Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Psychology*

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SYNOPSIS

From the perspective of the history of Western thought, humanism is a philosophy based on the belief that the human is irreducible to other forms of life, whether material or Divine. To the extent that Humanistic Psychology has its roots in the humanist tradition, it shares this conviction that the human cannot be understood except in its own terms. This paper will review the philosophical precedents for this perspective on the nature of human functioning, and will then consider whether or not the fruits of humanistic-psychological labor over the last 35 years have borne out the promises of its approach.

> Man [sic] has long felt himself to be but a puppet in life—molded by economic forces, by unconscious forces, by environmental forces. He has been enslaved by persons, by institutions, by the theories of psychological science. But he is firmly setting forth a new declaration of independence.
> (Rogers, 1978: 331)

Historically, the early roots of the Humanistic Psychology movement are to be found in the work of American personality theorists such as Gordon Allport (1937, 1955), Henry Murray and Gardner Murphy, in the interpersonal and neo-Freudian schools of the psychoanalytic tradition as represented by Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan, in the Gestalt psychology of Kurt Koffka, Max Wertheimer and Wolfgang Köhler, and in the thought of Kurt Goldstein. Later influences shaping the direction of this movement include the European philosophies of existentialism and phenomenology, and Eastern philosophical and religious traditions, all of which were imported into the United States following the Second World War (cf. DeCarvalho, 1991; Matson, 1981).

It will be my aim in the following to articulate the operative philosophical underpinnings of Humanistic Psychology, and to consider the implications of this conceptual framework for the development of an alternative paradigm for psychological theory and practice. I will begin with a thumbnail sketch of the history of humanism in the Western intellectual tradition, to draw out the conceptual cornerstones of the humanistic perspective. While it is a matter of debate as to whether or not, or to what extent, Humanistic Psychology belongs within the humanist tradition (Giorgi, 1981; Graumann, 1981), in the second part of this paper I will argue that they share a common philosophical perspective which may be as productive in guiding psychological science as it was in fostering the art of Leonardo and Michelangelo, or the political views of Rousseau and Jefferson. I will conclude, however, that Humanistic Psychology has not yet been able to achieve its humanistic

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objectives in the concrete development of psychological research and theory, and will suggest possible guidelines for future forays in this direction.

The Humanist Tradition

In a recent series of lectures on the humanist tradition in the West, Oxford historian Alan Bullock provided a crude but useful way to differentiate between humanism and other philosophical perspectives. Using the term 'man' as the pre-twentieth century designation for human being, Bullock writes:

> As a rough generalization, Western thought has treated man and the cosmos in three distinct modes. The first, the supernatural or the transcendental, has focused on God, treating man as a part of the Divine Creation. A second, the natural or the scientific, has focused on Nature and treats man as part of the natural order like other organisms. The third, the humanistic, has focused on Man, and on human experience as the starting point for man's knowledge of himself, of God and of Nature. *(1985: 16)*

The humanist perspective places human beings on center stage and considers human nature irreducible to either the material being of physical Nature or the supernatural or transcendental being of the Divine. Human being occupies a separate ontological realm and, unlike other components of the world, can only be properly understood in its own terms. Typically, aspects of human experience such as language, creativity and self-reflection may be identified as best embodying that which is distinctively human, but it is the underlying assertion of humanism that the possession of such qualities serves to distinguish the human realm from all other spheres of reality.

From this fundamental conviction in the unique value and status of human being and experience, there follow three characteristics of the humanist tradition which Bullock identifies as its most important and constant conceptual cornerstones (1985: 155). The first of these characteristics may be considered an epistemological consequence of the distinctive ontological status accorded human nature. If the human constitutes a realm unto itself, irreducible to either material or spiritual being, then knowledge of the human must be similarly distinctive and non-reductive. To attempt to understand the human solely within the parameters of the physical sciences or the Judeo-Christian tradition of revealed religion is therefore to distort its nature and to lose what makes the human precisely human. This is not to suggest that materiality and the sacred will have no role to play in human life, but that they cannot be accorded a primary role in accounting for the nature of human experience. Human experience must itself be primary, and other realities may only be considered through this lens of human consciousness. From this perspective, both scientific investigation and religious belief are viewed as human practices, derived, as Bullock writes, 'by human minds from human experience' (1985: 155).

