ARTICLE

"Scientific" Healthcare and the Person: exemplifying relations between general laws and idiographic interpretation

Line Joranger MPhil PhD

Associate Professor, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, University of South-Eastern Norway, Porsgrunn & Department of Psychology, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

Abstract

This paper highlights the relationship between the person and the philosophy of science and mental healthcare. Focusing on what are generally considered to be the main differences between the idiographic sciences, that is, the human sciences and the nomothetic sciences, that is, the natural sciences, the paper sketches with a distinctive set of analytical tools the complexity of the relations between these scientific poles when it comes to understanding and explaining a person. Through an interdisciplinary historical and existential-phenomenological way of thinking, the paper shows that as living beings, we are not just physical brains or marionettes in a reasonable historical development; rather, we are creative, reflexive actors who have an impact on scientific and cultural norms, which we also, consciously and subconsciously, adapt to. This is why scientists dealing with persons and psychological phenomena should not only seek to become a positivist Sherlock Holmes, intelligently discerning the concealed and buried meaning that is awaiting discovery, but in contrast, the detective who finds him or herself part of the game and thereby a co-creator of the science and mystery she or he seeks to solve.

Introduction

This paper will reflect on how, within modern mental healthcare systems, an unhealthy schism between the idiographic and nomothetic sciences has developed and how it is possible to think in other ways when considering to the enigmatic nature of mental health. The theoretical base that will be employed includes theories from the German philosopher Emmanuel Kant, the German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers and the French intellectual historian Michel Foucault, among others.

Karl Jaspers [1] was one of the first to distinguish between an explanatory (*erklären*) and an interpretative (*verstehen*) mental healthcare. This distinction bears upon the difference between the nomothetic and idiographic sciences, first outlined by the neo-Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Windelband [2,3]. Conceptually, the nomothetic sciences are based on Kant's characterization of the natural sciences, that is, sciences that can generalize and that attempt to derive laws and concepts that explain objective phenomena in general. Idiographic sciences are based on the human or cultural sciences and what Kant describes as an orientation to specific examples, that is, the goal is to interpret and understand the meaning of unique and often subjective phenomena.

As Richard T.G Walsh, Thomas Teo and Angelina Baydala have claimed, healthcare workers and psychologists have defined the focal points of their study through this kind of dual scientific thinking. They state that: "Psychologists with a natural-science orientation typically emphasize the prediction and control of behavior (…). Psychologists with a human-science orientation generally stress subjectivity (…)" [4]. Hidden in this contrast are two assumptions: (a) that this contrast exhausts the alternatives and (b) that what we mean by subjectivity is immediately apparent. For example, the American philosopher Peter Bertocci [5] highlights that mental healthcare is only possible when the human person is viewed in terms of general dimensions, that is, from the nomothetic point of view and any science we gain in this way comes from associative judgement. He criticizes the American psychologist Gordon Allport's idiographical view of the person,[1] recognizes nevertheless the autonomy

---

[1] Allport was one of the first psychologists to focus on the study of the personality and is often referred to as one of the founding figures of personality psychology.

of the person, yet states that "to accept uniqueness as the only ultimate is to destroy the possibility of rational knowledge of any sort." Allport [6], on the other hand, is convinced that the usual methodology employed in psychology is of value for research on human beings, but at the same time he endorses the importance and even primacy of idiographic methods that enable us to reach the more complete picture of the human person.

In what follows, this paper will sketch in broad strokes, and with a distinctive set of analytical tools, the complexity of the relations between these putative two poles, focusing on what are generally considered to be the main differences between the idiographic sciences, that is, the human sciences and, the nomothetic sciences, that is, the natural sciences. Through an interdisciplinary historical and existential-phenomenological way of thinking, the problematic and contested concept of the person will be used as the focal point.

