

FOUR PHENOMENOLOGIES¹

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Perhaps the most parsimonious definition of phenomenology would be the theory or science of experience. With the current vigorous re-approach of psychology to the study of human experience, particularly in the areas of perception and clinical psychology, the term phenomenological psychology is often used in the literature. At the same time it is not sufficiently realized that there are among the present-day and historical phenomenological theories a number of different positions. The writers who propound any one of these take insufficient account of the other related approaches, and the a-phenomenological theoreticians have occasionally directed their criticism against merely peripheral aspects of the existing phenomenologies.

The purpose of this paper is to present the four major positions which have been self-defined as phenomenological, and to order and characterize them briefly regarding their more central aspects for ease of general identification. No attempt is made at review and critique.

CLASSICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

One of the most enduring and profitable adaptations of phenomenology to psychology is represented by the work of David Katz (18) and R. B. MacLeod, a one-time student of his. In a sense, this position has a priority in psychology since it may be dated from 1911 with the publication by Katz of *Die Erscheinungsweisen der Farben und ihre Beeinflussung durch die individuelle Erfahrung* (Modes of Appearance of Colors and their Modification through Individual Experience) (13). Perhaps the more distinct statement of this first phenomenological psychology is given by MacLeod in a 1947 publication (15).

In general, MacLeod and Katz base their work directly on Husserl. Katz (14) reports himself as being most heavily influenced by G. Mueller and by Husserl. While it is uncertain as to whether he at-

¹Among those with whom the author has enjoyed helpful discussions are the committed phenomenologists Drs. Marvin Farber, R. B. MacLeod, A. W. Combs, Donald Snygg, and a group of ever-questioning graduate students in the self-concept study group at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Herbert Spiegelberg was especially helpful with historical problems. Aid with translations from the French and the German was given by Mr. A. J. Kraemer. None of these are responsible for any specific errors or interpretations in this paper.

tended lectures by Husserl at Goettingen, there is no doubt that Mueller's laboratory was heavily involved in the phenomenology of the era.² One of the more significant publications emerging from the Mueller laboratory which manifests the influence of Husserl, is the study by Schap (21). MacLeod first met Katz in 1928, when Koehler recommended him to aid Katz in preparing English translations for his summer lectures at the University of Maine. From this first meeting there followed a long and profitable personal and professional friendship during which the two published, together and separately, many experimental studies bearing the phenomenological influence. MacLeod's later articles specifically differentiate his conception of phenomenological psychology, particularly within a framework of social psychology (16, 17).

The MacLeod-Katz phenomenology is a direct adaptation of the classical position of Husserl. It takes particular notice of a major contribution in method by Husserl, namely the *epoche* or the phenomenological reduction. This is fundamentally a point of view for the study of phenomena, that is, the world of experience or consciousness. It is a method for identifying more clearly the structure of consciousness. It involves an attitude of "unbiased description of phenomena" (13), of "disciplined naivete," enabling the experimenter to discover more fruitful hypotheses concerning the world of consciousness, unencumbered by the pre-judgements occasioned by the natural, physical objects. This approach is often called "descriptive psychology." The term, however, fails to indicate the peculiar type of description, the *epoche*, which is involved.

Phenomenology No. 1, then, we may term the classical phenomenological psychology of Katz and MacLeod. It may be defined as a method for the preliminary exploration of the world of perceptual phenomena, involving principally an attitude of "disciplined naivete" by the researcher to differentiate perceptual phenomena more clearly.

A NEW PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The origin of this position may be ascribed to the year 1941 when Donald Snygg's "The need for a phenomenological system of psychology" (22) appeared. This notable paper, which was the first in the American literature, on phenomenological psychology, presented many concepts, in outline, which were later developed with the collabora-

²I am very much indebted to Professor MacLeod for providing me with considerable historical material on the work of Katz.

FOUR PHENOMENOLOGIES

tion of Arthur W. Combs (23). The position of Snygg and Combs is in many ways a reaction against the "superobjectivists" who, they felt, had taken hold of American psychology. It may be termed a new phenomenological psychology inasmuch as it was relatively uninfluenced by MacLeod or Husserl.