The second characteristic of humanism is the value it places on the individual and the respect for the freedom and dignity of the person, which it takes to provide a foundation for all other values and rights (Bullock, 1985: 155). We might consider this to be the ethical and political corollary of the ontological and epistemological positions already described, in that the irreducibility and privileged status of the human are here taken to provide a guide for moral and social conduct. It is in the individual that the humanists have found those capacities which most distinguish human beings from other organisms; capacities such as the power to communicate, to reason, to reflect, and to be creative. Thus it is in the individual that they have placed the source of value for what is distinctly human – and for what, therefore, should serve as the basis for economic and political order. For individuals to exercise these powers to the fullest, two conditions have been deemed necessary: freedom and education. The state should interfere with individual freedom and expression as little as possible, and should have as one of its aims the fostering and protection of individual rights. On the other hand, potential and talent are not simply to be neglected or ignored, but are to be awakened, drawn out and cultivated by an educational process which emphasizes the growth and development of the individual's abilities. Taken together, the ultimate aim of these political and educational practices is the fullest actualization of each person's potential (Bullock, 1985: 156).

Bullock identifies as a third, related characteristic of humanism an emphasis on ideas, reasoning and the plurality of perspectives through which the human spirit can be expressed. Having placed more importance on processes of critical inquiry and reflection and artistic creativity than on the products of cooperative labor, the humanist tradition has been 'distrustful' of abstract systems of thought and has favored the historical study of concrete human experience and symbolic expression in its social and cultural contexts (Bullock, 1985: 157).

Viewing religion, science and art as fundamentally symbolic practices which embody the human hunger for meaning, humanists have typically accepted that there are many ways to the truth, and that the way, the practices

themselves, are more important than any possible destination. From this emphasis on symbolic expression there have followed interests in drama, literature, art and particularly language, as embodiments of the human imagination. Culture and history have also attracted much attention, as civilizations have been viewed as constructed out of constellations of meaning rooted in the daily lives and practices of their citizens. Through studies of language, history, art and symbolic practices, empathy has come to be valued as an avenue of access to other cultures, and as an important tool in understanding human experiences in their varying contexts.

These three characteristic emphases on human experience, freedom and meaning can be found interwoven in the history of the humanist tradition. Most accounts have humanism beginning in fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy as a revolt against the scholasticism and authoritarianism of the medieval church. Petrarch, who may be considered the first humanist, suggested a reversal of the then accepted view of history which heralded the dawn of the Christian age as bringing salvation from the heathen ignorance of Roman culture and its predecessors. For Petrarch, it was rather the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome which best illumined the human spirit, which he felt had fallen into darkness with the fall of Rome and the ascendancy of Christianity. He counseled a liberation from what then came to be called the 'middle ages' by a return to, and revitalization of, the lost arts and teachings of the past; by a 'renaissance' of antiquity (Bullock, 1985: 13–15). The Italian humanists saw in Greek and Roman ruins and history a civilization which was focused on human beings and the difficulties encountered in everyday experiences on earth rather than on a transcendental Being and questions pertaining to an after-life. They saw in the teachings of Socrates in particular a kind of thinking which occurred on a human level and which addressed human concerns, insisting on a cultivation of the person's own life and conduct and a humility of reason in the face of realities which transcend the limits of human experience and understanding.

This turn away from the mysteries and speculations of revealed religion to experience and thought on the human scale can also be seen in the introduction of perspective into Renaissance art and in the renewed interest in civic affairs in Italian cities such as Venice and Florence. These explosions in the arts and political activity and reflection were accompanied by emphases on education (primarily a study of the classics such as Virgil, Homer, Cicero and Plato) and expression (in poetry and prose as well as architecture), reflecting the Italian humanists' belief in the unique potentiality and creativity of human beings. Not only did they attempt to ground painting and sculpture in human experience and design their buildings and cities in human proportions, but they also began to exalt the human itself as a source of value, order and reason in the world. For some, this glorification of the human came into conflict with Christian teachings of original sin and the subordination of reason to faith, bringing about significant changes in religious thought and practice. As humanism spread from Italy throughout Europe, scholars began to view the Bible as another text to be subjected to the tools and interests of historical exegesis. Others became skeptical of the necessity of a church hierarchy to mediate between God and the individual, arguing for a more direct and immediate relationship and a more personal form of religious practice. These last trends of humanist thought contributed, among other things, to the Protestant Reformation.

