

Perspectives

The Journal of the
Human Science Institute



Volume 1, Number 1

June 2016

Human Science Perspectives

Volume 1, Number 1 (2016)

Table of Contents

Letter from the Editor

Introducing Human Science Perspectives – Geoffrey A Thompson

Introduction

A Human Science Approach to Engaging in Transformational Social Change – JoAnn McAllister

Research

Working in Ways that Do No Harm: Mindful Engagement in Social and Environmental Justice – Wendy Wood and Thais Mazur

Complex Subjectivity Revealed through Art and Human Science – Geoffrey A Thompson

Articles

Human Science and Being and Intellectual – James Smith

Introducing Human Science Perspectives: Letter from the Editor

June 6th, 2016

Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Human Science Perspectives* (HSP), the Journal of the Human Science Institute (HSI). The first issue includes presentation selections given at the first HSI conference in September 2015 in Park City, Utah. The journal was conceived during the founding of HSI with the aim to reflect the core values listed in the mission statement:

The Human Science Institute is a transdisciplinary learning community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to creating a humane and ecologically sustainable global future through education and research. Founded by Human Science scholars, researchers, students, and professionals, HSI supports the work of those responding to the challenges of our times by promoting a transdisciplinary framework that respects the multiplicity of views and ways of knowing in our diverse global community.

HSP provides a forum for supporting and disseminating transdisciplinary scholarship in the form of original research, theoretical papers, viewpoints, engaged practices and news regarding the Human Science community. Human Science is a somewhat dispersed field, which has been invigorated by an increased urgency to apply epistemology in ways that implement and sustain actions for a more humane and compassionate world. This urgency is in part a response to seeing local and global events, which increasingly rip individuals, groups, nations and cultures apart from every conceivable conflict. These conflicts are often located in difference with devastating consequences. Appiah's (2006) concept of *cosmopolitanism* aptly speaks to this issue. Cosmopolitanism encapsulates human relations of self and other as a humanistic bond, one accepting of difference in association within the rubric: "citizen of the world". Cosmopolitanism posits: 1) Each person has an ethical responsibility, which means having obligation to others, and 2) "[We] take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance" (Appiah, 2006, p. xv).

Human Science Briefly

Broadly speaking the human sciences can be described as the study of the understanding of what it means to be human, focusing attention on the human capacities of self-reflection, agency, intentionality and purpose. Knowledge and understanding are increasingly sought through diverse lines of inquiry reflecting present complexity, in order to forge links to facilitate sustainable and compassionate action in the world. This approach empowers epistemology informed by an ethical humanistic explication and

action, to promote more humane, just and compassionate acts. Understanding extends from reflection on the intrapsychic self and the intersubjectivity of self and others to all other facets of human relationships, for example with other living things, inanimate objects, systems, including social and political, symbolic forms such as art, artifacts, culture, and the ecology of life on planet earth and beyond.

It is a project that has epistemological roots in antiquity but more recently derived from the Renaissance, with the original humanistic emphasis, which has more or less continued into the modern era. With the rise of natural science in the nineteenth century and the wrestling between the new field of psychology and philosophy, Wilhelm Dilthey (1976) delineated *Geisteswissenschaften* (human science) to reclaim the complexity of human lived experience, intentionality, and consciousness from a purely reductive scientific paradigm. Smith (1997) described *Geisteswissenschaften* as: “the sciences of mind or human spirit” (p. 516), which seeks *verstehen* (understanding), rather than the precision demanded from the causal scientific method. Polkinghorne (1994) reiterated Dilthey’s belief that: “the study of the human realm required hermeneutic or interpretive methods in order to disclose or understand (*verstehen*) the meaning of and the reasons for human expressions and actions” (p. 107). This context, not always scientifically clear and sometimes murky, by necessity must include attention to human agency and freedom (Bakker, 1999) and the poetic nature of human expression in defiance of pure rationality (van Manen, 1990). Qualitative modes of inquiry are not in opposition to natural science, rather they seek to build upon empiricism in order to ensure a holistic reflection of the complexity of human experience. Understanding in Human Science is pivotally related to empathy and in particular empathy-in-context, which includes the world-in-context, with each distinct temporal dimension. These must be considered in relation to meaningmaking

and empathic interpretation: “This is not an introverted and psychologising intuition; rather it is directed towards the exterior, towards the world and socio-historical processes (Nowak, 2011, pp. 310-311).

Human Science in recent years has had strong links to phenomenology and has informed humanistic psychology and the goal to recover the person, in its main branches of existential, transpersonal, person-centered, and phenomenological (Aanstoos, 1994; van Manen, 1990; Giorgi, 1970; May, 1980; Taylor, 1999). More recent developments have reasserted the complexity of self and debated identity as a fixed entity to understand the multiple aspects of self in context of multiplicity and alterity, yielded by postmodern realities (West, 1992). One reality included the pervasive shadow of fragmentation that has robbed the individual the progressive gains of freedom promised under modernity (Aronowitz, 1992). The “I” of individual identity may be irreducible but it: “remains uncertain of itself, precisely because of its dependence on the body and on the multiplicity of social relations. Group life is inevitably the home of individual identity” (Aronowitz, p. 94).

Nancy (2015) takes this farther: “Identity is an appropriating event of some ‘one’ (personal or collective)” (p. 42). Identity is dispersed, unstable and constantly re-made, yet the subject can be separate from this flux: “[T]he true consistency of a subject is the

overcoming at every moment of its identifiable identity” (Nancy, p. 42). A sophisticated understanding of difference, viewed within the imperative of an empathic and compassionate acceptance, requires courage to be able to confront some prescient global challenges (Appiah, 2008). Difference can therefore be recast from the negative reading, to one with the substance of being or: “positively different” (Duran, 2001, p.11).

Human Science seeks to explore the essence and nuance of human experience, suspending preconceived concepts and prescribed hypotheses, encouraging multiple narratives to emerge. It is embedded in the humanities and social sciences and embraces diverse approaches, notably across a wide range of qualitative research methods, from phenomenology, ethnography and action research to heuristic and narrative inquiry (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2005). The sensitive and empathic qualitative interpretation accepts, and indeed promotes, the subjectivity of the researcher in relation to collaboration. The other is acknowledged and alternative discourses are given space while meta-discourse is negated (Daring, 1999) and power structures are deconstructed (Foucault, 1984; 2003). Knowledge can be expanded through exploration across fields or disciplines to inform a more holistic understanding, greater than the sum of its parts. Expansion requires an openness to guard against absolute knowledge claims, which often become the absolute or universal and hence un-amenable to challenge or modification. This is vital: *“because knowledge matters: worlds are built to conform to it, and those worlds then produce ‘evidence’ of the accuracy of their own original premises”* (Minnich, 2005, p. 239. Italics in original).

Current Issue

HSP Volume I Number I contains reflections of the transdisciplinary approach of HSI, beginning in the Introduction section with a paper by Dr JoAnn McAllister, which focuses on introducing a solid foundation for contemporary Human Science. In the Research section authors Dr. Wendy Wood and Dr. Thais Mazur describe a recent research project, which investigates mindfulness as a means to ensure helpful compassionate acts do not unwittingly create harm. Dr. Geoffrey Thompson explores human subjectivity from a transdisciplinary viewpoint, examining the practice of art to counter harmful narratives. HSP concludes with two theoretical papers. Dr. K. Kevyne Baar discusses Human Science as a cogent tool for communication and James Smith articulates the necessity of integrating Human Science in understanding conflict. A common thread links each of the submissions, namely that knowledge can originate from multiple sources and then flows into informed and thoughtfully engaged social practices, which can have a real impact in the world. Each will be briefly summarized.

JoAnn McAllister provides in her paper, “A Human Science Approach to Engaging in Transformational Social Change” a welcome introduction and overview of Human Science, with the unifying theme of the desire to make the world a better place. The three domains: “knowledge, inquiry, and social theory” represent the breadth of Human Science and encompasses transformational change relevant to the wide range of a real world contexts, including ordinary lived experience, armed with praxis to address

issues of oppression and freedom. McAllister notes that praxis for social action, drawn from different epistemological traditions, is what differentiates Human Science today from previous models. The paper reflects the author's personal commitment to articulate a solid foundation or primer for Human Science, one cognizant of the rich philosophical traditions with an honesty to ensure epistemology will be accessible, and thus useful for real world engagement.

In the research paper, "Working in Ways that Do No Harm: Mindful Engagement in Social and Environmental Justice", authors Wendy Wood and Thais Mazur described their research from a Human Science perspective, using narrative research methods to advance social and environmental justice. Drawing from theory the research contextualized the co-researchers' stories within the framework of three main themes: mindfulness, compassion and altruism. These qualities provided a framework for the coresearchers to identify key values in relation to compassionate care to inform doing no harm.

In the paper, "Complex Subjectivity Revealed through Art and Human Science" I explore subjectivity through a Human Science and contemporary art perspective, to understand complex forms of subjectivity, and instances when subjectivity is denied, causing oppression and marginalization. Narratives can be harmful when embedded in power structures and prescribed for individuals, who can internalize them as a destructive self-concept, such as being mentally ill or a dangerous dissident. An example from contemporary art demonstrates an artist's powerful resistance to active oppression and abuse, while a research vignette illustrates the power of transdisciplinary research to facilitate empowerment through recovering a client's subjectivity, which had been severely distorted.

In "Human Science and Being an Intellectual" James Smith discusses Human Science perspectives in the context of truth and knowledge claims. The paper discriminates between natural and human science building on different theorists who have advanced the ethical imperative to harness intellectual thought to not only provide new insights, but also, more importantly, to shine a light and give voice to the disenfranchised and marginalized Other. This posits compassion and links knowledge to compassionate action in the world.

K. Kevyne Baar describes the interdisciplinary nature of her working method in the paper: "Walk with Me. Talk with Me. Human Science as Tool for Communication". Baar lists anthropology, sociology and history as fields of influence and her paper describes communication from a Human Science paradigm as an increasingly cogent means to tackle hatred and polarization. The paper examines instances of creating a dialogue to confront entrenched political ideology, with examples from the current 2016 US presidential race.

On Reflection

The HSP journal embraces the values and perspectives discussed in these papers and looks forward to a rich and enlightening discussion in the future. The journal's home

page lists these key points, which are all embraced in the current issue:

- Understanding how human beings make meaning of their experience, thoughts, and feelings
- Developing the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate transformative change in a complex world
- Rigorous research that is respectful of other ways of knowing and empowers communities
- Emancipatory values that advance equality, justice, and the thriving of human and natural communities

It is interesting to note on reflection Taylor's (1999) lament on the fate of humanistic psychology as it travelled through emancipatory practice in the 1960's, hailed as the "third force" in psychology, only to become marginalized. Taylor described the decline as an academic discipline to one fragmented and merged with folk psychology on the one hand and esoteric transpersonal theories on the other: "In this vein, it became distinctly anti-intellectual" (p. 9). To make matters worse, concern with socially relevant causes led the movement to be overtaken by postmodern developments in deconstruction, and cultural theories. A similar fate might be written for Human Science, fragmented and split into every conceivable field, marginalized in academia, yet determined to develop a cohesive whole, specific in its theoretical base, and viable as a potent transdisciplinary bridge.

Geoffrey Thompson, PhD
Editor, Human Science Perspectives

References

- Aanstoos, C. M. (1994). Mainstream psychology and the humanistic alternative. In F. Wertz (Ed.), *The humanistic movement: Recovering the person in psychology* (pp. 1-12). Lake Worth, FL: Gardner.
- Appiah, K. A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics on a world of strangers*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Appiah, K. A. (2008). *Experiments in ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Aronowitz, S. (1992). Reflections on identity. *October*, 61, 91-103.
- Bakker, J. I. (1999). Wilhelm Dilthey: Classical sociologist theorist. *Quarterly Journal of Ideology*, 22(1 & 2), 43-82.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). (Eds). *The Sage Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dilthey, W. (1976). *Dilthey: Selected writings*. H. P. Rickman (Ed). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Duran, J. (2001). *Worlds of knowing: Global feminist epistemologies*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- During, S. (1999). *The cultural studies reader*. (2nd Ed) (pp. 1-28). London, UK: Routledge.

- Foucault, M. (1984). Truth and power. In M. Foucault (P. Rabinow, Ed), *Foucault reader*, (pp. 51-75). New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *Abnormal: Lectures at the College De France 1974-1975*. New York, NY: Picador. (Original work published 1974-1975).
- Giorgi, A. (1970). *Psychology as a human science: A phenomenologically based approach*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- May, R. (1980). *The courage to create*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton. Retrieved from http://moe.machighway.com/~cliffor1/Site/EXSupplementalReadings_files/23692564-ROLLO-MAY-Tthe-Courage-to-Create.pdf (Original work published 1975).
- Minnich, E. (2005). *Transforming knowledge* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Nancy, J-L. (2015). *Identity: Fragments, frankness*. (F. Raffoul, Trans.). New York, NY: Fordham University Press.
- Nowak, M. (2011). The complicated history of einfuhlung. *Argument*, 1(2), 301-326.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1994). Research methodology in humanistic psychology. In F. Wertz (Ed.). In *The humanistic movement: Recovering the person in psychology* (pp. 105-128). Lake Worth, FL: Gardner.
- Taylor, E. (1999). An intellectual Renaissance of humanistic psychology. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 39(2), 7-25. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- West, C. (1992). A matter of life and death. *October*, 61, 20-32.

A Human Science Approach to Engaging in Transformational Social Change

JoAnn McAllister, PhD

Abstract

This essay outlines a framework grounded in the Human Science tradition for sensitive and engaged participation in addressing today's critical environmental and social justice challenges. Elements of this tradition – acknowledgment of multiple perspectives, appreciation of the meaning of ordinary human experience, and social theory/praxis dependent on context – are identified as essential to engaging in transformational social action. While definitions of Human Science are often vague, clarity is offered here with an emphasis on these three elements focused on understanding and responding to contemporary issues.

