Phenomenology and Psychological Science

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Phenomenology and Psychological Science
Historical and Philosophical Perspectives

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CHAPTER 1

THE MEETING BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

MAN CHEUNG CHUNG and PETER D. ASHWORTH

> Scientific points of view, according to which my existence is a moment of the world's, are always both naïve and at the same time dishonest, because they take for granted, without explicitly mentioning it, the other point of view, namely that of consciousness, through which from the outset a world forms itself round me and begins to exist for me.
>
> (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, p. ix)

Merleau-Ponty's statement applies exactly to the divergence between psychological science as it currently exists and any phenomenologically based human study. Even in circles in which it has become the vogue to employ "qualitative methods" there is often an underlying scientism of the kind Merleau-Ponty indicated. Human experience, or discursive action, is seen as part of a causal nexus, a set of variables within the "world." The chapters in this volume explore the meaning of the "other point of view, that of consciousness."

Some chapters focus on the history of psychology and the ways in which various psychologists (often rather isolated voices) developed ways of researching and theorizing that took account of at least some aspects of the phenomenological tradition in philosophy. Other chapters explore key philosophical debates within phenomenology itself—though always with an emphasis on their meaning for the realm of psychology. But in addition to the historical and technically philosophical themes, we include chapters that (though referring in some depth to the arguments

within the phenomenological tradition of thought) indicate how phenomenologically sound work can be carried out in the realm of psychology.

Understanding human "nature," some may argue, is a futile exercise because the complexity of human beings removes them from scholarly comprehension (though somehow we manage to conduct our practical daily relationships more-or-less adequately). While many psychologists, including the editors and the other authors in the present volume, would not dispute the fact that human beings are extremely complex, we nevertheless still hold a belief that some aspects of human action are open to fruitful exploration and indeed can be understood. What drives us to hold rather than relinquish such a belief is perhaps our curiosity about who we are and why we behave the way we do. Moreover, we are driven by our conviction that there are in fact rigorous approaches that can help us investigate and understand some aspects of being human. Whether seen as complimentary to other approaches (the "scientific" ones which to which Merleau-Ponty pointed, among them) or whether seen as uniquely qualified as a methodology for human studies, one such approach is that informed by phenomenology. The overall aim of this book is to articulate the extent to which phenomenology can assist us in understanding some aspects of human psychology.

The careful reader will have already noted the areas in which debate is likely to happen. Do we call phenomenological approaches "scientific," or do we reserve this term—together with its high contemporary status—for the explanation of human action in terms of variables externally assessable? Is the study of experience a line of research which is going to lead to understanding or explanation or both? Is research aimed at the evocation of "inner" experience likely to be lost in individual subjectivity? And what is the relation between experience and discourse? Some of these questions will resonate in the chapters that follow.

INITIAL CONTACT BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

The book begins by setting the scene for the initial contact between phenomenological philosophy and psychological science. Ashworth (see Chapter 2) draws our attention to the fact that mainstream psychology, at the beginning, was concerned with the study of experience, and this should have meant that the ground was well prepared for the arrival of phenomenology; psychology was engaged with topics which would relate well to the approach of phenomenologists. Despite this, Ashworth tells us that the behaviorist revolution drove a wedge between most psychological sciences and the emerging phenomenological philosophy of Husserl (1913/1983).

On the face of it, the detailed study of *the experience of being conscious of something* seems to be a kind of psychology. But Husserl had a philosophical purpose in founding phenomenology, not an immediately psychological one. Ashworth shows that Husserl's work, like that of the later disputatious members of his

school, needs to be worked through carefully if its relevance to psychology is to be fully grasped. The early aim of Husserl for his phenomenology is apparently that it would be a reflective philosophical discipline that would provide a conceptual underpinning for the different sciences and scholarly disciplines. This would include psychology. But Ashworth traces the dissent of Heidegger and later existential phenomenologists from this approach. Heidegger rejected, in particular, the Husserlian assumption that the philosopher could be sufficiently detached from the everyday world to be able to describe each phenomenon in its purity. Instead he argued for—and practiced—an existential and hermeneutic phenomenology. We learn from Ashworth and Chung in Chapter 10, however (where this dispute is taken up again), that Husserl and Heidegger should both be seen as *transcendental philosophers*—both locate their analyses in the world of conscious experience. This issue of phenomenological method is absolutely pervasive throughout the book, and we shall later find that it dominates the discussion of Chapters 5, 6 and 7, in particular.

