1. Type of program: Symposium

2. Title of program: Giorgi’s Reflections on Certain Qualitative and Phenomenological Research Methods: Panel Discussion
   First index term 45.4 qualitative methods

3. Brief Content Description: Amedeo Giorgi’s latest book on qualitative methodology will be discussed by three of his former students. Discussed will be a critical survey of grounded theory, heuristic, hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches to psychological research.

4. Division to submit this proposal: 05 - Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

5. Length of time requested on program: 50 min.

6. Chair(s) of the session:
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Title of presentation: 3 Different Qualitative Methods and Their Philosophical Foundations
Electronic Archiving: Yes
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Title of presentation: Description and Interpretation in Phenomenological Research Methods
Electronic Archiving: Yes
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Title of presentation: The Use of the Investigator’s Lived Experience and the Aim of Helpful Transformation
Electronic Archiving: Yes
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8. Discussant(s):

9. Accommodation request: None
10. Submit for CE: False

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Giorgi’s Reflections on Certain Qualitative and Phenomenological Research Methods: Panel Discussion

In his latest book Reflections on Certain Qualitative and Phenomenological Psychological Methods (University Professors Press, 2018), Amedeo Giorgi confronts several current traditions in qualitative research including grounded theory, hermeneutics, descriptive phenomenology, and heuristic research, offering critical discussion of their underlying philosophical positions. The book presents the critical reflections of one of the great, and perhaps the first and most enduring pioneer in the development of a qualitative research methodology for psychology, at the end of his career, bearing witness to the more recent proliferation of qualitative methods. Giorgi, above all, is a methodologist who has been concerned throughout his career about the foundations and procedures of science as it embraces the purpose(s) of research, what constitutes data, what procedures are to be used in analysis, and what kind of knowledge, including both idiographic and nomothetic, is scientifically justifiable. These are the questions he has answered in his own work and has been writing about for more than 50 years. In this volume and in our symposium, we will examine how Giorgi’s work, in light of his new book and most mature reflections, relates to the contemporary movement in qualitative research methods as it has grown up around his phenomenological approach. To what extent is there harmony among the various approaches and to what extent does phenomenology still have unique offerings in terms of its critical perspective, clarifications of what constitutes data, procedures of analysis, issues of validity and generalizability, and so on. Among the issues to be addressed are: the questions of the place of description and interpretation, the nature of the procedures of analysis that are required for genuine science, the use of personal data of the researcher, the place of practical and social change in research, and the scientific criteria that are to be used in evaluating qualitative research.
(1) **3 Different Qualitative Methods and Their Philosophical Foundations**

The first presenter will focus on Giorgi’s position, in his book Reflections on Certain Qualitative and Phenomenological Psychological Methods, that qualitative research methods in psychology are largely based on presupposed values of empiricism with various modifications to deal with human meaning. Empiricism focuses mostly on what it excludes in terms of what kinds of knowledge is unverifiable but also centers on sensorial experience as the point of departure in terms of what it counts as evidence for such knowledge. The nature of human meaning is addressed by Giorgi in terms of its origins. Pragmatism makes meaning a matter of practicality (outcomes) and constructivism makes meaning a matter of that which is social negotiated (origins.) Hermeneutics is addressed as being adopted as a basis for studying human meaning through text and text-analog analyses. For a basis for scientific inquiry, hermeneutics allows for the idea that there are more than one legitimate interpretation to any human experience. Discussion of Giorgi’s position that phenomenological psychology must include that which is “irreal” as well as real is important to his critique of limiting psychological research’s evidence to that which is empirically demonstrable. Moreover, the psychological reduction allows for fidelity to the experiencer’s meaning to be “the” one that results rather than one that is produced interpretively through a researcher’s theoretical perspective. Phenomenological research is conductive in the mode of scientific discovery regarding psychological experience and not verifying it as a matter of fact. Therefore, phenomenological researchers can remain confident in its eidetic findings even when not positing that the phenomenon exists in the way it presented itself to the researcher.

(2) **Description and Interpretation in Phenomenological Research Methods**
The second presenter will discuss aspects of Giorgi’s second and fourth chapters, where he presents clarifying distinctions between various uses of interpretation in qualitative research, including its more limited application within his own “descriptive phenomenological method.” Giorgi’s work advances our understanding of an old controversy within phenomenological psychology: where does description stop, and at what point might we find ourselves engaging in one or another form of interpretation? More importantly, Giorgi offers incisive definitions of what constitutes description as well as what constitutes the psychological attitude that underlies it. This presenter will enter into dialogue with Giorgi, in light of (a) the ways that Husserl, Heidegger, and Ricoeur have discussed the meaning of description, as well as (b) the multiple significations of the term “interpretation” as it is used by researchers both inside and outside of the phenomenological tradition. Beyond the definitions and comparisons found in the second chapter, Giorgi offers in the fourth chapter one of his best demonstrations of the method, through a return to his earlier research on learning. In this most recent demonstration of data analysis, Giorgi for the first time brings out the meaning of Husserl’s philosophical noetico-noematic method of analysis with reference to what Giorgi calls the “intentional-presentational versus functional-fulfilling” relations uncovered within a description of learning. This focus on the “how” of human experiencing offers a deeper understanding of what it is that we are “describing” when engaging in the phenomenological attitude. The volume concludes with a critique in his fifth chapter of the recent trend toward “naturalizing” phenomenology, bringing philosophers Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher into dialogue with the earlier work of Aron Gurwitsch and reaffirming that phenomenology is not only non-naturalistic, but anti-naturalistic. The implications of this position will be discussed and elaborated.

(3) The Use of the Investigator’s Lived Experience and the Aim of Helpful Transformation
By focusing on Chapter 3 in Giorgi’s most recent book, Reflections of Certain Qualitative and Phenomenological Psychological Methods (2018), this presentation examines whether qualitative research can fruitfully utilize the investigator’s lived experience and help resolve personal problems of the researcher and others. Giorgi’s seminal articulation of a phenomenological research method, which did not utilize the researcher’s experience or aim at transformative healing, has given way to other methods that claim to fulfill these aims. An exemplary case in point is Clark Moustakas’s contributions of heuristic and phenomenological methods. Giorgi’s close examination of this work concludes that methods such as these can lack the rigorous specification of procedures required of science and may satisfy human interests in self exploration and healing without producing genuinely scientific knowledge. Giorgi’s phenomenological psychological methods, which are not necessarily motivated by personal suffering or problems and typically have not included self-study, require principled procedures featuring the disinterested analysis of generality. Giorgi’s focus on fundamental principles, what is essential for psychology, his qualitative method can indeed be motivated by practical problems and can involve deep self-exploration on the part of the researcher, but these contingencies, however important, must be differentiated from the scientific research methods as such. Although Giorgi’s method may be and has been viewed as impersonal and impractical, this chapter makes clear that his point is to differentiate the aims and moments of scientific research from those of personal and social problem solving and healing. Giorgi’s point is that phenomenology provides the basis for science and its methods that are overlooked by methods that emphasize personal exploration and transformation, which need not be excluded and indeed are best addressed by rigorous science. The chapter raises the question of the compatibility of scientific research methods with healing through intimate knowledge of self and others.