Keywords: Human Science, Epistemology, Transformational, Social Change, Critical Theory, Qualitative Inquiry

Introduction

In this first issue of *Human Science Perspectives*, we begin a conversation about how the Human Science Institute (HSI) can support those who are committed to creating a more humane and ecologically sustainable future. In presentations at the Institute's first conference in September, 2015, the philosophical and theoretical concepts – questions about knowledge, research methods, and social theory – that have characterized the historical Human Science conversation were highlighted in relation to facilitating transformational change. The characteristics drawn from these conceptual dialogues include: 1) an appreciation of multiple ways of knowing and diverse belief systems, 2) the use of modes of inquiry focused on understanding the meaning people attribute to their experience, and 3) a commitment to theories of change that are emancipatory and dependent on the context of people and their communities. We propose that these are also the basis of a framework for sensitive and effective engagement in contemporary environmental and social justice issues. Additionally, these concepts suggest the essential capacities of individuals and organizations that wish to participate in, or facilitate, efforts that contribute to both incremental change and cultural transformation. Given the urgency of contemporary environmental and social issues - for example, the increasing destruction of habitat and the loss of biodiversity (Wilson, E.O., 2016) and climate change and the resulting displacement and conflict in human communities (Wheeling, K., 2016) - effective short and long-term efforts are essential.

This essay offers an outline grounded in the historical Human Science conversation about knowledge, inquiry, and social theory that can support such engagement and lead to substantive and systemic change. You may ask, "Why do we need a framework?" Many of us already appreciate the multiple perspectives represented in the global community, understand that inquiry into human experience must be shaped

by an appreciation of these differences, and know that we need to act collaboratively to create meaningful and systemic change. Indeed, great strides have been made in many places ensuring basic human rights and legislating environmental protection. There are millions of individuals and thousands of organizations around the world dedicated to addressing environmental and social justice issues. Many of these work from principles very much aligned with philosophies and theories drawn from the Human Science tradition, as well as from non-Western traditions. Yet, it is often difficult to understand different viewpoints, to ask the right questions, or hear the answers, and engage in appropriate actions.

We are also aware that both domestic and global efforts have promoted, and often imposed, Western privilege-based models, strategies, and practices that have not been effective and have even caused harm. Increasingly, the work of non-profits, NGOs, philanthropic foundations, and government programs are being scrutinized. Not because of malfeasance, but because their solutions and programs are not effective and do not appear to address the root causes of problems. Initiatives that seek to respond to our 21st century challenges could benefit from an applied framework that facilitates a deeper understanding of the complexity of human experience, expressions, actions, and cultural contexts.

Our intention in founding the Human Science Institute is to provide support to scholars, practitioners, researchers, advocates, and activists – all those who want to make a difference in the world – to engage thoughtfully and effectively as change agents. We hope the conversations in *Human Science Perspectives* will highlight the importance of understanding ordinary human experience and the meaning that human beings attribute to their experience as part of effectively responding to today’s environmental and social challenges. This essay, then, is my attempt to outline a Human Science framework for transformational social action that is informed, affirmative, and strategic by weaving together the concepts of how we know, how we learn, and how we act. It will take shape only as others bring their insights and experience to these pages.

We Begin: Some Background

What is Human Science? This is the first question I am asked when I tell people “I am a Human Scientist.” It is the question my students have asked over the years even as they intuited it was the intellectual territory they needed to inhabit in order to ask their questions about what it means to be human. They wanted to understand human beings: their beliefs, behaviors, social structures, why they went to war, why some were privileged, why others were oppressed, why they despoil their world – the whole realm of human phenomena. These questions filled their imaginations, fired their curiosity, and fueled their passion to create change. I was not unlike these students when I found the Human Science degree program at Saybrook University in 1993 and “knew,” as someone engaged in environmental and social change, that I needed this approach to understanding the complexity of the human condition. What I didn’t know then and could not have told anyone was that what I needed to understand was knowledge itself if I was to understand why we believe and behave the way we do.

When I enrolled in the Human Science program the description was, we might say, aspirational instead of descriptive with the kind of student learning outcomes we now expect. But, perhaps, this is why it appealed to me as an activist and to all the

students who enrolled in the degree over the many years it was offered. I wanted to change the world and it promised to help me understand the human realm - the intersection of history, culture, philosophy, science, religion, politics, psychology, art - that is, the creations of humanity. I did not have to stay in disciplinary silos that offered thin slices of the human enterprise, but could range across the scholarly world to find the answer to my question: how could I make a difference in the world? Of course, I also did not know then that there was not an answer, but a multiplicity of answers and, even more importantly, more questions. Nonetheless, it was clear that through a Human Science lens I could ask questions about the human condition that would allow me to participate more thoughtfully in making the world a better place.

Still, we have the question: What is Human Science? It is often difficult to find a succinct definition. The origins of Human Science are to be found in the late 19th and early 20th century dialogue about the sufficiency of the methods of the natural sciences, empirical and quantitative, to shed light on questions of purely human phenomena – the world of human ideas, artifacts, and social arrangements. Donald Polkinghorne (1983) in *Methodology for the Human Sciences: Systems of Inquiry* carefully takes the reader through these historical conversations and offers as a definition that “the term *human science* (italics in the original) is used to refer to an inclusive approach to human phenomena that uses multiple systems of inquiry” (p. 288). And, as “a science which approaches questions about the human realm with an openness to its special characteristics and a willingness to let the questions inform which methods are appropriate” (p. 289). The phenomenologist van Manen (1990) describes it as a term that “collects a variety of approaches and orientations to research,” and explores “meaningful expressions of the active inner, cognitive, or spiritual life of the human being in social, historical, or practical contexts....” Then, quite simply, he summarizes, saying, “human science is the study of meaning” (p. 181).

It is not surprising that the focus of Polkinghorne and van Manen and many others writing in the human sciences and seeking to define Human Science has often been on modes of inquiry because that was the nub of the original debate with the natural sciences. That argument, which continues even today with the current emphasis on STEM education and resulting decline in support for social science and the humanities, is about methods that are appropriate to learning about human phenomena that are not amenable to measurement. These were simply described by Merleau-Ponty (1962) as the “basic experience of the world” (p. ix).

A Human Science Framework: The Essentials

While the ongoing dialogue about modes of inquiry that best reveal the meaning of our “experience of the world” is essential, the other two domains of the conversation about what is Human Science - epistemology and critical theory – are equally important. I begin with epistemology as the first step in developing a model for engagement, not only because it has been a significant concept in my own experience, but because it is central to understanding the process of inquiry and the application of theories of change.

Knowledge

For a model to be applicable to real-world conditions, the perspective of the practitioner is crucial. Our perspectives on what knowledge is, how we acquire it, what

we claim to know, and the level of authority we ascribe to our knowledge shape our view of the world. Being aware of how we distinguish between our opinions, beliefs, and the “truth” is a significant aspect of self-awareness. As an epistemological stance, these determine how we interact with and respond to others, especially to those who make different knowledge claims and hold different beliefs.

We may think that epistemology is the province of college philosophy departments, or agree with those who think it is irrelevant, but these questions are part of our daily conversation. If you are in any doubt about the ongoing relevance of philosophical dialogue, see the Stone, a New York Times forum on contemporary issues. Whenever anyone makes a knowledge claim and we say, “wait a minute; how do you know that?” we are asking the maker of the statement to provide a justification for their assertion. In essence, the evidence upon which they have based the statement. They might reply, “my father always said,” or “I read it in the New York Times.” In further discussion they may add something about the nature of the knowledge claim, or how much authority they ascribe to it, as in “just my opinion,” “medical science shows,” or “it is in the Bible.” These remarks range from information to a statement of faith and, thus, we learn what the speaker believes is “true,” and, therefore, something about their view of reality. This allows us to know if we, and the speaker, share any common ground, and, if in fact we are having a conversation, or simply talking past each other.

These kinds of questions took form in the West in the 4th century with Plato’s systematic approach to philosophical inquiry and are still essential if we are to work with individuals, communities, or nations with different “truths.” Unfortunately, too few of us routinely examine our own opinions and beliefs and ask the question, “How do I know that?” If we propose to support the process of change, the questioning of one’s own knowledge claims might be the most effective first step.

How should we begin to scrutinize our own epistemological stance and that of others as we engage in collaborative work or in research necessary to respond to social issues? Polkinghorne (1986) proposed that we have moved from the era of the Enlightenment epistemological conversation focused on the search for the unchanging and permanent to the era of the “epistemic conversation.” Epistemic conversations, he writes, reflect “a) an awareness of the temporal and conditional context of knowledge, b) a focus on surface phenomena rather than...laws and rules, and c) an attempt to broaden knowledge goals to include those that undergird human wisdom as well as those that supply technical expertise” (p. 26). Interestingly, this conversational paradigm suggests a protocol to follow in exploring human experience and the knowledge claims embedded in our stories. It also offers a guide to revealing our own perspectives, which, perhaps, is best done before we begin our conversation with others.

An approach to knowledge based on these concepts suggests that 1) conversation is located in an historical context, 2) that individuals who share a common tradition are likely to agree about the purpose of the conversation, 3) that knowledge is not certain since it changes as context changes, and 4) that one’s opinion, beliefs, and “truths” are relative to context. According to Salner (1986), taking such a relativistic stance toward knowledge claims requires an advanced level of cognitive development. Citing the work of Kohlberg (1969), Perry (1970), and Kitchener (1983) on levels of cognitive development, Salner proposes that conducting Human Science research as constructed by Polkinghorne (1983) requires Perry’s third stage of cognitive development “contextual

relativism” (Salner, p. 130). This is a level of cognitive competency, Salner writes that indicates “increased awareness of the importance of contexts in defining truth and value” (p. 130). For example, in scrutinizing one’s own perspective it would include a review of one’s context – where we came from, what were our circumstances and those of our antecedents, how we acquired our knowledge, and how what we know and believe has changed as our context has changed over time. Since these factors shape our approach to theory, research, and practice, it is clear that epistemological questions and our own epistemic stance are central to participating in transformational change.

I offer significantly less reflection on the next two aspects - inquiry and praxis - of a Human Science framework here, because, as I noted above, my experience has challenged my own epistemological stance significantly. Furthermore, it seems that these two categories require multiple voices and examples from practice to become fully articulated. So, the comments below only constitute a place to start. We hope to have project-based examples of appropriate modes of inquiry and applied theory in future issues of the journal.

Inquiry

In the decades long exploration of how to understand the subjective and intersubjective human realm, distinctive approaches to research have been emerged out of this understanding of the temporal and contextual nature of human experience. I prefer the term inquiry instead of research as it seems to be more compatible with the reflective character of qualitative approaches to investigating phenomena, especially to those methods that are iterative and interpretive. It is important to note, as Polkinghorne (1983) did, that these approaches are not put forward as an alternative to natural science, but as alternate ways of knowing. These are additive putting flesh on empirically identified bones and providing important information about context and meaning that are not accessible through quantitative measures. The debate about research method has never been about replacing natural science, but utilizing the right method for the question. As Polkinghorne (1983) reminds us it is the “willingness to let the questions inform which methods are appropriate” that is important (p. 289).

Transformational change agents need to appreciate and integrate knowledge from the natural sciences to grasp the realities of the myriad issues that impact human beings and the natural world. We need the explanation of physical phenomena that can be gained through researchers in the fields of conservation biology, oceanography, ecology, and other relevant natural science disciplines and their methods of observation and experiment. Integrated with qualitative inquiries that tell us about the context of problems and the meaning of specific human and ecological conditions leads to the design of more appropriate and effective strategies for creating positive change. Multiple modes of inquiry and their integration as in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary formats are useful but given the complexity of 21st century problems a transdisciplinary perspective is even more important. Transdisciplinary, as used in the HSI mission statement, calls for new ways of seeing that transcend disciplinary lenses. Creating new ways to understand our world and our behavior are increasingly important in spite of our insular predilections. Arne Collen (1990) gave us a head start on how this might come about, stating that:

My general thesis is that a more tactful and constructive approach is to advance a human science that draws and thrives on a multiplicity of sciences

and disciplines. By achieving a transdisciplinary science, we would deepen our understanding of human beings, develop more useful methodologies, construct more fruitful theories, and address the major problems of our times. We must pursue human science in a cooperative, integrative, and transdisciplinary fashion. (p. 17)

We now have a plethora of more useful methodologies. Phenomenology pays attention to the “lived experience” of human beings, Hermeneutics calls on the researcher to integrate their own reflections in creating a shared interpretation, while narrative researchers know the value of understanding their own story so that they can listen more attentively to their study participants. Human Science researchers paying attention to the everyday experience of people and the meaning they ascribe to their experience can contribute immensely to creating more responsive strategies and programs for change.

Praxis/Practice

From the beginning the conversation about how to understand the lived experience of human beings had an emancipatory aspect, that is, how to free people. While the analyses of power and oppression varied, there was the intent to contribute to human freedom. Critical theorists and those in the fields of critical social sciences and cultural criticism have responded to the plethora of modern day social ills with a variety of analytical perspectives and theoretical prescriptions. These are generally active processes of theory and action, or praxis as described by Gadamer (1979):

As we think about what we want to achieve, we alter the way we might achieve that. As we think about the way we might go about something, we change what we might aim at. There is a continual interplay between ends and means. In just the same way there is a continual interplay between thought and action. This process involves interpretation, understanding and application in 'one unified process.' (275)

Gadamer (1979) highlights the dynamic quality that should characterize the process of acting for change and illustrates the reason for using the word transformational rather than transformative in referring to change. These terms have been used increasingly in the fields of adult learning theory, particularly as influenced by Mezirow (2000), and in organizational development (Gass, 2013; Henderson, 2002). While often used interchangeably, some dictionaries note differences in their application. Transformational seems to carry the idea of a process whereas transformative seems more applicable to the level of change proposed or to an event that has been transformative. In both cases the change is described as radical changing basic characteristics of an individual, organization, or culture. I favor transformational to describe an approach to facilitating change that may, indeed, be transformative, but that designation is one that should be applied by those who experience such change. Given our history of imposing visions of change upon others this nuance seems indicated and may remind us to be in a continuing dialogue not only with those we seek to serve, but also with our own expectations and desired outcomes.