Idiographic methods as a source of subjective experiences, the mysterious and the human psyche

In contrast to contemporary attempts to describe the human mind and behavior in nomothetic terms, I have shown in several works [7-10] how Jaspers and Foucault acknowledged the idiographic methods as a source to reach subjective experiences, which they believed represented meaningful symbols of the inner world of metaphysically toned personal experiences. They point out that our psychological life carries with it our historical past, attitude and lifestyle, as well as our future choices and activity, which makes it impossible to use the same methods and concepts within the field of psychology as in the field of physiology. Like Allport [6,11], Gadamer [12] and Innis [13-17], among others, Jaspers and Foucault recognize that although contemporary nomothetic sciences could be an important supplement to idiographic approaches, personal metaphysical experiences, as opposed to somatic illnesses, are a normal part of both the 'healthy' and the more 'bizarre' experiences of the world. It is therefore only a question of smooth transitions or even at times abrupt transitions between sick and healthy behavior and thinking. Along with memories, associations and the flight of ideas, experiences and imaginations, such as dreams, represent a source the therapist is dependent on in order to understand the content and nature of behavior - not as universal and *a priori* meanings, but as affect-laden symbols a personal and cultural experience.

Opposed to a reduced empirical naturalism, Jaspers and Foucault emphasize the mysterious in both nature and in the human mind [7]. Like the artists and poets in the Romantic epoch, they seem at times to look back at ancient times, as a period that represents the 'quiet times' where every human being could develop freely, without influence from expansive State power. Like Spinoza, Schiller and Herder, among others, they saw in what Kant called dogmatic rationalism and empiricism the project of alienation. As such, they replaced Descartes' core idea of

an autonomous reflecting self with the notion that human consciousness cannot be separated from the culture, which it is part of. Jaspers and Foucault praised the Romantic poets for being able to absorb the Greek ideal of a sensuous and tragic expression and to manage to express the sensuous by playing on the contradictions of life. In the experiences' arbitrary and confused flow of images, all human beings are primitive souls.

The human psyche and its ability to imagine have been understood differently throughout history. In the ancient and romantic world, imaginations and morbid phenomena, including dreams and traces, were often regarded as natural and important [7]. They were creatively expressed in poetry and applied to explain the relationship between inside and outside; the psychical and physical world. Inspired by ancient thought, Sigmund Freud was one of the first modern psychiatrists to assign meaning to imaginings and dreams, calling them the unconscious part of the human mind. Jaspers and Foucault praised Freud for making dreams meaningful, but they criticised Freud's attempt to explain our unconsciousness in scientific and logical terms through libido.

The field, history and study of psychology

When psychologists and those who concerned themselves with mental healthcare first admitted that their field of study, like that of other sciences, has a past and that knowing it helps one to understand the present and plan for the future, the field of history of psychology began. What we mean by psychology and mental healthcare today is a conceptual construct rooted in socio-historical changes. Because the term 'psychology' has historically been ambiguous, the British historian R. Smith [18], observes that the discipline is so diverse in its theoretical positions that multiple psychologies prevail rather than one unitary.

In his first published book, *Mental Illness and Personality*, Foucault [19] illustrates that there is a multiplicity of factors existing behind the modern history of mental healthcare. With the help of an historical analyses of concepts and methods, he reveals that the methods and concepts used in contemporary mental healthcare do not have their own historical origins. Rather, they originate from the classical medical and nomothetic sciences, which postulate that psychological symptoms can be isolated and assembled like physiological symptoms and that all illness is a natural essence manifested by specific symptoms.

To prove their common origin, Foucault searches the genealogy of modern mental healthcare and finds that the French psychiatrist Ernest Dupré used the nomothetic sciences, such as biology and anatomy, to define hysteria as a diagnosis of mental illness in *La Constitution émotive* [20]. Pierre Janet used the same nomothetic methodology to discover the mental diagnosis psychasthenia and André Delmas used somatic concepts and classifications of the arts to separate obsessions into the categories of phobia, obsessional neurosis and defence mechanisms. Consequently, modern mental healthcare, like the somatic

field of knowledge, has begun to divide psychological phenomena into abstract categories, leaving no room for personal and idiographic expression [19].

