

SYMPOSIUM ON
PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONCEPTIONS OF PERSONALITY:
INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN¹

ALFRED E. KUENZLI
Southern Illinois University

The participants in this symposium are persons who share the "tender-minded" bias that an adequate psychology must come to grips with human experience—with the feelings, attitudes, values, and perceptions which constitute the subjective side of the organism-environment relationship. While differing in points of detail, these persons acknowledge that it is necessary to postulate, for the individual, a "life space," "phenomenal field," "reality world," or "universe of events."

This is an orientation which has been developing steadily in American psychology, especially during the past 20 years. Some of the leading proponents are Hadley Cantril, Arthur W. Combs, Lawrence K. Frank, Fritz Heider, Robert B. MacLeod, Theodore M. Newcomb, Victor Raimy, Carl R. Rogers, Saul Rosenzweig, M. Brewster Smith, Donald Snygg, and Ross Stagner. It is useful to regard these persons as belonging to a loose kind of confederation known as "the phenomenological movement."

One of the purposes of the symposium is to achieve a greater degree of synthesis among the main varieties of phenomenological psychology. The participants examine the current status of conceptualization and methodology in this field. They clarify basic postulates and raise questions for further research.

The first paper (Patterson) presents the view that has developed within the framework of client-centered therapy. The second paper (Kilpatrick) presents the transactional approach that has grown out of research on the perceptual constancies. The third paper (Luchins) reminds us that phenomenology has roots in the "Berlin school," especially in the work of Max Wertheimer. The fourth paper (Jessor) contrasts the phenomenological and behaviorist orientations with regard to several methodological issues.

The final paper (Landsman) discusses the views expressed in the preceding presentations and makes an overall appraisal of the phenomenological movement today. All five papers convey a feeling of considerable emergence and change. The ultimate aim is a science which will handle, more adequately, those meanings and purposes which characterize the "style of life" at the human level.

¹Symposium held at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, Illinois, September 2, 1960.