Conclusion

This approach to social change within a Human Science framework is an initial offering in the development of a practical guide to informed, affirmative, and strategic action in the world whether one is an activist, advocate, educator, researcher, staff, or volunteer with an organization taking on the challenge of today's critical issues. It highlights what has been meaningful to me as I continue to consider how we can contribute to the vision of a more humane and ecologically sustainable world. The interplay of these three conceptual domains that constitute the Human Science conversation - knowing, understanding, and emancipatory theory and action - can offer a useful model and strategic tool kit for responding to complex environmental and social challenges.

In ending his discussion of the Human Science conversation, Polkinghorne (1986) says that in this era of epistemic conversations, the "answers to the question 'What is human science?' will ultimately emerge" (p. 30). So, I conclude with my working (and in process) definition of Human Science, especially focused on facilitating transformational social change.

Human Science is a transdisciplinary approach to understanding ordinary human experience and the meaning that human beings attribute to their experience that offers a critique of human thoughts and activities through the experience of those harmed by these, whether they are the human or non-human inhabitants of our world, and proposes restorative actions that are sensitive to this knowledge.

In succeeding issues of *Human Science Perspectives* these concepts will be expanded. Please join the conversation and offer your insights in developing a framework that will support the creation of the ecologically sustainable and humane future that we all desire.

References

- Collen, A. (1990). Advancing Human Science, *Saybrook Review*, 8 (1), 17-39.
- E.O. Wilson Foundation. <http://eowilsonfoundation.org/>
- Gadamer, H. G. (1979). *Truth and Method*. London, UK: Sheed and Ward. Retrieved from: <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-praxis.htm>.
- Gass, R. (2013). What is transformational change? Retrieved from: <http://transform.transformativchange.org/2010/06/robertgass>.
- Henderson, G. M. (2002). Transformative learning as a condition for transformational change in organizations. *Human Resource Development Review*, 1 (2), 186-214.
- Kitchener, K.S. (1983). Cognition, metacognition and epistemic cognition: A three-level model of cognitive processing. *Human Development*, 26, 222-232.
- Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive development approach to socialization. In D. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research*, 347 – 480. Chicago: Rand McNally.

- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *The phenomenology of perception*. (C. Smith, Trans.). London, UK: Routledge.
- Mezirow, J., and Associates. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical reflection on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Perry, W. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1986). Changing conversations about Human Science. *Saybrook Review*, 6 (1), 1-32.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1983). *Methodology for the human sciences: Systems of inquiry*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Salner, M. (1986). The relationship of naïve epistemology to formal epistemology: Implications for teaching Human Science methodology. *Methods*, 1 (1), 125-157.
- Smith, M. K. (1999, 2011). 'What is praxis?' in *the encyclopaedia of informal education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-praxis.htm>.
- The Stone. <http://www.thestonereader.com>.
- van Manen. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human Science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York, NY: New York State University Press.
- Wheeling, K. (2016). Research spotlight: Colin Kelley. Pacific Standard Retrieved from: <https://psmag.com/research-spotlight-colin-kelley-25501cd86839#.272gox3lu>
- Wilson, E.O. (2016). *Half the earth: Our planet's fight for life*. New York: Norton & Co.
- Bio: JoAnn McAllister, PhD, is the President/CEO of the Human Science Institute, the former Director of the Human Science degree program at Saybrook University, co-author of *Doing Democracy: the MAP Model of Social Movements* (2001) and a program development/evaluation consultant, narrative researcher, and volunteer at the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory. Send her your comments at: jmcallister@humanscienceinstitute.org.
- Citation: McAllister, J. (2016). A Human Science framework for transformational social change. *Human Science Perspectives*, Vol. 1 (1).

Working in Ways that Do No Harm: Mindful Engagement in Social and Environmental Justice

Wendy Wood, PhD and Thaïs Mazur, PhD

Abstract

Stories inherently inform the process of global humanitarian and environmental efforts and help us to make sense of our actions, choices, and how we navigate and respond in our work. Using a narrative approach to inquiry grounded in Human Science, the co-researchers explored the phenomenon of ‘do no harm’ and engagement in relationship to social and environmental justice. The researchers argue that integrating the qualities of mindfulness, compassion and altruism are central to meaningful engagement and important to critical thinking and action related to complex problems.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the understanding and thinking of the participants as they approach their work in ways that ‘do no harm.’ The researchers elicited stories and asked questions about the participants’ methods and practices of engagement in their respective work. They explored the participants’ application of mindfulness and compassion; what actions to ensure the emotional safety of those with whom they work; and what is required for sustainable change to occur as a result of their work. Themes emerged from the narrative analysis of the participants’ collective stories and response to questions asked by the researchers. The themes included: (a) mindfulness as an essential tool; (b) compassion as a path to insight and altruism; (c) the critical nature of language; (d) agency and authenticity; (e) the need for equality; and (f) acting from a place of love and joy.

As a result of the research findings, the authors are proposing a theory of *mindful engagement through action* that supports working in ways that do no harm integrating altruism and compassionate action using the principles of mindfulness, compassion, agency, authenticity, equality, critical use of language, love, and joy as a context to meaningful engagement.

Keywords: engagement, mindfulness, compassion, altruism, agency, authenticity, equality, narrative, do no harm.

Introduction

Stories inherently inform the process of engagement and help us make sense of our actions, choices, and how we navigate and respond in our work. Using a narrative approach to inquiry, the researchers explored the phenomenon of the qualities of meaningful engagement in relationship to social and environmental justice. The authors argue that integrating the qualities of mindfulness, compassion, and altruism are central to meaningful engagement and important to support critical thinking and action related to complex problems.

Five people participated in the research, working in peacebuilding; environmental, social justice; and global humanitarian efforts. The narratives of these people inspire, provide insight, and deepen our understanding of what it means to engage in ways that are mindful, compassionate, and insure the emotional and physical safety of those with whom they work.

This quality of engagement can be experienced through mindfulness, increasing attention and supporting conscious choices in how one engages in work (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Reid, 2009; Yerxa, 1993). Martin (2005) and Yerxa (1993) both have commented that mindfulness creates a process of conscious participation and of being fully connected to one's experience and understanding of the world. These authors agree with Frank (2011) that humanitarian work requires critical reflection to transcend traditional ways of working in humanitarian and environmental protection efforts.

This study investigates the participants experience with respect to the ways in which they engage that are mindful, meaningful, compassionate, and effective. The researchers elicited stories and asked questions about the participants' methods and practices of engagement and explored their understanding of mindfulness and compassion, steps they have taken to ensure the emotional safety of those they work with, and approaches to engagement required for sustainable change to occur as a result of their work.

The following questions were asked of the participants:

- 1) In what ways might you utilize mindfulness and compassionate action to engage in your work?
- 2) What does it mean to work in ways that 'do no harm?'
- 3) What steps or practices are required to insure the emotional safety of those you work with?
- 4) What approaches to engagement are required for sustainable change to occur in your work?

The researchers consider their work to represent equal authorship.

Review of Literature

The review of the literature was used to determine what is known about the subject and to develop more defined and insightful questions in the fields of interests associated with this topic. The review discovered an array of scholarly publications as well as both classic and contemporary literature. The three primary areas of the review of literature included mindfulness, compassion, and altruism.

Mindfulness

In English, mindfulness translates from the Pali word *sati* into several meanings, including bare attention, intentness of mind, wakefulness of mind, and alertness of mind (Gunaratana, 2002). The practice of mindfulness is presence of mind, attentiveness to the present, rather than the memory of the past (Bodhi, 2000). Thera (1998) identified four foundations of mindfulness practice: body, feelings, consciousness, and mental thoughts— thoughts related to images or ideas that shape the belief and actions of an individual.

The essential definition of mindfulness is seeing and experiencing each moment as it arrives, as it is, and for what it is. Mindfulness can be viewed as a quality of human consciousness that hones the acceptance and awareness of lived experience (Goleman, 2003). Mindfulness is a practice to enhance attention to the constant stream of life events in ways that allow us to move through life in a gentler and kinder way (Hudson, 1991). Research suggests that being mindful increases engagement with the present moment and allows for a clear understanding of how thoughts and emotions can impact the ways in which we respond to potentially challenging experiences (Mazur, 2013).

Our perception of experience can be altered through mindful awareness of states, thoughts, and images. These include the sensory experience of the body and the development of such qualities as energy, tranquility, and equanimity (Nanamoli & Bodhi, 2001). In addition, the experiences of (a) intention to pay attention to momentary experience; (b) distinction from normal, everyday modes of consciousness; (c) clear focus on aspects of moment-to-moment experience; (d) sustained moment-to-moment awareness of immediate experience; and (e) an attitude of openness, acceptance, kindness, curiosity, and patience are included (Grossman, 2008).

To be fully mindful, one must bring complete attention to the moment-to-moment experience of thoughts, body sensations, and emotional experiences. Two veteran meditation teachers defined mindfulness as:

Mindfulness means seeing how things are, directly and immediately seeing for oneself that which is present and true. It has a quality of fullness and impeccability to it, a bringing of our whole heart and mind, our full attention, to each moment. (Goldstein & Kornfield, 1987, p. 62)

Hanh (1991) spoke about the present moment as the “mind of the river. There is nothing to chase after” (p. 132). Meditation scholars and psychologists agree that self-examination through the practice of mindfulness can quiet the mind and allow deeper

insight into emotional patterns that cause suffering and block one's relationship to happiness and peacefulness (Fishman, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Kamalshila, 1996; Kornfield, 2008; Martin, 1999; Mollica, 2006; Neff, 2003; Santorelli, 1999; Welwood, 2000).

Research has shown that cultivating mindfulness is intricately linked to our understanding of suffering. Suffering ultimately causes feelings of fear, doubt, confusion, disappointment, and depression. However, these feelings are balanced by an inner realization that suffering can lead to experiences that are positive and create feelings such as joy and satisfaction (Mazur, 2013). Joan Halifax (2008), suggested that mindfulness can assist in developing a way of working with suffering "rooted in the raw and honest self-observation, and a view of reality that actualizes our awareness, equanimity, and compassion in seamless responsiveness to the world" (p. 32).

The theory of mindfulness views the personal and the global experience as a whole (Macy & Brown, 1998). Senior meditation teachers and scholars teach that meditation creates a deep state of awareness that can transcend the personal to the universal (Boyce, 2011; Chödrön, 2003, Hanh, 1987; Kornfield, 2001; Wilber, 2007). Ladner (2004) wrote:

By developing deep, powerful feelings of compassionate connection with others we can learn to live meaningful and joyful lives. Only such feelings can help us to learn experientially how to work for meaningful causes and give of ourselves without becoming exhausted or burnt out-such feelings of joyful compassion teach us how taking care of others is actually a supreme method for taking care of ourselves. (p. 126)

Within the theory of mindfulness, events and transitions of the world that lead to trauma and chaos are not seen as separate from the individual but as the collective whole of the world experience (Macy & Brown, 1998; Rothberg, 2006). Suffering is seen as an expression of the personal and the collective suffering of all living beings; therefore, mindfulness theory upholds that our thoughts and actions create our perception of the world (Hanh, 1987; Macy & Brown, 1998).

The skills of listening, stillness, and patience create an abundance of love and compassion, not just for ourselves, but for the world (Packer, 2001). From the point of view of Buddhist theory, mindfulness is a benevolent practice that can heal the collective human disease of suffering and imbalance (Dalai Lama, 2001). This applies equally to every human in a universal sense and the quality of mind and healing the self is directly related to healing the world. Kabat-Zinn (2005) stated:

In some vein, if we wish for greater wisdom and kindness in the world, perhaps we could start inhabiting our own body with some degree of kindness and wisdom, even for one moment just accepting ourselves as we are with kindness and compassion rather than forcing ourselves to conform to some impossible ideal. The world would immediately be different. If we wish to make a true difference in this world, perhaps we must first learn how to stand in relationship to our own lines and our own knowing or at least learn along the way, which always amounts to the same thing, since the world does not wait for us but is unfolding along with us in intimate reciprocity. (p. 135)

The connection between the personal and the collective is an essential component of mindfulness that dissolves one's perception of isolation and expands one's experience in the world as being part of a whole (Mazur, 2013). Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) explained how mindfulness can transform suffering:

In intense suffering, you feel a kind of relief, and joy within yourself because you know that you are an instrument of compassion. Understanding such intense suffering and realizing compassion in the midst of it, you become a joyful person, even if your life is very hard. (p. 125)

The Nature of Compassion and Altruism

Throughout the history of philosophical and ethical ideas, the question of caring for others and the meaning of compassion has been considered and debated as ancient, modern, and post-modern thinkers have advanced an ethic of virtue, care, and altruism. Aristotle (as cited in Curzer, 2007) advocated for *philein*—interpreted as love, friendly feeling, or friendly affection. Curzer (2007) explained, “We may describe *to philein* towards anyone as wishing for him what you believe to be good things, not for your own sake but for his, and being inclined, so far as you can, to bring these things about” (p. 221). Aristotle (as cited in Nussbaum, 1996) also thought that the precursor for compassion, or *eleos* in Greek, was the witness of suffering of others. In the original Buddhist text, compassion is translated as the trembling or quivering of the heart in response to pain or suffering (Salzberg, 1997). Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg (1997) viewed compassion as a powerful force opening a conscious way of being that can transform lives and make a difference in the world.

In the West, compassion is mainly conceptualized in terms of *compassion for others*. As defined by Webster's online dictionary, compassion (n.d.) is “the humane quality of understanding the suffering of others and wanting to do something about it.” In Eastern traditions, however, it is considered equally important to offer compassion to the self (Brach, 2003; Salzberg, 1997). Recent psychological research has suggested that individuals vary on the personality trait of self-compassion, and numerous studies suggest that self-compassion is strongly linked to psychological well being (Siegel, 2007b).