Since the 1850s, mental healthcare has, according to Foucault [21], adopted the view that one could apply the same medical concepts and methods used on the body to the human psyche. From the end of the nineteenth century, a focus developed that exclusively concentrated on abnormalities and pathologies. As examples, Foucault refers to contemporary physical-chemical models, *à la* J.S. Mill and Newton, which searched for mechanical abstractions and universal laws in relation to the human psyche. He also refers to the organic models presented by behaviorists such as Wilhelm Wundt and Gustav Fechner and to the evolutionistic models developed by Herbert Spencer and outlined by, among others, the English neurologist John Hughlings Jackson and French psychiatrist Théodule-Armand Ribot. Foucault believes all of these notions are influenced by the positivistic nomothetic idea that it is possible to develop a scientific and universal model of mental healthcare.

In addition, we find, according to Foucault [22], a counter-reaction that searched for a more idiographic approach to mental health. That trend prioritized the search for the discovery of meaning and criticised medical concepts for ignoring human variation and the ambiguous characteristics of different personalities and personality types. To Foucault, Wilhelm Dilthey, Edmund Husserl, Jaspers, Ludwig Binswanger and Freud are examples of this trend because they were concerned with the idea that one could not use the same mechanical and nomothetic models used on the body on the human psyche. They were also, to a greater or lesser extent, concerned with environmental causes in the broad sense of that term.

The relationship between nature and nurture, temperaments and personality

Throughout the history of mental healthcare, one has been eager to describe the relationship between nature (genetic constitution) and nurture (the environment). The question is: Do we possess different inborn and largely unchangeable temperaments and a fixed personality (genetic), as Plato, Descartes and Kant seemed to believe, or are we, as individuals, born with minds similar to a *tabula rasa*, a blank tablet to be filled with experiences, as Aristotle, John Locke and John Stuart Mill believe? Within the nurture approach, there is an ongoing debate whether we, as individuals or as groups of individuals, can be determined by our physical and cultural environment and driven by universal and abstract laws that can be explained by nomothetic sciences, as the behaviourists, empiricists and extreme Marxist Hegelians suggest, or whether we as individuals are so psychologically different that our perceptions and behaviour cannot be determined by materialistic universal laws. This anti-deterministic notion is shared by several existentialist-phenomenologists, such

as Jaspers and Foucault's 1954 notions of mental health. Like Jaspers, Foucault's ideas about mental health are quite anti-deterministic in the first half of the 1950s, although he, like Jaspers, believe that our psychic world is dependent on our physical world.

To Jaspers [1,23,24] and Foucault [19,25], all mature persons, including those who are ill, living in a world of others, are social and cultural human beings who are moral and responsible for oneself and other human beings [cf. 8,17,26]. They have intelligence, self-awareness and consciousness, which require or represent a unique existence and a unique personality. Because human beings are conscious, intelligent and self-aware, a person also has the ability to transgress general laws and develop their environment, which is not fixed. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, in respectively *Being and Nothingness* [27] and *Phenomenology of Perception* [9,28], emphasize this view further. They claim that a social human being is not limited in the way that an object can be limited. An object does not know its own limit, which is external to it. Contrary to objects, a person continually seeks to transgress its limits; it tends, as Jaspers argued [29], toward the infinite, the unconditioned, the encompassing. This infinite, for Jaspers, is not an object that can be fully scientifically analysed or explained. To speak of an absolute and general knowledge of a person's consciousness, is in this sense, to speak of something outside reality. A person is as such a human being who, as Kierkegaard showed, relates reflexively to itself. In this way, he or she differs from material things.

