

MUTUAL ENLIGHTENMENT: INSPIRED CO-EXISTENCE

Sunnie D. Kidd and George Chih-Hsin Sun, Ph.D.

Existential Phenomenology

As we turn to the meaning of experience, we turn to the essential structure, to how it is organized in the field of awareness. In so doing we turn to the person who is experiencing and who can give a description of the situation in which it is experienced. In this way, we arrive at the meaning. The person is a being-in-the-world and gives meaning to as well as derives meaning from life-praxis, while being an active agent in the formation of this work, not just a passive recipient. It is from these taken for granted meanings from everyday life that one understands the *Lebenswelt*. From Martin Heidegger's existential analytic we discover two fundamental modes of existence: the authentic and the inauthentic. The current project is more concerned with the mode of authenticity in which *Dasein* (there-being) has taken possession of its own possibilities of being. In this way, Heidegger shows the wholeness of *Dasein* as it is grasped in a movement towards authenticity, through the answer to the call to authenticity, of conscience. For Heidegger, the call to conscience has the character of a summons that is the call of the authentic self to the self that is lost in the "they." In everydayness *Dasein* is lost in the everyday mode of existence, in the "they," the collective mass. Consequently, *Dasein* is swept along with the tide of the masses, unaware of the authentic self. *Dasein* must be open to the appeal, to the call. The call to conscience comes to *Dasein* from the same *Dasein*, from the same existent, to step into the freedom to make one's own choice. From the everyday taken for granted existence comes the call to authenticity, to become aware, to "own" one's ownmost possibilities.

As a fundamental structure, this possibility of stepping into one's ownmost possibility and of being open to the call to conscience is always present. From Heidegger's existential analytic on the fundamental structure of Being, as it manifests itself in *Dasein*, we come to see for ourselves the meaning of grasping one's ownmost possibility, death. Death has the effect of throwing one back upon oneself and at the same time; it brings one's own death to full attention, making one face this possibility on one's own. In *Being and Time* Heidegger says:

Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the "they" and in what "they" want to undertake.¹

This being free to choose by being called back to one's own self, this fundamental possibility of being appealed to and of the call as a call to authentic existence, uncovers the fundamentals of an aware and self-initiated kind of life. Being called out to the meaning of self-responsibility for this direction takes us out of the anonymous "they" and delivers us over to a freedom to step into an open future. With Heidegger being-with-others is another fundamental structure of *Dasein's* Being. From the existential phenomenological view, we are self-responsible, socially, standing open to the appeal of Being. Heidegger does not mention inspiration but uncovers the possibility of being appealed to, of being called out, as a fundamental structure of human existence. Since *Dasein* dwells in the inauthentic mode of existence most of the time, we are not always open to the call but still carry this possibility with us each day. It comes upon us or to us, a call towards the Self.

From this basic knowledge of our move towards authenticity and Being-with-others as a fundamental structure of human reality, we move on to literature which specifically speaks of this capacity. This involves the structures of co-existence. How do we enter into the social world, what is our access to this co-constituted field of meaning? The capacity to be appealed to implies two terms: *encounter* and *presence*. It is in this fundamental "we" perspective that we are first addressed not that "you" address "me" but that as you address me, so I respond.

Several avenues open up here, from the field of therapy, social psychology and philosophy. With Heidegger to ground the direction of this inquiry in the field of human existence, the possibilities of *Dasein* as a Being-in-the-world, it seems necessary now to explore the notion of Being-in-the-world-with-others. Then, more specifically, in what ways do we find ourselves as Being-with-others? Just what does this Heideggerian insight mean? How do we find ourselves involved? These also seem to be important questions in psychology. What this is moving towards is a field of "expressive conduct"² and the realization that these all have one underlying structure, the embodied subject. In this area, Merleau-Ponty seems the most prolific. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates that our body is our primary access to the world, that we are a living body. Our actions are instances of expressive conduct and we are present in our bodies as a being expressing itself in gestures, speech and language. Merleau-Ponty is speaking of an, "incarnated consciousness, where subject and world determine each other reciprocally."³ The body is a human body, for it is "my" body. With the body, the embodied subject as a focus of varying perspectives on the world with each perspective referring to other possibilities, we are interrelated with other human beings and their perspectives of which we are aware in seeing their bodies. We take an attitude towards our existence and towards others. It is in the co-existence (or the cultural) that the body resides in a transcendental field of meaning.