Heidegger proposed "the world" as a central concept. Though there is a sense in which this establishes the primacy of "my" perspective, nevertheless, it can be shown to have a definite structure which all of us "in" the world necessarily share. Elsewhere in the book, authors use the cognate term "lifeworld."

Having laid out some of the developments in phenomenological philosophy, Ashworth discusses the relationship between phenomenology and some developments in psychology, notably Gestalt psychology (especially the work on perception), and some related approaches in social psychology due to Heider and to Kurt Lewin. In the United States, a stream of work related to phenomenology emerged after the Second World War. The idiographic personality theory of Gordon Allport has affinities with existential phenomenology. To Allport, the whole person is a unique entity and needs to be understood as a coherent whole. He or she is not simply a collection of parts or elements. But Ashworth sees a distinction between Allport and the phenomenologists due to Allport's lack of any insistence on the primacy of the individual's own perspective. More committed to the phenomenological approach are Robert Macleod and Snygg and Combs, who show considerable awareness of Husserl and the epochē—the determination to turn attention to conscious experience and the bracketing of the question of its relation to reality.

American "humanistic psychologists" were also in line broadly with phenomenological thinking, especially in its existential version. These psychologists were concerned with issues pertaining to authenticity and freedom, despite the fact that they, on the whole, tended not to engage in the methodological rigor of phenomenology.

Ashworth concludes his chapter by introducing us to some of the contemporary voices within psychology which urge phenomenological methodology on the discipline. One of these is Amedeo Giorgi, the author of Chapter 3, and the founding editor of the flagship journal in this area, the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology.*

A. Giorgi begins Chapter 3 by describing Husserl's conceptualization of consciousness. For instance, Husserl believed that consciousness is a type of being

which is different from a physical "real thing"; consciousness is not given to us via sensory experience nor as a spatio-temporal entity regulated by causal laws. Consciousness can present to us, in a direct way, objects other than empirical ones. Husserl contends that we can access our consciousness through the phenomenological attitude of bracketing and reduction. The main function of consciousness, A. Giorgi tells us, is intuition and not experiencing; consciousness can know itself and such awareness is not through appearances. Consciousness is *intentional.*

A. Giorgi then turns attention to the way in which early psychologists treated consciousness. He develops the brief account by Ashworth in Chapter 2 considerably, by describing the structural psychology of which Wundt was an advocate. Despite Wundt's empirical and natural science approach, he distinguished psychology from natural sciences in that, while the former is concerned with the objects of experience dependent on experiencing subjects, the latter is concerned with the objects of experience independent of experiencing subjects. Wundt believed that inner experience and outer experience did not refer to different kinds of objects, but different ways of looking at identical objects experienced.

A. Giorgi explains that Titchener, an American student of Wundt (whose version of structural psychology was taken in the United States as authoritative), viewed psychology as a natural science with a method based on experimentation. Titchener believed that the mind does not *have* thoughts and feelings. Instead, the mind *is* thoughts and feelings. To Titchener, consciousness means the mind now, the mind of the present moment or the mind at every "now." Every consciousness is composed of a number of concrete processes (wishes, feelings, ideas, etc.) which, in turn, are composed of a number of really simple processes that are coming together. That is, Titchener took "consciousness now" to be a totality which can subsequently be broken into different basic elements. Conscious activities are processes within this totality but these activities are not related to the outside world. That is, intentionality does not play a role in Titchener's approach to psychology, which is often called a psychology of content rather than a functional psychology or a psychology of act.

The functional school's approach to the study of consciousness was different again. Functionalism was essentially naturalistic. Anti-dualistic, consciousness was simply seen to be a matter of evolutionary development. Nevertheless, the functionalist's approach does entail some of the features of psychological research that phenomenology values, in that, for example, consciousness, according to the functional psychologists, should be understood within the context of person–environment relationships.

Also moving away from the dualistic approach, William James talked of "radical empiricism." To him, there is only one type of "stuff" (pure experience) of which the world is made. His approach to consciousness is effectively phenomenological *avant la lettre*. He described the stream of consciousness as personal, selective, constantly changing, continuous and related to independent objects. Through introspection, consciousness becomes aware of itself.