If we delve deeper into the relationship between the psychical and physical worlds, we meet an unexpected challenge concerning how the mind, looked at psychologically, experiences things in the physical world. Kant [30], in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, was one of the first philosophers to develop a thorough phenomenology of how our experience is created through the universal filter of our mind. His notion was that we can never have direct experiences of things, that is, the noumenal world. What we experience is the phenomenal world as conveyed by our senses. Kant explains our common knowledge of things by recourse to an *a priori* framework of forms of intuition, namely, space and time, and a system of categories such as causation which is applicable only to objects located in space and time. Our experiences, psychical and physical, are thus always temporal, or in time, and most of them are in space, the two universal frames. A thought or desire might be an example of a non-spatial but temporal experience, but taking a walk occurs in both space and time. The mind, understood transcendentally, comes equipped with these forms; otherwise, Kant argues, we could not account for the coherence, structure and universality of human experience. In Kant's vision, an *a priori* form of intuition, or spatiotemporality, helps to mould brute sensations into the objects of experience by means of a synthesis. But the *a priori* forms of experiences do not give us the empirical categories, as opposed to the transcendental categories, we use to give content to our experience and to define it, by empirical syntheses, within 'the bounds of sense' established universally by the *a priori* forms of intuition.

Clearly these empirical syntheses, such as those charted in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), can be not just mistaken, but delusional and even morbid, but they leave intact the presupposition of a universal framework of experience.

As expressed in 1954, Foucault's anti-positivistic and idiographic view seems to go so as far as to challenge Kant's notion that space and time are two *a priori* intuitions that provide all other forms of experience. According to Foucault, where the psychic life is concerned and not at least with respect to mental illnesses and existential experiences, time (*les formes temporelles*) and space (*les formes espaces*) are perceived without any common structure or logic, as is the case for the physical body (*conscience du corps*). In this respect, Foucault distinguishes between psychological (idiographic) time and space and mathematical (nomothetic) time and space, believing that psychological time and space ignores the simultaneity of the past and the present (the mathematical and evolutive), especially in relation to different stages of mental illnesses

Foucault's anti-deterministic and ideographic view of time and space is presented in the work of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. In his 1889 book *Time and Free Will*, Bergson's groundbreaking step was to distinguish between two types of time: time employed by natural (nomothetic) science and time that we immediately experience. According to Bergson [31], scientific time is mathematical. It can be measured by means of instruments indicating time in spatial units. It exists passively, as a line on paper. The time we experience, however, is a one-way, floating range of interpenetrating conditions experienced as an undivided process. Bergson calls this time 'pure time' or 'real duration' (*la durée réelle*). This time we can just reach by an idiographic approach.

To Bergson, the difference between space and duration is essential. In space, things are separate from one another; they emerge with clear differences and in different locations and form an external, static and mechanical composition. Conversely, in duration, phenomena overlap; they form an inner procedural motion and each can only be understood through this internal context. In this way, the conditions of consciousness also overlap; they reflect each other and form what one might call an organic whole. This means that the personality is fully present in even the slightest phenomenon of awareness. Bergson's notions are, in this sense, anti-deterministic and anti-nomothetic. Because the different aspects of consciousness are interconnected and related to each other, they are coloured and marked by each other. In this way, consciousness changes constantly as it receives new impressions; it exists in a constantly dynamic process. The desire to predict the duration is, for Bergson, synonymous with attempting to stop its continuous temporal flow and maintaining some of its moments.

Interpretation and explanation, mind and body

Returning to Foucault's earliest works, another approach to the relationship between the psychical and physical worlds is observable in his introduction to the German psychiatrist Binswanger's essay *Dream and Existence*. In the introduction, Foucault [25] abolishes the distinction between interpretation and explanation, mind and body, regarding the physical and psychic life as part of a common reality that also includes imaginings and dream conceptions. In imaginings and dreams, everything, according to Foucault, says 'I'. The physical and the psychic life melt together in a common personalised universe. Past and present images of reality mingle with future images of reality. Using the power of art and literature, Foucault attempts in his introduction to find a way to express how such existential experiences are manifested as meaningful phenomena, without slipping into either a kind of identification of philosophy with logic or some sort of psycho-logic.