Compassion is derived from Latin and means co-suffering, or *suffering with* (Partridge, 1996). Understood as an active desire to alleviate another's suffering, compassion is thought to be a social precursor to altruism or a selfless belief in acting for the sake of others. Feldman and Kuyken (2011) described compassion as a way of thinking that recognizes pain in human experience and the development of a capacity to address that pain with kindness, empathy, equanimity, and patience.

Feldman (2005) argued that compassion could cultivate greater insight into a person's responses to adversity:

You can learn to attend to the moments when you close and contract in the face of suffering, anger, fear, or alienation. In those moments you are asked to question what difference empathy, forgiveness, patience, and tolerance would make. You cultivate your commitment to turn toward your responses of aversion, anger, or

intolerance. With mindfulness and investigation, you find in your heart the generosity and understanding that allow you to open rather than close. (pp. 141–142)

Similarly, Wallace (2007) remarked, “The proximate cause of compassion is seeing the helplessness in those overwhelmed by suffering and its causes, while also recognizing the possibility of freedom from such misery” (p. 122).

According to Marks (2007), modern understandings of compassion consider compassion’s sometimes perceived weakness as a strength, since it could be supplemented and complemented by other independent motives for serving others. Wallace (2007) suggested that what is required for altruistic engagement is mental preparation in order for the outer expression of compassion to be intricately linked to the inner expression creating a “benevolent concern for others’ well-being” (p. 122). Also focusing on the importance of *intrinsic motivation*, Reilly (2006) stated, “Compassion as an agent’s inner motivation for acting and justice as the act’s external rationale are two measure of the same act—the first indicates the good being intended by the agent and the second indicates the good being bestowed upon the recipient” (p. 26).

Despite what might appear as an inherently natural human desire for humanity to be happy and free of suffering, as believed by many scholars, philosophers, historians, and theologians, there are those who consider compassion as superficial and view it with a degree of skepticism. Tronto (1993) cautioned those who rely on compassion, care, and emotions as a way of moral development to consider the boundaries of this thinking with respect to evolving gendered norms. As a feminist scholar, Tronto was concerned about the risk of a neo-Kantian ethic of reliance on an external source such as God or universalized principles with respect to moral conduct. Ethical theorist, Ayn Rand (as cited in Binswanger, 1988), regarded compassion as “an act of moral treason” (par. 2), if felt toward someone who was legitimately and morally at fault for causing suffering to others.

Compassion has its own distinct characteristics. Goetz, Keltner, and Simon-Thomas (2010) explained compassion as a feeling that “arises in witnessing another’s suffering and that motivates a subsequent desire to help...a general benevolent response to others, regardless of suffering or blame” (p. 352). In keeping with the teachings of the Dalai Lama (1995, 1999, 2005), Goetz et al. viewed compassion as different from empathy, “which refers to the vicarious experience of another’s emotions” (p. 360), although closely related to sympathy or sorrow for another’s pain. They also agree that compassion is clearly differentiated from love:

Where love centers on affection, the appreciation of positive attributes of the other, and the motivation to be physically and psychologically close, [compassion] responds quickly and appropriately to signals of suffering and is not necessarily accompanied or preceded by love. (Goetz et al., 2010, p. 360-361)

Armstrong (2010) described compassion as “an attitude of principled, consistent altruism” (p. 9) toward all humanity, not simply for our own sake. According to Wood (2013), from a humanistic perspective, “compassionate people have developed a deep knowing of their own suffering” and “they can perceive the needs and interests of others

and infuse wisdom into their actions” (p. 38). Compassion, by its very nature, leads us toward wisdom and altruism expressed across multiple domains (Wood, 2013).

There are other empirical findings relevant to the relationship between compassion and prosocial behavior. In their analysis of a broad array of scholarly literature as well as their own research, Goetz et al. (2010) found that “compassion is neither unbounded or unconditional, [but] shaped by cost-benefit ratios” (p. 361). They suggested that the relationship of one who may act with compassion to the sufferer is an integral part of what shapes a compassionate response. Goetz et al. concluded that the ability to regulate emotions is critical to the ability to experience compassion and “includes some judgment of fairness or justice” (p. 365). Is the sufferer worthy of assistance? How important is the sufferer to the one who may offer assistance? What is the individual’s capacity and ability to manage the situation requiring compassion? There is evidence to support the idea that experiencing compassion causes changes in behavior that are both altruistic and caring and motivates one to reduce the suffering of another (Batson, 1994).

Compassion is conceptualized as “both a statelike and a traitlike tendency” (Goetz et al., 2010, p. 374), giving rise to the question as to whether it is possible to cultivate lasting states of compassion that are expressed as traits. Goetz et al. (2010) hypothesized that moral judgment and action motivated by compassion is “within a specific moral domain related to unjustified harm” and “compassion guides moral judgment and action across different moral domains” (p. 378). As Wood (2013) stated:

Compassion is not merely related to the harm and suffering of others but also to other domains such as justice, freedom from oppression, and human rights. In these contexts, compassion can be seen as an emotion that *motivates* and *elicits moral acts*. Compassion is, indeed, a profound quality. (p. 46)

Merton (1955), a Catholic Trappist monk, modern religious writer, scholar, and philosopher, wrote extensively on both contemplative and social issues. He spoke to the inherent requirements for living a compassionate and merciful life. Merton stated, “Compassion is not learned without suffering” (p. 212) and not easily attained or understood.

Method

The theoretical framework for this study is from a postmodern perspective that is meant to inform the inquiry from a human science perspective. The meta-narrative aspects of the study design take into consideration the importance of engaging in ways that reduce potential harm that may be caused by those who are working in humanitarian endeavors. Using a social constructivist view, this study seeks to understand the world in which those who engage in social and environmental justice live and work in order to make meaning of the participant’s experience to the greatest degree possible.

For studying the phenomenon of mindful engagement, the researchers utilized a qualitative narrative approach to inquiry. This approach allows for a rich exploration of each participant and their history, stories, and feelings, in order to give voice to lived experiences. This method allows for a broad and holistic context in which to study the

phenomenon of mindful engagement. Stories inherently originate from a process of engagement, making sense of our actions, choices, and how we respond to challenges. The participants' narratives bring together events from their lived experiences and their work into a cohesive whole.

The researchers used this method of inquiry to establish a reality that is grounded in the multiple contexts of the experiences of the participants as suggested by Wertz et al. (2011) and Clandinin (2007). As Ochberg (1994) suggested, it is important for the researchers to discover the deeper nature of the participants' stories. This allowed the researchers to develop a better understanding of the ways in which the participants made meaning of their actions in relationship to their work. In addition, this method guides the process to reveal the meaning and the subjective interpretation of their internal and developmental process.

The research design involved one semi-structured interview of each participant that was typically two hours in length. Questions were open ended. Respondents were asked to speak freely and express opinions. The participants waived their anonymity.

Data Analysis

Holistic narrative analysis was used for interpreting the interviews. Data analysis for this method involves descriptions, extracting themes, contents, assertions, and threads (Creswell, 2007). The researchers thoroughly reviewed the data and determined if it created an aggregated result forming a picture and a deeper understanding of the participant's experience. Both unifying and disparate themes were explored in an effort to create an understanding of emerging themes. As patterns were recognized, data was compared, conceptually distinguished, and synthesized. The data from the interviews was analyzed by examining responses made by each participant. Data was sorted in order to determine whether themes emerged.

Participant Profile

Five people participated in the study. They worked in peacebuilding, environmental and social justice, and global humanitarian efforts. Their professions are as follows: Ken is an attorney, author, and works internationally in the area of mediation and peacebuilding. Cathrine is a social worker and leads a non-profit organization working with former inmates and land stewardship. Gen is a health practitioner and works internationally educating people on health issues related to the environment; Joan is a higher education specialist, mediator, author, and international trainer. Yumi leads a non-governmental organization that serves people who have been affected by environmental disasters.

Emerging Themes

The six common themes that emerged from their collective stories and responses to questions asked by the researchers were (a) mindfulness as an essential tool; (b) compassion as a path to insight and altruism; (c) the critical use of language; (d) agency and authenticity; (e) the need for equality; and (f) acting from a place of love and joy.

Mindfulness as an Essential Tool

All participants acknowledged the value of integrating mindfulness into their personal and professional lives as a way of cultivating “clarity,” “balance,” “awareness,” “calm,” “assurance,” and “attentiveness.” Each spoke of mindfulness as a critical skill in recognizing the subtleties and complexities of engagement that is often required in challenging work environments. Mindfulness was a tool for increased awareness and insight and allows them to “see who they are and pay attention to who they are in a different way.” Ken, speaking to the value of mindfulness as a part of engagement stated, “It is that sense of awareness that is a source of purification and permits you to see the dynamics in relationships.”

All participants noted that this “awareness” allowed them to see and respond to “what is in the moment.” Participants concurred that mindfulness of “self and other” creates a focus that supports “being ready for anything at any given moment” and the importance of paying attention. The participants emphasized that incorporating mindfulness into their work was important because it allowed them to “know where [they] are mindful as a way of creating calm and peace.” Central to each participant’s stories was the concept of being “stripped of illusion.”

Gen commented:

These are very challenging times and sometimes confusing times. And so I think its very important how we look at the world and how we see ourselves in relationship to the world environment and mindfulness is the key word because we need to be aware of where we are and what is happening.

Yumi reflected on mindfulness and said:

What I do is I try and connect with myself and my deepest needs or desires. Like why am I doing this work: I want wellbeing, I want health, I want peace, I want love and trust. Those important values. Then I calm down. Mindfulness for me is when I have this difficult situation...(mindfulness feels like) calm and peace. Not agitated and not bewildered.

Gen, when referring to mindfulness, stated, “Mindfulness is the key because we need to be aware of where we are and what is happening. What am I eating? What am I seeing? So the mindfulness is around your work and gives you the clarity to act.”

Cathrine often answered the questions with stories that reflect the ways in which mindfulness is demonstrated within herself and the people she guides in their work. She stated, “They’ve learned how to focus and see what’s right in front of them.” She has been able to weave her experiences into meaning making as she views it through the workers’ actions and experiences. She spoke to how she keeps the workers’ “focused.” She stated, “It’s like the plant. You have to look at the whole plant and they have learned to do this as well.”

Joan, when referring to her meditation writing practice and work stated, “I notice more. The awareness allows the stuff I’m bringing to evaporate or melt.”

Compassion as a Path to Insight and Altruism

Four of the five participants spoke of compassion as a valuable “source of information” when engaging in their work with individuals, communities, and systems. While one of the participants did not use the term ‘compassion,’ she did point to the need to understand one’s own suffering in order to understand the suffering of others. Central to the narratives of the participants are the connections between compassion, mindfulness and empathy. They spoke to the ways in which they have gained “wisdom” and “humility” through their understanding of suffering. Each participant acknowledged that compassion is developed through “learning and practice.” They all agreed that their practice is ongoing and was by no means “perfect” or “complete” but a lifelong endeavor.

The five participants made reference to *collective suffering*. “We are in this together,” stated Ken, and added, “We are not just isolated from the rest of the world, so wherever there is suffering that suffering is also yours. If it harms me it harms you. Do not harm, protect instead.”

Yumi exemplified the ways in which she has come to understand compassion:

I have learned compassion is with pain—so you know the pain of others and you feel it in your heart. Now that I am looking back, I left two children of mine in Japan, in 2003, when the court decided that my ex-husband had right to custody and I didn’t. It was so devastating for me. I had never had that much suffering in my life. When the United States started bombing Afghanistan and when 9/11 happened, I could feel the pain of the mothers who their children, and immediately I was full of compassion because of that experience. That event made my heart bigger and deeper. I was an activist before, but that pain created deep compassion.

When referring to her personal losses, the losses she saw in Afghanistan and her experiences in Fukushima, Japan, after the earthquake and nuclear disaster of 2011, Yumi stated, “My pain created that deep compassion.”

Joan brought the idea of compassion and connection into a social context and stated:

So I let go of my constructs, my bringing ideas, what they should know to what’s going on in their lives, to who they are and how they could connect with each other. There is a need to deal with your own suffering because it gets in the way [of one’s work].

Ken stated:

Compassion is a source of information; valuable information about what is happening for another person. You are placing yourself, through suffering, in the place of the other. Know your own suffering. Whatever you can’t see inside yourself is a blind spot you can’t see in the other [and] you will miss it. So it’s important to look at yourself in order to see what is true in the world.

The Critical Use of Language

The participants made reference to the importance of *mindful communication*. They all admitted that this can be challenging at times and the use of language “requires practice” and “skill building.” All participants spoke to the harm that can be caused when language is misused and that “caution must be exercised.” “Words can be threatening” but also can be used for the “greater good.” Two participants have purposefully incorporated non-violent communication skills into their communication style. Two incorporate mediation skills as a way of communication. The participants spoke directly to the need for *right speech* which is in keeping with Indian and Buddhist teachings that refer to approaches to communication that *do no harm*. As Ken stated, “There is a critical nature to the words we use” and we must “practice speech that does not create an illusion of separateness and does not open the wound of the other.”

Agency and Authenticity

The participants demonstrated agency and authenticity, defined by the authors as follows: Agency is the ability of people to possess the capacity to act independently and make free choices within their economic, political, and social worlds. Authenticity is acting from what one values and believes to be true. Both agency and authenticity were reflected in the participants’ descriptions through their narratives and included: working independently and not being inclined to be solely connected to organizational systems; choosing to openly express their thoughts and beliefs; and making choices outside of traditional constructs. The participants shared that the ability to be “authentic and real” helped them to “connect” with those they work.

During the interview, Cathrine spoke of the challenges of working with individuals and communities that have historically been marginalized and stated, “People are afraid of you [referring to her clients who are former inmates] but we need to take care of all living beings.” She shared stories of the need for those she works with to find their agency and authenticity and said:

When I first started working with the plants and the people, they’d always weed out the plants and not the weeds. People don’t know what’s inside you I tell them. They only see what’s outside. So I tell them that they have to be open to being seen. The idea is, the world doesn’t always see you in a positive way but so what...you need to see yourself in a positive way.

