Contributions of Humanistic Psychology
to Positive Psychology

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In his presidential address, Martin E.P. Seligman (1999) laid out a vision for a "positive psychology" which promises expanded horizons for future psychological research and practices. It also echoes themes expressed by humanistic psychologists over the past three decades, initiated by the work of two other presidents of APA, Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, leading founders of Humanistic Psychology. The term "positive psychology" itself was first used in Maslow's ground-breaking book *Motivation and Personality* (1954) the last chapter of which, entitled "Toward a Positive Psychology," lays out a research agenda that has much in common with Seligman's proposal.

This article will explore the common ground between positive and humanistic psychology, and respond to positive psychology's useful challenges to humanistic psychology (Seligman, 1999, personal communication) about research and a concern for social values, because the outcome of a dialogue between them can help the human condition: a goal that is central to both.

This paper therefore begins with a brief review of the humanistic movement and its ongoing call for a more positive psychology. We then move into an exploration of the unique research approaches and areas of study dictated by the primacy in humanistic psychology of human experience. We conclude by showing how positive psychology can gain from recognizing the merit of experiential, process-oriented research methodologies and perhaps most importantly, by entering into a larger dialogue with humanistic psychologists for the serious investigation of such metapsychological issues as the nature of truth and ways of knowing, and the role of choice, values, and meaning in positive human and social evolution.

Humanistic Origins of Positive Psychology

The first phase of humanistic psychology, which covered the period between 1960 to 1980, was largely driven by Maslow's agenda for a positive psychology. It articulated a view of the human being as irreducible to parts, needing connection, meaning, and creativity. As the intellectual core of the human potential movement, humanistic psychology had a broad impact both on the field of psychology as well as the culture at large. This holistic perspective on psychological development and self-actualization laid the foundation for the professions of individual and family counseling (Satir, 1964) and organizational development consulting(Massarik, 1992). The study of peak experiences

and self-actualization was popularized throughout the culture. Humanistic psychology also affected the educational system with its views on self-esteem and self-help, offering tools for personal and spiritual transformation. For example, the state of California funded a study of self-esteem which was sponsored by John Vasconcellos, past president of the Association for Humanistic Psychology and at the time Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the California Assembly. (Mecca, Smelser & Vasconcellos, 1989).

The Humanistic Psychology Division (32) of the American Psychological Association was founded in September, 1971 in response to the call for theory construction, research, and clinical professional education in humanistic psychology. Humanistic psychology has continued as an organized movement that focuses research and educational efforts on the study of human experience. Besides Division 32, the organizational structures that carry the movementforward include the Association for Humanistic Psychology, as well as the graduate programs of the members of the Consortium for Diversified Psychology Programs, Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Saybrook Graduate School, Seattle University, Sonoma State University, State University of West Georgia, Union Institute, Universidad AutÛnoma de la Laguna (Mexico), and Harmony Institute (Russia). It includes The Humanistic Psychologist and the Journal of Humanistic Psychology as well as the Association for Transpersonal Psychology and the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology.

The first brochure of Division 32 stated in its mission statement: "Humanistic psychology aims to be faithful to the full richness of human experience. Its foundations include philosophical humanism, existentialism, and phenomenology. Its approach to the science and profession of psychology accepts the challenge to develop a systematic and rigorous understanding of human beings." Humanistic psychologists investigate not only suffering and trauma, but also growth and creativity, dreams, ethics and values (Frankl, 1959; James, 1961; Maslow, 1971; May, 1958). They want to know what works, and how to assess outcome in therapy (Bohart, 1997; Schneider, & Eagle, 1996-7).