The social perspective is most successfully interrogated in the cultural phenomenon of speech and language, in the form of dialogue. It is in the return from the dialogue, its recall and integration by which our encounter or shared presence becomes a part of one's history, of one's life story. It is in this that the other as a part of one's story or history that remains present. In this sense we carry others with us as a field of felt presence and meaning.

From Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger has emerged the capacity for possibilities of an embodied subject to become responsible for personal existence, to existentialize one's meanings and to step into an open future through awareness of one's authentic self and one's access to all of these through others. The field of presence, the existential bond of intersubjectivity grounds and concretizes the meaning of the other as it calls one towards Heidegger's authentic mode of being.

This speaks to an affirmation of existence to a saying "yes" to what *is* one's own. *Dasein* is a being-in-the-world, an embodied subjectivity in dialogue with the world. "This is a man as *existent* subject, as project, as 'having to be,' and its execution, as history. Man is essentially history and, as such, he is radically social."⁴ The authenticity of existence presupposes the existence of others because we are always already participating in a cultural world. The proper meaning of the thesis that, "*existence is co-existence*" resides in the fact that others make us be, so that my being is a, "being-through-others."⁵ Heidegger describes the mode of being alone as a deficient mode of being-together.

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological description of the ways in which Being is manifested in the dialectic concretizes the possibility for what one can call inspired co-existence. With "my" body as the characteristic access to my world and to others, through our co-existence, we are now free to look at the styles in which we co-exist. More precisely, in the ways we move each other, make each other be.

Gabriel Marcel reaffirms Merleau-Ponty's emphasis upon our sense of embodiment, not as a body but as "*my* body."⁶ Speaking of a gap in understanding, he asks how, if we are each an existential orbit, a center, a body, can it be possible to extend our existential participation to an interpersonal communion? Marcel underscores the importance of the inner awareness of my body and concentrates attention on sensation:

It is really meaningless to construe sensation as a translation; sensation is immediate, the basis of all interpretation and communication, hence not itself an interpretation or communication.⁷

There is no dualism between my body and me. It is inconceivable from an existential viewpoint. There is no dualism in the intersubjective.

It is this particular mode of existence which exists between persons, this intimacy which Marcel describes as the unity we have with other selves is *disponibilit e* or disposability, openness, permeability to the other, spiritual availability. This is a psychological connection between the persons involved.

Marcel expands the perspective of the capacity to be inspired through the other to a dimension beyond that which Merleau-Ponty offers. It seems an essential dimension in the field of psychology, particularly in the area of the current research, to develop this ineffable sensing. Being is in itself indefinable but manifests through the pathways of embodied subjectivity, as in expressive conduct. But there is another dimension that calls for further clarification, that is, it is still mysterious. It rests in the field of what Marcel calls a metaproblematic or a mystery:

...a mystery gives off a certain light which is not that of the understanding, but which in a metaphysical sense, encourages the bourgeoning of the understanding as the sun encourages the growth of a tree or the blooming of a flower.⁸

The metaproblematic is best described as in opposition to the problematic. It is a sort of void in knowledge that cannot be filled by an adjustment in linguistics or by a lack of knowledge in scientific principle. It is an aspect of our experience that is inexpressible. Marcel points toward understanding inspired experiences as a facet of the interpersonal, as *permeability* and *reverberation*, a resonance. These two terms open up another field for exploration and at the same time stress the magnetic flow between those involved. It is a dimension of sonority. The permeability leaves one open through a certain "incohesion," a less dense dimension. This quality of being less dense corresponds with openness in attitude and the flow between those involved sets up the quality of resonance. This also speaks to a certain contagious mode of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm approaches a vital perspective or attitude. It conveys a sense of living quality to interpersonal communion, of inspired co-existence. This also has a motivational feeling; to be enthused is to be engaged, to be excited, to be involved. But how can we understand the term enthusiasm in a psychological sense? What does this mean in interpersonal relationships? Surely it describes a structure already existing in our everyday lives whereby we find ourselves being energetically oriented, excited or moved into participation by others who share in our projects, ideas or aspirations, this common participation means we are actually self-involved. It matters to *Dasein* (Heidegger). This can be described as an inspiration/aspiration dialectic. There is a subtle connection here that is important. To be inspired

there are certain cases in which one aspires to be what one considers a higher motivational dimension. Perhaps these are connected with the push or pull theories of motivation that are a deficient mode of explanation in the field of traditional psychology.

