

DISCUSSION OF THE PAPERS BY
PATTERSON, KILPATRICK, LUCHINS, AND JESSOR

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Within my assigned role of synthesis and criticism, I shall attempt to discover common ground and concepts in the diverse presentations of this symposium and truly extend myself beyond my own inclinations and assemble a gentle critique.

All of our speakers recognize a common foe: behaviorism. Allies called upon are sociology by Patterson and philosophy by Jessor. The foe, however, is also not without friends. These are presumably physics and biology. But it is a comfort to note that no one is after unconditional surrender. Jessor made it clear that "slaying the dragon" is not enough. Only hard, constructive work will regain phenomenology's position in human behavior and experience.

SYNTHESIS

Self-concept. If there were a single core of emphasis (other than on perception itself), it would be some kind of central, encapsulated, small area or field—a "phenomenal field" and/or a "self-concept." The centrality of this in the presentations by Luchins and Patterson is patently obvious. Kilpatrick has pointed out that "first-person personality," one's own personality as perceived by the self, "is an organization of social self constancies." Jessor insists that to cope with distal functioning, one must have a type of definition "congruent with the postulation of central concepts such as life space or meaningful environment." The self-concept, or something like it, is seen by all as central to the individual's personality and functioning. (You will recall that Luchins pointed out a reservation which Wertheimer would make to this proposition.)

Social nature of the self-concept. I consider Kilpatrick's emphasis on social constancy and social transaction as one of the major recent theoretical contributions. Without insisting, again, on their concurrence, I find much in the presentations of the other three contributors which stresses, similarly, the social nature of the self-concept. This includes Patterson's reminder of origin in the works of two sociologists, Cooley and Mead. "Positive self-regard . . . is learned through internalization or introjection of experiences of positive regard by others," Patterson has said. In addition, he quotes Rogers' definition of the

self-concept to include "the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and to various aspects of life." I see in this a reflection of the transactional approach. Luchins tells us of Wertheimer's suggestion that "understanding of the Gestalt may require study of its surroundings and of its transactions with its environment." Such an emphasis points to the frequently quoted statement among students doing self-concept research: "There is nothing more social nor more individual than the self-concept."

Self constancy. Two of the panel members, Kilpatrick and Patterson, have ventured dynamic concepts: self constancy and the tendency for the self to maintain itself. While these are not identical, they bespeak the tendency of the self to consistency. This was first developed by Prescott Lecky (4), and we learn from Thorne's biographical sketch of Lecky (8) that during the development of his theory Lecky was close in his thinking to Alfred Adler. He had studied under Adler in Vienna and, "For the remainder of his life Mr. Lecky was an admirer of Dr. Adler and integrated many of his concepts into the new self-consistency theory of personality" (8, p. 13).

For each of the aforementioned apparent congruences, however, I should like to say, there are undoubtedly, both material and minute differences which make each single theorist's views exceedingly unique and different from his fellows. But I find many common goals, common concepts, and stimulating new perspectives in this company.

CRITIQUE

Each panel member has spoken of the change in tone of American psychology toward phenomenology. Jessor, with his characteristic prose, refers to "the ebbing of the behavioristic tide." But is this merely another tide which will ebb today and return in 20 years time? What will spell the difference between whether or not this is a tide or a true change in the shore line?

There are three areas which I would like to see bolstered, even amidst this robust discourse. Attention to these, I think, will save us and this profession from a tedious repetition of the ebbing and rising of molar and molecular tides. These areas of fault lie in (a) a limited awareness of historical antecedents, (b) the lack of logical clarity in definition, and (c) the failure to develop a meaningful methodology. Let us consider these three points in that order.

1. I am pleased with Patterson's reference to Cooley and Mead. But there is no single idea in the history of ideas which has so long a

history as has the study of the self. Specifically, I refer to Indian philosophy where the study of the self has predominated without alternation for perhaps as much as 60 centuries (5).