This position eschewed external description of behavior in favor of internalized (but not necessarily subjective) concepts. While such an approach is in no way entirely new to present-day psychology, its organization into a total frame of reference represented Snygg and Combs' major departure. Reinforced by the emerging importance of clinical psychology and psychoanalysis, and client-centered therapy in particular, Snygg and Combs argued in *Individual Behavior* (23) for understanding human behavior from a phenomenological frame of reference—one concentrating upon the perceptual world of the subject—in contrast to a frame of reference of agreement amongst objective, externally observing judges.

Among their major postulates are the self concept, the phenomenal field, and the phenomenal self. Perhaps their most important formulation is what they describe as the basic, unitary, fundamental need: the need for the preservation and the enhancement of the phenomenal self.

This perceptual frame of reference did not propose to exclude all of previous psychology; nor would it void experimentation. Rather it wished that previous work be seen in a different light. Most of Snygg's previous publications had been in the area of rat learning. Combs is a clinical psychologist of the Rogers school who saw in phenomenology a theoretical structure for client-centered psychotherapy, major theoretical propositions of which are closely related to this new phenomenological psychology (20).

Phenomenology No. 2 may be defined as a frame of reference for understanding human behavior, which is concerned almost exclusively with the perceptions of the observed individual, the subject. It was developed almost entirely independently of the other three phenomenologies.

EXISTENTIALISTIC PSYCHOLOGY

Most recent in the American literature is the existentialistic phenomenological psychology of Sonneman, presented best in his *Existence and Therapy* (24) published in 1954. Sonneman's phenomenology as influenced by Binswanger (1, 2), is closely related to, yet differs from that of Husserl. Sonneman and Binswanger have drawn mostly from

Heidegger (10) and secondarily from Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel. Accepting this relatively classical influence, Sonneman and Binswanger have created a position for psychological theory of considerable vigor and controversy. Inasmuch as Sartre has widely captured the American audience for existentialism, it should be mentioned that Heidegger largely rejected Sartre, his pupil, and also slighted Husserl, his master.³ Nevertheless, phenomenology is the acknowledged (albeit sometimes not proud) parent of present-day existentialism.

Existentialistic psychology argues the significance of *being* in relationship to the problem of *knowing*. While being and knowing are thought to be a unity, the latter is considered as anchored in the former. This may be somewhat clarified if contrasted with a definition of present-day psychology as a science of "knowing" human behavior. Existentialist psychology argues for a redirection of psychology toward a science of "being." In his emphasis on "modes-of-being" Sonneman goes considerably beyond the work of Husserl. He defines this new direction as "a normative (categorical) science of possible and phenomenal world structures with their different 'spheric centerings' and their different modi of 'spatialization' and 'temporalization' . . . It concentrates on the categorization of some general structural laws of phenomenal worlds" (24, p. 158).

This *Daseinsanalyse* rejects the objectification of man (that is, any theory which tends to regard him as an object alone), and points rather to the study of man's being as "the encompassing experience of everything that can become the material of science" (24, p. ix). It argues for taking man's spontaneity and "freedom to be" into account, methodologically, and speaks of "eidetic knowledge." Yet Sonneman points out:

The objectivist is mistaken if he believes that phenomenology is uncontrollable; . . . phenomenology not only admits of statistics, it demands, at one decisive point, its services. It admits, as well as demands, statistical validation of personality psychological approaches and of single findings, with the self-evident provision that the data are true *as data*, to which, unlike to all other problems just in statistics, the objectivist has never yet given the full benefit of his attention (24, p. 326).

Phenomenology No. 3 is an argument for a redirection of psychology toward a science of man or a science of being. It severely questions the

³Heidegger succeeded Husserl to the chair at Freiburg, and under the Nazi regime became rector of the university in 1933. Husserl, as a non-Aryan, was treated coolly by Heidegger at the time. While most present-day existentialists tend to ignore this, Husserlian phenomenologists find it hard to forgive. Katz was deprived of his position at Rostock in the same year.

assumptions of functionalistic psychology. Its data are structural laws of phenomenal (personal) worlds. It is most influenced by Binswanger, Heidegger and Husserl.