Humanistic Psychology

Abraham H. Maslow has extended the motivational field to include what we are speaking about in terms of “metamotivation.” Metamotivation is experienced by the person who is gratified in all basic needs, *belongingness, affection, respect, self-esteem* and who is open to motivation by higher needs, “Being-values.” These values are the ultimate, the ineffable, beauty, truth, devotion. “The characteristics of being are also the values of being.”⁹ They are the fully human dimensions of human possibilities. These values come into play among the psychologically healthy person who is open to existential choice. It is the unitative style of consciousness, a letting be for the expression of the intrinsic nature of things, the unveiling of an essence. Maslow’s metamotivation speaks to the creative attitude, to the areas of knowledge and experience that have the least quality of denseness, the poetic, the artistic. It is in this metamotivational aspect that Marcel’s permeability and reverberation seem most at home. Maslow is looking into an area of healthy persons, offering not only a way of understanding what is happening now but pointing to a direction of where one might move to expand and actualize possibilities for freer and more open circumstances which promote healthy attitudes through creative and self-chosen, mutually inspired living situations. This is a new way of seeing ordinary everyday people as those who are living out their most fulfilling possibilities and who are embodying what they believe, there is a consistency between what they say, what they believe and what they do. They are embodied values of the highest order. Maslow expands the purposefulness of our activities to being caught up in them, swept away by them or surrendering oneself over to that which calls to one. It is a discovery rather than a fate or destiny:

Here one feels more the element of duty, obligation, or responsibility, of being compelled helplessly to respond no matter what one was planning to do, or wished to do. It is more “I must, I have to, I am compelled” than “I want to.”¹⁰

In this context Maslow also introduces *synergy*. Acts which permit the full development of the person and which are at the same time for the good of the group are said to be high in synergy. Those that are for the “individual only” are said to be low in synergy. This is a way of looking at the cohesiveness of the group, of looking to whether or not it is a communally satisfying living situation for the people involved in its constitution. What we are looking toward is a place where people can live out their various and

self-chosen life styles, values and at the same time, provide an existentially satisfying and mutually inspiring environment which fosters the development of all our fully human possibilities. Many of these mini-environments are available to various small groups of people who are drawn together for a common cause. Mutual enlightenment: inspired co-existence is the full expanse of these values. Now that we have looked to the height dimension of motives, there is another group of investigators and theory builders who look to the depths.

Depth Psychology

James Hillman begins with an imaginative psychology. We are to look for a poetic basis of mind, the soul as imagination. Psychology is soul-making. Psychology of soul-making is Carl Jung's process of individuation. One finds through the myths one lives out the archetypal roots of existence, finding a way to link up with the wholeness of being in its most diverse aspects. "By *soul* I mean, first of all, a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself."¹¹ The archetypal perspective from the point of depth psychology fosters the attempt to deepen and to intensify experience since archetypes are the, "*deepest patterns of psychic functioning*."¹² We are engaged in the act of personifying. Personifying is a way of being-in-the-world and experiencing the world as a psychological field, where persons are given with events, so that events are experiences that touch us, move us, appeal to us. This is Jung's Theory of Synchronicity as an acausal principle of action. What is interesting here are the experiences that touch us, move us and appeal to us. The personifying act as an ensouling by tradition is a necessary mode of understanding the world while being in it. This act is a way of admitting the many and multi-various modes of existence, which lie in archetypal images in the unconscious into existence and giving them space by which to manifest. It is this imagining things in a personal form by which they find an avenue of living to reach the heart, to touch us, to move us. Words are seen as charged with affect, with emotive meaning. Again we touch upon the power of the word to transform.

For Hillman, words are angels in a sense, because they are the carriers of soul between people. It is in the community of speech that we tell our stories and create histories together. In telling one's story one speaks of the others who have made them be. Lives could not be told without including the others with whom one's personal meaning is mutually embedded:

This aspect of the word transcends their nominalistic definitions and contexts and evokes in our souls a universal resonance. Without the inherence of soul in words, speech would not move us, words would not provide forms for carrying our lives and giving sense to our deaths.¹³

We live in a psychological nexus of meanings by which we unfold the ultimate meanings of life and live out their multi-dimensional and perspectival *personae* in life. We tell the story of soul-making by the process of living out mythical themes in a metaphorical existence. Hillman says that by the process of individuation we give full play to each of the “multiple-personality images” in each theme. We are all characters, all personalities and only by providing a “psychological inner space” for their manifestation and affirmation may we be called to take responsibility for the meanings and the actions of life. This is done by an imaginal process. It is by allowing the inhumane this psychological freedom in the imaginal process, as well as the humane, that our inhumanity can be tamed by dreaming. We could speak of it as imaginal psychodrama. In this process of individuation, room is given for the inhuman qualities of humanity. Only by allowing them to speak are we able to tame them, to take from them the power to erupt unguided and to overpower the humane, to make themselves manifest in pathology. For Hillman, this is the road to understanding pathological conditions. Our imaginations are the roads that take us to the heart of the power structures of mental illness. But it is also the road out of this same situation by understanding these demands by the soul to be heard. It is asking for a creative space by which we can explore our depths and give voice to the most complex and infinite richness of soul possibilities, the longing of and for *anima*.

