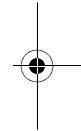
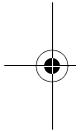




CHAPTER 30

Phenomenology and the Qualitative in Individual Psychology

CHRISTOPHER SHELLEY



As clinicians and practitioners, Adlerians employ narrative as a tool to facilitate psychological growth and healing. Whether it is parents using Adlerian parenting methods, counselors and therapists in the consulting room, teachers in the classroom or Adlerian writers drawing on the rich texts of their diverse literature, it is tacitly recognized that language and narrative are pinnacle to an *understanding* psychology. This essay examines the philosophical ideas that underpin the use of narrative and qualitative methods.

Adler was a psychological practitioner of extraordinary method. His client base, especially in Vienna, was often drawn from the lower economic classes (Hoffman, 1994). The material conditions of everyday life and the pragmatics of offering psychological services to the less financially endowed necessitated an approach that allowed for faster resolution of psychic distress. This contrasted with the upper-class and leisurely psychoanalytic method from which Adler famously diverged. Moreover, Adler's social idealism and his attention to history and context rendered him a complex thinker who fashioned techniques that, nonetheless, appeared elementary to some. For example, the ideas and concepts Adler put forward





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were frequently railed against by orthodox Freudians and their later supporters, dismissed as superficial, and decried as mere ego psychology (Kaufmann, 2003). Some critics, moreover, still contend that Adler's is not a depth psychology but rather one that panders to "platitudes," a shallow system seeking "to make a virtue of being simplistic" (Kaufmann, 2003, p. 263). Even those whose systems closely approximate that of Adler accused him of having taken an insufficient journey into the depths, as Karen Horney charged (Paris, 1994). Such criticisms, however, fail to grasp the inherent complexity of Adler's field psychology and of the centrality of intersubjective understanding to which Individual Psychology (IP) adheres. Certainly, some of Adler's concepts hold an initial digestibility and this "common sense" ease of entry into Adlerian thinking is appreciated, especially by lay adherents. However, connecting these concepts to the overall doctrine is, as the advanced Adlerian knows too well, a challenging yet invigorating project. This epistemological and methodological complexity is implicit in Adler's (1956) own summary that

all the methods of Individual Psychology for understanding the personality take into account the individual's opinion of his goal of superiority, the strength of his inferiority feeling, the degree of his social interest, and the fact that the whole individual cannot be torn from his context with life — or better said, from his context with society. (p. 327)

Understanding the person means understanding his or her context and the ways in which the surrounding milieu is interwoven with one's unique subjectivity. Lewis Way (1950), in discussing Adler's adoption of the neo-Kantian philosophy of *Vaihinger*, draws attention to the subjectivistic orientation of Individual Psychology: "It is therefore never possible to suppose the human being capable of anything in the nature of a 'pure perception' or apprehension of reality undistorted by the nature of his own mental world" (p. 65).

Method in Psychology

The subjectivistic, context dependent presuppositions of Adlerian psychology necessarily pose problems of method. The embeddedness of the human psyche in its object imparts inevitable challenges of representation for psychologists. Psychology as a discipline, especially as it developed over the 20th century in Anglo-American contexts, generally esteems quantitative truth claims predicated on operationalism (Danziger 1997; Deese, 1972). Such claims elevate the abstract, numeric, and reified findings of

especially laboratory-based research over and above the generally subjectivistic, narrative, and meaning dimensions yielded by qualitative research.

The development of psychology as discipline, forming as it did from a 19th-century split with rationalistic and often introspective philosophy, carved out an experimental and empirical niche. The 19th-century importation of the German Wilhelm Wundt's objectivistic laboratory methods (whilst disregarding his subjectivistic *völkerpsychologie*) into Anglo-American psychology, placated psychology's penchant for representing itself as unbiased and empirical, a rigorous scientific psychology. This objectivist niche has been defended diligently by academic psychology through its historic adoption of *positivism* as the proper means for generating truth claims about the reality of human subjects and their individual psychological processes. This general adherence to positivism differs markedly from Adler's adoption of Vaihinger's *idealistic positivism* in ways that will become apparent.