Humanism reappeared following the Counter Reformation and religious wars and Inquisitions in the form of the Enlightenment. If the Italian Renaissance is known primarily for its impressive contributions to art and architecture, late-seventeenth and eighteenth century humanists are known for their philosophical and political views concerning the role of the individual in the creation of knowledge and a just society. Following upon the earlier scientific advances of Galileo, Bacon and Newton, the Enlightenment saw an increased conviction in the power of human reason to discern the laws by which God, Nature and the human mind all functioned. Arguing that knowledge was derived from the activity of the mind reflecting on sensory impressions, John Locke (1690/1959) inaugurated a period in the history of philosophy which placed human experience back on center stage. Knowledge was neither innate (à la Descartes) nor revealed (as in the Judeo-Christian tradition), but was to be determined through the operation of the mental faculties on the givens of experience. This philosophical tradition, which flowed through Hume and Berkeley to Kant, led to the conclusion that knowledge was a result of the organization of sensory data through the internal structures of the human mind. We understand the world according to categories of space, time and causality, according to Kant (1787/1929), because that is how our understanding is structured. Based upon Kant's 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy, human reason assumed the role of foundation for all knowledge, placing even the natural-scientific laws of Newton and the laws for moral behaviour, which had been the domain of religion, within the framework of subjective experience.

Similar achievements were being made at this time in political theory in undermining the religious foundations of monarchy and in framing the initial arguments for democratic rule. Locke's work had equal impact in the political arena,

providing intellectual justification for the 1688 English revolution and articulating for the first time the framework for a contractual view of government (Bullock, 1985: 52). Locke's emphasis on the rights and liberties of the individual was furthered by the thought of Rousseau, who saw government as being primarily oppressive and as corrupting the innate potential of humans to be just. Rousseau (1762/1947) argued that societies should be self-determined, and ruled on the basis of a social contract through which power is delegated to government only to actualize the collective will of the people. In this view, the only valid aim of government, and the educational practices which are its main resource, is the fostering of the growth, development and actualization of its individual citizens. These emphases on individual rights, contractual government as self-determination, and the importance of education in the actualization of individual potential, soon informed the thought of Thomas Jefferson and his compatriots in the Revolutionary War and the founding of the democratic institutions of the United States.

One last thread of the humanist tradition will be important for present purposes. Somewhat in contrast to the Enlightenment interest in the universal laws of Nature, but growing nonetheless out of a shared conviction in the important role of human imagination and reason in the construction of knowledge and culture, the eighteenth century saw a renewed interest in the historical sciences. Beginning with the work of Giambattista Vico (1744/1970), scholars returned to the systematic study of language, literature, and religious and cultural practices as symbolic embodiments of the human spirit. For Vico, Herder and others, each civilization and historical period represented a unique manifestation of human activity, and was therefore not to be reduced to universal laws. Human nature, like history itself, was constantly changing, and there could be no truths which were applicable to all communities. As in the Renaissance, this emphasis on the historical and symbolizing nature of human being led to a pluralistic tolerance of, and interest in, various cultures and various paths to the truth. It also called for an important role for empathy, or 'imaginative sympathy' (Bullock, 1985: 77), in affording the historical scholar insight into the lives of men and women of different times, settings and situations. In this context, there arose a renewed interest in education as the art of self-cultivation (the German concept of Bildung) and the origins of a Protestant theology (via Schleiermacher) which held that one way to the Divine was through the development of the individual's inner life.

These various features of the humanist tradition combined to provide a robust background for philosophical and scientific advances over the last two hundred years. From the work of Vico and Herder, for example, there developed the discipline of the *Geisteswissenschaften* or human sciences in the writings of Wilhelm Dilthey. Dilthey (1894/1977) argued that historical understanding of the inner lives and motivations of human beings provided a parallel in the human sciences to the role of physicalistic explanation in determining the laws of natural science. Kant's initial focus on the structures of human consciousness eventually led to the development of the philosophical school of phenomenology founded by Edmund Husserl. Husserl (1913/1983) developed a method for the systematic study of subjective experience, and demonstrated how the structures of subjectivity provide a basis for such human pursuits as science, logic and mathematics. Phenomenology then became influential in spawning the existentialist philosophies of such thinkers as Martin Heidegger (1927/1962), Jean-Paul Sartre (1943/1956) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1942/1983). In addition, the pragmatic and pluralistic approach to political theory imported by Jefferson and others, in combination with the romanticist views (influenced by Rousseau) of American transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau, contributed to the development of American philosophers William James and John Dewey. There has been a significant enough persistence of these trends into the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries that some have been moved to refer to this period as the 'new' or 'third' humanism (Bullock, 1985; Mann, 1942).

