



Symposium/Other Proposal

2018 APA Annual Convention

Proposal ID: sym18851

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| 1. Type of program: | Symposium |
| 2. Title of program: | Phenomenology-Can-Do: Psychology as a Human Science, Fifty Years Later |
| First index term | 54 Philosophical/Theoretical |
| Second index term | 58 Religion and Spirituality |
| 3. Brief Content Description: | New phenomenological approaches to psychology are shown to be effective means of self-knowledge, of understanding the other, and of appreciation of religious determinants of mental health and one's behavior both in research and clinical practice. |
| 4. Division to submit this proposal: | 24 - Theoretical and Philosophical |
| 5. Length of time requested on program: | 1 hr. 50 min. |
| 6. Chair(s) of the session: | |

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7. Participants:

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Membership status: APA Member
Title of presentation: Knowledge as Being-with-One-Another in Psychotherapeutic Practice
Electronic Archiving: Yes
Coauthor :

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Membership status: APA Fellow

Title of presentation: How Do Psychologists “Know” Others? Empathy and Existential Intuition as
the Geist's Ways of Knowing

Electronic Archiving: Yes

Coauthor :

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Title of presentation: Phenomenological Research of Religious and Spiritual Determinants in
Mental Health

Electronic Archiving: Yes

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8. Discussant(s):

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9. Accommodation request: None

10. Submit for CE: True

Based on the contents of the symposium, psychologists will be able to recognize and appreciate phenomenological philosophy and method as tools for clinical practice and research.

Based on the contents of the symposium, psychologists will be able to skillfully utilize empathic, intuitive, self-reflective, and intersubjectively anchored approaches in their scholarly and clinical practice as related to marginalized forms of human experience and behavior (e.g. religious or spiritual experience, or experience of cultural differences).

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Phenomenology-Can-Do: Psychology as a Human Science, Fifty Years Later

In this symposium, we reflect on contributions of phenomenological approaches to psychology's ways of knowing, and examine to what extent this approach requires formalization, and how it can be flexibly adjusted to the needs of research and clinical practice.

In addition to early descriptive phenomenology of Husserl, or hermeneutic phenomenological ontology of Heidegger, the authors draw upon the recent developments in phenomenological philosophy: this includes phenomenology of emotions, embodiment, self-awareness, and especially the sphere of inter-subjectivity and the constitutive analysis used by contrast with a more simplified focus on the structures of meaning evident in daily life.

Drawing upon his extensive history conducting existential therapy, the first presenter will examine the opening moments of the psychotherapeutic encounter engaging "Being-with-one-another" [Heidegger's *Miteinandersein*]. This becomes the context within which the psychologist comes to know the patient. The very presence of psychologist becomes the chief "way" of knowing the other.

The second presenter looks at the psychologist's acts of knowing from phenomenological and hermeneutic perspectives, reconsidering the meaning of *Geisteswissenschaft* [human science] and considering our mode of access to others in terms of empathy, second person perspectivity, and Heidegger's *Mitbefindlichkeit* [finding oneself in a shared disposition].

Working within the phenomenological tradition of Levinas, Henry, Otto, James and Dahl, our third presenter will review her novel findings regarding the ways in which religious experience impacts both the "internal" and "external" spheres of experience, such as self-awareness and one's relationship with, and action in, the world.

We will show that in psychological clarifications of marginalized areas of human experience, phenomenological reflection offers more than does common sense naturalistic approach to knowledge generally practiced in psychology. In a concluding discussion, we will revisit intuition in its rapidly changing current cultural contexts, as a valid and promising means of delivering novel psychological findings and new strategies of successful clinical work.

(1) *Knowledge as Being-with-One-Another in Psychotherapeutic Practice*

Asking how I go about knowing as a psychotherapist is not only ontological, philosophical, or scientific but deeply personal, immediate, and urgent; an ontical imperative.

Several times a day, five days a week, I walk out to my waiting room and invite someone into my office. Even before we reach my office door, I find myself already changed, already with this one and no other. It is not just my mind or psyche that has changed but my whole being which is now constituted, no longer as just being-in-the-world, but as an utterly distinct once and once only Miteinandersein, being-with-one-another. By the time we actually take our seats my mind is already occupied with affectively hued images of this person's home, family, workplace, past, and future. And our discourse begins, as one person put it, "before language itself."