Some Adlerians, recognizing the psychological grounding of Individual Psychology qua psychology have understood the necessity of generating quantitative research in order to retain a place in psychology as a discipline. Adler was, however, more of a practitioner, interdisciplinarian, and, indeed, philosopher than a classical academic psychologist. His conscious celebration of philosophers such as Vaihinger, Smuts, the social philosophy of Marx, and aspects of Nietzsche are clearly woven into his overall doctrine (Lehrer, 1999).

Adler never followed the rigorous quantitative dictates of the developing discipline of psychology. Such a psychology veered relentlessly to the "hard" truths of the human psyche as object. On the contrary, Adler retained the concept of the self, with its holistic, synthetic, subjectivistic *and* objectivistic features intact. Empirical psychology, in contrast, disavowed the self and solidified around mechanistic, deterministic, and measurable constructs (Danzinger, 1997). Hence academic psychology generally espouses *nomothetic* laws whilst Adlerian psychology largely clusters toward *idiographic* ones, with limited nomothetic exceptions (Adler, 1956).

However, William Stern, famous in psychology for introducing the concept of Intelligence Quotient, noted that nomothetic and idiographic aspects in psychology are not clear-cut; they may represent two positions but not two distinct fields (1911/1996). A differentiation of the nomothetic from the idiographic point of view should not be considered as a binary separation into separate scientific disciplines. Gordon Allport, who studied with Stern in Germany, subsequently abandoned behaviorist and laboratory methods with which he had previously concurred, to develop Stern's notion of *real individuality*. Stern's idea of real individuality and



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Allport's subsequent *personalistic* psychology represent a break with the subject/object divide in experimental psychology (Nicholson, 2000). This break represents an exception to the rule by which academic psychology continues to be interested in the object often at the expense of the subject.

Much of the research that academic psychology generated over the 20th century was nomothetic and actually strikes one as a subset of physiology or, at least on the borderland thereof. Such aggregate representations resulting from experimental settings reduce the self to component features lacking in agency, a series of elemental chains devoid of the existential or spiritual aspects that make a life worth living. Hence, Anglo-American psychology also repudiated aspects of another founding figure, William James (1842–1910), who, like Adler, argued a similarly conceptualized holistic self that intertwines material, social, and spiritual dimensions (e.g., biological embodiment, sociological factors, and existential aspects, respectively). All three tiers are viewed by James as equally significant in understanding human selves, although James personally favored the spiritual self as “supremely precious” (1955/1890, p. 203).

Especially in America, retaining a place in academic psychology required Adlerians to produce quantitative data. However, the kinds of quantitative data that Adlerians produce are predicated on notions of soft (as opposed to hard) determinism (Adler, 1956). In a classic article, Ansbacher argued for the generation of quantitative data. Yet, citing a brief paper that Adler wrote on the issue of quantitative methods, Ansbacher noted the proviso that Adler understood experimental results as limited, representing “a shadow of reality” (Ansbacher, 1941/1994, p. 477). Ansbacher nevertheless concluded that a detailed book referencing quantitative data in order to support the presuppositions of IP would be welcome. In remarking on Adler's commonsense approach, he stated that

[I] regret that it is based entirely on the case history method. Valid truths can in many cases be stated in quantitative terms. Such a book would reveal that the original Adlerian tenets are exceedingly well supported by subsequent quantitative research.... It would also show that the general trend is much more in accord with Individual Psychology than is usually assumed by the Adlerians themselves. (p. 477)

Although Ansbacher regrets the exclusivity of the case study approach, this method is a narrative one that has, nevertheless, served all depth psychologies well. It is certainly not without its insufficiencies (e.g., cultural and ecological validity) and needs to be viewed as part of the qualitative genre, a particular thread of method amongst an array of possibilities. Its

strengths rest in potentially capturing the paradoxical complexity and interpretational richness that strictly quantitative methods lose. I would agree, however that its one-sidedness as method is problematic. However, for a number of reasons that beg investigation, Ansbacher's call for quantitative research results to substantiate Adlerian truth claims remains a complex one. First, Adler was not, as we have seen, opposed to experimental methods (usually producing quantitative results). The dilemma for Adlerians is what to do with such results, since they pose an inevitable interpretational problem. Second, Adler's own positioning of quantitative results as casting a "shadow" of reality suggests the incompleteness of such data. Thus, the problem is not necessarily the generation of quantitative data but its subsequent interpretation and use. Clearly, the philosophical requirement is to make use of such data synthetically. Synthesis is posed as a means to unite the "shadow" with its object and this necessarily means to represent an account that does not negate the subject. Such an approach, when synthesized contextually, will solve problems of ecological validity and static reification.