Humanistic Research Methodologies

A critical issue in developing a positive psychology is whether the dominant objectifying approach of twentieth century experimental psychology is sufficient to measure the uniqueness of human experience. For most of the past century, psychology has preferred a model of science that deals with phenomena that can be treated as "objects of study." There is no question but that objective information about psychological and social systems can make important contributions to positive psychology. However, human beings are not just objects, but they are also subjects. As conscious beings, they have a rich subjective inner experience, composed of more than thoughts. The challenge is to find a methodology which is adequate to describe this full range of the experience of being human. Humanistic psychologists, while embracing the need for rigorous science, have therefore argued for a science which captures the primacy of experience over abstract truths, uniqueness along with universality, descriptive or qualitative research methodology which captures the unique lived experience (Giorgi, 1970, 1971), "the centrality of the experiencing human being and the actualization of the human potential"

(Arons, personal communication, 1999). This science would include the full range of human experience: the place for the dark side, the romantic side, and an appreciation of awe (Schneider, 1998; Schneider & May, 1975), the importance of creativity and the body (Arons, 1995; Criswell, ; Elkins, 1999; Greening, 1977; Krippner, 1988; May, 1975; Resnick, 1997; Richards, 1997; Selver, C., 1966; Serlin, 1996, 1999; Stern,) and authenticity (May, 1953, 1958; Bugental, 1963, 1989).

A second methodological issue concerns values and the nature of choice and free will. Positive psychology is about choosing wisely, individually, as persons and collectively, as social groups. Choosing well or wisely can be illuminated by the scientific study of objectified human nature, but the process of choice is a conscious experience that can only be revealed fully through conscious self-reflection and dialogue.

A third metatheoretical issue is about the nature of truth. Humanistic psychology is both holistic and descriptive; it does not understand by analyzing something into parts, but instead focuses on the whole aspect of a phenomenon, all levels of body, speech and mind, the phenomenon in context to its surroundings and its history. Maslow (1971) said: "If I had to condense the thesis of this book into one sentence…I would have stressed the profoundly holistic nature of human nature in contradiction to the analytic-atomistic Newtonian approach of the behaviorisms and Freudian psychoanalysis" (p. ix). Understanding human nature means taking all levels-individual, group, social and political, physiological, cognitive, affective, imaginal, spiritual-into account (Allport, 1937; May, 1960; Maslow, 1971). Humanistic psychology is also non-dualistic. From its holistic perspective, polarizing psychology into "good" and "bad" (Descartes, 1972) splits the fullness of the paradox (Kuhn, T., 1962; May, 1981; Schneider, 1999), and therefore misses the complexity and nuances of the phenomenon. As holistic, humanistic psychology understands that the good, or the positive, takes its meaning from its dialogical relationship to "the bad" or "the negative." Meaning also comes through all the senses (Berman, 1989), not just through the eyes or the ears. We hear, sense, feel, taste, shapes. It is a meaning spelled out, not conceptually in linear word or letter sequences, but in multiple, complex, dynamic images (Ricoeur, 1976; Gergen, 1994; Laing, R.D., 1969). Images are not objective objects, but are fluid, interactive, and meaningful (Hillman, 1979; Casey, 1976; Sartre, 1968).

Fourth, the concept of "positive" itself only makes sense in the context of lived human experience. What is positive is desirable, a category that can only be explored experientially. Positive psychology must therefore confront the epistemological issues that have been at the core of humanistic psychology.

Perhaps one of the most important recent contributions pushing psychology toward a more complex epistemology is Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner's interdisciplinary approach uses data from behavioral analysis, neurophysiology, genetics, and the social ecology of adaptation to identify seven (more or less) types of intelligence: Linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and the personal intelligences (intra & inter). The linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences are easily modeled by computers and have been the focus of

considerable research in cognitive psychology. The last category, interpersonal intelligence, is indeterminate in number and less widely researched. However, Daniel Goleman (1997) has explored the implications of the ability to cognitively interpret and manage one's own and other's emotional reaction as one very important dimension of psychological adaptation. Humanistic psychologists have consistently recognized diverse forms of abilities and varieties of intelligence.

Phenomenological methods can also be used to sharpen and deepen perception of the phenomena. The concept of the "felt-sense" (Gendlin,1978) describes a kind of perception which draws on bodily sensations to deepen images and thoughts. "Kinaesthetic imagining" (Serlin, 1996) is another method of developing kinaesthetic intelligence, a way of knowing through body sensation and meaning-making that is useful for problem-solving and with severe psychological or physical disturbances (Serlin, 1999).

