4, “Humanistic Psychology and Multiculturalism: History, Current Status, and Advancements” by Louis Hoffman, Heatherlyn Cleare-Hoffman, and Theopia Jackson, and Chapter 26, the special section “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion,” this volume). The first major international existential psychology conference took place in Nanjing, China, in April 2010; the second was held in Shanghai, China, in May 2012; and a third is slated for June 2014, also in China. The first World Congress of Existential Psychotherapy is slated for May 2015 in London. To repeat, the revival of humanism is a significant, worldwide development; it is deep, and it is of major consequence to our profession.

**Humanism and Positive Psychology.** With its stress on the exalted, ennobling, and inspiring dimensions of human functioning, positive psychology is forging an unprecedented opportunity for bridge building among humanistic and more mainstream psychologists. Although divisions between humanistic and positive psychology remain, this potential bridge building could bring powerful new investigative tools to neglected areas of psychological study—areas such as wisdom, creativity, peak performance, psychotherapy, peace, ecology, and holistic health (see Chapter 6, “Rediscovering Awe: A New Front in Humanistic Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Society” by Kirk J. Schneider; Chapter 10, “Humanistic Psychology and Ecology” by Marc Pilisuk and Melanie Joy; Chapter 11, “Humanistic Psychology and Peace” by Marc Pilisuk; Chapter 12, “Two Noble Insurgencies: Creativity and Humanistic Psychology” by Mike Arons and Ruth Richards; Chapter 26, the special section “The Renewal of Humanism in Psychotherapy: A Roundtable Discussion”; Chapter 37, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World” by Maureen O’Hara; Chapter 42, “Humanistic Psychology, Mind–Body Medicine, and Whole-Person Health Care” by Eleanor Criswell and Ilene Serlin; Chapter 43, “Romantic Love as a Path: Tensions Between Erotic Desire and Security Needs” by G. Kenneth Bradford; and Chapter 47, “Humanistic Psychology in the Workplace” by Alfonso Montuori and Ronald Purser, this volume; see also Resnick, Warmoth, & Serlin, 2000; Wong, 2012).

Recently, I have called for the equivalence of a Manhattan Project on behalf of humanistic depth psychology (Hartmann, 2013; see also Schneider, 2004, 2013). What I mean by this is that if we are to survive—let alone thrive—as a species, we are going to need to mobilize a massive psychological shift. The world is in many ways at a tipping point with regard to environmental degradation, the proliferation of weaponry, the spread of terrorism, the political domination of corporations, and the divisiveness among classes, races, and ethnicities, and the question is who or what will
lead us in the battle to combat these menaces. Many traditional areas of psychology are quite restrictive, as O’Hara (Chapter 37, “Humanistic Psychology’s Transformative Role in a Threatened World,” this volume) has pointed out, and this narrowness is not exclusive of humanistic psychology. However, with its stress on holism and social justice, humanistic psychology it seems to me is in a prime position to address the world’s encroaching menaces. In addition to all that’s been elucidated in this volume, I would like to see humanistic principles of dialogue and responsibility applied to the legislative and diplomatic settings. Personally, I would feel much more comfortable if world leaders were supported to engage in the kind of experiential, person-to-person dialogues outlined by Rogers, Buber, and others at key junctures of our humanistic history. Such experiential engagements would be facilitated by humanistic-oriented, culturally attuned mediators and should become standard as supplements to all major deliberative encounters. We simply know too much now about the power of person-to-person dialogue to exempt it as a standard component of conflict resolution at multiple levels of social engagement.

I would also like to see humanistic depth principles revived at the level of public mental health. Why can’t we appropriate even a fraction of the trillions we spend on defense contracts, expansions of prisons, and exorbitant investments in psychiatric drugs to fund longer-term, relational therapy to the millions in our society (and others) who desperately lack such optimal resources? How many despairing, addictive, and violence-prone lives are we neglecting because our mental health systems too often offer short-term fixes rather than the fuller regimes that we know have more staying power and that promote greater life satisfaction? These are questions that humanistic psychology and its branches of existential, transpersonal, and constructivist psychotherapy are in key positions to address.