While it is admitted that the human sciences produce as well as study interpretations and systems of values, human phenomena that vary with the perspective the researcher has or takes, it is the natural sciences which engage, with complex analytical and often extremely abstract tools, a world expected to remain constant despite any changes in perspective as long as one remains within a chosen frame. This requires, in the dimensions of the world that a so-called scientific psychology is concerned with, that data must be collected through direct observation or experiment, that empirical evidence does not rely on merely or arbitrarily personal arguments, beliefs, values or feelings and that all extraneous variables must be controlled in order to be able to establish cause and effect. It requires, not without deep challenges, that one should be able to form a concept of the 'true nature' of something (*das Ding an sich*) independently of any human perspective. This is a highly problematic and contested position in light of the essentially perspectival nature of human experience and knowing and the problematic idea of a 'view from nowhere'.

However, there are, it is asserted, types of psychological phenomena that can be generalized as common for all people. They are what are termed sensory phenomena that are understood as expressions of the psyche. They consist of the human physiognomy presented in such forms as shape and expression, appearance, involuntary gestures, speech and writing, artistic productions and conscious purposeful behavior, among others. When we speak of somatic expressions, we can, if we so choose by a process of abstraction, simply register a general relationship between, for example, fear and dilation of pupils, smile and friendliness, blush and certain emotions, isolation as anxiety, *et cetera*. We can register it, scientifically or not, and make it part of our common knowledge, which nevertheless is socially distributed and conditioned.

Expressive phenomena, perception, experience and relationship

Expressive phenomena are as such general as far as they can be perceived by the senses and manifest themselves as matter of fact, which can be measured, photographed, recorded, or counted, *et cetera*. Moreover, the interpretations of somatic expressions are always subjective and unique, since the actual perception of them is highly personal. Insight into expressive phenomena, therefore, requires rather different evidence beyond the simple registration of purely objective physical facts. They are situation-dependent. In these cases, nomothetic sciences, which aim to generate general laws, will not alone be sufficient for understanding the meaning of the content of the expression that a person gives.

As opposed to the nomothetic sciences, there is the view, often related to the idiographic human sciences, which takes into account that scientific claims, although they are subjected to the empirical tests of researchers, are related to unique subjective perception and experiences that cannot be outlined in general laws. Rather, they could be related to a specific sociocultural context that more or less subconsciously pushes us to think according to certain values, whether moral, personal, social, gender-specific, political or cultural. These are systems of premises taken for granted which make up the framework of 'conviviality' that Michael Polanyi explored. In his book *Personal Knowledge* [32], Polanyi states that all knowledge claims, including those that derive from rules, rely on personal judgement and that we believe more than we can prove and know more than we can say. As such, a knower does not stand apart from the universe, but participates personally within it. Our intellectual skills are driven by passionate commitments that motivate discovery and validation. According to Polanyi, a great scientist not only identifies patterns, but also chooses significant questions likely to lead to a successful resolution. Innovators risk their reputation by committing to an hypothesis.

From this perspective, language and rational structures need not be a closed system; *a priori* assumptions are subject to change and are socially variable as R.G. Collingwood [33], among others, argued with historical nuance. Jerome Bruner [34], in a different way, holds a comparable view. He states that contemporary mental healthcare will fare better when it recognizes that its truths, like all truths about the human condition, are dependent upon and relevant to the point of view that it takes toward that condition. This is where mental healthcare starts and (wherein it is) becomes inseparable from cultural sciences. In this case, a person's experiences need to be *explained*, not to be *explained away*.

We see this when we go back to the history and philosophy of psychology. Aristotle, whose *De Anima* is the first 'scientific' psychology, which also underlay his analysis of the political order of existence, stated that a person is a *zoon logikon* or a *zoon logon echon* - a living thing made rational by the power of speech, the locus of rationality. The human being 'divides its voice' in a way not found in all of nature, and by the power of speech takes up a position in the cosmic and social order. However, perhaps the most famous formulation came from the ancient philosopher Boethius, who sees the 'person' as an individual substance of a rational nature, which became canonical in scholastic philosophy and its aftermaths. Another way of describing the human person is based on relationships with other persons. This direction was started and exploited in his theological writings by St. Augustine and by Martin Buber who held that the human is a person only because of the existence of another interacting person to whom one responds as a 'Thou' as opposed to an 'It'. In the world of illness and its treatment this is a crucial distinction.