Another problem with generating quantitative truth claims in IP rests with Adler's philosophical commitments. Smuts (1926/1973) was scathing toward the psychology of his day for its penchant to produce a collection of reductionist, atomistic, and quantitative representations. In contrast, Smuts viewed personality as amongst the highest expressions of holism, which is compromised when rendered asunder through reductive analysis. He wrote that

each human individual is a unique personality; not only is personality in general a unique phenomenon in the world, but each human personality is unique in itself, and the attempt at "averaging" and generalising and reaching the common type on the approved scientific lines eliminates what is the very essence of personality, namely, its unique individual character in each case. (p. 279)

In rendering personality unique and indivisible, an exemplary manifestation of holism, Smuts repudiates the positivist epistemology and associated methods of psychology: "the province of psychology is much too narrow and limited for the purpose of personality; and both its method and procedure as a scientific discipline fail to do justice to the uniquely individual character of the personality" (p. 280). According to Smuts, and adopted by Adler, a key aspect to the unique individual character is its distinctive phenomenology. This proposition celebrates personality not as an aggregate of traits but one that colors and shades human experiences with an underlying creative force.



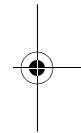
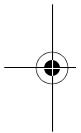
Phenomenology

The philosopher most identified with phenomenology is Edmond Husserl (1859–1938). Husserl's phenomenology is not concerned with abstract or objective events independently of how such events are *experienced*. Hence, Husserl focuses on how phenomena are experienced by a knowing subject (Bowie, 2003). In turning to the subject, he was not averse to objectivity, but rather concentrated on the subject's *knowing* of objects. The "I" experiences by means of reflection and by its ability to hold within the mind mental representations. If I look into someone's eyes, I can strive to see them as an ophthalmologist might (as objects: cornea, pupils, iris, crystalline lens, and so on), and subjectively experience them as warm, alluring, bright, beautiful, cold, calculating, defective or even menacing. Yet, my experience of striving to see eyes objectively will also be biased by my very act of looking (previous knowledge, intention, hypotheses, and assumptions). Though I may be able to see eyes as objects, I do so by willfully repressing or ignoring an indivisible subjectivity. I do not have a wholly objective access to the object.

Bowie (2003) argues that "for there to be consciousness at all it must have an object to be conscious of ... and it must be connected to a subject that thinks" (p. 63). Hence, phenomenology concerns itself with describing consciousness, the consciousness of a subject that thinks. Husserl's¹ concentration is focused toward what he called *evidenz*, cognitive comprehensions or *encountering* that concerns itself with how objects are known at all. The presumptions of phenomenology are generally drawn from the premises of German Idealist philosophy (e.g., Fichte, Schelling) which ultimately concerns itself with wholes. Bowie furthermore notes that subject and object are intertwined in ways that cannot be artificially separated, as evidenced in the claim that since nature produces subjectivity, nature's objective products are also inherently subjective.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), in developing a *hermeneutic* stream of phenomenology, emphasizes *understanding* (Heidegger, 1953). His perspective is holistic in as much as phenomena are embedded in temporal and situational contexts. Understanding requires an ongoing interplay between whole and parts in order for phenomena to be both knowable and intelligible. Bowie (2003) summarizes Heidegger's point of view: "Why should seeing the sunset as an object of physics have priority over the everyday apprehension of it as an object of beauty, given that this is the way the phenomenon is initially manifest?" (p. 203).