Is Humanistic Psychology 'Humanistic'?

Does Humanistic Psychology fall within the borders of this tradition, or is it connected to it in name only? Anthony Sutich (1976) has informed us that many names were originally considered for this alternative movement inspired by the work of a variety of loosely related thinkers; names such as orthopsychology, ontopsychology and person psychology. In fact, the committee formed to launch the new journal for this movement had decided on the phrase 'Self Psychology' until Sutich received a letter from a student of Maslow at Brandeis, Stephen Cohen, who first suggested that the journal instead be entitled *The Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Greening, 1985). While this name was officially adopted in 1961, it is not yet clear if this choice reflected an acknowledgement of the movement's background in the humanist tradition, or if it simply posed a less controversial choice than 'self' or 'orthopsychology'. In his letter, Cohen referred to the relationship between this new psychology and 'the whole history of humanism' (in Greening, 1985: 10). But had he not written this letter, or had the committee chosen to ignore it, would we still consider

the third force movement to be, in the terms we described above, 'humanistic'?

A brief survey of the history of Humanistic Psychology will suffice to suggest several substantive connections between the goals of this movement and those of the humanist tradition. It is widely acknowledged that Humanistic Psychology first arose as a protest against the images of human being (Bugental, 1963) offered by behavioristic and psychoanalytic psychologies. In their rejection of reductionistic theories that attempted to explain human conduct solely on the basis of biological or mechanistic models, the early humanistic psychologists were asserting their belief that human nature needed to be understood in its own terms. 'Humanistic psychology is concerned', wrote Bugental in a characteristic statement, 'with that which most distinguishes man [sic] as a unique species' (1978: 17). This belief in the special status of human nature, and the failure of existing psychologies to capture the distinctly human in human terms, represented the fundamental conviction shared by the founders of the movement. Humanistic Psychology represents a recent echo of this long-standing desire for an approach to the study of human beings which begins with human experience and does not reduce the human to the non-human.

When the early humanistic psychologists were not confined to the *via negativa*, e.g. defining the human as non-mechanistic, they chose to define the human by virtue of those same capacities which the humanists had typically used to set humans apart from other forms of life. As we see in the original Articles of Association of the American Association for Humanistic Psychology, Humanistic Psychology was taken to be 'primarily concerned with those human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place, either in positivistic or behavioristic theory or in classical psychoanalytic theory, e.g. creativity, love, self, growth' (Sutich, 1962: 96). And with the earlier masters of the Renaissance and philosophers of the Enlightenment, Humanistic Psychology, according to its founding statement, shares 'an ultimate concern with and valuing of the dignity and worth of man [sic] and an interest in the development of the potential inherent in every person' (cited in Misiak and Sexton, 1973: 116). From these glimpses into the mission statements inaugurating the movement, it is clear that its connection to humanism is not exhausted in its ontological and epistemological convictions in the unique status of human nature and experience. It is also reflected in the emphasis which Humanistic Psychology places on the value, potential and dignity of the individual as capable of creativity, communication and self-actualization.

Our third cornerstone of humanism, the emphasis on the multiple expressions of the human spirit through language and culture, is also to be found in Humanistic Psychology in its more practical applications. Humanistic psychological theory, as it has been implemented in clinical work, has stressed the freedom and rights of individuals, and the importance of empathy and allowing for self-direction in the actualization of clients' innate potential. Humanistic Psychology has also shared with humanism an interest in education as the art of self-cultivation, and an optimism that growth and development can be achieved by enabling the person to listen to his/her own inner voice rather than by encouraging conformity to external notions of normality.