To sum, humanistic psychology remains, as Taylor and Martin (Chapter 2, “Humanistic Psychology at the Crossroads”) put it, at a crossroads; and so does the profession of psychology. The question is, will these fields find ways in which to cooperate, to transcend their parochialism, and to link their traditions, or will they continue to clash, to go their separate ways, and to further subject the profession to impoverishment and eventual co-optation?

For humanistic psychology, this question rides on two essential tracks: (1) the willingness to bolster its scholarly output and (2) the willingness to further articulate its scientific perspective (particularly as it relates to social policy). For organized psychology, the question is one of integrity. Will organized psychology return to its original (humanistic) inquiries (what does it mean to be fully experientially human, and how does that understanding illuminate the vital or fulfilled life?), or will it be co-opted by current fashions (e.g., biologism, technicism, nihilism) and atrophy as a result?

I hope that we have shown in this volume that a full and human psychology is an experiential psychology, a psychology that embraces all dimensions of human awareness and subawareness but particularly those that have meaning, impact, and significance for each given person. The challenge is to further articulate that meaningful resonance—to weave out of it a rich and subtly nuanced theory, philosophy, or guideline—and to apply that understanding to a diverse and hungering populace. This is a populace that has been bombarded by cosmetic fixes but that yearns, perhaps more than ever, for existential sustenance. Have we responded to that yearning in this volume? I emphatically believe that we have. Although “sustained good work” needs to continue, we have shown that excellent work already has been done and deserves to be acknowledged. Furthermore, we have shown that humanistic psychology...
is a rich mélange in which joy and sorrow, the personal and interpersonal, and the finite and infinite all have their place and in which “self”-actualization (i.e., the actualization of intimate capacities) is a general ethic. Can the ideals of humanistic psychology be achieved? Is society ready for those ideals? I am not sure. But what I am sure of and share exuberantly with this volume is that the ideals must be engaged.

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J. FRASER PIERNON

In the “Epilogue and Prologue” to Challenges of Humanistic Psychology,1 Bugental (1967) defined the original meaning of psychology as “knowledge about the soul” (p. 346). Today, psychology is likely to be defined as “the science of mind and behavior” (Mish, 1988, p. 951) or “the study of mind and behavior” (APA, 2013), with the accent on understanding and modifying behavior or “medicalizing” the mind. The quest for ever-increasing depth and breadth of understanding of the psyche—“the human soul, spirit, or mind” (Flexner & Hauck, 1987, p. 1650)—remains at the heart of our discipline but, I believe, is nowhere more eloquently celebrated in theory, research, and practice than among those who embrace the existential and humanistic perspectives in psychology. The contributors to the present leading-edge volume give ample evidence of this assertion, as did the founders more than 50 years ago.

Humanistic psychology once again is at a significant turning point in its development as a uniquely identified, valued perspective within psychology. As Kirk Schneider points out in his closing comments, there are numerous indicators that herald a renaissance for humanistic psychology—a renewal of interest and activity within the humanistic community around the world and an increased receptivity within the field of psychology, particularly with regard to the practice of psychotherapy. This volume is both a reflection of this revitalization and a stimulus to its maximum flowering. Collectively, the authors of the chapters in the volume articulate what exemplifies humanistic psychology at this time in its history. It is a dynamic, living perspective and, as such, unfolds in resonance with the global consciousness of our era as expressed by its practitioners. We need to continually reassess—to consider what we stand for in addition to what we protest. Just as an individual psychotherapist benefits from establishing and continuously refining his or her “pou sto” or place to stand in terms of theory and practice (Bugental, 1999, p. 85; see also Bugental, 1987), so too does the perspective as a whole. It is my hope, as the second edition of this volume comes to fruition, that we unite as a worldwide humanistic community—and discipline of psychology—joined by our investment in understanding and “prizing” (Rogers, 1980) ourselves as “human beings” with a commitment to promoting “human becoming.”2

Investment in the study of human being and commitment to human becoming are expressed throughout this volume but are particularly apparent in Part IV, “Humanistic Applications to Practice,” and Part V, “Humanistic Applications to Broader Settings.” We now know that conceptualizations of the vital and fulfilled life first bloom within the context of relationship and culture. The universal culture that we share as members of the human species combines with the ecological, national, regional, gender, racial, and ethnic cultures in which we are socialized. All play roles (see Chapter 30, “Existential Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Courage to Be an Existential Counselor” by Vontress and Epp, this volume).