THE QUESTION OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD

The chapters so far have revealed a direction that the influence of Husserlian thought takes with respect to psychology. But the immediate question of research psychologists—who are hugely practical people and will not entertain a theoretical stance, however convincing, without a clear approach for empirical research—will certainly be *But how is phenomenological psychology carried out?* Barbro Giorgi, in chapter 4, describes a method of research based firmly on phenomenology and which can be applied to empirical work in psychology. This method aims to discover, articulate, and make explicit the participant's lived psychological meanings. The practical steps of the phenomenological psychological method are given in sufficient detail in this chapter to enable readers to make some attempt at such research themselves. (It has to be said that phenomenology will never lay out mechanical techniques of research after the style of an experimental design: the target of the research is the elucidating of experience rather than the testing of causal hypotheses.) Behind the practical steps which she describes, the classic phenomenological descriptions of the essential features of lived experience encapsulated in notions such as the lifeworld, intersubjectivity, intentionality, intuiting, pre-reflectiveness and the epochē act as guiding concepts. B. Giorgi devotes considerable attention to clarifying the relation of these to the research method.

HUSSERL'S TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECTIVITY

While the foregoing chapters have demonstrated the relevance of Husserlian thought for psychology, his approach is not free from controversy. What follows is a chapter (Chapter 5) which aims to address one of these controversies, namely, Husserl's view on transcendental subjectivity. Dahlberg here wishes to explore two broad questions: Did Husserl change his mind on his view on transcendental subjectivity? Did his followers take up the idea of transcendence at all? She argues that the answer to question one is "no" and to question two is "yes."

Did Husserl change his mind? According to Dahlberg, through a focus on the transcendental, Husserl intended to go beyond the natural attitude (the uncritical and unanalytical attitude with which we go about our practical activities in the world), in order to understand the world. However, there are limitations and constraints in his transcendental subjectivity because it is inevitably approached by real persons who are immersed in the world of experience and cannot fully detach from it. That is, it is impossible to bracket off all of our pre-understanding or pre-assumptions so as to turn back with a clear view on the lifeworld (we can never be completely free of our own prejudice). In turn, this means that Husserl's ultimate wish to discover pure consciousness is unachievable and unrealistic.

Although it is impossible to obtain the purity of transcendental subjectivity, as Dahlberg remarks, "the path between natural attitude and the point of pure

transcendence is accessible to us and provides an entry point from which we can develop an approach of critical scrutiny for research." When Husserl spoke about transcendental subjectivity, he not only had this notion of pure consciousness in mind, but also the notions of self-reflection and self-awareness (i.e., our human ability to think about and reflect upon our own consciousness). Thus, while the human lifeworld is characterized by a natural attitude, within the lifeworld, a critical attitude is attainable that involves the processes of reflecting on that of which we are aware. Through reflection, consciousness, which is directed towards the world, turns towards the self. Consequently, consciousness establishes a distance between itself and the world and between itself and the natural attitude. It is possible, then, to focus more critically on the phenomenon that we are investigating.

Did his followers take up the idea of transcendentality at all? Dahlberg argues that Merleau-Ponty and Gadamer were clearly thinking in line with Husserl. For example, they believed that philosophers should suspend the affirmations implied in the facts given to us in our lives. However, to suspend them does not mean to deny them. Neither does this mean to deny the link which binds us to the physical, social, and cultural world in which we live. Quite the contrary, we should see and become conscious of the link through "phenomenological reduction."

HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE AND THE EXISTENTIALIST TURN

The criticism of Husserl which focuses on the fact that unprejudiced reflection on "pre-reflective" experience is not fully possible is especially associated with Heidegger (1927/1962, 1927/1988). Several of these lines of criticism have had the valuable effect of bringing empirical psychology and phenomenology into greater contact. So the importance of these critiques must not be underestimated because they have turned out to be vital in strengthening the relationship between phenomenological philosophy and the psychological sciences, and in nurturing the development of phenomenological psychology. The book proceedes to examine some of these critiques.

