The Relationship of the Personal from Graduate Training to Professional Practice*

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This article will focus on the *personal* in graduate training and the importance of addressing the human dimension in the development of psychologists. The implications of this stance for professional practice and the field of psychology as a whole will be examined as well. The terms *practice* and *professional* are meant to include any endeavor or activity by a psychologist, implying no particular group or subspecialty within psychology. Our intent (Weiss and Kempler, 1986) is to describe what we see as an ongoing conflict in graduate education between the acquisition of skills and knowledge on one hand, and the development of the person of the psychologist on the other. While the former tends to be addressed explicitly in graduate programs adhering to APA guidelines, the latter tends to be neglected by most psychology departments. This conflict in the training of new psychologists stems from a broader crisis in psychology.

We will argue that graduate training in psychology needs to assist the development of personal and professional identities integrated with the acquisition of skills and knowledge. In doing so, we will question the field's ability at present to assist the student in understanding more fully the unique person he or she is and the unique talents and resistances that are brought to the choice of careers.

Personal is used here to mean the constituents of being-in-the-world (Binswanger, 1963) that are most uniquely human. These include not only the simply idiosyncratic, biographical aspects of one's life but also the dynamic, dialectical, and complex relationship of one's perceptions, needs, ambitions, feelings, and thoughts that constitute one's involvement in the doing of psychology.

The "Third Force" in psychology emerged as an attempt to include the personal within psychology as a corrective to perceived limitations in the subject matter and conduct of the field. Certain authors draw attention to psychology's conception of itself as a natural science and conclude that the subject matter appropriate for this attitude of science is inadequate to address the richness of human experience (Bingswanger, 1963; Giorgi, 1970; Hillman, 1975; Maslow, 1966; May, 1979). Moreover, the conduct of research according to a natural science viewpoint has been shown to neglect the human dimensions of experimentation (Perrott, 1977; Weiss and Kempler, 1986) in a fashion that has been described as "a-personal" (Romanyshyn, 1971). Accordingly, while the relationship between the inadequacies of the field and the education of the psychologist has been acknowledged (van Kaam, 1958), the neglect of the personal in graduate training has received little attention. In fact, the personal within psychology may be best understood by its absence or exclusion, the impersonal. Humanistic psychology's attempts to include the personal have been limited by its reception in psychology as *merely* providing additional content and not fundamentally addressing the underlying issues of approach (Giorgi, 1970).

The neglect of the personal is a manifestation of a foundational crisis in the profession. Siegel (1982), for example, at a conference on "The Foreseeable Future of Psychology" stated that the primary crisis in the field was the division between academic and applied psychology. Giorgi (1982) noted, at the same conference, a crisis reflected in the split between theory and praxis. Psychology's defining itself as a natural science, in contrast to what Giorgi (1970) terms a human science, has also resulted in a fragmentation within the field that affects every aspect of doing psychology, including the training of its own members. Subspecialty groups bear differing professional as well as theoretical allegiances on account of conflicting perceptions regarding what constitutes the proper domain of psychological work, that is, how psychology ought to conceive and con-

duct itself. Furthermore, the APA's Boulder Model (Raimy, 1950) for graduate training — the scientist/practitioner model — is an expression of this split or division within the field. It is a product of psychology's efforts to integrate two disparate visions of itself. Nevertheless, this model perpetuates the current state of crisis and tension by maintaining that same arbitrary division in name and practice.

The lack of an integrated and unitary vision can also be observed in the structure of graduate training programs. The APA's (1977) position is that doctoral students must complete core courses in a broad range of areas of psychology. Yet, the field has one of the fastest growing bodies of literature of any science. Knowledge expands in a random manner similar to the seemingly haphazard way divisions are added to our organizational structure. Thematic to both areas of concern is the lack of a coherent, guiding principle or attitude for the study of human phenomena. It is not surprising to find that certain graduate students in psychology tend to express discontent with their training, finding the theory learned in doctoral programs inadequate in preparing them to face the daily issues of psychological practice (Weissman, H., Goldschmid, M. & Stein, D., 1971). These students report that, upon graduation, much time is spent disentangling themselves from theoretical loyalties that are not personally nor professionally relevant.