PURE PHENOMENOLOGY

The most fundamental and complex phenomenology is that of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Originating in the latter part of the 19th century, it has the clearest claim to priority and is basic to the preceding three. Inasmuch as it is least known to psychologists, major consideration is given to it here.

Although Husserl more or less by-passed Wundt, if one recalls Wundt's precise thinking with regard to the nature of object and subject, there are many likenesses between the two. Husserl, initially a mathematician, became strongly influenced by Brentano, who is best known to psychologists for his volume on *Psychology from the Standpoint of an Empiricist* (3). Husserl was a devoted student of Brentano, but departed vigorously from many of the viewpoints of his teacher. Among other precursors of Husserl were Dilthey, Theodore Lipps and Natorp.⁴

Closely related contemporaries were Stumpf, with whom Husserl also studied, Meinong, Marty and Oskar Kraus. Among those with later influences were Hartmann, Scheler and Reinach. Some closely related were Jaspers, Koehler and Heidegger.

No matter how precisely, in terms of individual proponents, the growth of pure phenomenology is traced, one must also consider the influence of the *Zeitgeist* in the emergence of the phenomenology of Husserl at the turn of the century, and its three more recent forms in middle 20th century psychology.

Husserl's position was first most fully stated in his *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical Investigations) (11), published initially at the turn of the century. He sought to demonstrate the early phenomenological position by the purest and most rigorous of logic. The force of his logic excited a growing storm of controversy, tempered with undisguised admiration by the philosophers and psychologists of the day.

Husserl's search for precise differentiation, as well as his relationship to the growing Gestalt movement, is illustrated by the following brief selection. "The most general relationship between wholes and parts is

⁴The position of Hegel in *Phenomenology of the Mind* (9) is not considered here because it had little direct influence upon psychology. It does, however, predate all the others.

the law that dependent objects can only exist as parts of wholes of a certain proper kind. The color of a piece of paper, for instance, is a dependent aspect; it is predestined according to its nature, its pure mode, to partial being" (19, p. 82).

Husserl's development of the pure phenomenology is more likely marked by the publication, originally in 1913, of his book, *Ideas; General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (12). Husserl describes phenomenology somewhat immodestly, as the first philosophy and the basis of all science. It takes as its field the realm of consciousness or experience, in distinction to the realm of the natural, physical world. While it does not deny the existence of the physical world, it excludes it in somewhat the same way that one excludes the wood in the study of the color of a chair. This "bracketing" of the physical world leaves the world of phenomena exposed and permits a minute exploration of the structure of phenomena. These phenomena are termed essences, ideal objects instead of real objects.

Many present-day psychologists have shied away from pure phenomenology because of misconceptions concerning its methodology, which is principally the *epoche* or the phenomenological reduction, mentioned earlier, wherein the natural world is bracketed off. The method uses pure reflection, not in the arm-chair sense, but rather with the employment of rigorous logic and thinking. It does not exclude experimentation. None of the four phenomenologies do, incidentally. Rather, manipulative experimentation may be considered an aid to pure reflection in the same way that thinking is manipulation of symbols.

Much of Husserl's argumentation seems to be a reaction against the "psychologism" of his time, which regarded all of philosophy and logic as merely a part of psychology. Husserl considered phenomenology as the basis of psychology and indeed of all science.

The principal contemporary proponent of pure phenomenology is a philosopher, Marvin Farber (5, 6), of the University of Buffalo, who is the editor of *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, an international periodical which continues to explore phenomenology in its broadest sense. Farber has presented the following statements for the beginner:

There are a number of things which phenomenology conspicuously does not do or mean. (a) It does not "tear the meaning loose from the act." (b) It does not deny or reject the external world. (c) It does not try to answer all questions, and is not intended to be all-inclusive as a method for all purposes. (d) It is also not intended to be a substitute for other methods, and above all, for those involving factual and hypothetical elements. (e) It does not deny inductive truth, nor does

it fail to distinguish between different types of "truth." (f) It is not a trap for metaphysical purposes.