I believe that Maslow’s (1967) call for “resacralization” (p. 284) is being heard. As he described it, when we are open to sacralization, we see each person we encounter in context and relationship as unique and intrinsically precious, as woman with a capital W and man with a capital M (my supposition is that if Maslow were alive today he would recognize all gender identities). We do not forfeit the sacred, poetic, and eternal.

Maslow’s (1967) B-motivation, or the “being” values (p. 281; see also Maslow, 1978), guides humanistic psychology now as it did during the early years. A yen to foster the “growth” needs (i.e., metaneeds or actualizing needs), such as aliveness, richness,
meaningfulness, playfulness, and lovingness (Goble, 1970, p. 50), radiates throughout the chapters in this volume. The quest is to know humankind “as is” and also to know humankind “under the auspices of eternity” (Spinoza, cited in Maslow, 1967, p. 284), under the auspices of awe.

Some 30 years ago, one aspect of being fully human was “to have concerns that extend beyond self and immediate family to the nation and all humankind” (Simpson, 1977, p. 76). Today, our concerns extend to all sentient creatures and life forms with which we share our planet. This contemporary addendum is not only altruistic but also anchored in our innermost need to “discover” ourselves through our relations with those representing “other nations,” as the naturalist Henry Beston (1928/2003) put it. Reflecting on her encounters with free-ranging dolphins, Frohoff (1998) articulated the significant personal dividends resulting from this ethic when she disclosed that “it is from being in the presence of another species that I have learned how to be more ‘human’” (p. 79). A similar observation was made by Akerman (1995), who poignantly stated, “There are wonderful creatures that have roamed the earth much longer than we, creatures that not only are worthy of our respect but [also] could teach us about ourselves” (p. xi). More pointedly, Akerman reminded us that we need to take our turns “on morning watch” so that we may save our astoundingly biodiverse planet and ourselves (1995, p. xi). I am grateful to Pilisuk and Joy (Chapter 10, “Humanistic Psychology and Ecology,” this volume) for representing the humanistic perspective in this urgent worldwide human concern. As Campbell put it so cogently, “Today, the planet is the only proper ‘in-group’” (cited in Osbon, 1991, p. 25).

Since its coalescence as the “third force” nearly six decades ago, humanistic psychology has identified its central mission as “seek[ing] to bring psychology back to its source, to the psyche” (Matson, 1978, p. 23; see also Chapter 5, “The Search for the Psyche: A Human Science Perspective” by Giorgi, this volume). It is a mission of almost mythic proportions. Numerous publications, conferences, experiential workshops, and academic courses presently associated with humanistic psychology document our valiant efforts and successes in this direction.

There is yet another way in which we honor and actualize our central mission, and I wish to close by highlighting it. This path draws on the wellspring of the subjective realm within each of us and embraces the feminine. We bring psychology back to its source by how we live our lives, how we cultivate our capacity for presence and attunement to the earth and to her creatures, and how we celebrate our existence (our own and as a species), as well as by our openness to the cosmos.

It is with this awe and reverence that Walt Whitman celebrates existence and the profound mystery of the soul (psyche)—the animating force in life. Whitman’s words and imagery in “Grand Is the Seen” from Leaves of Grass resonate within me. They are timeless and convey a passionate sacred sense of soul and a powerful way of being alive in the world:

Grand is the seen, the light, to me—grand are the sky and stars,

Grand is the earth, and grand are lasting time and space,

And grand their laws, so multiform, puzzling, evolutionary;

But grander far the unseen soul of me, comprehending, endowing all those,

Lighting the light, the sky and stars, delving the earth, sailing the sea,

(What were all those, indeed, without thee, unseen soul? Of what amount without thee?)
More evolutionary, vast, puzzling, O my soul!