The decision to become a psychotherapist, for example, is generally an unconscious one based on a perception of the opportunities to pursue one's own personal growth and maturity. "The contrast between the academic, didactic atmosphere and the highly subjective motivations which send him to training frequently lead to disillusionment" (Whitaker and Malone, 1981). In response to academic psychology's failure to respond to his or her personal needs, the trainee often adopts an "objective" approach as a defensive substitute. Whitaker and Malone (1981) suggest that not only is it impossible to train a psychotherapist didactically, but that the process of training often prevents the development of the personal attributes necessary for the functioning of an adequate psychotherapist.

One of the limitations of that theoretical orientation is the treatment given to the subjective and the personal. We do not intend to focus this critique simply on the inadequacies of content or subject matter within the field but rather on a scientific attitude that neglects the subjective and the personal both in theory and praxis. Content and educational process stem from the same guiding but conflicting visions within the field. Accord-

ingly, the process of education is geared towards mastery of a subject matter that tends to neglect the personal and subjective, and students end up living out the split between theory/academic and praxis/applied, living out that division privately and publicly that exists within the field professionally. It is interesting to note that in the study cited immediately above, students from experiential or psychoanalytic programs tend to report greater satisfaction with their training and professional development. The implication is that these programs which incorporate the personal into their theory and training effect a more satisfying professional integrity. Left unanswered by the study is the effect such programs have on personal as well as professional integrity.

THE BROADER SCOPE OF THE NEGLECT OF THE PERSONAL

Historically, psychology in its emulation of physics has emphasized a logical-empirical, "objective" approach to the study of human phenomena (Giorgi, 1970; van Kaam, 1958). This perspective has defined the objective as separate from and antithetical to the subjective and the personal (Orne, 1962; Rosenthal, 1966). Training in psychology has dictated the minimization of the subjective and personal which are viewed as contaminants of objective knowledge and invalid as scientific data.

Giorgi (1970) addressed the notion of *approach* as a dimension of psychological work. By this he means, "the fundamental viewpoint toward man and the world that the scientist brings or adopts, with respect to his work as a scientist, whether this viewpoint is made explicit or remains implicit" (p. 126). He continues:

any researcher or scientist, implicitly at least has certain views about the nature of the phenomena he is concerned with, and . . . he should permit these views to enter into the public aspects of science rather than trying to keep them hidden or attempting to limit all researchers to the commonly accepted views at any given time. (p. 130)

Subjective influences then, are no longer conceived as contaminating objectivity but as contributing a vital element to research, the meaning of the world as co-constituted by the person as questioner of the world. Subjective "biases" are included, articulated, and within certain circumscribing limits utilized to inform research. Polyani (1958) echoes Giorgi's sentiments about the value of actively incorporating the personal presence of the researcher as he distinguishes it from the subjective.

I think we may distinguish between the personal in us, which actively enters into our commitments, and our subjective states, in which we merely endure our feelings (Polyani, 1958).

Although Giorgi addresses approach with regard to traditionally conceived research, psychotherapy and teaching as they betoken particular forms of research can also be scrutinized using these concepts. The efforts of Giorgi and other psychologists (Colaizzi, 1978; Weiss and Kempler, 1986) are an attempt to correct this weakness in the field with regard to research, and by our own extension all activities of a psychologist. We include the training of psychologists as well, for that is the starting point where old notions, values and assumptions become perpetuated by the very content and *style* of training.

Kuhn (1970) in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* describes how graduate training involves learning

the accepted examples of scientific practice — examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together — that provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research. (p. 10)

Mastery of these coherent traditions which Kuhn has termed paradigms is not the end of the matter for psychologists. Becoming a psychologist does not simply entail acquiring the skills and tools of technique and theory necessary for competent work. It requires socialization into a field and a way of life that is both personal and emotional. Graduate training shapes the person and soon enough the person shapes psychology.

While the psychologist was once cast in the role of a detached observer, recent humanistic and psychoanalytic writers have declared our fate as participants in psychological practice (Carrere, 1982). We are no longer detached, "objective" Copernican observers, rather our involvement in psychological work is revealed to be an intimate one however we choose to theorize that involvement. Accordingly, it is important that psychology as a science address the subjective and personal engagement of students in its professional education.