MacDonald (see Chapter 6) argues that Heidegger, Jaspers, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty acknowledged the fact that one of their points of rupture from Husserl had to do with phenomenological method. MacDonald focuses on five principal criticisms put forward by Heidegger:

1. Over-theoretization (theoreticism): This is concerned with the idea that all forms of human attitude toward the world are construed as analogues to a theoretical attitude. One attitude is the genetically primitive. The other is the "derivative" attitude of natural science.
2. Over-intellectualization (intellectualism): This is concerned with the idea that all forms of human behavior towards the world are construed as varieties of an intentional directedness modeled on an intellectual encounter with objective aspects of mere things. This is also concerned with the fact

that the corporeal, affective and evaluative dimensions of us are derived from some basic stratum of intellectual apprehension.

3. Splitting of the ego: This is concerned with the idea that transcendental ego is separate from the empirical or mundane ego. Our consciousness is composed of two separate realms, one being anonymous, lifeless and neutral and the other being personalized, full-of-life and interested.
4. Consciousness and world separated by an abyss: The apparent gulf between the being of the conscious and that of the non-conscious (what Sartre refers to as *être pour soi* and *être en soi* requires detailed phenomenological attention.
5. Neglect of the understanding of the meaning of intentionality: Macdonald tells us that the question of the distinction between the being of the intentional act and the being of an intentional agent is much neglected.

It is hardly controversial to say that, in Husserl and Heidegger, we have the founder of phenomenology in its contemporary guise, and the instigator of the main lines of deviation. We would also say (though this *is* controversial), these lines of deviation are extraordinarily creative and productive. This positive judgment of (at least the early Heidegger) has possibly been borne out in such psychotherapeutic applications as those of the humanistic psychologists (mentioned in Chapter 2) and of Medard Boss (Chapter 8). So at this stage in the book we turn to some important phenomenologists/existentialists, who were influenced to a significant degree by Husserl and Heidegger.

Focusing on Sartre and Heidegger, Groth (Chapter 7) aims to address two questions: What was Sartre's contribution to psychology and to what extent was Sartre's psychology influenced by Heidegger's thought?

To address the first question, Groth speaks of existential psychoanalysis, which begins with the idea that human reality is a unity rather than a collection of functions. However this may be, we are never able to see or know ourselves as a unity because we are forever changing (i.e., forever "condemned" to be a choice of being). That is why existential analysis denies the notion of the unconscious and the unmediated influence of the environment upon us. Groth also talks about Sartre's notion of "bad faith" which can only be understood in terms of the fact that "the being of consciousness is the consciousness of being." According to Sartre (1943/1958), Groth argues, the orthodox psychoanalytic model of the censor which operates in our psychic apparatus is in bad faith. Groth tells us that the significant differences between existential psychoanalysis and orthodox psychoanalysis lie in their emphasis on the present versus the past, freedom versus determinism, and interminable versus terminable periods of therapy.

To address the second question, Groth points out that however influenced by Heidegger Sartre might have been, Heidegger did not think that Sartre was entirely correct in understanding some of his findings or opinions. One of Heidegger's lines of critique of Sartre revolves around the fact that Sartre read *Being and Time* as if it were a work of metaphysics which, in fact, Heidegger wanted to reject and

deconstruct. Heidegger rejected existentialism partly because he thought it to be characterized by metaphysical thinking in which human beings are the focus. On the contrary, Heidegger was interested in the notion of be(ing). Groth concludes that "although Sartre freely adopts some of the terminology of *Being and Time* in *Being and Nothingness*, we must conclude that Sartre's Heidegger is not one Heidegger himself would recognize." Another criticism by Heidegger questioned whether Sartre's way of thinking can be constructed as a kind of humanism (to which Heidegger was averse and which he did not recognize in his own thought. Heidegger also criticized Sartre for failing to "recognize the essentiality of what is historical about be(ing)." Heidegger, then, saw the *Dasein* (the being of the human kind) as immersed in historical and cultural forms. Sartre—and we have to say, for the most part, Husserl—did not.