More multiform far—more lasting thou than they. (Whitman, n.d., p. 422)

Whitman is remembered as a man who had “largeness of view” (Trowbridge, 1902/2000, p. 18). He sought to bring nature, “especially nature’s living masterpiece” (humankind), into his poetry with unflinching realism yet imbued with optimism, love, faith, and pervasive sense of awe (Trowbridge, 1902/2000, p. 18). Humanistic psychologists also have such “largeness of view.” It is this abundant vision that first captured my imagination when I was introduced to the work of the founders (e.g., Maslow, Bugental, Buhler, Jourard, May, Rogers, Sutich) and other depth-oriented champions of psyche (e.g., Frank, Frankl, Fromm, Hillman, Jung, Laing, Moustakes, Perls, Yalom, Szasz), and it profoundly stirs it now as we celebrate the inspiring contributions represented in this volume.

NOTES

1. New Challenges of Humanistic Psychology was the original working title for the first edition of The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology: Leading Edges in Theory, Research, and Practice. It was inspired by Jim Bugental’s first book, Challenges of Humanistic Psychology, published in 1967. The idea for the book emerged serendipitously, as do many amazing projects. It was ca. 1996, and I was searching for a central text for the humanistic psychology course I offered regularly at Southern Oregon University. Just before leaving Jim’s monthly, 3-hour case consultation group, I happened to casually mention my dilemma. Almost instantly, Jim remarked that he had just received the publication rights for Challenges of Humanistic Psychology as it was out of print and suggested that we embark on an updated edition. Imagine my surprise and wonder at his invitation! We launched New Challenges with requests for current pieces from the original contributors, who almost to a person responded in the affirmative. Those who declined did so because of retirement or health reasons. Fast forward several years in the book’s passage from conception to actualization. As Jim’s health and energy declined, we knew we needed a new captain with the vision and heart to take the project’s helm. Kirk Schneider came immediately to mind. In keeping with the sense of awe that has surrounded the book since its formative period, Kirk immediately said “yes,” and off we went close hauled, sails full-and-by (the fastest point of sail); a spirited, deeply rewarding adventure. Jim maintained his presence as the sailing master on our first voyage, as he does forever in our hearts. I imagine Jim and Elizabeth would be thrilled to see the evolution of the existential-humanistic perspective as showcased in this marvelous second edition of The Handbook of Humanistic Psychology.

2. I have adapted part of this phrase from Matson’s (1978) statement: “Humanistic psychology is not just the study of ‘human being’; it is a commitment to ‘human becoming’” (p. 23).

3. I am inspired by Williams’s (1994) concept of “embracing the bear” as embracing the feminine. Her definition of the feminine includes “a reconnection to the self, a commitment to the wildness within” (p. 53).
REFERENCES


I cherish an ideal of wholeness which I am convinced is a direction always to travel and never to attain. My inner sense is—when most fully understood—an aspect of that potential wholeness which is my true nature. (Bugental, 1976, p. 5)

We are in the early stages of one of the major revolutions of the human experience. Once [the person] felt he was at the center of the universe. Then science demonstrated the earth to be far from the center even of our own galaxy, showed the sun to be the center of the solar system, and in countless other ways dispossessed [the person] of his sense of specialness in the cosmos. It was important to our maturity that this occur. But now the time has come for [the person] to point to a new direction to a process that has overcarried. . . .

What I argue for is not a [person]-centered universe but [rather] a [person]-centered [person] in the universe. Let us come home to our own place in our own lives and set about making our destiny our own. (Bugental, 1967, p. 348)

Psychology emerged from the mother of disciplines, philosophy, anxious to join its earlier siblings and to demonstrate its maturity as an adult science. It has done so by avoiding subjectivity, which was deemed to be weak and not capable of standing on its own. Instead, persons were treated as interchangeable, and statistics came to match the laboratory as carrying the cachet of truth.

Much that is useful, interesting, and (to a limited extent) practical has been harvested from the objectified psychology. In this volume, we acknowledge these benefits and trust that they will continue to be attained. Concisely, this is not so much a competitive stance as a complementary one. However, it is a complementation that inevitably must, at times, identify itself by contrasts with the more popularly familiar conception of an impersonal and truly objectified psychology.

Humanistic or personalistic psychology must venture into that long-feared and avoided realm of the subjective. It is our contention that our discipline of psychology is incomplete so long as the actual lived experience of being human is neglected.