The participants also shared stories that illustrated their choice to often stay outside the traditional organizational structures. Ken remarked, “Social entities are a form of social hypnosis. They are designed to convince you that they exist when in reality, they don’t. They are figments of our imagination.”

The participants demonstrated a willingness to step outside of what society deems possible and that this required “courage and authenticity.” Yumi’s choices to take action were in direct response to the nuclear industry’s activities in her community. Cathrine’s work has addressed the lack of attention paid to inmates as they exit the prison system. Gen has advocated for integrated health and wellness outside of the typical health care systems. Joan has been instrumental in bringing “higher education to the people.” Ken has been a leader in the field of mediation, peace and reconciliation, and the civil rights and free speech movements.

The Need for Equality

The five participants referred to the need to be mindful of the inherent risk of creating an “imbalance of power” and stepping into a role of authority when engaging with individuals, communities, and systems. Achieving this balance and equality required “removing the obstacles that create inequality.” Paying attention to the complex nature of equality and inequality allowed them to see their “interconnectedness.”

Participants stated that it is important not to have roles that create a hierarchy, but rather have roles that honor the needs and interests of those with whom they are engaged. Central to their collective stories was their belief that there must be a willingness of the people with whom they are working with to “receive help and support.”

Joan, when referring to her experiences of teaching in an inner-city high school revealed:

I had an insight. I learned to stop manipulating them and teach them tools they needed to survive rather than feed my ego. I was interested initially in the ideas, information, and clever exercises. The shift happened when I figured out that was not what they needed or wanted [because] we all want to be seen, noticed, connected with.

Acting from a Place of Love and Joy

Of the five participants interviewed, four spoke about their work as “joyful” and their actions coming from a “place of love.” The fifth participant, through her stories, described situations in which laughter, kindness, connectedness and joy were common in her interactions with others. Four of the participants spoke about love and joy as essential elements to meaningful engagement. They described their work as having a “joyful influence” and “engaging from a place of loving humanity.” Participants reported that acting from love informs their quality of engagement and reinforces their dedication to those with whom they work. Being in a “place of love” grounded them “in the moment.”

The participant’s linked authenticity, vulnerability, suffering and love. Gen referred to suffering as a deep form of love and stated, “It is like a mourning. It is much closer to love [if] you are sharing sadness or suffering.”

Conclusion

The narratives of the five participants served to reveal the ways in which they experience the phenomenon of meaningful engagement while working in the fields of peace building, environmental, social, and global humanitarian efforts. The participants’ response to the questions posed integrated with their stories, served to develop a deeper understanding of what has informed their thinking and actions with respect to engaging in ways that reduce harm and are meaningful and effective. Woven throughout their collective stories, the six themes that emerged indicate that in order for engagement to be meaningful, integration of mindfulness and compassion as well as authenticity, agency, mindful communication, equality, and love are critical.

Cathrine summarized her experience and stated, “It’s like life...you take the

weeds out, keep weeding, and it won't change overnight and the weeds will come back but keep working on it." She tells the story of the former inmates who work in the garden:

Many of the prisoners used to tell me how they'd beat up old people, gay people, but they can't do that now. They told me that they were connected and giving and growing something [food that they grew to their communities]. Suddenly they were connected and giving something and they could say to their families, 'I can do something good.'

Cathrine continued: "Take care of yourself. You will become what you're supposed to be. The plants grow together. When you plant them close together it keeps the weeds from growing. If you forget to water them they won't survive so don't forget."

When talking about his work in the South in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Ken stated:

It became completely and totally clear to me that it is completely false to say that this is something we're doing for other people. This is something we're all doing for all of us and I benefited much more than the people I worked with. So whatever happens to other people happens to you. There is a realization that this isn't entirely about other people it is also about you.

It was clear from the interviews that meaningful engagement can become something that is more important than the individual human beings that you live and work with. It was something that they *became*. Gen shared, "I don't regard it (compassion) as separate. It is who I am." The findings would indicate that the qualities of meaningful engagement are integrally linked, creating a coherent way of engagement.

As a result of this research, the authors are proposing a theory of *mindful engagement through action* (META) that requires the principle qualities and actions of: mindfulness; compassion and altruism; agency and authenticity; equality; critical use of language; and love and joy.

Limitations and Further Study

This study was limited to five people whose work is specifically focused in peacebuilding; environmental, social; and global humanitarian efforts. Future research could expand the number of participants; focus on distinct occupations, populations, or ethnic groups; consider expanding on the themes that emerged from the findings; and consider how systems and structures of authority influence individual engagement.

References

- Armstrong, K. (2010). *Twelve steps to a compassionate life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Batson, C. D. (1994). Why act for the public good? Four answers. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin. Special Issue: The Self and the Collective*, 20(5), 603-610.
- Binswanger, H. (Ed.). (1988). *The Ayn Rand lexicon: Objectivism from A to Z*. Retrieved from <http://aynrandlexicon.com/lexicon/compassion.html>
- Bodhi, B. (2000). *A comprehensive manual of Abhidhamma*. Seattle, WA: Buddhist Publication Society Pariyatti Editions.
- Boyce, B. (2011). *The mindfulness revolution*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Brach, T. (2003). *Radical acceptance: Embracing your life with the heart of a Buddha*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 822–848. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12703651>
- Chödrön, P. (2003). *Comfortable with uncertainty*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Clandinin, D. (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Compassion. (n.d.). In *Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compassion>
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Curzer, H. J. (2007). Aristotle: Founder of the ethics of care. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 41, 221-243. doi: 10.1007/s10790-00709088-2
- Dalai Lama. (1995). *The power of compassion*. London, UK: Thorsons.
- Dalai Lama. (1999). *Ethics for the new millennium*. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam.
- Dalai Lama. (2001). *An open heart: Practicing compassion in everyday life*. New York: NY: Little, Brown.
- Dalai Lama. (2005). *Illuminating the path to enlightenment*. Long Beach, CA: Thubten Dhargye Ling.

- Denzin, N. K. (1994). *Interpretive biography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Elliot, M. L. (2011). Being mindful about mindfulness: An invitation to extend occupational engagement into the growing mindfulness discourse. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 4(18), 366-376. doi:10.1080/14427591.2011.610777
- Feldman, C. (2005). *Compassion*. Berkeley, CA: Rodnell Press.
- Feldman, C., & Kuyken, W. (2011). Compassion in the landscape of suffering. *Contemporary Buddhism*, 12(1), 143.
- Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., & Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). Compassion: An evolutionary analysis and empirical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(3), 351–337.
- Goleman, D. (2003). *Healing emotions: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on mindfulness, emotions and health*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Goldstein, J., & Kornfield, J. (1987). *Seeking the heart of wisdom: The path of insight meditation*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Grossman, P. (2008). On measuring mindfulness in psychosomatic and psychological research. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 64, 405–408. (Pubmed/18374739)
- Gunaratana, B. H. (2002). *Mindfulness in plain English*. Boston, MA: Wisdom.
- Halifax, J. (2008). *Being with dying: Cultivating compassion and fearlessness in the presence of death*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Hanh, T. N. (1987). *The miracle of mindfulness: A manual on meditation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press
- Hanh, T. N. (1991). *Peace is every step: The path of mindfulness in everyday life*. New York, NY: Bantam.
- Hudson, F. M. (1991). *The adult years: Mastering the art of self-renewal*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: past, present and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144-56. doi: 10.1093/clipsy.bpg016
- Kamalshila, (1996). *Meditation: The Buddhist art of tranquility and insight*. Birmingham, AL: Windhorse.
- Kornfield, J. (2008). *The wise heart: A guide to the teaching of Buddhist psychology*. New York, NY: Bantam.

- Ladner, L. (2004). *The lost art of compassion: Discovering the practice of happiness in the meeting of Buddhism and psychology*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Macy, J., & Brown, M. (1998). *Coming back to life: Practices that reconnect our lives, our world*. Gabriola Island: New Society.
- Marks, J. (2007). Rousseau's discriminating defense of compassion. *American Political Science Review*, 101(04), 727-739. doi:10.1017/S0003055407070578
- Martin, P. (1999). *The zen path through depression*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Martin, M. (2005). Using 'mindfulness' to enhance health and wellbeing. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 12(10), 430.
- Mazur, T. (2013). *The effect of mindfulness practice on the perception of senior meditator's life stories when faced with a major life transition* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (UMI #3564298)
- Merton, T. (1955). *No man is an island*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Mollica, R. (1999). *Healing invisible wounds: Paths to hope and recovery in a violent world*. New York, NY: Harcourt.
- Nanamoli, B., & Bodhi, B. (2001). The middle length discourses of the Buddha. A translation of the Majjhima Nikaya (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Wisdom Press.
- Neff, K. D. (2003). Development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223-250. doi:10.1080/15298860309027
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1996). Compassion: The basic social emotion. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 1, 27-58. doi:10.1017/S0265052500001515
- Ochberg, R. L. (1994). *Life stories and storied lives*. In A. Lieblich & R. Josselson (Eds.), *Exploring identity and gender: The narrative study of lives* (pp. 113-144). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Packer, Toni. (2001). Recording of talk at Spring Water Meditation Center, Rochester, New York.
- Partridge, E. (1996). *Origins: A short etymological dictionary of modern English*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Reilly, R. (2006). Compassion as justice. *Buddhist-Christian Studies*. 26, 13-31.
- Rothberg, D. (2006). *The engaged spiritual life: A Buddhist approach to transforming ourselves and the world*. Boston, MA: Beacon.

- Salzberg, S. (1997). *Lovingkindness: The revolutionary art of happiness*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Santorelli, S. (1999) *Heal thy self: Lessons on mindfulness in medicine*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Siegel, D. J. (2007). Mindfulness training and neural integration: Differentiation of distinct streams of awareness and the cultivation of well-being. *Journal of Social Cognitive Affect Neuroscience*. 2, 259-263. doi:10.1093
- Thera, N. (1998). *Abhidhamma Studies*. Boston, MA: Wisdom.
- Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wallace, B. A. (2007). *Contemplative science: Where Buddhism and neuroscience converge*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Welwood, J. (2000). *Toward a psychology of awakening: Buddhism, psychotherapy, and the path of personal and spiritual transformation*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Wertz, F., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L., Josselson, R., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Wilber, K. (2007). *The integral vision: A very short introduction to the revolutionary integral approach to life, God, the universe, and everything*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Wood, W. (2013). Women religious contributing to an ethic of compassion and social justice while responding to Catholic church structures of authority (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations. (UMI # 3594270)

Complex Subjectivity Revealed through Art and Human Science

Geoffrey A Thompson PhD, ATR-BC, LCAT

Abstract

This paper will explore Human Science philosophies in relation to human subjectivity, which reflects the intrinsic qualities of being human: consciousness, reflexivity, ipseity, self and other, narrative self and the environment. These domains will be discussed to posit subjectivity within concepts of the self as subject, lived experience, symbol formation and self as an ongoing reflective process of becoming, not reducible in the positivist sense. Implicit awareness of self or ipseity will be presented together with instances of compromised ipseity, believed to be a characteristic of people diagnosed with psychotic disorders. The dynamic of self and other includes the debate regarding the cogito and certain knowledge of the existence of self and other. Examples of self and other are given where power intrudes causing Other to become marginalized and oppressed.

A contemporary art example illustrates parallels between human science and art and the active open process where subjectivity develops and unfolds. The phenomenon of suspending knowledge, to provide an opening for self-discovery leads ultimately to transformation. Wider implications for an aesthetic model of understanding culture can provide hope amidst postmodern dissonance. The dissident Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is discussed in relation to the denial and suppression of subjectivity and loss of freedom as a deliberate strategy to control citizens of China. Art merges with politics in pursuit of freedom of expression and represents a battle line against oppressive practices. Art is essential for freedom, survival and happiness, and represents a human right.

Even in an “open” society cultural production and speech are often misunderstood, misappropriated and even willfully denied and contradicted. Psychoanalysis has shed insight on the dynamics of delusional life and a false self yet these effects also result from the denial of authentic subjectivity. A vignette from my recent research illustrates the effects of a one-dimensional psychiatric narrative given to a person with a severe mental illness. Subjectivity was recovered through immersion in studio art, which led increased self-acceptance and understanding and a new sense of self, independent of the psychiatric milieu and a narrative focused purely on psychopathology.

Introduction

This paper will explore Human Science philosophies regarding subjectivity, to mark the inaugural colloquium of the newly founded Human Science Institute (HSI). In consideration of this occasion, I turned to my attention to subjectivity, since it occupies a central place within the diversity of the transdisciplinary field of human science. Subjectivity underscores what it means to be human, and represents foundational knowledge across diverse fields. Human science seeks *verstehen* (Dilthey, 1997), which reflects an in depth understanding and explanation of human experiences and applies theoretical knowledge to action in the world.

What comprises human science? This question occupied the HSI colloquium and the subsequent discussions were indicative of the ebb and flow of the process of human nature, reflexivity, understanding, difference and transformative practice. Foucault's (1973a) archeology of the human sciences represented a significant attempt to chart this complexity and illuminate the arrival of man as a subject. The obscurity of what actually comprises human science may, in part be due to the fact they:

do not comprise mainstream academic disciplines; they are rather an interdisciplinary space for the reflection on the "man" who is the subject of more mainstream scientific knowledge, taken now as an object, sitting between these more conventional areas, and of course associating with disciplines such as anthropology, history, and, indeed, philosophy. Disciplines identified as "human sciences" include psychology, sociology, and the history of culture (Kelly, n/d).

The web of entanglements between disciplines, ways of knowing or epistemology, between "man" as both a subject and an object illustrate aspects of this obscurity. This paper will examine subjectivity from another key human endeavor, art, uniquely situated, both inside and outside of everyday culture, to reveal insights into the human condition. The intersection between contemporary art, subjectivity and human science will be explored in relation to self as a work of process, reflection and possibilities. Specific examples of certain challenges to subjectivity, such as the ideology of false or imposed narratives will be presented. Lastly a brief vignette from my recent research will be presented, which focused on contested subjectivity in the context of mental illness, followed by concluding remarks.