With regard to relatively current history, I am particularly grateful to Patterson for acknowledging the often overlooked influence of Raimy and of Snygg and Combs. The Snygg and Combs book (6), appearing in 1949, was the first complete phenomenological system to brave the coldest winter of the behavioristic climate (cf. 3). I am, however, concerned with a question of paternity in the discussion of the "maintenance and enhancement of the phenomenal self." Who said it first, Rogers or Snygg and Combs? Adler's position also must be considered. He stated as "the supreme law:" "The sense of worth of the self shall not be allowed to be diminished" (1, p. 358). Actually I am grateful that we did not fall to another internecine battle—who first said which? But I hope you will forgive this particular issue since I find that error so often repeated in the literature.

In reading Kilpatrick's paper, I was struck with the similarity of the concept of social transaction to writings of one whose name should certainly be mentioned here, Edmund Husserl. Husserl (2) refers to the relationship between a perceiver and an object in much the same fashion as shown to us more clearly by Kilpatrick's preliminary discussion of object constancy. Husserl adds another distinction, which Kilpatrick may or may not find useful, the distinction between "noesis" or real phenomena, and "noematic" or intentional phenomena. Similarly, Husserl's discussion of categories lends validity to Kilpatrick's notion of dealing with higher-order generalizations, or laws of social significance, and moving downward to those with narrower significance.

2. Regarding problems of definition, I believe it is fair enough to present an old word such as "self-concept" or "ego" and provide a new definition for it, but it is somewhat unfair to have the author of the definition be the only one to understand its meaning. Our cousins, the Existentialists, though still beloved, are ruining the family name by such carryings on. We must redefine ego and self-concept without the use of such vaguenesses as the "I" or the "me" and without phrases like "various aspects of life." I would suggest a better definition, still imperfect, that is found in the writings of Taylor (7)—another self-concept researcher.

3. Methodology has been perhaps the most haunting problem in phenomenology. Is it possible that our orientation has failed for decades to gain respectability in psychological science because of its awkward and unreliable methodology?

Perhaps limitations of time did not permit Kilpatrick to describe methods for the measurement and exploration of social transaction, the measurement of social constancy, and the determination of high-order, significant laws of social interaction. What are the methods acceptable to the confirmability approach suggested by Jessor? Pat-

erson has pointed to the development of Q-technique in self-concept measurement, and I think this is clearly a major breakthrough in phenomenological research. But how can one discover, manipulate, or test the self-actualizing tendency? Luchins has mentioned the demonstrations of the Gestaltists. Here, I think, is a methodology which offered so much promise that it was never developed. The Gestaltists pioneered in presenting single visual demonstrations of incontrovertible concepts, the vase-face for example. The existence of the phenomena of focus and field was apparent in a single pen-and-ink drawing.

I do not mention these three topics—history, definition, and method—in specific criticism of the present panel alone; these topics have been our characteristic weaknesses; we have been rich in seemingly significant ideas, but we have lacked the tools to test and develop the ideas. In fact, I see in the present discussion a more rigorous application of logic to our ideas. This is especially evident in the papers by Kilpatrick and Jessor. I would single out as having particular significance, the concept of social constancy of Kilpatrick, and the clarification of the inter-subjectivity problem presented by Jessor. Patterson has demonstrated to us a phenomenological system which has not feared to develop a research methodology, and Luchins has reminded us of our eminent historical heritage in the work of the Gestaltists.

Other questions and issues which I see ahead of us include the whole subject of phenomenological research, a possible rapprochement with S-R theorists through the medium of scientific methodology, the exploration of the genesis of the self-concept or ego raised by Luchins, the exploration of unique human conditions such as love and loneliness, the phenomenology of time, and the development and measurement of dynamic and integrative phenomenological systems.

It is gratifying to find that the long winter of behaviorism is passing in American psychology. Now the voice of the phenomenologist is being heard in the land.

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