BOSS AND DASEINSANALYSIS AND CONTEMPORARY EXISTENTIALISTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Heidegger's version of phenomenology (and—it is worth saying—we do regard the Heidegger of the period of *Being and Time* as a phenomenologist) strongly influenced the development of Daseinsanalysis, pioneered by Medard Boss. Jenner (see Chapter 8) provides a biographical sketch of Medard Boss who was closely associated with Freud, Jung, Binswanger, and Bleuler as well as Heidegger. Some of the philosophical ideas underlying Daseinsanalysis, for which Boss was indebted to Heidegger, are described. Boss disagreed with Freud in several ways. He showed, for example, that Freud's lingering faith in the ontology of 19th century physics and the natural sciences was unnecessary in the arena of psychotherapy. He also showed that Freud was mistaken in believing that narcissistic neurosis is not amendable to psychological treatment. Despite Boss's critical view of Freud, he admired Freud's technique of free association and in fact used it to help his patients to discover their own potential. According to Jenner, Boss's therapeutic approach was humane, concerned, and impressive. The underlying philosophy was also interesting, though not unproblematic. Boss had indeed helped to nurture a view of psychiatry beyond simplistic medical axioms.

Turning to more contemporary existentialists in psychology and psychotherapy, Hanscomb (Chapter 9) describes Yalom's existential notion of "ultimate concerns" (i.e., death, freedom, responsibility, willing, isolation, and meaninglessness). These concerns are not independent of each other but are interwoven, being fundamentally based upon conscious human existence. Van Deurzen-Smith's existential analysis contrasts with Yalom's in speaking of "existential dimensions": physical, social, psychological, and spiritual. Hanscomb aims to map the self with reference to these "concerns" and "dimensions." He argues that "the experience that makes best sense of all these concerns is separation (alienation), uncanniness or a sense of not-at-homeness." If it is the case that some form of alienation, uncanniness or not-at-homeness is inevitably a part of our human condition, it is

not surprising that some form of anxiety is also part of this condition. Hanscomb develops his thesis in terms of our relationship with other people, the notions of freedom, guilt, and death, the notion of authenticity, and the notion of meaning.

A LONG STORY

In the final chapter, Ashworth and Chung attempt to bring, if not closure, at least some sense of summation to the book. For the story of phenomenology and psychological science is complex if not a short story, or a straightforward one. Neither let us pretend that the present volume tells the whole story. Far from it, this book provides only a taste of a very wide discussion, which has a century-long history and continues in a renewed way with the rise of post-modernism. It is the view of the contributors to this volume that the approach inspired by phenomenology is not merely historical, nor is it confined to philosophy. It has a contemporary application to psychology and one which, we believe, will be of growing importance as psychologists become more aware of that "other point of view, namely that of consciousness, through which from the outset a world forms itself round me and begins to exist for me." The fundamental theme of phenomenology in psychology is that we seize again the meaningfulness of our own lived experience.

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CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE PLACE OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL THINKING IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY

PETER D. ASHWORTH

The account in this chapter is intended to provide an introductory framework, allowing some of the detailed arguments of later chapters to be contextualized. The following, therefore, attempts to locate the points at which there has been contact between phenomenological philosophy and psychological science—and the various ways in which phenomenologists have argued that there *should have* been contact.

Even the most superficial reading of phenomenology would alert one to the concern that this school of thought has with experience (though the exact meaning to be given to this word no doubt requires specification). And, on the face of it, the detailed study of *the experience of being conscious of something* seems to be a kind of psychology. Nevertheless, it has to be said that, most unfortunately, phenomenological thinking has been marginal in the history of psychology. Two reasons for this need to be mentioned at the outset. Firstly, Husserl had a philosophical purpose in founding phenomenology, which was not by any means immediately psychological. His work, like that of the later disputatious members of his school, needs to be worked through carefully if its relevance to psychology is to be fully grasped. Secondly, Husserl's line of thinking emerged at a point in the history of psychology when discussion of experience as such was especially unwelcome. It is true that,

when experimental psychology was founded in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was *defined* as the science of experience, nevertheless by the early years of the twentieth century, dilemmas regarding the scientific meaning of conscious experience had led to a widespread move away from this concern.

The philosophers and physiologists (in the main) who began to establish psychology as a discipline had seen the immensely impressive strides in understanding the nature of the external world made by the physical sciences. Psychology would complement this by developing a scientific understanding of the inner world of experience; this inner realm would be approached experimentally and quantitatively. We shall see what kind of research this involved, and the *behaviorist* reaction which it evoked.