The often decried failure of humanistic psychologists to come to a consensus on the specific content and direction of their movement (cf. Berlyne, 1981; Giorgi, 1981; Rogers, 1978) may be itself only one manifestation of their pluralism and thus their traditionally 'humanistic' belief in there being many valid ways to the truth (Klee, 1978). In these and many more ways, Humanistic Psychology may therefore be taken fairly to represent, in the words of Floyd Maison, a 'renaissance of humanism in psychology' (1978: 23). This link to the humanist tradition may be found most eloquently in the passage from Rogers which opened this paper, in which he compares the founding of the third force with a 'new declaration of independence' from psychological theories which view human conduct as solely the product of impersonal forces (Rogers, 1978 : 331). If one looks beyond the immediate precursors, it is not difficult to trace the historical lines which ground Humanistic Psychology directly in the tradition summarized above. The American personality theorists were rooted in the writings of James and Dewey as well as influenced by Gestalt psychology. Allport, for example, did postdoctoral study in Germany (cf. DeCarvalho, 1991 ; Taylor, 1991). Gestalt psychology itself had an early foundation in Husserl's Phenomenology and in the Act psychology of his teachers, Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf (Brennan, 1982; Hergenhahn, 1986; Spiegelberg, 1972), while the interpersonalists and neo-Freudians had been influenced by European sociology and anthropology in the tradition of Vico, Dilthey and Weber (cf. Fromm, 1941, 1955; Horney, 1939; Sullivan, 1953).

An Appraisal of Humanism in Psychology

To determine whether or not the introduction of humanism into psychology has been valuable, one must decide first on the intrinsic value of the contributions of the humanist

perspective. If humanism is itself valued for its contributions to our appreciation of the human, then the vehicle for its introduction into academic psychology, i.e. Humanistic Psychology, will also be valued. Contemporary Western culture has been so permeated by the values of humanism that it is difficult for us to step back far enough even to question their validity; they have become, in the words of Jefferson, 'self-evident'. Particularly in the United States, we have built our very political and social order on beliefs in the dignity, worth and freedom of the individual, the right for self-exploration and expression, the need for pluralistic tolerance of multiple cultural traditions, and the hope for progress and growth into the future. It is perhaps in its resonance with these fundamental American convictions that Humanistic Psychology best represents a distinctly American discipline. And yet there have been criticisms of these very values as well, on political but also philosophical grounds.

The most important criticism leveled against humanism, and thus also against Humanistic Psychology as its derivative, has taken issue philosophically with the notion of the irreducibility of the human. It is problematic simply to insist that human nature represents an ontologically distinct form of life. While the human may in fact appear to be qualitatively distinct from other forms of life, closer examination reveals that this is only by virtue of the nature of its relation to other forms of life as well. Humanism may want to begin with human experience, but there will eventually be a need to ground this realm of experience either in relation to the natural world, in relation to the spiritual world, or in relation to both. This criticism may therefore be more of a caution to humanists not to overstate the uniqueness of their domain by overlooking the network of constitutive relationships that ground the human as a distinctive sphere. In heeding this caution, humanistic psychologists should build an explicit acknowledgement of these relationships into the methods and metaphors they employ in their scientific study of human experience.

Within Humanistic Psychology, there have traditionally been two ways to define the distinctiveness of the human incorporating its relations to other ontological domains. In the first case, secular humanists such as M. Brewster Smith (1982, 1986, 1990) have held that human beings are essentially biological organisms whose distinctiveness has been achieved by virtue of their position on the evolutionary scale. This position argues that human beings have become so evolutionarily advanced that they have crossed a qualitative boundary, typically represented by such achievements as the capacity for language or self-reflection, that sets them apart from other organisms. While such a view may be characterized ontologically as an 'emergentist materialism' (Slavney and McHugh, 1987), it preserves a unique domain for humanistic-psychological inquiry into the nature of the 'higher' mental functions through which meaning, language and culture become possible.

In the second case, transpersonal psychologists such as Ken Wilber (1979, 1981, 1989) have held that the human derives its distinctiveness from its spiritual connection to the sacred. This position argues that human beings are an incarnation of the Divine, created in the image of the Creator, and therefore set apart from the rest of the Creation by virtue of their potential for enlightenment. Such a position can trace its roots to the emanationist views of the Neo-Platonists, Augustine and Eastern religious traditions. In this view, a proper focus for Humanistic Psychology becomes the ways in which spirituality has become manifest and distorted or alienated in everyday life.