Subjectivity

What is subjectivity? Schopenhauer (2015) provided a helpful definition the subject:

It's who knows everything, without being yourself known is the subject. The subject is, therefore, the bedrock of the world, the invariable condition, always implied in any phenomenon, any object, because all that exists is only for the subject (n/a, 2015).

Each person is equipped with a reflective self, which included, according to Dilthey (1997) the phenomenon that a lived experience represents reality instantly *there-for-me*, because: “I possess it immediately as belonging to me in some sense” (p. 223). The sense of “belonging” echoed the belief that phenomenal experiences and objects exist within the personal sphere of subjectivity. Subjectivity inhabits the self-as-subject and the environment, which can include perceptions of reality and objects together with the *community of egos* (Husserl, 1973). The immediacy of subjectivity is indicative of the core sense of being human, of existentially existing and thus gripped by a continuously changing becoming (May, 1969), which becomes intertwined with the multilayered reflexivity of consciousness. Consciousness includes the temporal awareness of the past, present and future, “within its consciousness of the present” (Dilthey, 1997, p. 225).

Subjectivity includes the ability to engage in symbolic formations, which makes humans biologically distinct. Sullivan (1962) quoted Meyer on this advanced nature:

[The] individual in action as an agent or subject...as the ‘he’ or ‘she’, the ‘you’ or ‘I’ that we know as a biological individual and a social entity...instead of acting as an ordinary mechanical reflex machine, the organism constitutes itself as a subject (p. 31).

Implicit aspects of subjectivity only become objective phenomena, according to Dilthey (1997) in thought. Subjectivity can thus be objectivized in the sense of the Cartesian mind and body dichotomy. The mind and body split contributed to positivist epistemology and rationalism and the distrust of subjectivity derived from the subjective/emotional sense, believed residing in the body.

Iipseity

Iipseity refers to the experiential sense of self, of fundamentally being a vital human being. Iipseity provides the foundation for first-person ownership of experiences and perceptions belonging to the person, referred to by Henry (as cited in Sass & Parnas, 2003) as the “self-feeling of self” (p. 4). It refers to the intrinsic sense of being human, which informs agency and experiencing (Zahavi, 2008; Sass, 2010), while providing a level of consistency, of self-sameness, irrespective of changes across lifespan resulting from reflective consciousness. This is achieved because ipseity reflects the tacit or implicit sense of existence. This core facet provides the “I” or “mine” first person experiences resulting from a central unified self-concept of a person as a subject and social being. Iipseity provides the perceptual balance between objects/experiences in the field and the there-for-me of these constantly changing experiences and perceptions can remain more or less fixed (Sass, 2010) or at least manageable. Dilthey (1997) stressed the interconnectedness of a particular lived experience as a singular event to the object it may represent, which constitutes: “a separable immanent whole” (p. 224). He also described the particular instances of lived experiences, which: “designates a part of the course of life in its total reality – a concrete part which from a teleological point of view possesses a unity in itself” (Dilthey, 1997, p. 225).

The presence of ipseity can be more readily apparent when made visible through its absence or significant alteration. The bizarre fragmentation believed evident in people diagnosed with schizophrenia or psychotic disorders, has provided clues to the phenomenal qualities of ipseity, whereby the flow of the mineness of experiences can become affectively and cognitively derailed. (Sass & Parnas, 2003; Parnas, 2011). Sullivan (1962) described the psychopathological

implications of derailed symbol formation, which he equated with: “a matter of seeking to understand and interpret eccentric symbol performances” (p. 32). Lack of self-authorship, agency and/or the disappearance of consistency and smoothness of the temporal flow of life narratives also occurs (Fuchs, 2013; Zahavi, 2008; Lysaker & Lysaker, 2006). Also present is the diminished the capacity for empathy and the ability to relate intersubjectively (Sass, 2010; Arieti, 1974). Sass (2010) wrote:

The core abnormality in schizophrenia is a particular kind of disturbance of consciousness and, especially, of the sense of self or ipseity that is normally implicit in each act of awareness [and] Ipse-identity or ipseity refers to a crucial sense of self-sameness, of existing as a subject of experience that is at one with itself at any given moment. (p. 639)

Arieti (1974) believed a schizophrenic with the dislocated fragmented and isolated self, is incapable of entering the life-world of another, unable to relate empathically.

Self and Other

The dynamic between a subject and object can be understood through the Hegelian dialectic, which incorporated the skepticism of individual knowledge being reflective of universal means of knowing. Although the awareness of self as a subject may be given, Hegel (1977) extended skepticism about consciousness to include the intersubjective knowing of the other. From this perspective self-awareness must include awareness of self as both subject (the self) and object (the self understood and perceived by others) (Hegel, 1977). Blackburn (1999) related Sartre’s belief that acceptance of the Cartesian knowledge I exist, must also include the certain knowledge that the other also must exist.

The phenomenon of recognition of the self was complicated by Ricouer’s (1994) discussion of the stability or slippage of the self through two dimensions of self-sameness and selfhood, which he called oneself as another. The self that is knowable by another represents the conception of self-subjectivity as a struggle or tension illustrated by Hegel’s exploration of the master and slave dynamic. Sartre (1968) demonstrated that through the felt-sense of an emotion such as shame, we come to acutely and somewhat uncomfortably, recognize our self as other.

Narrative Self

The narrative self pieces subjective experiences together through emplotment (Ricouer, 1984). According to May (1969) personal myths are essential for mental health and can be integrated into wholes accepted by the self. The reality reflected in a person’s subjectivity entails fictional as well as commonly agreed upon dimensions of shared reality. James (2010) viewed the self as a fluctuating synthesis of four dimensions, where each contains multiple dimensions: “a. The material Self; b. The social Self; c. The spiritual Self; and d. The pure Ego.” (p. 162) Goffman (1959) articulated the complex relations governing the projection and reception of discrete differences in inner-directed self and outwardly in social relations. Reality exists for the subject, directly because of it being there-for-me. The relationship between subjectivity, consciousness and reality can present conflict, confusion and tension between self and other. From the existentialist perspective of existence precedes essence (Sartre, 1968) humans are in a

state of flux, of existing, changing and hopefully creating, rather than experiencing from an immutable essence. This affects the conception of truth and reality, as noted by May (1969): *“There is no such thing as truth or reality for a living human being except as he participate in it, is conscious of it, has some relationship to it”* (p. 14, italics in original). The existence of Reality itself has been called into question by Baudrillard (2005): “The Invention of ‘Reality’, unknown to other cultures, is the work of modern western Reason, the turn to the Universal” (p. 39).

Postmodernism has attacked the hegemony of the metanarrative including metaphysical reality, immutable truths and universal knowledge (Lyotard, 1984). Equally suspect today is the conception of one “Reality,” especially when constructed within hierarchy, power relations, race, gender, socioeconomic class and political motivation. This has often taken place at great expense to difference located in the other, with narratives used to justify marginalization, exploitation, disempowerment and stigma (Goffman, 1963). May’s (1969) conception of the existential conditions for experiencing truth and reality can become entangled in power. An example of this is the European cultural product of the novel, which has frequently reflected the narrative of Western imperialism as a fixed truth of a certain Reality, which deliberately rendered entire peoples from non-western countries both inconsequential and invisible (Said, 1994). Currently this phenomenon was described by Fares (2015) of the ill-effects of being made Other against the public and political outrage over the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, compared to those in Lebanon: “after all what is humanity but a subjective term delineating the worth of a human being meant by it?” (n/p). Fares (2015) expressed the deadening effects of this: “I’ve come to terms with being one of those whose lives don’t matter. I’ve come to accept it and live with it” (n/p). Appiah’s (2005) ethical perspective provides an important counter to these disturbing practices, namely that self-presence must include others, while accepting difference and providing investment in Other.

Human Science & the Aesthetic Mirror

The Hegelian conception of consciousness as a process is akin to the process of art. In the film: William Kentridge: *Anything is Possible* (Art 21, Inc, 2010), the artist provided a theory of knowledge, where ultimate meaning or truth is suspended in favor of a process toward the articulation of possibility. Kentridge’s aesthetic motivation and philosophy parallel the process between his aesthetic work and what comprises of a human science orientation:

Kentridge talks about how his personal history as a white South African of Jewish heritage has informed recurring themes in his work-including violent oppression, class struggle, and social and political hierarchies

(Art 21, Inc, 2010).

It is a theory about possibility, openness and process, of suspending preconceptions about reductive knowledge and absolute truth. Subjectivity in this context highlights the connections between self, other(s), and environment informed by the shaping that inevitably flows from diverse cultural, philosophical and socio-political discourses. Subjectivity can be a site of resistance to destructive ideology.

During the film, Kentridge (Art 21, Inc, 2010) discussed a stream of thoughts and ideas:

Human Science Perspectives, 2016, Vol.1, No.1

It's about staying in the looseness of trying different things; images [and] ideas emerge. So it's about not knowing what is happening in advance.

Understanding the world as process rather than fact. Transformation always has to do with understanding the world as process (n/p).

Art is a silent invitation to experience the subjectivity of self and others, derived through the artist's understanding of his or her life-world. Kentridge's (Art 21, Inc, 2010) subjectivity includes the self plus an ecological context as noted by Bateson (1987), which provide a scaffold where navigation of the unknown occurs through understanding. Truth suspended reasserts the unknown, which can provide an opening to potential discovery followed by transformation. Watching Kentridge's (Art 21, Inc, 2010) animated drawing reveals the intricate delicacy of imprecision, as marks are instantly and precisely transformed into multiple magical moments of recognition and understanding. Encounters come and go in a lyrical and graphic hallucinatory stream of images, graphically articulated in a constantly evolving matrix of formation and erasure. The transient nature of the encounters are tantalizing in their clarity even as a particular image vanishes. Kentridge (Art 21, Inc, 2010) explained his navigation of the unknown:

There's an uncertainty of what you're doing, an imprecision, so that what you do is that you're not knowing what it is in advance that you're carrying out, but rather allow and recognize something as it appears (n/p).

This phenomenon is a fluid ongoing process and akin to the authentic presence required in psychotherapy (May, 1969).

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) argued for something similar, which they called the ethico-aesthetic where art and aesthetic experience represents a *vital-becoming* and a network of sensations. The ethico-aesthetic paradigm promotes the ecology of subjectivity where new multiple encounters are possible. Guattari (2009) formulated *ecosophy*, which combined the political with the ethical dimension of ecology. Dosse (2009) listed the three dimensions of ecosophy: "the questions of the environment, of social relations and of the subjective dimension" (p. 25). Guattari (2009) has also argued for an understanding of *machinic* subjectivity, where individual subjectivity is intertwined with technology. The machinic dimension and technology can inform subjectivity by integration, compliment, or enhancement, but in instances where the personal freedom associated with individual subjectivity are denied, technology can be harnessed to recover subjectivity. Weiwei (2014) exemplified this:

That's why the Internet is the best thing that ever happened to China. It turns us into individuals and also enables us to share our perceptions and feelings. It creates a culture of individualism and exchange even though the real society doesn't promote it. There isn't a single Chinese university that can invite me to give a talk (n/p).

Subjectivity Denied

For Weiwei (2013) art possesses an imperative for action in the pursuit of freedom of expression and a necessary condition for happiness: “If there is no freedom of expression, then the beauty of life is lost. Participation in a society is not an artistic choice, it’s a human need” (p. 26). Likewise living a good virtuous life with good acts may require more than compassion: “compassion without courage, say, will too often leave you not doing the compassionate thing” (Appiah, 2008, p. 39). Weiwei (2014) has seamlessly combined art and politics in pursuit of freedom and expressive subjectivity, in the face of oppression, and censorship in China. Subjectivity of self and other denied has been a consistent theme of Weiwei’s art and his response resonates with humanism: “Let’s talk about humanity, individualism, imagination and creativity -- those are the values a society is built on. What education are we getting, what dreams do we dream?” (n/p). In contrast to the commonly accepted intellectual competence of Chinese students Weiwei noted:

Chinese students are the least trained in having a sense of aesthetics. They lack any ability to sense what is beautiful or what is proper. They can be learned and skillful, but they lack the ability to make their own free judgment (n/p).

Weiwei’s (2013) life as an artist reflects his complete subjectivity including personal constrictions: “Everything is art. Everything is politics” (p. 24). Being an artist, especially in this context, exemplifies the human right of self-expression and freedom. Weiwei stated: “I think it’s a responsibility for any artist to protect freedom of expression and to use any way to extend this power” (p. 26).

Denial of subjectivity can occur in democracies where freedom and individual rights are believed to be a given. These sites require activism and strategies to reclaim the freedom associated with individual or collective expression. In the field of psychiatry, where a fundamental issue in the construction of patient narratives is the closed system and the absence of ambiguity, the finality of the voice of authority can be achieved. The field of psychiatry has presented itself as the scientific truth (Szasz, 1960). This achievement undermines individuals who may be vulnerable and casts aside morality. Weiwei (2013) stated:

I think all aesthetic judgments – all the aesthetic choices we are making – are moral choices. They cannot escape the moral dimension in the broader sense. It has to relate to the philosophical understanding of who we are and how so-called “art and culture” functions in today’s world (p. 28).

Foucault (1973b) described the dominance of reason over unreason, which led to the objectification of the mentally ill who were forced to into massive confinement, through dividing practices (Foucault, 1984). Through reason the mentally ill were stripped of subjectivity, instead becoming objects to be isolated, studied, and treated. The recovery of subjectivity through art can help to reestablish the moral dimension by making a person visible. (Thompson, 2015). Guattari (1992) delineated three *Paths/voices* to understand subjectivity: power, knowledge and self-reference. Power and knowledge act upon subjectivity from the outside, whereas self-reference is primarily internal. Guattari (1992) described the pathway of power: “circumscribing and circumventing human groupings from the outside, either through direct coercion of, and

panoptic grip on, bodies, or through imaginary capture of minds” (p. 19). When the denial of freedom and self-expression is accepted this dynamic is illustrated, as Weiwei (2012) described: “Overall we feel that everyone has the right to express themselves and this right of expression is linked to our happiness and even our existence” (n/p).