Clinical psychologists have been quicker to acknowledge the importance of personal involvement in their work, perhaps because of the necessarily subjective nature of their task. Regardless of subspecialty within the clinical field, use of self is recognized as a primary ingredient in clinical work (Sundberg, Tyler and Taplin, 1973). The primary resource that psychotherapists bring to therapy is themselves, the people they are, and not simply the skills they have acquired in training. Who one is as a

person is an important variable in the efficacy of psychotherapy from a variety of theoretical perspectives. From a behavioral perspective the therapist may be seen as modeling the attributes of positive mental health or mature relationships for the patient to learn. Psychodynamically, the issue of countertransference or what the therapist brings to therapy is a crucial variable. From a Rogerian perspective the capacity of the therapist to listen empathically is one of the necessary elements for the establishment of a climate for change. Finally, experiential psychotherapists argue that the locus of the psychotherapy lies in the dynamics of the psychotherapist.

At issue is psychology's ability to incorporate lived experience in its body of literature, its armamentarium of techniques and practice, and its training of graduate students. If we are to involve ourselves in a serious consideration of the subjective or personal in psychology, we must begin with an examination of personal issues in graduate training. In all of our work as psychologists, academicians, researchers, psychotherapists, expert witnesses, etc., we are in the role of advocating and teaching a set of values and behaviors that differentiate adaptive from maladaptive lifestyles, the more human from the less human. Furthermore, the college professor, the researcher, the psychotherapist, and the consultant can be regarded as students of human experience whether the project be the psychotherapy relationship, a written article submitted for publication, or a lecture delivered to students. No psychologist can delve into those human experiences she or he is uncomfortable with exploring and unwilling to face personally. Addressing the personal in graduate training can only enhance one's status as a psychologist enriching the acquisition of skills and knowledge while fostering greater personal and professional identity. Using an analogy, how can we train people to scuba dive if we never address their fear of depths? Thus, the personal, the subjective, is implicated in the conduct of psychology especially a graduate training program. One's personal life is an issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Writing within a profession which places particular emphasis on methodology, it would be easy to make technical recommendations. In fact, one of the limitations of the natural scientific attitude is the tendency to rush by the matter of approach for the apparent security of practical methods and content areas. The creation of a personalized approach to

graduate training, however, is more complex. It would demand a degree of tension and greater involvement and engagement of faculty and students on an intimate basis. The focus would include the interpersonal and individual perspective as well as the collective professional literature. Effort would be made to keep in view the style and process of the training experience as well as its content. Accordingly, the context of education is always at issue.

To make specific recommendations would be presumptuous without knowledge of the particular professors, students, institution, and locale, to name a few considerations. These are all dimensions of training. Nevertheless, we can address examples of a personalized approach that currently exist at some institutions. The following sample of ideas is not intended to be reified as solutions but to be taken as illustrations of particular ways some doctoral programs and training institutes have grappled with inclusion of the personal.

Admissions: Qualified applicants are screened according to departmental standards of academic excellence, as is usually done in most departments. The final phase of the selection process, however, includes an interview during which the candidate meets with professors and senior graduate students. Such an interview introduces the admissions candidate to the importance of the personal as it relates to the practice of psychology. Some institutions meet candidates individually while others group candidates in order to address dimensions of team building, working cooperatively, and the perspective of the interpersonal. Finally, as a part of this process, senior graduate students are included and given equal status with faculty in the selection of candidates. The status given to senior graduate students expresses faculty commitment to its own training process and the belief that professional training involves the maturation of the psychologist professionally and personally.

Development of mentor relationships: (1) Each student is assigned an older student who functions as a "big sibling." This not only helps the new student maneuver through the administrative complexities of the program but also provides a model of an older student who has experienced personal growth in the program and remains involved in that process. (2) Faculty-led small groups meet once weekly with membership rotating each month. The agenda can include case studies presented by senior graduate students, specialized research problems, issues of professional praxis, a shared analysis of personal descriptions of a selected phenomenon, or presentation by the professor of his or her experiences in the field.

In this way, students have the opportunity to practice professional presentations and receive comments in an environment of safety while learning from others in a manner difficult to achieve in a classroom setting.