This need to study human experience in relation to other ontological domains has perhaps been best demonstrated in the works of existentialist thinkers who have influenced Humanistic Psychology. It has been the existentialists, more than any other modern thinkers, who have tried to articulate the ontological distinctiveness of the human. A careful consideration of their mature positions reveals that they came to define the human primarily as an intentional relation to – and engagement in – the surrounding material, socio-political, and/or spiritual world. Sartre (1960/1963, 1960/1976), for example, turned to Marxism in order to situate human experience in its concrete relation to its political-economic context. Heidegger (1947/1977) turned in his later writings to a more theistic position in which he rejected the humanist tradition precisely for what he took to be its isolation and glorification of the human at the cost of the sacred. And Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) consistently suggested that it was not as productive to view human experience as independent from the natural and spiritual worlds as it was to view it precisely as providing a space for their mutual 'intertwining'.

While these views may in fact be in line with those of the early humanists, who had a deep regard for both Nature and the Divine, it has been the perception of an isolated, independent view of the human that has served as the ground for another important criticism of the humanist tradition. From a political perspective, humanism has been criticized for being ahistorical and for promoting self-actualization as an individual pursuit above more communal concerns. As early as the Renaissance there was a debate between the virtues of the contemplative as opposed to the active life, and

in the eighteenth century the humanist focus on education as self-cultivation was faulted for leading to self-absorption and a neglect of social and political problems (Bullock, 1985: 27, 99). These same criticisms have been repeatedly leveled against Humanistic Psychology, from both within and outside of the movement itself (Campbell, 1984; Friedman, 1976; Geller, 1982; Giorgi, 1981; Graumann, 1981; Prilleltensky, 1989). While Humanistic Psychology may appreciate culture as an expression of the human spirit, it has been perceived as underestimating the importance of social and political context in concretely shaping people's lives. Ignoring these dimensions has led to a moralistic blurring of boundaries between psychology, politics, ethics and religion (Davidson and Cosgrove, 1991; May, 1989; O'Hara, 1989).

Despite these concerns, the goals shared by humanism and Humanistic Psychology seem nonetheless noteworthy, noble and worthy of pursuit. To the extent that Humanistic Psychology has imported these objectives into academic psychology, it should be viewed as a successful and important movement. While some within the Humanistic Psychology community credit the movement with 'humanizing' the discipline in precisely these ways – challenging psychologists to develop less reductive models and methods for the study of the human – they now worry that the promise of the movement may have been exhausted in this 'protest' against behaviorism and psychoanalysis (Giorgi, 1987; Rogers, 1978; Tennessen, 1981). Others wonder if Humanistic Psychology, though successful in this protest, will now be surpassed by more scientific approaches to the human phenomena at first highlighted; cognitive developmental psychology and neuroscience being two popular examples (Smith, 1982). Still others argue that this protest battled with an overstated 'straw man'; that academic psychology has in the past, and will in the future, pursue such goals without the assistance of Humanistic Psychology (Berlyne, 1981). Apparently, while most will agree on the goals to be achieved, there is little consensus within the discipline on the ability of Humanistic Psychology to provide a sea-worthy vessel for this journey.

From the above discussion, it would appear that Humanistic Psychology should be able to overcome any hesitations related to humanism's overstatement of the independence of the human by explicit acknowledgement and exploration of the intertwining of spirit and world, of person and culture. Humanistic Psychology will only demonstrate its efficacy in this endeavor, however, by making original contributions to our understanding of human conduct and experience. The main criticism to be leveled against the movement is thus neither philosophical nor political in nature. Its major weakness is that it is perceived as having yet to produce much of lasting impact (Giorgi, 1987; Rogers, 1985). Even if we can agree that, while overstated, the goals of Humanistic Psychology are worthwhile, we still must wonder why, after nearly five decades (as of 2012) of effort, this has been so difficult to achieve.

Looking Toward the Future

With respect to its failure to have significant impact, Humanistic Psychology has certainly not reflected its humanist heritage. The art of Leonardo and Michelangelo, the political ideals of Rousseau and Jefferson, attest to the enduring quality of the contributions made by the humanist tradition to a range of human endeavors. Why is Humanistic Psychology perceived as having thus far failed in guiding psychology down similarly productive paths?