A positive psychology needs to address not only the question of what these various forms of intelligence are in operational and neurophysiological terms, but also what it means to use these forms of knowing skillfully. Humanistic psychology has placed conscious human experience at the core of the psychological enterprise. During the first half of the twentieth century, consciousness had been marginalized by psychoanalysis' emphasis on the unconscious and banned by the behaviorists' focus exclusively on objectively observable behavior. Drawing on sources such as the Gestalt psychologists and the European phenomenologists and existentialists, the founding generation of humanistic psychologists argued that the conscious experience of creative, healthy persons should be at the center of psychological investigation. In their view, a complete psychology should include issues of freedom and creativity, choice and responsibility, values and fulfillment. This in turn requires at least at the onset a thorough phenomenological description of various forms of consciousness in action.

Seligman offers an ambitious agenda for positive psychology: "We can articulate a vision of the good life. We can show the world what actions lead to well-being, to positive individuals, to flourishing communities, and to a just society. Ideally, psychology should be able to help document what kind of families result in the healthiest children, what work environments support the greatest satisfaction among workers, and what policies result in the strongest civic commitment. Yet we have scant knowledge of what makes life worth living. We know very little about how normal people flourish under more benign conditions" (1999,p. 560). These goals clearly call for the subtle and sophisticated exploration of the varieties of human experience.

The emphasis on the study of human experience had led humanistic psychology to confront the dilemma of appropriate methodology. In general, the solutions to this problem have derived from Edmund Husserl's phenomenology (Giorgi, 1970, Valle & King, 1978; Reason & Rowan, 1981). They have come to be grouped under the rubric of qualitative methods, which includes a variety of approaches that have also developed in the other social sciences and even in the humanities. These approaches are characterized

by what Clifford Geertz (1973, following Gilbert Ryle) calls "thick description," rather than by the development of cause-and-effect models of explanation.

The experience of "Positive", for example, would best be understood through description. Humanistic researchers would use a concrete, phenomenological method to explore the phenomenon of "Positive" by re-invoking the experience or the memory of that experience in the "co-researcher" (Polkinghorne, 1988). The methods of the humanistic psychologist derive from Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, which advocates a return to the "things themselves" (Husserl, 1960). These methods are grouped under the rubric of qualitative methods, which include other approaches used in anthropology, other social sciences and the humanities. They seek to understand through deepening rather than cause-and-effect.

What we know as traditional science is really a recent paradigm from the age of modernity. What we need are not modernistic methods, but post-modern and non-Newtonian methods (Kvale, 1996) which has clearly laid-out steps (Giorgi, 1971; Wertz,), which other researchers can follow.

But the results would not be standardizable or generalizable in the sense of traditional science. Qualitative research cannot generate the breadth of data that allow generalizability to larger samples, but it can generate a depth that follows in the investigative method of Freud. Henry Murray, director of the Psychological Clinical at Harvard and a humanistic psychologist, conducted clinical resesarch by using the intensive study of individual subjects. Trained as a physician, he "…felt that the narrative form of case study, which had been central to the growth of medical science, was also essential for the development of psychology" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 103). Case studies have been used in humanistic psychology to study phenomena like loneliness (Moustakis,), or dissociation (Moyer,).

Humanistic psychology has developed a variety of research methodologies and practice models focused on facilitating the development and transformation of individuals, groups, and organizations. The methodologies include narrative, imaginal, and somatic approaches. The practices range from personal coaching and organizational consulting through creative arts therapies to philo(sophy)-cafes. As humanistic psychologists including Myron Arons, Thomas Greening, Ilene Serlin and David Elkins have pointed out, in some ways, these approaches and practices have a closer relation to the disciplines of the humanities (philosophy, history, arts and literature) than they have to the natural sciences.

The role of embodiment and experience in humanistic psychology

With the evidence showing a limited relationship between happiness and material attainment, the focus in positive psychology has centered on the mental and cognitive aspects of happiness (Seligman, 1991; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). A strong movement within humanistic psychology, while acknowledging the Critical role of mental patterns, regards the interplay between the mind and the body to be of even greater significance.