THE EARLY EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

A major interest of those early experimentalists, in fact, was in discovering what precisely the relationship was between the "outer" and the "inner" worlds. (Yes, unfortunately there was an assumption that this distinction could be assumed for all practical purposes.) Gustav Fechner (1801–1887) who was, with certain reservations, regarded by the premier historian of experimental psychology, Edwin Boring (1950), as the founder of the discipline, aimed to discover the laws relating the physical nature of an external stimulus to the internal experience of the sensation it produced. Fechner's *Elemente der Psychophysik* (1860/1966) could indeed be regarded as the founding publication of experimental psychology. In it, Fechner reported his findings on such matters as the relationship between a change in light intensity and the subjective sensation of brightness. But what was the meaning of "experience" in experimental work such as Fechner's? It was limited in the extreme, and boiled down to the individual report of some aspect of a sensation. The fact that the experience of variations in brightness was within a very specific, controlled context, with a particular social meaning (and so on) was, it appears, of no interest to Fechner.

Right at the start there was scientific controversy surrounding Fechner's book. Some of it was aimed at the details of the methodology. But William James was one distinguished psychologist who regarded the whole enterprise of "psychophysics" as completely without value. However, for the most part, the human capacity to report verbally on sensations of the elementary kind investigated by Fechner ("Which light is brighter?" "The one on the left.") could, it seems, appear unproblematic given the restricted focus of interest of the experimental investigation. Later investigators developed psychological studies which had more complex aims, however. Thus, Wundt's *Physiologische Psychologie* (1874/1904) was concerned with immediate experience in terms of its discriminable elements and the manner of their inter-relationships. Wundt believed immediate experience to be made up of elements (sensations, images, and feelings) which are combined in various ways. The laboratory investigation of the nature of the elements and the laws of their

inter-relationships, while systematic in the extreme and controlled at the level of stimuli, nevertheless depended on the research participants' verbal reports of their (a question-begging term) *introspections.*

Wundt's work on the "structure" of immediate experience did not by any means remain unchallenged. In particular, Brentano (1874/1995) developed a quite different approach to immediate experience, regarding it as a process or *act*, so that different kinds of experience are to be distinguished, not by the way in which they are structured in consciousness, but by the particular way in which consciousness relates to the object of experience. Judgment and perception, for instance, involve different orientations to the object. The definitive feature of conscious activity, for Brentano (and this was taken up by Husserl and the phenomenologists), was its *intentionality*, a technical term pointing to the intrinsic "relatedness" of consciousness to the object of its attention. The fact that consciousness—unlike any other process—has this attribute of intentionality was definitive. "All consciousness is consciousness of something." And psychology had the task of delineating the various ways in which consciousness could relate to its objects.

Brentano's act psychology did not gain a significant hearing outside Germany, though it has an impact on Gestalt theory. And Wundt's structural psychology with its introspectionist technique and focus on mental content, gave way to functionalism, especially in its behaviorist form in the Anglo-American world. But in the meantime the psychological descriptions of William James are of great importance.

WILLIAM JAMES AND THE INTERNAL STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In volume one of James' *Principles of Psychology* (1890/1950), we have a basic psychology of experience, primarily in terms of the stream of conscious but also through the description of two meanings of "self." The thing which distinguished James's description of experience from those of Fechner and Wundt was that, whereas they were concerned to find the elements that combined together in various ways to make the totality of experience at a particular time, James rejected this atomism in favor of the attempt to describe key features of the field of awareness taken in its entirety. James described consciousness as an ongoing process, having its own themes within which the current foci of attention get their meaning. So the content of consciousness is, at a particular moment, a phase of a personal "stream." The significance of a particular object of consciousness is not just due to its reference to the external thing but is also due to its relationship to the ongoing themes of my awareness—its personal relevance to me.

James builds up a general case for the importance of what he calls the "fringe" of the focal object of our conscious experience. An object of awareness gains its meaning in large measure from the "halo of relations" with which it is connected—its "psychic overtone." Husserl later also pointed to a similar idea: the "horizon" of a phenomenon. That is, an object of awareness is affected intrinsically by the whole web of its meaningful connections within the world of experience. Choice is also a feature of consciousness for William James. Of the available objects of

attention, one becomes focal at a particular time and others are reduced to the periphery of attention. Here, we have something akin to the Gestalt psychologists' distinction between the figure and ground of awareness.