One possible response, suggested by Giorgi, is that it may be in the nature of Humanistic Psychology 'never to dominate the psychological scene, but merely to bear witness that another mode of psychology is possible' (1987: 18). According to this view, it goes against the grain of humanistic psychologists to force their vision on to others, to manipulate their colleagues and patients in order to wrest power away from current, mainstream approaches. This understanding assumes that the movement has made substantial contributions but that these insights have met with an unappreciative reception in our alienated, dehumanized, technologically oriented culture. Our only hope is that we will find a way to redeem our societies along with our science, making way for a more humanistic approach in our cultural and academic institutions (cf. Lerner, 1991; Levin, 1985).

Even if there is some validity to this view, it remains incumbent upon the current generation of humanistically oriented psychologists to reflect on both the merits and limitations of the movement, in order to see where progress might be made. A review of some of the more notable contributions that Humanistic Psychology has made (e.g. Maslow's work on self-actualization, Roger's on self-direction in therapy and education) suggests that perhaps the movement has confused its humanistic aims with the means through which to achieve them. We seem to have taken respect for the distinctively human and individual self-actualization as ends in themselves, rather than seeing them as providing points of departure for the development of ways to study and promote human growth and development. It should be with a respect for the distinctiveness of the human that we begin in developing a science of psychology, allowing that conviction to inform our methods. Such a conviction has too often

appeared instead to be an end result, a 'finding', of humanistic-psychological efforts. If we are to make original contributions to the understanding of psychological functioning, we cannot remain content with philosophical statements concerning various aspects of human nature. Rather, we will need to use these insights to encourage and guide our empirical investigations of various aspects of the concrete, everyday lives of people engaged in the struggle of living out their particular forms of humanity.

It will be important for us to recognize, in addition, that it is all people who are engaged in such struggles. While a real virtue of Humanistic Psychology has been its uncompromising insistence that all people, regardless of race, gender or IQ, have a right to pursue self-actualization, it has been difficult to remember that everyone is already engaged in this process in whatever context they happen to be living, and against whatever odds they may be facing. Here, too, ends have been confused with means, as we have taken the achievement of human potential to be an end in itself, setting up arbitrary distinctions between those who are self-actualizing and those who are not, rather than seeing this as a process in which we are all engaged by virtue of our common nature. While Maslow's original work on self-actualization (e.g. 1968, 1970) pointed out that growth occurs indirectly through the pursuit of communal concerns that transcend the individual, some within the human potential movement have since taken self-actualization to be itself a goal for psychology. But as Friedman (1976) cogently argues, we cannot turn the process of growth into a goal without rendering it empty and meaningless. We do not grow by focusing on the self, but, as in Maslow's example of the Buddhist Bodhisattva, by venturing out from the self to an engagement with others and the world.

So how might we best use our convictions in the value and importance of human experience, freedom and meaning to guide the development of our psychology? How might we pursue a science of persons in relation to their bodily and spiritual dimensions, each other and their surrounding material, social and political worlds? I shall suggest three guidelines for future efforts in this direction.

1. Determine the parameters that best define the nature of our subject matter and use them as a conceptual base upon which to build an empirical science.

We have seen that the human cannot be adequately defined in isolation or as independent from other ontological domains. Even if we remain convinced that the human represents a distinct and unique sphere, we need to decide how best to situate this sphere in relation to material and spiritual dimensions. Once we have mapped out the scope and nature of these relations, we will then have a basis upon which to articulate the interests, and develop the methods, for our new science. In this regard, I have found Husserl's (1952/1989) work on the various constituents of the domains of animate, psychic and spiritual reality particularly helpful in delineating the borders of the human domain as one point of intersection of Nature and Spirit. Through his concept of 'regional ontology', he (1913/1983) has identified aspects of experience belonging specifically to the realm of the human, while also tracing out their connections to both higher and lower strata of sense. Of particular interest are the ways in which perceptual processes are built upon physiological sensations, to be taken up kinesthetically in the constitution of a sense of personal agency and volition (cf. Davidson, 1992). While not the only one to tackle these issues, Husserl has provided us with unusually intricate phenomenological analyses of the interweavings of Psyche, Spirit and Nature that provide an invaluable framework for a psychology of human experience. Other work of similar interest can be found in Merleau-Ponty (1942/1983, 1962), Straus (1966), Werner (1948) and contemporary neuroscience (cf. Dennett, 1991).