To be sure, the methods and values of much that is called psychology cannot be transferred intact to this new and challenging realm. Methods of inquiry, of data processing, and of generalizing all must be reexamined and, in some cases, reinvented.

It is evident that the prospect is a challenging one that will call for all our inventiveness and, importantly, our patience.

The task of any intellectual discipline is to distinguish that which is momentary and superficial from that which is fundamental and abiding. Subjective psychology seems, at first view, to offer few candidates to meet those criteria. It is our belief, however, that such an evaluation is too hasty and takes too little account of how much already has been established.

The chief vehicle of inquiring into the personal has been clinical theory and practice. By the very nature of the effort to respond to persons in emotional distress, we have had to attend to the subjective. Out of the wealth of clinical observations, we already have developed an abundant literature and a varied and creative praxis.

The authors of the chapters in this volume write from varied backgrounds but are united in their will to mine the aforementioned—to seek the fundamental and abiding—and to extend the range of our discipline.
REFERENCES


Appendix

Regionally Accredited Schools With Graduate Programs in Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology

The following is a limited sample of regionally accredited schools that have humanistic and transpersonal graduate programs in psychology. This list is intended to be a resource for the interested reader. It is neither evaluative nor exhaustive. For specific information regarding addresses, programs, and degrees, contact the individual school.

Western Region

Antioch University, Marina Del Rey, CA
Antioch University–Seattle, Seattle, WA
California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA
John F. Kennedy University Graduate School for Holistic Studies, Orinda, CA
John F. Kennedy University Graduate School of Professional Psychology, Orinda, CA
Naropa University, Boulder, CO
National University, San Diego, CA
Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, CA
Pepperdine University, Department of Psychology, Culver City, CA
Saybrook University, San Francisco, CA
Seattle University, Department of Psychology, Seattle, WA
Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA
Sophia University, Palo Alto, CA
Southwestern College, Department of Psychology, Santa Fe, NM
Midwestern Region

Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago, IL
Michigan School of Professional Psychology, Detroit, MI
Union Institute Graduate School, Cincinnati, OH
Walden University, Minneapolis, MN

Southern Region

State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA

Northeast Region

Duquesne University, Department of Psychology, Pittsburgh, PA
Goddard College, Plainfield, VT
Lesley College, Cambridge, MA
Norwich University, Montpelier, VT
Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA
Salve Regina University, Newport, RI
The Living Institute, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

SOURCE: All school listings are originally excerpted from Directory: Graduate Programs in Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology in North America (5th ed., 1996), published and distributed by the Department of Psychology, State University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA 30118. Copyright © 1981 by Division 32 of the American Psychological Association. All rights reserved. Several new schools have been added to and several deleted from the list based on the editors’ updated knowledge about their curricula. To the best of the editors’ knowledge, all schools listed were regionally accredited at the initial time of publication. For an update on this listing and on other humanistic-transpersonal psychology programs, contact the Department of Psychology at the State University of West Georgia or the Society for Humanistic Psychology of the American Psychological Association (Division 32).
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that they are dialectical thinkers and have to take that more seriously.

Ilene A. Serlin, PhD, BC-DMT, is a psychologist and registered dance/movement therapist in San Francisco and Marin County, California. She is a past president of San Francisco Psychological Association and of Division 32 (Humanistic Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. She is a fellow of the American Psychological Association. She has taught at Saybrook University, Lesley University, University of California at Los Angeles, the New York Gestalt Institute, and the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. She is the editor of Whole Person Healthcare (2007, three volumes) and has written more than 100 chapters and articles on body, art, and psychotherapy. She is on the editorial boards of PsycCritiques; American Dance Therapy Journal; Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Arts & Health: An International Journal of Research, Policy and Practice; Journal of Applied Arts and Health; and The Humanistic Psychologist. She has published numerous articles and chapters in existential-humanistic psychology, particularly in the areas of the psychology of women and psychology and the arts.