A core issue to surface in the hermeneutic stream of phenomenology rests with the fact that we are diachronically rooted in the world; that is, our *being* is within and not outside of the world. Heidegger's magnum opus,



Being and Time (1953), connotes the embeddedness of human subjects in a world that, when experienced, contains temporal boundaries that cannot be wholly transcended. Heidegger's pupil Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) extended this thesis by speaking of the historical force of *tradition* (1960), a somewhat inadequate translation of the German *Überlieferung*, which carries no exact English counterpart. Tradition in the Gadamerian sense means both what is handed down from the past and the ongoing conversation that gives force and movement to what the past carries forward. Like language, one's tradition preexists. By being born into a particular time, one inherits (introjects) the traditions (values, beliefs, ideologies, and customs) that already exist and move dialectically in ways that cannot be wholly grasped. The best one can do is to try and foreground the prejudices one (unconsciously) carries, to strive for glimmers of truth through dialogue and the generation of new, perhaps more comprehensive questions.

Truth Claims

Like Heidegger, Gadamer privileges language over mathematics and puts into question the whole idea of method as a means to substantiate absolute truth claims. Indeed, it is argued that “rule-bound methods ... predetermine how the world can appear in them” (Bowie, 2003, p. 253). Methods, whether quantitative, qualitative, or a mixture of the two are themselves reflective of a prejudice inherited from the traditions of 19th- and 20th-century modernity, laden with beliefs drawn from the Enlightenment. In contrast, Gadamer (1960) places his faith in Art, which, he believes, is uniquely poised to transcend the limitations of a scientific method that projects the hard truth of the object independently of the contingency of the subject. Indeed, as Stones (1985) points out, quantitative methods especially prioritize method rather than phenomena. If one thinks of the violinist as object, one might consider measuring and quantifying the tendon movements, number of breaths, vibratic motion of the finger(s), calibration of bow and string, firings of the eardrum, blood flow, and attention to meter. An indeterminate number of empirical approaches may attempt to understand the structural and physiological mechanics of the violinist's effect, yet nowhere are the experience, meaning, creativity, or holistic features of the artist and the music apparent. Such an approach in this instance is hollow, bereft of those intrinsically linked features that make art and creativity a force in human subjects, contributing to those experiential dimensions that make a life worth living.

The evisceration of subjectivity and experience are what Husserl disputes, the appropriation of logic into empirical psychology. Like Gadamer,



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Adler too recognized the transcendent and creative power of art, claiming that, “Some day soon it will be realized that the artist is the leader of mankind on the path to the absolute truth” (1956, p. 329). In addition, like Gadamer, Adler concedes that we are not “blessed with the possession of absolute truth” (1956, p. 142). This metaphysical statement points to Adler’s unique synthesis of both the metaphysical and the dialectical traditions in philosophy. Without direct access to absolute truth, one of the things that Adler turns to is dialogue. This is akin to Gadamer’s (1960) emphasis on Art and the necessity of dialogue to reveal the glimmers of truth that Art may yield. Likewise, one can see it in Stein’s (1991) emphasis on Socratic exchange and Maddox’s (2001) insistence that IP be founded ideally on “open dialogue and debate” (p. 45). These positions harmonize with Gadamer’s “to and fro” of dialogue.

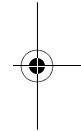
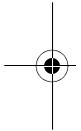
Individual Psychology and Phenomenology

Phenomenology has long been acknowledged as fundamental to IP and is a crucial aspect to an Adlerian epistemology. Mosak (1989) notes that, “The *Journal of Individual Psychology* (now *Individual Psychology*) referred to itself as being, ‘devoted to a holistic, phenomenological, teleological, field-theoretical, and socially oriented approach’” (p. 81). As well, Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) argue that IP holds similarities with Husserl’s *phenomenology* although Adler did not use the term. Indeed, several points of convergence unite IP with both the hermeneutic and existential streams of phenomenology. In order to comprehend Adler’s use of phenomenology better, it is necessary to engage in further philosophical unpacking.

Adler’s subscription to the post-Kantian philosophy of Vaihinger (1911/1965), specifically the somewhat obscure doctrine of *idealistic positivism*, cleverly counters ordinary positivism. Idealistic positivism is actually a repudiation of the more familiar positivism sourced to Auguste Comte (1798–1857) or the later views of the *logical positivists* (1920s) of the Vienna school, a stream of positivism that has abated over time. Adler’s use of Vaihinger’s ideas are predicated on the notion of truth *as if* truth. The statement resonates more clearly with Nietzsche, whose ideas Vaihinger admired and credited in *The Philosophy of As If*.