2. Recognize that all people share this basic image of human being, and focus research on those groups deemed most in need of assistance.

It was an important early contribution of Humanistic Psychology to turn away from psychology's traditional focus on pathology to take up the more healthy aspects of human functioning. While this has broadened the scope of psychology to include such topics as love and creativity, it has also led humanistic psychologists at times to focus on esoteric phenomena that do not seem to be of pressing or wider significance. It seems to me that it would be more in line with Humanistic Psychology's aim of facilitating freedom and growth, and would also help in our quest to have more of an impact on the mainstream, if we focused our energies on those groups of people who are currently most in need of help from our social institutions and psychological healers. Investigating the experiences and issues of the homeless, the seriously mentally ill, survivors of sexual abuse and other trauma, those addicted to substances or struggling with chronic illness, or other wounded people will provide us with opportunities to study the range of vulnerabilities and virtues of human functioning in extreme cases. Examples of such research may be found in the work of Fischer and Wertz (1979) on experiences of being criminally victimized, Hagan (1986) on poor mothers who underuse health care, Draucker (1992)

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on surviving incest, Laing (1965) on the social and political context of schizophrenia, and Davidson and Strauss (1992) on recovering from severe mental disorder. Such research not only makes important contributions to areas of pressing and general concern, but also helps to restore 'marginalized' individuals to the center of our image of human being.

By recognizing in them the core of humanity that we all share, we will be taking an important step toward enhancing their freedom, improving their condition and justifying our own scientific approach.

3. Develop empirical methods appropriate to the rigorous study of human experience in its complexity, richness and meaning.

Humanistic psychologists have been very divided in their attitude toward and use of 'science'. Some have eschewed science altogether as inappropriate for the humanistic study of experience in its meaningfulness, while others have argued for the development of new methods better suited to this task; and still others have adopted unchanged traditional quantitative methods (cf. Giorgi, 1987). Meanwhile, it has become a truism of contemporary medical and social science that an interdisciplinary approach is required to fulfill the mandate of a 'biopsychosocial model' (Engel, 1977, 1980) of human functioning. It is my impression that humanistic psychologists cannot only benefit from interdisciplinary collaborations with their colleagues in other social sciences and medicine, but that they can also make a unique contribution in terms of their understanding of the complex, rich and meaningful nature of human experience. A particularly valuable contribution would be the development of methods to be used in exploring this complexity and richness of meaning in a rigorous and empirical fashion. To take up this task, we will have to overcome what appears to have been a distaste for systematic study due to a suspicion that it will fail to do justice to distinctly human phenomena. In this respect, the field may benefit from examples set by such scientist-artists as Goethe and Coleridge, who argued for a balance of Imagination with Method. While Humanistic Psychology has been strong on imagination, it can only benefit from a serious and sustained consideration of method. For assistance, we can consult the work of Geertz (1973, 1975), Giorgi (1970, 1985), Polkinghorne (1983, 1988), Bruner (1986), Mishler (1986) and Spence (1982) on qualitative methods and narrative research.

Perhaps it is ironic to end a review of Humanistic Psychology such as this with a reflection on method. Growing up in the era of behaviorism, with its rat and pigeon experiments, Humanistic Psychology has been wary of the application of scientific methods when this is done solely to serve the purpose of being scientific. Indeed, in such cases we have lost sight of human beings in the process of accumulating irrelevant and trivial facts. But we may not assume on this basis that all methods will equally fail us in our attempt to understand human functioning. We should strive instead to implement new methods built upon a recognition of the role of sense-making and story-telling in human experience. Methods such as those of ethnography, phenomenology and narrative research that encourage study of the lives of people as they unfold over time in their social milieu may offer us access precisely to those aspects of meaning, agency, creativity and value that most interest us. Science may liberate as much as constrict. This lesson has been taught to us as well by the masters of the Renaissance. Were we able to apply the kind of disciplined artistry in our attention to the details of human subjectivity that Michelangelo and Leonardo demonstrated in their grasp of the nuances of the human body, we would be well on our way to developing a science of psychology worthy of its humanistic heritage.

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