More specifically, it examines somatic influences and the fundamental role played by states of the body in the ability to attainóand especially to sustain a positive frame of mind.

Humanistic psychology's exploration of the issue of embodiment(Zaner,1964) has its roots in the study of perception. Merleau-Ponty grounded perception in an "incarnated mind" (1963) and Polanyi in tacit knowing (1958). Today, even cognitive therapists are recognizing the importance of experiential learning to ground conceptual learning in the body, thus creating new experiential references and habits ((Safran et al, 1991; Parrot & Howes, 1991; Dobson & Craig, 1990) Beck, 1986). Changing core beliefs is directly related to the experience of the self (Safran et al,1991) and change is stabilized when thoughts, affects, and behaviors are congruent (Dodge, 2000). Positive experiences have been shown to be fostered by developing a better vocabulary for positive affect (White & Epston, 1990), honing skills in empathy (Tobin, 1999); and by bringing somatic awareness skills into the therapy process; (Borysenko, 1987; Murphy, 1992).

Happiness, as a state of subjective well-being, involves not only a positive way of thinking and acting, but is, at its core, a body-felt sense of well-being, i.e., pleasure. The field of psychology, like the culture at large, is highly suspicious of pleasure, but pleasure is a much broader issue than mere mindless acquisitiveness. As Csikszentmihalyi points out, the boring or externally imposed practice of positive psychological techniques is insufficient for achieving happiness. "You have to enjoy mental health to benefit from it" (1999, p. ??). Research in the multidisciplinary field of psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) shows a direct association between pleasurable experience and an enhanced immune response (Pert and Snyder, 1973; Benson, 1975; Locke, 1982; Locke & Colligan, 1986; Ornstein & Sobel, 1989; Seeman, 1989). With happiness clearly connected to the ability to sustain good feelings, the body-based phenomenolgy of that experience becomes a valuable resource for positive psychological study (Resnick, 1997).

Other humanistic psychotherapists included the body in their understanding of the mind and body in psychotherapy. Carl Rogers (1951) is most known for working with the theory and practice of congruence, and Sydney Jourard ( ) another humanistic psychologist, early articulated the need for what he called "transparency" or unity of inner and outer. Gestalt therapists use role-play and awareness techniques to bring inner experience and outer expression into congruence (Perls, 1992; Perls et al, 1951; Serlin & Shane, 1999). The importance of "authenticity" (Bugental, 1963; Laing, 1969; Sartre, 1964) is itself a therapeutic goal. Congruence, as both an experiential and a conceptual state, can also help to assure the internal validity in qualitative research.

Finally, humanistic methodologies are dialogical, in which reality is created through relationship. Whether that relationship is between a therapist and a client, a researcher and a subject, or any two or more persons and their world, their humanity is deepened through the I-Thou relationship. The humanistic research method called "Dialogical Research" (Halling,), for example, is structurally similar to dialogical therapy (Friedman, 1985; Buber, 1958). Both are based on teachings from outstanding theologians and

philosophers who were predecessors of today's humanistic psychologists (Boss, Kierkegaard, 1945; Tillich, May, 1953; Binswanger, 1936).

New schools of thought which have become popular in the last 25 years are also based on the structure of dialogue, and can be considered to be within the neo-humanistic camp. Postmodernists such as Gergen (1994) have drawn our attention to meaning as created from relationship (Gergen, 1991; O'Hara, 1992; Anderson, ;Warmoth,), while others in fields such as literary criticism and anthropology emphasize the structure of narrative (Sarbin, 1986). Constructivists (Bohart, Epting & Leitner, 1992) show how we construct our realities through language. Therapists such as Michael White ( )and Bill O'Hanlon (1987), and psychologists attentive to myth (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988; May, 1989) listen for the narrative structure in client's description of themselves and their worlds. Their narrative therapy aims to help clients exchange "functional" or more "open-ended" narratives for ones that are self-limiting or self-sabotaging. Feminist therapists also seek to help women recapture their own voices (Gilligan, 1982; Heilbron, 1988; Jordan et al, 1991) and author their own lives (Bateson, 1989).