Just as persons must 'find' themselves through self-reflection and action, what does it mean for us to 'find' a person and especially one who is ill? Is it possible to find someone that is in constant psychological movement through general laws? And, not least, why should we bother to 'find' someone in this way? According to Kierkegaard [35], if we want to help a person "One Must First and Foremost Take Care to Find the person Where the person is and Begin There". To Kierkegaard, all true helping begins with a humbling. The helper must first humble him or herself under the person he or she wants to help and thereby understand that to help is not to dominate, but to serve. To help is not to be the most dominating, but the most patient. To help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other understands. We must, as Martin Buber [36] states, establish an I and You (I-Thou - *Ich und Du*) relationship, which is the opposite of what Buber calls an I-It relationship.

For Buber, I-You is a relation of subject-to-subject, while I-It is a relation of subject-to-object. In the I-You relationship, human beings are aware of each other as having a unity of being. In the I-You relationship, human beings do not perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, but engage in a dialogue involving each other's whole being. In the I-It relationship, human beings perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities and view themselves as part of a world which consists of things. I-You is a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity, while I-It is a relationship of separateness and detachment. To Jaspers and Foucault, when a therapist approaches a person with a medical gaze, an I-It relationship will occur and the person who needs to be helped will no longer be a person, but a *thing* that can be measured as an *object*. In Jaspers' and Foucault's points of view, human life is more than the sum of its parts. One can never understand a mental or physical phenomenon by exclusively relying on an empirical analysis of the body's responses to stimuli. Physical responses will always be influenced by psychological choices and beliefs and our personal feelings and our environment, which, in turn, will affect how we physically respond to our surroundings. No fixed relationship between objective features and their meanings for the persons involved can therefore be drawn.

The person, general laws, autonomy and self-governance

Smedslund and Ross [37] point out that insights about a human person, whether borne of empirical work, thoughtful analysis of history or experience, or deductions from an understanding of human goals and capacities, do not offer formulae or algorithms that can be applied automatically or mindlessly. Rather, they suggest that these insights essentially provide 'tools' for potential use. Like any tools, their effective use, whether conscious or non-conscious, involves some combination of experience and skill. The wise practitioner also recognizes the importance of changing tools when the ones currently being used are not getting the job done.

I believe every attempt to uncover the reality of a person through general laws will be met with resistance. To be subjected to nomothetic general laws and methods is against the nature of autonomy and self-governance. This is a fact that I suggest can itself be outlined as a general law. First, although there are similarities in behavior and thinking, every person, as an embodied being into which all its life-experiences have been enfolded and qualify it as 'this' being, is different. Second, not even a single individual is the same in every situation. In social encounters we automatically and sometimes unconsciously expand and change in order to adapt to the situation. We are self-reflexive, dynamic, social, historical and cultural human beings. How we adapt to a situation depends on our life and experiences, our biological body and personality, the persons we meet and how we and the other person want to be seen. It also depends on the situation itself, that is, what kind of expectations it holds. Every meeting is as such unique and provides different sides of our personality.

In the course of our understanding another person, a good deal of what is sociocultural is incorporated into both our pre-reflexive, intentional action and the more advanced reflexive consciousness that emerges as development unfolds (cf. Jaspers [1]). We cannot therefore understand a person merely in terms of an individual *subject*, because a great deal of a person's action happens only insofar as the person understands and constitutes him or herself as an integral part of a 'we'. In this case, we can never understand a person independent of social and cultural contexts, which always have an agonistic element of some sort. For if, we agree that a person is a product of 'strife' between individual experiences, nature and the sociocultural world of others, it can be contended that we have to search everywhere to find a person, which in most cases opposes the aim to find or develop general laws. A person is distributed uniquely in manifold contexts.