The distinction between idealistic and other forms of positivism is manifest in the concept of the *fiction*. Adler (1956) clarifies:

Fictio means, in the first place, an *activity of fingere*, that is to say, of constructing, forming, giving shape, elaborating, presenting, artistically fashioning, conceiving, thinking, imagining, assuming,



planning, devising, inventing. Secondly, it refers to the *product* of these activities, the fictional assumption, fabrication, creation, the imagined case. Its most conspicuous character is that of unhampered and free expression. (p. 78)

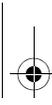
Ansbacher and Ansbacher distinguish between the idealist and the positivist:

Whereas idealism regards ideas as the ultimate reality, and positivism recognizes only observable facts, Vaihinger's system regards ideational constructs, even when in contradiction to reality, of great practical value and indispensable for human life. This is what Vaihinger means when he calls his philosophy "Idealistic Positivism" or "Positivist Idealism." (Adler, 1956, p. 87)

Ansbacher and Ansbacher outline Adler's use of the fiction as a means to substantiate the theory of IP. The theoretical core posits subjectivity as being fictional in nature. Fictions cannot be causally linked to objective matter. Rather, fictions are drawn from the inventive aspects of the mind and resonate with the fundamentally creative spirit of the human subject. Moreover, fictions are formed in the unconscious, a point of divergence with phenomenology's emphasis on consciousness. This aspect actually differentiates Adler's use of phenomenology from the "knowing subject" or the detailed descriptions of consciousness that Husserl sought. We are not the *all*-knowing subject. Hence, the contents of consciousness are, for Adlerians, subject to the interpretative dialogue necessary to unpack their unthought meanings. This premise tends to place Adler's IP on the hermeneutic side of the phenomenological stream. It also differentiates IP's connection phenomenology from cognitive psychology's exclusive phenomenology of consciousness.

However, Adler cannot be located solely in the hermeneutic stream of phenomenology. He also resonates with key aspects opened up by the *existential* stream (based on Merleau-Ponty, Arendt, Sartre, and de Beauvoir). This stream focuses more on *description* than the hermeneutic preference for interpretation. The existentialists concentrate on complex issues such as freedom, choice, and the conscious knowledge of the inevitability of death (ontological temporality).

Also akin to the existentialists, in his method of psychotherapy Adler unites subject and object. This is evidenced in the clinical uses of (a) empathy, and (b) taking an objective stance similar to the concept of *bracketing*. This ostensibly produces the ingredients necessary for an *understanding psychology*. To empathize with the client whilst simultaneously observing from an "objective" point of view (bracketing-out



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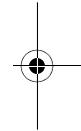
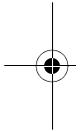
presuppositions) draws attention to the *existential index*. Giorgi (1997) explains:

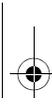
to enter into the attitude of the phenomenological reduction means to (a) bracket past knowledge about a phenomenon, in order to encounter it freshly and describe it precisely as it is intuited (or experienced), and (b) to withhold the existential index, which means to consider what is given precisely as it is given, as presence, or phenomenon. (p. 238)

Adler did not use the terms *bracketing* or *existential index*, but a consonance with these concepts is apparent under aspects of idealistic positivism, which again is concerned with truth *as if* truth. To bracket out one's presuppositions or biases is an important technical aspect of Adlerian therapy. From a clinical point of view in IP, the attempt constitutes a stance of neutrality, a conscious awareness not to infect the clinical environment with one's own material as best as one consciously can. The hermeneutic stream of phenomenology disputes the subject's ability to achieve this fully, hence the emphasis on stance (*as if*). To completely extinguish the prejudices of the self is to stand outside of time and space, an impossibility (Shelley, 2000).

The hermeneutic rationale that disputes bracketing stems from the unconscious force of prejudices — one cannot extinguish what one does not know. Gadamer (1960) ascertains that, "language is more than the consciousness of the speaker; so also it is more than a subjective act" (p. xxxvi). Moreover, the potential for countertransference and the necessity of supervision for good therapeutic practice emphasize the impossibility of a totalizing bracketed stance. This leads to a final point of confound with phenomenology in Adler's system, the question of a dynamic unconscious. IP acknowledges the force of unawareness in human life and is correctly positioned as a modality of *depth psychology* that connects the here and now with the fictions formed in childhood that point to future goals (constructed teleologies).