Nader Shabahangi is the CEO and cofounder of AgeSong. As CEO, Nader ensures that the company’s vision drives its decisions and plans for eldercare services. In 1992, he also founded the Pacific Institute, a nonprofit organization that defines its mission as one of helping elders live meaningful lives through an existential-humanistic approach to care. He is a frequent guest lecturer, including presenting at international conferences focusing on aging, counseling, and dementia. In 2003, he authored Faces of Aging, a book challenging stereotypical views of the aging process and growing old. In 2008, he coauthored Deeper Into the Soul, a book aimed at de-stigmatizing and
broadening our understanding of dementia. In 2009, he coauthored Conversations With Ed, a book challenging readers to look at dementia in different ways. In 2011, he wrote Elders Today, a photo essay describing the opportunities awaiting us in the second half of our lives. In the same year, he also edited Gems of Wisdom, a book of poems written largely by elders living in assisted living communities in California. Last year, he edited Encounters of a Real Kind, a compilation of stories highlighting his innovative Gero-Wellness program, where young psychotherapy interns work hand in hand with often very frail and forgetful elders in an elder community. He received his doctorate from Stanford University and is a licensed psychotherapist.

**Jeffrey G. Sharp** is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Oakland, California. His practice, which includes work with individuals, couples, families, and groups, is informed by existential-humanistic perspectives and attachment theory. He has taught at numerous graduate schools and provided clinical supervision at several clinics throughout the Bay Area. In recent years, he has provided Mental Health Services in Nicaragua as a volunteer with the Yale Alumni Service Corps. His teaching, writing, and research have focused on the training of psychotherapists, the importance of mentoring, and conducting psychotherapy with men. He particularly enjoys conducting therapy and consultation groups for therapists.

**Ernesto Spinelli, PhD**, is a fellow of the British Psychological Society and in 2000 was awarded the British Psychological Society Division of Counselling Psychology Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Advancement of the Profession. He is also a U.K. registered existential psychotherapist as well as a fellow and senior accredited member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. In 1999, he was awarded a personal chair as Professor of Psychotherapy, Counselling and Counselling Psychology. Currently, he is the director of ES Associates, an organization dedicated to the advancement of existential psychotherapy through specialist seminars and training programs. He is the author of numerous papers and texts, including The Interpreted World: An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology (Sage, 2005). The second edition of Practising Existential Psychotherapy: The Relational World (Sage, 2007), which has been widely acclaimed as a major contribution to the advancement of existential theory and practice, is being prepared for publication in 2014.

**E. Mark Stern**, a diplomate in clinical psychology, is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society. He is a clinical psychologist interested in the intersection of psychological inquiry and practice and religious experience. His edited collections, books, and essays have emphasized the experiential as a means of personal and scientific investigation. He is a past editor of The Psychotherapy Patient and editor emeritus of Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy. He was the first recipient of the Carl Rogers Award given by Division 32 of the American Psychological Association, and he is a professor emeritus at Iona College in New York.

**Sharon Stewart** has worked primarily with veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Her permanent home is in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She earned a master’s degree in psychology from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and a PsyD from The Colorado School of Professional Psychology.

**Robert D. Stolorow** is a founding faculty member at the Institute of Contemporary
Psychoanalysis, Los Angeles, and at the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity, New York City. He is the author of World, Affectivity, Trauma: Heidegger and Post-Cartesian Psychoanalysis (2011) and Trauma and Human Existence: Autobiographical, Psychoanalytic, and Philosophical Reflections (2007) and coauthor of eight other books. He received his PhD in clinical psychology from Harvard University in 1970 and his PhD in philosophy from the University of California at Riverside in 2007.

Thomas Szasz is Professor of Psychiatry Emeritus at the State University of New York Upstate Medical University. He is the author of 25 books, including the classic The Myth of Mental Illness (1961) and, most recently, Fatal Freedom: The Ethics and Politics of Suicide (1999). A forthcoming book is Pharmacacy: Medicine and Politics in America. He is widely recognized as the world’s foremost critic of psychiatric coercions and excuses. He has received many awards for his defense of individual liberty and responsibility threatened by, in his view, the modern form of totalitarianism masquerading as therapy. A frequent and popular lecturer, he has addressed professional and lay groups and has appeared on radio and television in all of the Americas (North, Central, and South) as well as in Australia, Europe, Japan, and South Africa. His books have been translated into every major language.