A dialectical gaze, science, humanism, social and cultural psychology

Accordingly, it is possible to establish a dialectical gaze that can span the individual to the sociocultural, from the physical body to the specific mind, from the rational and logical to the unique and general, from a specific situation to a broader historical and global overview. My appeal can be related to C.P Snow's still relevant 1959 essay *The Two Cultures* [38]. According to Snow, the intellectual life of Western Society is divided into two cultures, between the nomothetic and idiographic sciences, that is, between the natural sciences and the humanities. Echoing Snow, this may be considered a major hindrance to solving the world's problems and to finding the person where the person is. Snow is surely right that the natural sciences and the humanistic sciences have not only diverged over the years, but also developed a tension in relation to each other.

Snow points out that if the scientists are in favour of social reform and progress through science and technology, then the humanists are backward looking in their understanding of development. Snow's intention is not to force potential physicists to read a bit of Dickens or to force potential humanists to conjure up some basic theorems. Instead, he encourages the growth of an intellectual bilingualism and the capacity to attend to and learn from, and eventually contribute to, wider cultural conversations. This involves not only understanding how one's own special area of study fits into a larger cultural whole, but also a recognition that interdisciplinary questions which include the investigation of ideas in a broader historical context should become part of a professional achievement in the given field.

To Kenneth Gergen, most social psychological research focuses on minute segments of ongoing processes. Gergen [39] states that social psychological research concentrates very little on the function of these segments within their historical context: "We have little theory dealing with the interrelation of events over extended periods". Likewise, (intellectual) historians could benefit from the more rigorous methodologies employed by the social and cultural psychologist as well as his or her particular sensitivity to psychological variables. In sum, I believe that the most effective way to reach an understanding of a person is to confront different sciences with a rival consciousness, in the sense of rival knowledge areas and rival experiences that can sharpen and open up the gaze concerning psychological phenomena, thereby doing greater justice to the irreducible side of the person.

Conclusion

A closer look at history and philosophy of mental healthcare reveals that there are no fixed, or maybe even essential categories to be found in the various, ongoing, dynamic processes of interaction between sociocultural practices and individual actors, but that meaningful distinctions still can be made. It is in this never-ending sociocultural interaction that all individuals are lodged. As living beings, we are not just physical brains or marionettes in a reasonable historical development, as Hegel's view of history would lead us to believe; rather, we are creative, reflexive actors who have an impact on cultural and scientific norms, which we also, consciously

and subconsciously, adapt to. This is why mental healthcare workers or scientists dealing with psychological phenomena should not only seek to become a positivist Sherlock Holmes, intelligently discerning the concealed and buried meaning that is awaiting discovery, but, in contrast, the detective who finds him or herself part of the game and thereby a co-creator of the mystery she or he seeks to solve.