James's approach to consciousness is continued in the subsequent chapter of the *Principles*, which is devoted to the self. James regards this as a very difficult topic, but he discusses in detail the distinction between the self as an object of thought (the self-concept, let us say), and the self as that *who* is aware of that self-concept. So the self is a "duplex" (as James puts it) involving both (a) the self which we can conceptualize, the self as known, the *me*, and also (b) the self as that which "has" that knowledge, the *I*. In addition, the me is shown to have a complex structure itself. So James provides a basic phenomenology of the self, which was developed by such later authors as G.H. Mead and Gordon Allport.

The basic description of awareness and self was a valuable advance. James, much later, continued the descriptive tendency of his work in a way which also employed a form of qualitative research. This was in the groundbreaking *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). In this book, James draws on a wide range of texts and personal accounts, which are—in an important methodological move akin in some ways to the phenomenological process of "bracketing" reality—interpreted as matters of subjective conceptualization, rather than in terms of any external reality to which the perception or conception is supposed to refer.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY THEORETICAL FERMENT AND THE EMERGENCE OF BEHAVIORISM

Unfortunately, the very fruitful forms of literary-qualitative research shown in James's psychology did not remain part of mainstream psychology but were submerged in the general disillusion with Wundtian introspection. Critique of introspection took several forms and each form, it seems, gave birth to a distinct school of psychological research, but the dominant one, especially in American academic psychology, was behaviorism. This line of thinking was especially inimical to any phenomenologically-oriented approach and so it is important to note its characteristics.

Historically, then, behaviorism began as a methodological critique of introspectionism, taking the line that mental processes could not be the object of scientific study because they were not open to observation. Watson's (1913) statement of position, "Psychology as a behaviorist views it," demanded a replacement of introspective method with the study of behavior. Partly, this was an impatient reaction to the irresolvably contradictory findings of the introspectionist psychologists. "Objectivity" was the catchword, and this meant focusing on events which both (a) could be reported reliably and were not susceptible to idiosyncrasy, and also (b) were open to observation by someone other than the person undergoing the experience. Watson recognized that this meant that psychology would no longer be the science of consciousness but he seems merely to have regarded this as a

consequence of the requirement that psychology adopt a "scientific" methodology. It was not that consciousness was ill-formulated by the introspectionists, or that consciousness could be dismissed as unreal. It was simply not amenable to objective attack. It is also true to say that behaviorism was committed to the direct and unmediated connection between all human functioning and the world, to the extent that consciousness (which would seem to represent a hiatus in the flow of world—person exchange) was normally unrecognized.

This historical shift was unfortunate, for it put out of play several lines of thought which, when elaborated, are conducive to the development of qualitative and more specifically phenomenological psychology. When the psychologist concentrates on objective stimuli and measurable responses, attention is turned from the following (among other things):

The 'first person' perspective. Propositions about psychological events can only be stated in the third person—from the viewpoint of the observer rather than the actor themselves. The statement "*They* responded in such-and-such a way in certain environmental circumstances" may be scientific, but "*I* perceived (subjectively) the situation in such-and-such a way and so acted as I did" cannot be scientific.

The perceptual approach. Behaviorism could not consider the viewpoint of the research participant. And the other modes of intentionality of consciousness—thinking, judging, paying attention and switching it from one thing to another, etc.—could not be properly differentiated and researched because behaviorism could not permit itself to consider the relationship between consciousness and its objects of awareness.

Idiography. Behaviorist research, though allowing for 'individual differences' due to variations in individuals' histories of reinforcement, could not regard the study of people in their uniqueness as a justifiable scientific enterprise. Objectivity would be threatened.

Meaning is sacrificed by behaviorism. In the search for the objective and observable causes of behavior, the meaning that a situation has for the person disappears as a topic of research. Similarly, people's own accounts of their experience is regarded as *verbal behavior*—that is, responses which need to be explained in terms of their causes—rather than understandable and meaningful in their own terms.

Social relatedness was simply seen in stimulus-response terms: other people are an important source of stimuli, and my responses to them are likely to have significant repercussions. But people were not seen as different in kind to the things which constitute a person's environment; behaviorists were not able to recognize the *social nature* of the human being. In particular, they were not able to fully recognize the intersubjective constitution of human reality.

In effect, those things which behaviorism neglects provide a valuable list of items which are central to a qualitative sensibility in psychology. They also indicate the inimical context in which the general line of thinking of Husserl and his successors vied for a hearing.

However, within behaviorism, developments in a cognitive direction were made from time to time, attempting to re-establish psychology as a science of