The art and science of psychology

The act of telling one's story is in itself healing. Research tells us that the simple act of writing daily in a journal improved college students' general health (Pennebaker, 1999). Some more active humanistic psychotherapists, like those using Gestalt or role-play, might have the client role-play his or life. But instead of being the usual victim in the family drama, for example, the client would now have the opportunity to experience him or herself as the director of the play. Virginia Satir, a pioneering humanistic family therapist, used the process of "family sculpting", to have participants experience themselves in multiple roles in their own family drama, thereby giving them the benefit of a range of perspectives, new insights, empathies and powers (1964). The act of shaping raw material or emotion into symbol or image is healing, as it helps objectify the emotions, get some distance from them, and make active discriminations to portray them (Jung, 1953; Kandinsky, 1977; Bachelard, 1971; Runco & Richards, 1997; Krippner, 1988; Serlin, 1989; Arons,).

Art has always healed, as the Greeks knew. As Aristotle explained, the function of identification through mimetic action and subsequent catharsis in Greek drama functioned as a collective healing ritual (Aristotle, 1961). Rollo May, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, was himself an artist, and used art both as a metaphor and as an organizing principle in his approach (May, 1975). For him, the act of creation in the face of the void or the blank page was a metaphor for the act of creation in life, in the face of inevitable death or emptiness. A true artist or self-actualized person is one who gives "…birth to some new reality …whose creativity is the most basic manifestation of a man or woman fulfilling his or her own being in the world" (pp. 37 - 38). Humanistic psychologist James Bugental also puts art at the center of the psychological endeavor. The self-actualized person "…sees beauty and wonder in the common birthright of all human beings: the will to actualize what is latent (1976, p. xii). For Bugental, art also

describes the practice of psychology: "…I believe that psychotherapy is more an art than a science (1976, p. xvi).

Humanistic psychologists have a tradition of honoring the arts. The resulting access to deep emotional states through symbol or story is a dimension of human existence which does not seem, however, to be developed in Positive Psychology. Knowing not only as conceptual, but as multi-sensorial and symbolic, deepens experience and ripens information into wisdom.

Is art the opposite of science? Not at all. In a 1994 article in the American Psychologist, Bevan and Kessel argue that science has been confused with technology, and call for a psychology that bridges art and science (pp. 505-509). They recommend a shift to what Sigmund Koch calls "indigenous methodology", which respects a range of methodologies and can reflect the full range of human experience (Koch, 1993).

Humanistic psychotherapy

Such techniques already exist in the humanistic tradition. Those who have developed consciousness-changing techniques include: Krippner (1988), Criswell ( ), Resnick ( ), Rubenfeld (1977), Natalie Rogers (1980), Anna Halprin ( ) Feldenkrais (1972), Selver ( ), Murphy ( ), and Leonard ( ). We have traditions of existential, humanistic, and Gestalt therapies which teach awareness practices such as meditation ( ), hypnosis and imagery (Wickram, Van Nuys, 1973; Rossman). Methods to assist participants to take responsibility for their own lives (Perls, 1951) and choices, deepening authenticity (Bugental, 1989; Yalom, 1980), and increasing interpersonal awareness through dialogical therapy (Friedman, 1985) are all humanistic methods. As have all psychologists, humanistic psychologists have wrestled with the problem of how to assess their own processes and outcomes. Even with the epistemological problems of existing methods, however, humanistic psychologists have used a broad range of improvement measures to conduct research on their own work. Their findings showed impressive support for the effectiveness of the warm, empathetic personality of the therapist as a change agent in therapy (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Given the resurgence of the relational schools of therapy, it would seem likely that humanistic clinical research and practice can add an experiential and deepening element.

Humanistic Ethics

By placing conscious experience at the center of psychology, humanistic psychology found itself constrained to reject the contention that the ideal of a "value-free science" is possible in psychology. The idea that by being "objective" science can be "value-free" was seen as a move that allows values to be defined by cultural and political processes entrenched in fixed ways of seeing things. Maslow, Rogers, Fromm, and others believed that a universal set of values might be derived from an understanding of universal of human nature, but they also recognized that our ideas about human nature often become a self-fulfilling prophecy. They never reconciled this contradiction in their own thinking.