The success of our project depends entirely on our capacity to know and understand one another. How can I know this person in his or her immediate unfolding? How can I know myself? How can I know what is unfolding between us?

Freud would say that it is empathy, Einfühlung, "the mechanism by means of which we are enabled to take up any attitude at all towards another mental life." Rogers would embrace the same term, albeit eschewing Freud's mechanistic formulation while emphasizing an immediately experienced felt quality. Contemporary psychoanalysts might speak of the relational mind, implicit relational knowing, intersubjectivity, or co-constituted emotional worlds. Heidegger and Boss would call our attention to Mitsein, our being-with. Allen Schore would point to bio-social "right brain to right brain" communication. What about intuition? The evolutionary need to be safe, securely attached? Do any of these actually help me at all, there, in those very first moments of meeting and in the hour to follow? What does?

(2) *How Do Psychologists "Know" Others? Empathy and Existential Intuition as the Geist's Ways of Knowing*

My contribution presents phenomenological, hermeneutic, and existential approaches to the question of “how” psychologists are able to know others. I begin by reconsidering the meaning of the term *Geisteswissenschaft*, offering an “etymological” interpretation of its meaning. Then I discuss phenomenological conceptions of “access” to the meaning of others’ experience, drawing upon Dilthey, Jaspers, Husserl, Uexküll, Heidegger, Köhler, and Merleau-Ponty and their concepts of empathy, self-transposition, trading places, coupling, participatory observation, reversibilities of the flesh, and what I have referred to as second-person perspectivity as modes of presence that reveal the other’s “spirit” to us. Next we look at how the hermeneutic phenomenologist makes use of guiding conceptions [*Vorgriffen*] to guide one’s “sight” [*Vorsicht*] toward that which appears as “psychologically significant” – and even ontologically essential – in the lived experience of our patients and research participants. Heidegger’s “existentials” are identified and discussed in terms of how they act as lenses of perception by means of which the psychologist is able to observe and take note of what is going on in the lives of others. Sartre’s taking up of Heidegger’s most important existential concept, namely, “authentic temporality”, is presented as a basis for reframing the usual deterministic accounts of human experiencing. For Sartre, there is a free choice of being that determines all of my experiences, and which in the same stroke establishes the “reasons, causes, and motives” that we take to be the determinants of our behavior. It is this same free choice of being that serves as the basis for existential temporality: there is no linear determinism in psychological life: everything can appear as though it were determined to be; and yet, it is always the self that awaits me in the future that determines the significance of all those affairs in my present and past that (seem to) “explain” my behavior.

(3) *Phenomenological Research of Religious and Spiritual Determinants in Mental Health*

Phenomenology studies how experience is put together by the processes which take place within experience itself. Religious experiences create profound effects on one's behavior and health. However, they are difficult to study scientifically. Therefore, phenomenology is the only method which can fully describe, explicate, and thereby explain participation of religious or spiritual determinants in mental health or pathology. In this paper, I describe how emotion and embodiment (Michel Henry), and relationship with the other (Emmanuel Levinas) shape religious experience. On one hand, religious experience takes place deeply within one's self, as stipulated by (and experienced in) Indian Advaita Vedanta (Louchakova-Schwartz, 2017) or Orthodox Christian mysticism (Louchakova-Schwartz, 2016). In these forms of mysticism, experience is both emotional and embodied. On the other hand, some religious texts and practices associate the sacred with the presence of other religious subjectivities within one's own religious intersubjectivity (for example, see Suhrawardi's account of nur, 'light' in Arabic, in the plurality of lights separated by the impenetrable barazikh, 'barriers' pl., apud Louchakova-Schwartz, 2013). According to such accounts, even in deepest solitude, a person is never away from other persons (cf. Corbin's *Alone with the Alone*, or Sri Ramana's accounts of devotion to Arunachala), except for merely hypothetically. This ever-present otherness creates a mystery, in which the quality of "religious" can never be fully given or grasped in one's experience (cf. Otto, Levinas, Dahl, Taipale). The Holy and experiencing subject never fully connect. I will resolve the problem of "interior-exterior" character of religious experience by showing how these two aspects prevail or recede dependent on cultural modes of religious introspection (Cf. Flood 2013), nevertheless always remaining in a co-constitutive tandem (cf. Norenberg 2017, Mercer 2017). Further, I will show how "internal-external" religious experience engages many regions and spheres of the mind, which explains its long-lasting transformative effects and intimate relationship with health or sickness.