Eugene I. Taylor (1947-2013) was the author of several scholarly studies on William James. His most recent work was Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America (1999), a historical study of the American visionary tradition. His most recent academic appointment was at Harvard Medical School as lecturer of psychiatry and as a senior psychologist in the Psychiatry Service at Massachusetts General Hospital. He also was a core faculty member at Saybrook University, where he taught the history of humanistic and transpersonal psychology. He held an MA in general/experimental psychology and Asian studies and a PhD in the history and philosophy of psychology.

Clemmont E. Vontress, a recipient of awards and recognition in the United States and abroad, is noted for his scholarship in African traditional healing, cross-cultural counseling, ethnopsychiatry in France, and existential therapy. He has devoted much of his research and writings to existential cross-cultural therapy. After undergraduate school, he spent 2 years in Europe; there he met Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir in a small café in Paris, where they shared their views with a small group of university students. That encounter triggered a lifelong interest in philosophy, especially ideas related to existentialism. Although he pursued counseling as a career, the emerging post–World War II conception of human beings continued to fascinate him. After obtaining a PhD in counseling with minors in psychology and sociology from Indiana University in 1965, he became Professor of Counseling at Howard University (1965–1969) and held the same position at George Washington University (1969–1997), where he was Professor Emeritus of Counseling. He is a graduate of Kentucky State University (BA, 1952, in French and English).

Roger Walsh, MD, PhD, DHL, is a professor of psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology and a professor in the religious studies program at the University of California at Irvine. He is a long-term student, teacher, and researcher of contemplative practices. His relevant publications include Paths Beyond Ego, The World of Shamanism, and Essential Spirituality: The Seven Central Practices, as well as the American Psychological Association psychotherapy video
Positive and Transpersonal Approaches to Therapy. He recently edited The World’s Great Wisdom: Humanity’s Heritage of Timeless Teachings. For more information, see www.drrogerwalsh.com.

Bruce E. Wampold is a professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin and one of the foremost researchers of psychotherapy process and outcome. He is renowned for his book The Great Psychotherapy Debate and many other books and writings highlighting the contextual factors in psychotherapy effectiveness.

Denise M. Warren, PsyD, is a licensed staff psychologist for the Advanced Cognitive Behavioral Unit at the Colorado State Mental Health Institute at Pueblo, Colorado. In this unique setting, she is dedicated to the holistic recovery of patients who have been adjudicated not guilty by reason of insanity in the state of Colorado. Furthermore, she is actively involved in the treatment of trauma and is part of a significant movement to put into practice the use of mindfulness as a standard for individual and group psychotherapy for all patients. Before entering the field of forensics, she spent several years treating combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder. Last, her scholarship has focused on treatment of trauma, brain injury and its neurobiological effects on relationships, and existential-humanistic issues related to therapy and healing. She resides in Colorado Springs with her husband and granddaughter. She earned her doctoral degree from the University of the Rockies in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Jeanne C. Watson is Professor and Associate Dean, Programs at OISE, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada. A major exponent of humanistic-experiential psychotherapy, she has contributed to the development of emotion-focused therapy, the process-experiential approach. She teaches and conducts research on the process and outcome of emotion-focused psychotherapy. She has coauthored and coedited a total of seven books, has written more than 60 articles and chapters, and has delivered more than 100 presentations, including workshops and invited addresses, on the theory and practice of emotion-focused therapy, with an emphasis on empathy, the working alliance, emotional expression, and the treatment of depression. She received the Outstanding Early Career Award from the International Society for Psychotherapy Research in 2002 and is currently the general vice president of the society. She has a part-time practice in Toronto.

Frederick J. Wertz is a professor of psychology at Fordham University. His scholarship and research span philosophy, methodologies, theories, and the cultural contexts of psychology. He coedited Advances in Qualitative Research in Psychology: Themes and Variations, edited The Humanistic Movement: Recovering the Person in Psychology, and coauthored Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry. He was also the editor of the Journal of Phenomenological Psychology and the Bulletin of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology. He is a past president of the Society for Humanistic Psychology and the Society for Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology. He is the current president of the Interdisciplinary Coalition of North American Phenomenologists. In 2014, he will receive the prestigious Rollo May Award for pioneering work in humanistic psychology from Division 32 of the American Psychological Association. He earned his PhD at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
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