The existence of such a paradox suggests that the ethical issues opened up by the positive psychology agenda are not going to be easily resolved.

Many humanistic psychologists, particularly those most influenced by existentialism, such as Rollo May and James F. T. Bugental, understood the human condition as a perpetual state of ethical dilemma. They saw ethical tensions as arising both from the conflicting forces of personal desires, fantasies, and dreams, and from the conflicting requirements and expectations of social and cultural contexts. Perhaps the key to understanding ethical decision-making as a lived process is that we are continually called upon to make choices for which we must bear responsibility, but which must always be made on the basis of more or less insufficient information.

The ethical issues surrounding positive psychology particularly invite phenomenological investigation and constructive conversation. This is even more true of positive psychology than of clinical psychology. Psychopathology generally involves qualities of experience that most clients agree are unpleasant, and which lead to consequences that both clients and society at-large agree are undesirable. Thus the question of the desirability of objectifying interventions is rarely questioned (although James Hillman and other archetypal or imaginal psychologists have made strong arguments for the creative potential of symptoms).

There is no such consensus about the appropriateness of objectifying interventions to produce positive psychological states or social outcomes. Indeed, consensus about the particular state that would define the "good society" has been an elusive goal since the time of Plato. The lack of such a consensus is at the heart of the contemporary phenomenon called the "culture wars." Thus positive psychology may find itself needing to adopt humanistic psychology's predilection for interventions based on dialogue.

Social Constructionism: A Cautionary Note

As multicultural societies and inter-cultural interaction become characteristic of a global world, the values of respect and empathic understanding become increasingly important ethical principles for the larger culture as well as on the individual, level. APA has been concerned with the issues of multicultural society, as is seen in Seligman's proposed initiative for ethnopolitical conflict resolution, as well as in recent proposals for cross-cultural psychology (Marsella, 1998; Segal, Lonner, & Berry,1998).

Humanistic psychologists Walter Truett Anderson (1990, 1995) and Maureen O'Hara (1995) have also been concerned with these issues. More and more we come to recognize the importance of cultural history and context in the shaping of human identity. Positive psychology may discover that its utopian pursuit of the ideal forms of social arrangements such as families, productive work, and political institution do not have universal answers, but only particular answers in particular communities with specific historical and cultural identities and traditions. This does not mean that it is not worth investing resources in investigating these questions, but it does suggest a need for ethical

self-reflection and the articulation of specific ethical commitments in designing these research strategies.

A key to the success of the positive psychology agenda may well be to develop interdisciplinary models of research and application, such as Seligman's initiative for the investigation of ethnopolitical conflict in Northern Ireland or the burgeoning field of cognitive science. The APA/CPA conference in Northern Ireland in June, 1999, involved scholars "from the fields of history, ethnic conflicts, human rights, and conflict resolution" (1999, p. 560), as well as psychology. Cognitive science is usually defined as incorporating the disciplines of cognitive psychology, computer science, artificial intelligence, philosophy, linguistics, and anthropology. A successful positive psychology will probably require contributions from social and personality psychology, psychology of learning and emotions, cognitive psychology and neuroscience, developmental psychology, and from other social sciences including anthropology, history, sociology, economics, and political science. In the past half century, humanistic psychology has explored issues of epistemology, methodology, and ethics and can make important contributions to this interdisciplinary mix.

Conclusion

The dialogue between positive psychology and humanistic psychology can be a fruitful one. Positive psychology's call for rigor and operationalizability of the variables is a wise challenge for humanistic psychologists. On the other hand, humanistic psychology's familiarity with the "farther reaches of human nature" with epistemologies and methodologies to match, can bring a complementary human depth to positive psychology's call for "massive research on human strength and virtue," and join in the claiming of a new psychology: "Psychology is not just the study of weakness and damage; it is also-or should be-the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best within ourselves" (Seligman, 1998).

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