In our attempt to discover the existential reality of a person, we must never forget that the fundamental characteristic of being a person, whether we are therapists or not, is to be responsible for others while at the same time taking responsibility for oneself.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] Jaspers, K. (1913; 1997). General Psychopathology, XL, p. 922. Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press.
[2] Windelband, W. (1905). Über Willensfreiheit : zwölf Vorlesungen. 2. unver. Aufl. edn., VII, p. 223. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck).
[3] Windelband, W. (1919). Präludien: Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte. 6. unveränderte Aufl. edn. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr.
[4] Walsh, R.T.G., Teo, T. & Baydala A. (2014). A critical history and philosophy of psychology: diversity of context, thought, and practice, XVI, p. 709. New York: Cambridge University Press.
[5] Bertocci, P.A. (1940). A critique of G.W. Allport's theory of motivation. *Psychological Review* 47 (6) 501-532.
[6] Allport, G.W. (1940). Motivation in personality: reply to Mr. Bertocci. *Psychological Review* 47 (6) 533-554.
[7] Joranger, L. (2013). Mental Illness and Imagination in Philosophy, Literature, and Psychiatry. *Philosophy and Literature* 37 (2) 507-523.
[8] Joranger, L. (2014). Karl Jaspers' Interdisciplinary and Dual Psychopathology Ideas in History. *Journal of the Nordic Society for the History of Ideas* 8 (2) 75-103.
[9] Joranger, L. (2014). Development of the Self in Society: French Postwar Thought on Body, Meaning, and Social Behavior. *Journal of Mind and Behavior* 35 (3) 133-149.
[10] Joranger, L. (2015). Subjectivity as science and experience: An existential-phenomenological and historical approach to subjectivity, objectivity, and psychology. Oslo: Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo.
[11] Allport, G.W. (1957). Personality; a psychological interpretation, XIV, p. 588. New York: H. Holt and Company.
[12] Gadamer, H-G. (1996). The enigma of health: the art of healing in a scientific age, X, p. 180. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
[13] Innis, R.E. (1992). Consciousness and the play of signs. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
[14] Innis, R.E. (2001). Philosophy and the play of life. *Focaal: European Journal of Anthropology* 37, 121-142.
[15] Innis, R.E. (2002). Pragmatism and the forms of sense. University Park: Penn State University Press.
[16] Innis, R.E. (2009). Susanne Langer in focus: The symbolic mind. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
[17] Innis, R.E. (2016). Existential goods of living in the instant: Life lessons from the ancients. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 30 (2) 144-162.
[18] Smith, R. (1997). The Norton history of the human sciences, XVIII, p. 1036. 1st American edn. New York: W.W. Norton.
[19] Foucault, M. (1954). Maladie mentale et personnalité. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
[20] Fourcade, M. (1911). La Constitution émotive. Paris.
[21] Foucault, M. (1957; 2001). La psychologie de 1850 à 1950. In: Dits et écrits, 1954-1976. Defert, D., Ewald, F.C. & Lagrange, J, Eds., pp. 165-186. Paris: Gallimard.
[22] Foucault, M. (1957; 2001). La recherche scientifique et la psychologie. In: Dits et écrits, 1954-1976. Defert, D., Ewald, F.C. & Lagrange, J., pp. 165-186. Paris: Gallimard.
[23] Jaspers, K. (1951). Man in the modern age. New edn., p.208. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
[24] Jaspers, K. (1971). Philosophy of existence, XXVII, p. 99. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
[25] Foucault, M. (1957; 2001). Introduction. In: Dits et écrits, 1954-1976. Defert, D., Ewald, F.C. & Lagrange, J, Eds., pp. 93-147. Paris: Gallimard.
[26] Joranger, L. (2016). Foucaults humanistiske psykologi. *Tidsskrift for Norsk Psykologforening* 12, 1042-1048
[27] Sartre, J-P. (2003). Being and nothingness: an essay on phenomenological ontology, XXI, p. 659. London: Routledge.
[28] Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945; 2002). Phenomenology of Perception, XXIV, p. 544. London: Routledge.
[29] Jaspers, K. (1971). Philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[30] Kant, I. (1787; 1996). Critique of Pure Reason, LIX, P. 1030. Indianapolis: Hackett.
[31] Bergson, H. (1889; 2012). Time and Free Will. New York: Harper & Brothers.
[32] Polanyi, M. (1958). Personal knowledge; towards a post-critical philosophy, XVI, p. 428. Chicago,: University of Chicago Press.
[33] Collingwood, R.G. & Knox, T.M. (1946). The idea of history, XXVI, p. 339. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
[34] Bruner, J.S. (1990). Acts of meaning, XVII, p. 179. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
[35] Kierkegaard, S. (1851; 1998). The point of view, XXVII, p. 351. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
[36] Buber, M. (1923; 2000). I and Thou. 1st Scribner Classics edn., p. 126. New York, NY: Scribner.
[37] Smedslund, J. & Ross, L. (2014). Research-Based Knowledge in Psychology: What, if Anything, is Its Incremental Value to the Practitioner? *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science* 48, 365-383.
[38] Snow, C.P. (1959). The two cultures and the scientific revolution. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
[39] Gergen, K.J. (1973). Social psychology as history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 26 (2) 309-320.