Phenomenology's concern with the precise detailing of conscious experience is important to Adlerians but such material is limited, subject to the necessity of interpretation. The force of one's unconscious goals can distort the products of consciousness. Therefore, pure experiencing becomes a near impossibility (e.g., see Adler's concept of *private logic* and his use of the Kantian-based *biased apperception*). Our task is to minimize the intrusiveness of unaware biases, to become aware of unconscious projection as manifested in transference and other safeguarding tendencies.





This is something that good supervision, reflexivity, and self-knowledge ideally imparts to the therapist/counselor.

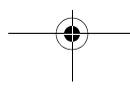
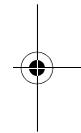
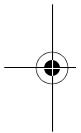
Qualitative Methodologies

Psychology's overreliance on positivism and, subsequently, a near one-sidedness regarding the elevation of quantitative methods, have left the *subject* of psychology in the shadow of its embedded object. Holloway (2005) suggests that some Adlerians have acquiesced to this dominant trend by similarly pursuing the operationalization of concepts such as *social interest* in order to produce objective and quantitative studies to substantiate the concept. He notes that some Americans seem to prefer a measurable conception whilst Europeans favor a philosophically based orthodoxy to the concept's German root *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*. The Europeans, he argues, are more likely to view it as existentially or spiritually grounded and less likely to pursue reified characterizations of the so-called manifestations of social interest. If Americans have tended to pursue quantitative studies on social interest (something that Slavik and Croake [1997], argue is conceptually unquantifiable), they have done so in ways that are consistent with the overall research program of North American psychology. North American psychology remains staunchly committed to quantitative results regardless of challenges posed by third wave psychology (e.g., humanistic and existential). This retention of a near methodological monopoly is also regardless of the fact that other disciplines, such as sociology, education, and anthropology long ago dropped the exclusivity of the quantitative in favor of a diversity of methods.

In IP specifically, I do not oppose quantification projects so long as they do not trump qualitative attempts or remain as reified representations (e.g., unsynthesized findings that succumb to frozen, calcified abstractions devoid of dynamics and lacking in a holistic, ecological validity).

Rennie, Monteiro, and Watson (2002) have conducted an extensive quantitative study on the minor rise of qualitative methods in psychology. In their analysis, they note that qualitative methods such as grounded theory, discourse analysis, phenomenological methods and so on have enjoyed a recent surge. The study examined published articles in psychology from 1900 to 1999. Defining qualitative methods, the authors remark on its status:

The term "qualitative research" refers to a variety of approaches to enquiry in the health and social sciences that address the meaning of verbal text in verbal rather than numeric terms. More fundamentally, qualitative research is more subjective than quantitative



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research; more exploratory than confirmatory; more descriptive than explanatory; more interpretive than positivist. Thus, in many ways qualitative research cuts across the grain of accustomed research practice. Accordingly, there is resistance to accepting it in many quarters. (p. 179)

Qualitative research projects published in psychology during the 1990s, the authors note, amount to an overall yield of 9% of the whole. This is a very small yield, yet far greater than in previous decades.

One wonders why there has been so little qualitative inquiry in psychology. Wood-Sherif (1987) and, separately, Kidder and Fine (1997), note that the formalization of psychology as discipline was conducted almost entirely by men who imported their biased worldview, including elevating objectivist and abstract tenets (patriarchal values), that have had the effect of silencing the voice of women. Freud belied the trend, however, and, with all his noted flaws, gave “hysterical” women a way to voice repressed suffering. Some feminists have argued that, historically, women needed to become hysterical in order to be heard. Hence feminists’ paradoxical celebration of psychoanalysis, disdaining its misogyny (theoretical intrusiveness of, for example, the “electra complex” in interpreting excavated voice) and celebrating its commitment to emancipate repressed narrative (Kurzweil, 1995). Moreover, the historic exclusion of women from the academy is traced back over a millennium with philosophical justifications appearing from time to time, such as the Baconian notion of men as rational “knowers” and women as the irrational mystery to be “known” (Westmarland, 2001). In the claim to the real and the universal, “man” continued to constitute women as “other.”