Dialogal Existentialism

As a Dialogal Existentialist, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy speaks particularly to the subject matter: the power to respond in an authentic mode to the address by another. “The right words, i.e., ‘names,’ guarantees responsiveness. Responsiveness is the lying open for being empowered.”¹⁴ It is in the magic of naming that one first becomes addressed, to be called out, to respond. An appeal is made to the openness of the other through the power of the name and because, “*The name is the right address of a person under which he or she will respond.* The original meaning of language was this very fact that it could be used to make people respond.”¹⁵ It is our name that gives us orientation; the disintegration of a society begins with a depletion of the meaning of the words and names on which it has been founded. Our names are the avenues by which we may be appealed to and the disintegration of the names brings disintegration of the orientation. “Because we need orientation, we wait for our soul to call upon our name.”¹⁶ The point is that the name is not a concept, a classification nor a metaphor for existence. Its power is exclusively used between you and me, it is personal. It is in the strengthening of the personality; it is through this soul path that we are open to the appeal that we are open to inspired co-existence, that we are given direction, orientation, purpose and destiny. It is this naming power and the call of our soul upon our name that gives us the courage to be, to be the traveler or to be on the path. Here is the possibility

for being the participant in inspired co-existence. Rosenstock-Huessy speaks of the unanimity which resides in our powers to transform one another, to carry one another forward in the face of the possibility of change, it is the creative dimension of soul-making, of everyday living for which we become responsible in our efforts to transform the world, to make each other be, for each new generation which comes forward to respond to the call. Each generation must find new ways to inspire a regeneration of values. Each person has a calling:

For a person is a man who responds with his whole heart to his calling. And any element of the universe that whispers to a human being, “respond lest I die,” calls forth this man personally to his human destiny.¹⁷

For Rosenstock-Huessy, the mind is the energy saver; the Ego and the soul are the investor and the savior, the pathway through which the power of an authorized name flows. It is the mind or Ego of contemporary psychology that blocks the flow of creative speech that guarantees each person an orientation. Again we see the open quality, the less dense attitude or atmosphere. It is this inherent power of naming which keeps calling, which describes Heidegger’s call to authenticity, makes sense out of Merleau-Ponty’s embodied subjectivity, which provides the resonance of Marcel’s interpersonal communion, which lets the flowering of Hillman’s multi-mythopoetic personalities emerge. It is this inspired co-existence that appears to rest at the base that creates the world anew for each of us each day. We need to investigate the conditions under which this phenomenon manifests the qualities that have been described. Through the community of speech and the power of the soul, the capacity to surpass mortal fears and to remain at unity through transformation and change, we must look at this communal spirit which we call: mutual enlightenment: inspired co-existence. The infinite appeal of the name that creates the dimension of unanimity is central to this concern, “To speak means to believe in unanimity.”¹⁸

Notes

- 1) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 344-345.
- 2) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior*, trans., preface Alden L. Fisher, foreword John Wild, foreword to the second French edition, Alphonse De Waelhens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 209.
- 3) Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, II (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 553.

- 4) William A. Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1972), p. 262.
- 5) *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.
- 6) Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity*, trans., intro. Robert Rosthal (New York: The Noonday Press, 1970), p. 20.
- 7) *Ibid.*, p. 25. Sensation is not an affection or impression. It is an action.
- 8) *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 9) Abraham H. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, preface Bertha G. Maslow, intro., Henry Geiger (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 133.
- 10) *Ibid.*, p. 303.
- 11) James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. x.
- 12) *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
- 13) *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 14) Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *I Am An Impure Thinker*, trans., intro. Freya von Moltke and Clinton C. Gardner, foreword W. H. Auden (Norwich: Argo Books, Inc., 1970), p. 42.
- 15) *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 16) *Ibid.*, p. 43. There is a difference between word and name.
- 17) *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- 18) Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Speech and Reality*, intro. Clinton C. Gardner (Norwich: Argo Books, Inc., 1970), pp. 160-161.