Vignette: Art, Subjectivity and Mental Illness:

My recent research (Thompson, 2015) investigated the effects of immersion in studio art on subjectivity and mental illness. Each of the ten co-researchers had been given a DSM IV Axis I (American Psychiatric Association) diagnosis of a severe mental illness. The following extract will recount aspects of the experiences of one of the co-researchers.

In preparation for the research I met with clinicians for potential referrals. A receptionist alerted me to Dominic, (pseudonym) an outpatient, based upon a drawing he had brought to the clinic to show her. She loved the drawing and framed it (with his permission) and hung the drawing close to his psychiatrist’s office. The psychiatrist described Dominic as a patient who was severely depressed, isolated and withdrawn from the world, due to mental and physical disabilities; additionally, he was seen as resistant (frequently missing monthly appointments) with a lack of interest in anything. The psychiatrist was convinced he would not be interested or able to participate in the research study and subtly attempted to influence me with this persuasive dynamic.

It became clear that the psychiatrist had no idea that Dominic liked to draw or that one of his drawings was hanging outside his office. I led the psychiatrist to the drawing where he was taken aback in disbelief that Dominic had drawn it. The subjectivity of Dominic and his life-world were completely ignored and disregarded; all deemed inconsequential in this damaging portrayal of a person utterly diminished with only glaring incapacity for contact with others and the world. Bateson’s (1987) theory of the double bind would be applicable to this dynamic where Dominic had become dependent on his psychiatrist who plied one-dimensional attention, disregarding his true self and withdrawing when he clearly progressed.

In contrast to the delivered narrative, during the initial phone contact, Dominic was positive; he was pleased to talk with me; he was interested in the study and spoke enthusiastically about coming to meet me to learn more. When we met the following day he signed the Informed Consent and was related, animated and excited about participating. Dominic talked for more than an hour during our interview, as I continually heard the voice of his psychiatrist, telling me he would never come. Dominic described his life in the present, which mirrored his psychiatrist’s account. He felt fragmented, depressed, hopeless and defeated: “You know reality is reality and I’m living inside a volcano”; “I just want to stay indoors every day – aggravating and you stay there with the pain”; “it’s just hard to go outside”; “I’m broken inside” (Thompson, 2015). Dominic expressed a global loss of interest and ability to feel positive emotions and pleasure. He described the darkness and depression he felt: “it gets to the point that you can’t get past that really dark place - all that work - even though you’ve got the paper to draw – it brings tears to my eyes” (p. 264). He believed he had been successful at hiding his broken inside from most people and he reflected on self-doubt, that he may be “crazy” and can only make “nonsense”. Three themes emerged from his first interview: *art was in the past, darkness and depression, and inside and outside.*

Dominic attended 6 open studio art sessions and the opening reception for the exhibition of artwork made during the study. He reflected upon the artwork he made, which primarily focused on dark, macabre subjects such as demons and grotesque figures, which he was always fascinated by. He developed insight the dark themes related to, “his seemingly never-ending ‘battle’ against depression and pain” (Thompson, 2015, p. 273). Previously Dominic believed he would never make art again, since it was firmly a thing of the past, and recalling this loss caused him to feel increased sadness, anxiety and depression. Now art occupied a central place in the present, which was positively affecting his future. His commitment and connection to making art was strong and it mirrored the intense inner life that was previously split off, buried and consciously pushed aside. Now he could use it to actively fight his illnesses and his depression in particular. He moved from hopeless passivity to an active fight for his authentic self. He had found hope and happiness, which made the fight worthwhile. Dominic reconnected to his fuller, more dynamic sense of self as his increased subjectivity now included his recovered artistic sensibility and newfound artist identity. In turn, this connection led to his ability to experience pleasure again. He could now recognize himself as himself, rather than purely see himself as a sick person, broken on the inside and incapable of feeling joy or happiness. I wrote (Thompson, 2015) about this effect: “There was a sense of lightness about him physically, not that his pain had subsided, but the pain no longer dominated his existence, his sense of himself, his very being” (p. 276).

Conclusion

When a narrative is imposed, as in this case, internalization and conformity can follow, which provide observable distortions in the self, which then become evidence of psychopathology and the accuracy of the (false) narrative. Disempowerment and marginalization increased for Dominic, as did the “symptoms”. The narrow focus of seeing a person with mental illness as solely a diagnosed mental patient casts aside the whole person. Dominic’s “self-narrative was extremely negative, hopeless and riddled with pain and depression, consistent with Polkinghorne’s (1991) contention of the effects from the dissolution of the unity of self-narrative and plot” (Thompson, 2015, p. 353). Although Dominic initially confirmed the psychiatrist’s account as his own, he spontaneously presented a multitude of other thoughts and feelings, particularly interest, excitement and by the end of the interview, hope. He stated: ““I’m already thinking about tapping into that what I might come up with” (Thompson, 2015, p. 355). Dominic’s relatedness and positive affect grew during the course of the study and challenged the psychiatric narrative and his own negative self-concept.

Minnich (2005) observed that distortions in self are an inevitability of being treated as insane or marginalized as Other. Dominic’s self-distortions included an exaggerated belief in how disabled he had become, which was compounded by the ironic withdrawal of his psychiatrist, who was content to not empathically relate to him. Empathy from authentic I thou (Buber, 2004) encounter was severely compromised in his infrequent visits to the hospital and Dominic was essentially unknown as a person. Un-empathic encounters by a therapist can be understood as a form of mistreatment (Ornstein, 2011). This danger of the therapist abandoning empathy was exemplified by Ornstein’s (2011) insight that a therapist (in this case Freud), “pursued by his own agenda [can draw] untenable conclusions” (p. 439) in the treatment and case formulation.

In the empathic milieu of the studio Dominic safely negotiated returning to art, expressing his fears, hopes and quite literally his demons. The community of making art in the studio provided a new frame for his experiences, which facilitated rendering his self-narrative amenable to change and quickly his feelings of despair abated (Bateson, 1972/1987; Polkinghorne, 1991). Ultimately, “Dominic developed a new sense of self, an aesthetic voice, which led to empowerment and a new narrative identity” (Thompson, 2015, p. 351), which increased his contact with the world.

The act of reintegration was described by Polkinghorne (1991) and Ricouer (1984) as *re-employment*, in which Dominic became receptive to past, present and future lived experiences and discovered himself through a new narrative of subjectivity freed from a repressive psychopathological paradigm. He could recognize himself as another (Ricouer, 2007); another in the sense of unified self and social entity. The freedom and potentiality of the studio, a reflective space, facilitated his ability to re-experience joy and happiness. Art became a site of resistance, where he met his challenges with an expressive intensity that reaffirmed he was not “crazy” but vital and alive.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Appiah, K. A. (2008). *Experiments in ethics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Appiah, K. A. (2005). *The ethics of identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Arieti, S. (1974). *Interpretation of schizophrenia*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Art 21, Inc. (2010). William Kentridge: Anything is possible (2010). Retrieved from: <http://www.art21.org/videos/full-program-william-kentridge-anything-is-possible>
- Bateson, G. (1987). *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson. (Original work published 1972)
- Baudrillard, J. (2005). *The intelligence of evil or the lucidity pact*. New York, NY: Berg.
- Blackburn, S. (1999). *Think: A compelling introduction to philosophy*. Oxford, England, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Buber, M. (2004). *I and thou* (W. Kauffman, Trans.). New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1980).
- Dilthey, W. (1997). Poetry and experience. Selected Works Vol 5. (R. A. Makkreel & F. Rodi, Eds). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University press.
- Dosse, F. (2009). Introduction to chaosophy. In F. Guattari, *Chaosophy: Texts and*

Human Science Perspectives, 2016, Vol.1, No.1

- interviews 1972-1977* (S. Lotringer, Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Dufrenne, M. (2002). The world of the aesthetic object. In C. Cazeaux (Ed.), *The continental aesthetics reader* (pp. 129-150). London, England, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Fares, E. E. (2015, November 14). A separate state of mind. From Beirut, this is Paris: A world that doesn't care about Arab lives. Retrieved from: <http://stateofmind13.com/2015/11/14/from-beirut-this-is-paris-in-a-world-that-doesnt-care-about-arab-lives/>
- Foucault, M. (1973a). *The order of things: An archeology of the human sciences*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1973b). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1984). The subject and power. In B. Wallis (Ed.), *Art after modernism: Rethinking representation* (pp. 416–434). New York, NY: The New Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. (C. Gordon, Ed.). New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Fuchs, T. (2013). Temporality and psychopathology. *Phenomenological Cognitive Science*. 12(1), 75-104. doi:10.1007/s11097-010-9189-4
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Guattari, F. (2009). *Chaosology: Texts and interviews 1972-1977*. S. Lotringer (Ed.). (Intro. F. Dosse). Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Guattari, F. (1992). Regimes, pathways, subjects. In J. Crary and S. Kwinter (Eds.), *Incorporations* (pp. 16-37). New York, NY: Zone.
- Hegel, W. F. (1977). *The phenomenology of spirit*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Husserl, E. (1973). *Experience and judgment*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- James, W. (2010). The self and its selves. In C. Lemert (Ed.) *Social theory: The multicultural and classic readings* (4th Ed.) (pp.161-166). Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press.
- Kelly, M. (n/d). "Michel Foucault (1926-1984)" by Mike Kelly, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/foucault/>
- Lyotard, J-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge. Theory and history of literature* (Vol. 10, G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans., F. Jameson, Forward). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. (Original work published 1979)
- May, R. (1969). *Existential psychology* (R. May, Ed.). New York, NY: Random House.

Human Science Perspectives, 2016, Vol.1, No.1

- McTighe, M. (2012). *Framed spaces: Photography and memory in contemporary installation art*. Dartmouth, NH: Dartmouth College Press.
- Minnich, E. (2005). *Transforming knowledge* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- n/a. (2015). Encyclopedia of philosophy. Subjectivity: Philosophical definition. Retrieved from: <http://www.the-philosophy.com/subjectivity-philosophical-definition>. 9/26/15
- Ornstein, P. H. (2011). The centrality of empathy in psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, 31*, 437-447. doi:10.1080/07/351690.2011.552047
- Parnas, J. (2007). Self and schizophrenia: A phenomenological perspective. In T. Kircher & A. David (Eds.), *The self in neuroscience and psychiatry* (pp. 217- 241). Cambridge, England, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 2003)
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1991). Narrative and self-concept. *Journal of narrative and Life History, 1*(2 &3), 135-153.
- Ricoeur, P. (1994). *Oneself as another*. (K. Blamey, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1990)
- Ricoeur, P. (2007). *The course of recognition* (D. Pellauer, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 2004)
- Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative* (Vol. I, K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1983).
- Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Sartre, J-P. (1968). Sartre: Existentialism. In W. Kaufmann (Ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (pp. 222- 311). Cleveland, OH: Meridian Books. (Original work publish 1956)
- Sass, L. A. (2010). Phenomenology as description and as explanation: The case of schizophrenia. In D. Schmicking & S. Gallagher (Eds.), *Handbook of phenomenology and cognitive science* (pp. 635-654). New York, NY: Springer. doi10.10007/978-90-481-2646-0
- Sass, L. A., & Parnas, J. (2003). Schizophrenia, consciousness, and the self. *Schizophrenia Bulletin, 29*(3), 427-444.
- Sullivan, H. S. (1962). *Schizophrenia as a human process*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Thompson, G. (2015). *Self-construction of an artist identity: The impact of art and therapy on subjectivity and mental illness in qualitative research* (Doctoral dissertation, SAYBROOK UNIVERSITY).

Human Science Perspectives, 2016, Vol.1, No.1

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Weiwei, A. (2012). Ai Weiwei does gangnam style – video. The Guardian. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/music/video/2012/oct/24/ai-weiwei-gangnam-style-video>

Weiwei, A. (2013). *Weiwe-isms*. (L. Warsh, Ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Weiwei, A. (2014). Interview with Ai Weiwei: “My virtual life has become my real life”. Spiegel Online International. Retrieved 10/14/2015 from: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/chinese-artist-ai-weiwei-discusses-efforts-in-china-to-monitor-him-a-943719.html>

Zahavi, D. (2008). *Subjectivity and selfhood*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Human Science and Being an Intellectual

James Smith

Abstract

This article responds to the question: “What is a Human Science for the future and what is each person’s responsibility to that future?” As humanists, we view that the human realm is unique. Humans are inherently social, cultural and communicative, whose human “being-ness” is contextual, temporal and grounded in shared reality. Human Sciences are embodied with multiple features that distinguish its approach and body of work from the natural sciences. The recent development of human sciences emerged as a rejection of the philosophical, methodological and epistemological underpinnings to ‘standard’ science. At the same time, in many quarters, the long-term debate over how to do scientific inquiry into the human realm evolved to accept that there needed to be unique methods and standards for Human Science. As Human Science’s project is to transform the world, so is it the task of persons who are engaged in the pursuit of Human Science. I would go so far as to say that if you are a human scientist, you are by definition a revolutionary intellectual. The key to being an intellectual is stand for the desire for more human freedom and realization of human potential.

Keywords: Human Science, freedom, intellectual, scientific inquiry, species being.

Editor’s Note: Jim Smith is a doctoral candidate at California Institute of Integral Studies. As a founding member of Montana Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing (PHWFF), Mr. Smith has a history of working with veterans and is deeply familiar with their issues. He has also trained members of the Montana National Guard and a cohort of mental health providers on issues confronting returning veterans and has trained volunteers, program leads and regional coordinators for PHWFF in Montana, Pennsylvania and New York. He received his MA in Human Science in 2015 from Saybrook University.

Human Science and Being an Intellectual

Nothing is less real than realism. Details are confusing. It is only by selection, by elimination, by emphasis, that we get at the real meaning of things. – Georgia O’Keefe

The purpose of HSI’s first conference last September was to establish an entity that could bring together a wide variety of people to further the cause of human science and to establish a unity of will and a unity of action about what human science means. We have established a mission statement for this new entity to assist in guiding the way:

The Human Science Institute is a transdisciplinary learning community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to creating a humane and ecologically sustainable global future through education and research. Founded by Human Science scholars, researchers, students, and professionals, HSI supports the work of those responding to the challenges of our times by promoting a transdisciplinary framework that respects the multiplicity of views and ways of knowing in our diverse global community.