If women were to have formalized the foundations of psychology, one speculates that it would not be so one-sided toward positivism and quantitative data (which provocatively suggests not a neutral representation of statistical scores but an androcentric phenomenology masked as objectivity). Instead, through social movements, women were eventually permitted into the academy yet socialized and compelled to master and reproduce the foundations of a “male” epistemology. Feminists draw vexed attention to the continued dominance of quantitative methods as a sustained epistemological aspect of psychological institutionalization, again traced to its foundations that were constructed entirely by men. This is an essentialized reading, however, in a world where sex/gender binaries are now considerably more muddled. The effect of the object/subject split is to maintain Cartesian dualism, which feminists also describe as disembodiment (Smith, 1999). Perhaps to attest to the feminist claim, it is noteworthy that traditional female disciplines such as nursing do not privilege



quantitative over qualitative knowledge production (Rennie, Monteiro, & Watson, 2002).

The aims of qualitative methods in psychology are often different from quantitative ones. Qualitative accounts tend to render data derived from information-rich interviews, to lend voice to experiences, or reflexive accounts garnered from detailed participation in groups (e.g., as an observer or reflexive participant such as in ethnography). Henwood (1996) notes that psychology, by and large, is a nonreflexive discipline and so may find the concept of self-reflection and foregrounding of bias *as part of the research process* simply too foreign. Nevertheless, famous psychologists have, on occasion, traversed qualitative practices. For example, Kidder and Fine (1997) note,

In the 1940s and 1950s, Muzafer Sherif and his collaborators immersed themselves in the rivalries of a summer boy's camp to write about conflict and cooperation. In the 1950s, Leon Festinger and colleagues infiltrated a doomsday sect to observe what happens when prophecies fail. In these classic studies social psychologists entered their subject's lives without structured questionnaires, pre-determined variables or research designs and no one doubted that they were doing psychological research. (p. 35)

Finally, how do we know the accurateness or truthfulness of a qualitative, narrative based account? A hermeneutic standpoint suggests that truth is something to strive for and yet the best one can hope for is to yield only glimmers. This begs the question, how does one prove the proof to which ensuing facts are constructed? Skultans (2005) suggests that, in reflecting the philosophical premises of Richard Rorty,

we have a duty to listen to narrative simply because the narrator is a human being. And if the told story diverges from the lived story, it may well be that the told story tells us more about the values and aspirations of the narrator than might the lived story. (p. 73)

Skultans's point resonates with the fictive constructivism at the core of IP (Slavik, 2002). Layers of meaning may be garnered through the use of narrative, the stuff of interpretation. That truths can be bent and distortions conjured gives psychologists some reasonable pause for thought in accepting narrative generated from qualitative accounts. On the other hand, there are also, as the perennial saying goes in quantitative research, lies, damn lies, and statistics.



Conclusion

It is my concluding contention that IP requires little philosophical substantiation for the use of qualitative methodologies. On the other side of the coin, Adlerians are free as always to pursue quantitative knowledge production. I certainly would not wish to obstruct such efforts. The results of quantitative studies are, however, argued to produce incomplete data, a “shadow” of reality. In IP, such results philosophically demand synthesis in order to be intelligible in the manner that I believe Adler (1938) intended. Otherwise, quantitative data succumbs to reification and falls on the wrong side of positivism. Finally, Adler’s late period, which turned in part to existentialism, finds common ground with phenomenological approaches to the detailed descriptions of conscious experience. Qualitative methods that employ an existential/phenomenological approach are, however, in danger of producing their own variety of incompleteness. The unconscious force of the fictional goals that populate unawareness demand space in struggling for the glimmers of truth to which we strive. Phenomenology provides an excellent entry point into the quest for intelligibility of such conceptions as style of life and social interest. However, phenomenology has yet to prove itself comprehensive enough to plumb and capture the depths and paradoxes that a depth psychology such as IP proposes. Nevertheless, it is through narrative and intersubjective exchange that voice can be lent to explicate the concealed aspects, one’s unthought movement, purpose, intentions, to garner insight into the forms of one’s style of life. In this regard, phenomenology can prove valuable as a beginning but cannot, I counter, embellish itself as an end.

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Notes

1. See Husserl’s work *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–1901).