Making visible the autobiographical: (1) Personal psychotherapy is encouraged by the department's making available a list of licensed psychologists willing to work with graduate students on a low cost basis, offering financial aid for such a purpose, or acknowledging the value of such an experience in considering it a valid budget expense when applications are submitted for loans, grants, work/study monies, and scholarships. Whitaker and Malone (1981) go so far as to suggest that students not begin graduate training until they have had sufficient experience as both a practitioner and patient to build a solid personal foundation with which didactic training can then be integrated. (2) First year students meet in weekly discussion groups with a consulting psychologist not affiliated with the department. Rapport among the class members can be developed as students face their own needs and desires related to graduate training. It may be an important place for students to understand how graduate training in psychology relates to their own autobiographies. (3) Senior graduate students meet in several groups with a consulting psychologist in order to achieve some sense of closure on their training experience and their working relationships.

Evaluation de-emphasized: (1) As the department has already set minimum standards for excellence, students are rarely terminated from the program for academic reasons. The faculty shares responsibility with the student for his or her success and works with each student to formulate solutions when difficulties arise. On occasion, students are asked to take a leave of absence in order to work in a therapeutic setting on what are perceived to be personal issues that inhibit progress through the program. (2) Grades are limited to a pass/fail basis in order to minimize the negative effects of competition and encourage mutual support. In this way, it is recognized that each person's maturation as a psychologist is unique, and each person's next step in that process need not come at the expense of another but may be enhanced by the other. (3) One institution communicates this attitude to first year students by involving them in weekly support groups that meet with the faculty in their professional areas. These groups provide an opportunity for informal, non-evaluative contact with the faculty and help to lay the groundwork for what is recognized as a mutually supportive, non-competitive and caring atmosphere.

Experiential education: (1) Students are placed in professional work settings within the first month of a program supervised by an adjunct psychologist. These practica are considered part of the student's development and credit is awarded. Not only is the student given the opportunity to learn by doing, the professional experience raises questions about psychological praxis that make didactic lectures more meaningful. (2) Students are encouraged to write phenomenological descriptions of experiences relevant to the course taught, and the class analyzes selected descriptions publicly. (3) Students are encouraged to conduct phenomenological research on topics of personal interest, i.e. the building of initial rapport in psychotherapy, the intent of researchers in psychology, women's experiences of the women's movement, the patient's experience of privacy in psychotherapy, and the experience of dysmenorrhea. (4) Classes at one institute are structured solely as discussion groups. While a reading syllabus is followed, the professors guide class progress by utilizing student interests and needs as they arise in response to the reading material. This method is based on the notion that discussing ideas and concepts leads to an emotional experience, for students respond to the reading material as their personal needs dictate and allow. Learning occurs best where there is an emotional investment, and it is that emotional interest which the professors address and develop.

These illustrations are in no way intended to overlook the value of the private aspects of the person of the psychologist, professor or student. The danger here would be to equate indiscriminate self-disclosure with a personalized approach to graduate training (Carrere, 1983; Weiss, 1987). These concerns, however, must await a more complete discussion at another time.

CONCLUSION

The question we raise is of a pressing nature. Graduate students are expected to shoulder the burden of the division within the field by having to master a comprehensive survey of knowledge. We have a model that is reaching its limitations, as Kuhn (1970) predicts is the eventual fate of all such models. We face a decision. Do we train specialists as medicine has done, continue to demand general training and mastery of a rapidly increasing body of knowledge, or do we fashion, perhaps, an alternative?

Rather than dissect the richness and variety of human experience as we have done, an alternative would be to help students articulate and

develop their own styles and personal perspective as they participate in a broader psychological approach. We must attend to the whole person in his or her world, and, at a minimum, provide a climate conducive to continued growth towards a fully actualizing life-style. It is urged that graduate programs explicitly address the values of students, teachers, and departments, their intent in pursuing education in psychology, and the relationship between the biographical and the conduct of psychology. As a profession we have always been concerned with rigor and discipline, emphasizing competency for content areas and techniques. We do not advocate a soft approach to graduate training, but rather we propose a shift in the emphasis of that rigor and discipline toward the inclusion of meanings and perspectives heretofore neglected. An exploration of these concerns will enable us to incorporate lived experience and the personal within the domain of psychological training.

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