In contrast to these misunderstandings, there are a number of things that phenomenology does do or mean. (a) It is the first method of knowledge because it begins with "the things themselves" which are the final court of appeal for all knowledge. . . . (b) It views everything factual as an exemplification of essential structures and is not concerned with matters of fact as such. (c) It deals with not only "real essences" but also with "possible essences." (d) Direct insight, evidence in the sense of the self-giveness of the objectivity is the ultimate test for it. (e) Despite the "reduction" the phenomenologist still has a brain (an "evolutionary" brain) in the same sense that he breathes. That statement is as true as it is irrelevant to the method (7, pp. 440-441).

Among the more notable students of Husserl are, besides Farber, Landgrebe, Fink, Gurwitsch and Spiegelberg (25). During the Nazi regime some of Husserl's writings found their way to safety at Buffalo with Farber; they are now being gathered in a collection of Husserliana at the Louvain in Belgium.

Publications centering about pure phenomenology are now appearing throughout Europe and in South America, as well as in the United States. Writings on the relationship of phenomenology to other disciplines are appearing in the literature of anthropology, art,⁵ psychology, psychiatry, sociology, physics, and English literature (8). All this is testimony to the richness, still untapped, in the original thinking of Husserl.

Phenomenology No. 4, then, is the pure phenomenology of Husserl. It is defined as the first philosophy, basic to all sciences, which is a systematic exploration of the realm of consciousness, bracketed off from physical reality. Its data are essences, ideal concepts as distinguished from concrete or real objects. Its method is the *epoche* or the transcendental reduction.

AN OVERVIEW

As diverse as these four positions seem to be, there has been little controversy among the phenomenologists. MacLeod has, with moderation, suggested that perhaps the position of Snygg and Combs ought to be otherwise classified (17), but, inasmuch as all these positions deal exclusively with the world of experience, of consciousness, it would seem that they fall within the broad definition of phenomenology.

⁵An instance of the continuing misinterpretations which sometimes embarrass phenomenologists, was the recent news service release describing a talk by Salvador Dali at the Sorbonne on "Phenomenological Aspects of the Critical Paranoid Method." Dali brought along a carload of cauliflower to illustrate his lecture.

With the possible exception of MacLeod's classical phenomenological psychology, all are vigorous reactions to the over-objectification of man and to the exclusive employment of the methods of physics. All, of course, give primary emphasis to perceptual data and place the self or self-concept in a central position. Yet none reject experimentation, "counting," or physiology.

An overview of these positions is presented in Table 1. The first three are phenomenological psychologies, the fourth is a phenom-

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF FOUR PHENOMENOLOGIES

Name	Chief proponents	Characterization	Methodological emphasis	Area of application
1. Classical Phenomenological Psychology	Katz MacLeod	descriptive psychology	disciplined naivete of researcher	perception, social psychology
2. New Phenomenological Psychology	Snygg Combs	perceptual psychology	subject's frame of reference and basic need	clinical and educational psychology
3. Existential psychology	Binswanger Sonneman	psychology of "being" as opposed to functionalism	subject's spon- taneity, eidetic knowledge, "freedom to be"	psychotherapy
4. Pure Phenomenology	Husserl Farber	basis of all science	epoche, brack- eting of natural world, by re- searcher	all conscious- ness and expe- rience

enological philosophy in its most fundamental sense. The three psychological positions may be distinguished in that MacLeod presents a point of view for the experimenter, Snygg and Combs present a frame of reference for psychology, and Sonneman presents an argument for a re-direction of the science of psychology. Husserl's pure phenomenology claims to present the basis of all sciences and philosophy as well.

All three of the phenomenological psychologies, according to their proponents, have implications for applied psychology, specifically, social psychology in the case of MacLeod, clinical and educational psychology in the case of Snygg and Combs, and psychotherapy in the case of Sonneman. These applied implications remain somewhat unclear, however, with the possible exception of those of Snygg and Combs. They seem to have made a definitive case for the phenomenology of adjustment psychology (4) and have been readily accepted

by many clinicians and educators. None, however, pretend to offer completed theories, but rather argue for a consideration of the phenomenological approach as a fruitful direction for psychology's current problems. Despite the immodesty in some of these four approaches, each of their proponents has freely sought for critical exploration of his own position and each has admitted a wide variety of issues which remain undifferentiated.

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