And I think this is a good beginning. I would like to contribute to this discussion by offering a few brief ideas about three main concerns that I believe are inherent in H.S.I.’s project. These notions are put forward in the spirit of beginning the dialogue that we need to undertake to become unified about the future of H.S.I. and our respective involvement with it. These are: what does it mean to be human and how do we share this reality; what is the breadth and scope of human science; and, what is unique about human science. Lastly, I would like to say a few words about what is the social role of H.S.I. and each of us as intellectuals who wish to fulfill its mission.

What Does It Mean to be Human?

As humanists, we view that the human realm is unique. Humans are inherently social, cultural and communicative, whose human “being-ness” is contextual, temporal and grounded in shared reality. Human being’s existence is a summation of experience which is full of nuance and subtlety derived from a dialogue with the social and natural environment which is mediated through language and culture. Human’s lives and consciousness cannot be reduced to components, due to the fact that human consciousness is an awareness that is reflective and self-aware, and is created by an on-going awareness of the larger social, environmental, planetary and cosmic context of life. This human consciousness and reflective awareness has meaning for the individual and the group, because the meaningfulness is culturally based, linguistically expressed, and historically grounded in the current context. Human beings have choice and free will to ethically and responsibly develop their potentials within the parameters of this multifaceted context, based on their aims, intentions, creative talents, physical attributes, and access to the resources made available to them through the existing socio-cultural paradigm.

Language, consciousness and human species being are intrinsically interrelated in the development of a social self and are all grounded in a complex dialectical relationship to the natural and social world. In today’s modern urban world we have become numbed to the role of

nature as an integral component of this dialectic. The relationship to place and environment is taken for granted and overwhelmed by technological representations of space, time and social connection. In contrast, indigenous and aboriginal peoples have a historical comprehension that their very existence and meaning are tied to place and the ecology of their culture. Their culture, language, and society are a creation of a deep interconnection between their ecological basis in a natural setting and the expression of their unique human existence.

Critical theory, through Habermas (1973), views language, labor, and power as intrinsically linked. Humans exist in a natural, material environment, which they engage in for survival, acting upon it and being acted upon it in a dialectical relationship that expands both the knowing of the potential of the aspects of the environment, and reflexively, expands (realizes) the potentials of our species being. One key development in this manipulation of the environment is the creation of tools (and then other artifacts) which have a use and a meaning for the user that was not there prior to its creation. And tools, as a special group of cultural artifacts embody another dimension as the repository of prior labor, labor saved to be used again, which then begins the accumulation of articles which can free humans from immediate necessity.

Language arises out of a similar material manipulation of the environment, that is, speech is the manipulation of air by lungs, teeth and lips to create a symbol which represents something which may or may not be present. And in this moment of creating this sign or representation (language), memory and consciousness are also created, as is the interaction with others expressed in language. Language is also a tool, evolves with and from the use of tools and the need to interact with others to survive. The “word” represents something other than itself, and makes that something present in the interaction, even though the “object” of the word is not present.

Just as human labor (acting on and reshaping the world) creates our world, speech and language allows us to “capture” that world in an abstract form and create symbolic representation of it. So from the very first use of speech, the question of understanding meaning was a “problematic.”. Understanding or interpreting the symbolic representation of things on one level, and on another level more abstract concepts that are required for survival (danger, safety, etc.) evolves.

Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness concerning the *immediate* sensuous environment and consciousness of the limited connection to other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. (Marx, 1967, p. 422)

And like tools, language begins the accumulation of knowledge and mastery over the natural world while concurrently creating the social world through interaction and sharing through language. Just as with the accumulation of tools, accumulation of language creates power in relationships between the cultural participants. Tools and language free us from immediacy and necessity and, with memory as a component of consciousness, they also create the history or lore of the group. Underlying all of this is the creation of relationships of power through mastery of tools, language, nature and knowledge embedded in both the things and their signs.

Through this lore (memories of the past), myth, and meaning are preserved, shared and evolve. Language is both simplified and made more complex in a dialectical interaction as it evolves through agreement on meaning, expansion of vocabulary and the further “capturing” of reality in words, signs and their shared experience in human interaction and the development of

more aspects of culture. Words and their meanings are enriched, deepened and expanded. Meaning is not simply abstracted from reality it is actively socially “imbued” into the symbol or sign by an agreed upon understanding. As time passes and experiences are accumulated, meanings may also change or shift, to incorporate new or discard old, cultural remnants embodied in the concept of the sign. Signs or symbols as representation are fluid in their use and meaning. Along the way a group consensus of interpretation and meaning is arrived at or agreed upon which is implicit in the validity of the interaction through language. The consensus in language (and other meanings of symbols) is imperative in order for society to function, and when consensus is broken it creates a social crisis of mistrust in what is meant.

As part of the “postmodern” view of language, based on Foucault, Barthes and others, words, concepts (a collection of words to give deeper meaning), language and even culture are in constant contradiction, both historically, culturally and temporally. These meanings are both specific and constantly being revised through the discourse of all of the components of society and culture (morality, technology, politics, power, economic relations, institutions, and more) such that the meaning is not definable or static but is constantly changing or being transformed. Meaning is not “being,” it is constantly “becoming”. In this way we share our realities such that we can function (or not) as humans living on our little planet as social beings. These are just some of the ways that uncover the fact that human *being* is a unique form of existence.

What is the Possible Breadth and Scope of Human Science?

Human Sciences are embodied with multiple features that distinguish its approach and body of work from the natural sciences. “We can identify three main intentions in the modern human sciences: *description, interpretation* and the *reconstruction of meaning structures*” (Rothberg, 1991, p. 1). Each of these aspects or intentions gives clarity and definition to the pursuit of understanding and knowledge which is defined as a “second main form of science” (Rothberg, 1991, p. 1). Human Science is not just about investigating what the human realm is all about, but rather in gaining knowledge to better the human condition. In practicing human science we must be clear that within the area we have decided to attempt to investigate, our goal is to describe what is going on with the individuals or group, interpret what the activities, aims and outcomes are and finally to reconstruct the meaning of these aspects, as to how they constitute assertoric knowledge that meets the criteria our scientific approach, method and discipline. In short, our inquiry as human science must be a holistic account which elucidates the complexity of all of the features and aspects of the area of inquiry (Creswell, 2013, p. 47).

The existential and transpersonal experiences and meanings of the individuals and/or group who are participating in our inquiry may or may not reveal scientific knowledge. What is revealed may be something totally unexpected as an outcome or result and/or unexplainable given our method and approach. We may have to decide to change our focus of inquiry, methods of investigation and involve the participants in developing the descriptions, interpretations and definitions of the meaning of this experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 47). In human science our philosophical and epistemological assumptions demand that we incorporate various methods into the inquiry to bring about a richer understanding of what we are observing. “In most qualitative studies, the central problems are to identify how people interact with their world (what they do), and then to determine how they experience and understand that

world: how they feel, what they believe, and how they explain structure and relationships within some segment of their existence” (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2014, p. 99).

As a human scientist, we must establish our relationship to the inquiry so that it is clear where we are “coming from” in regards to our own historical presuppositions, assumptions, potential biases, and so on. The “idea of the ‘researcher-as-instrument’ central to many styles of qualitative research emphasizes the potential for bias” (Robson, 2011, p. 157). In addition, many of the approaches of human science research call for direct observation as a technique of inquiry. While it “seems to be pre-eminently the appropriate technique for getting at ‘real life’ in the real world” (Robson, 2011, p. 316) it is not trouble free in so far as the presence of the inquirer creates an effect on the activity, and thus the outcome of the results of the inquiry. Methods of approach exist to mitigate this, but it is impossible to eliminate some influence. Again, this is another aspect of placing our involvement as part of the human science inquiry so that the evaluation of the knowledge gained takes this into consideration (Robson, 2011, pp. 317-324).

In the relationship of expanding knowing (epistemology) by refining our insights, it must be said, that understanding is not the same as knowledge. At one level of abstraction it could be said that the “progression” of epistemology is from perception to information to understanding to knowledge to wisdom, with each new level requiring a deepening of meaning and consensus. This does not eliminate the possibility of an insight, intuition or ‘hunch’ that causes a transcendence of some schematic development of any of these levels of knowing. Somewhere in here is also awareness, sense, belief and certainty, to say nothing of truth. This opens up a whole vast area of discussion in each of these levels of what are really relationships with the world. If we can accomplish all of the aspects laid out above, hopefully we will have scientific knowledge worthy of the name *human science*.

What is Unique about Human Science?

*If you look at a testimony of love from 2,000 years ago it can still exactly speak to you,
whereas medical advice from only 100 years ago is ridiculous. –
Jennifer Michael Hecht, on poetry versus science*

It would seem that the recent development of human sciences emerged as a rejection of the philosophical, methodological and epistemological underpinnings to ‘standard’ science, which held that only knowledge that was absolutely certain, objectively obtained and re-verifiable was worthy of consideration as meeting the criteria of “scientific knowledge” (Polkinghorne, 1983; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Creswell, 2013). As the discourse over the validity of these underpinnings to “standard science” progressed, it became clear that even in the natural or hard sciences that many of these tenets were untenable (objectivity, unbiased, value-free, apodictic knowledge, and so on).

At the same time, in many quarters, the long-term debate over how to do scientific inquiry into the human realm evolved to accept that there needed to be unique methods and standards for human sciences. That assertoric knowledge, derived from methods like phenomenology, hermeneutics, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, narrative inquiry, arts-based research, and other approaches could give us insight into individual and group experiences that qualified as scientific knowledge of acceptable certainty was ultimately accepted. One aspect of this acceptance was to overtly claim that the researcher came to the

inquiry with a pre-existing bundle of cultural and paradigmatic predispositions that were part of the context of doing research, not in a controlled laboratory setting, but in the real world, where a more faithful inspection of processes and experiences of the participants could be examined. Thus, more accurate descriptions of activities and interpretations of meaning were attainable, and therefore the knowledge gained would be of a higher quality in its correspondence with reality.

As a quick side note, we should take into account the view of Badiou as to the nature of knowledge, that is, that in acquiring knowledge

In addition, human sciences have a perspective that scientific inquiry is purposeful beyond the simple attainment of insight. Knowledge is to be used to alter or transform the world to make it a more human place, where the potential of human beings can be furthered towards their full realization. Science for science sake is not a valid or relevant position for human science with so many challenges facing the global situation of humanity. Perspectives from seemingly radical or alternate world views (indigenous, feminist, queer, minority, class, gender, disabled, and so on) are encouraged to join the dialogue and present their unique insight and certainties to the community for review and validation as new and needed knowledge.

It seems to me that several points about ‘standard’ science should be explored. The first is to remember Gregory Bateson’s statement, “Science never *proved* anything.” ‘Standard’ science’s application over the last 300 years to the hard sciences, engineering, medical and technological aspects of reality has created incredible advances in these areas (automobiles, airplanes, space travel, laser surgery, radiation therapy, cell phones, satellite communication, and so on). That these advances have both liberated and enslaved human society is still under investigation, debate and a search for resolution.

The discussion over whether or not “great discoveries” of science had anything to do with ‘standard’ science (or at least the much touted scientific method) has continued since the debate was furthered with the writings of Kuhn, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, Harrington, Polanyi, Feyerabend, and others. There is no doubt, however, that there is a place for the ‘standard’ view of science and its application to its appropriate fields.

Advancements in technology, especially those produced during economic crisis and war, usually completely outstrip the social relations and human capacity to incorporate them in a long-term strategy for survival and freedom, ergo the ecological crisis and NSA surveillance of everyday life as two diverse examples. The globalized commoditization of all aspects of reality has brought out a major contradiction in the ‘standard’ application of science. These “advancements” have created a human reality that it (‘standard’ science) cannot investigate for a solution on the individual or collective level.

‘Standard’ science, it could be argued, has thus become both a political ideology and an integral component of the means of production, working for an economic system that “owns” (for the want of a better word) the political apparatus of society(ies). In this context, democracy is a sham and the headlong rush to make profits at the expense of future generations is unable to be mitigated or controlled by the will of the world’s population. The ideological nature of ‘standard’ science permeates academia, scientific research, corporate and private laboratories, and governmental agencies. Hence the need for the development of alternative ethical and scientific methodologies and philosophies, in the hope that there can be an alteration to the path of the capitalist definition of “progress” and a transformation of world history in a direction which is committed to stopping ecological and cultural destruction. Re-subordinating “market forces” to the needs of people, societies and the environment requires new, maybe even

revolutionary, approaches to inquiry, understanding and purpose. Human science may have this potential. Our task is to help fulfill this possibility.

To me, knowledge is always grounded in a spatial, temporal and cultural context, shaped by the social, political and economic forces at play in the particular time and place. Echoing Marx, we can differentiate humans from other animals any way we choose, the human species differentiates itself by the fact that it makes its own world, its own history and its own future. This *making* of the world is a primary aspect of humanness, with a multidimensional dialectic between the creation/evolution of consciousness, language, technology, spirituality and all other aspects of culture driven by what is possible in the given environment and stage of cultural development. Metaphorically, all culture is derived from the top six inches of top soil and how it is appropriated by the given society to meet physical and social needs.

Knowledge is accumulated in this process and passed on, first internally and inter-generationally and subsequently between groups where they meet and exchange various aspects of their existence (words, concepts, food, tools, and so on). At some point the power of knowledge is recognized and retaining its power as a valuable asset that can increase control over others and the environment becomes manifest in cultural institutions (shamanism, religion, political structure, for example). Control of the cultural group (clan, tribe, society, nation, and so forth) and access to a greater share of material goods may follow. Various persons and groups vie for this control of resources and power, and what it brings. Groups evolve specializations and differentiation within their society, each with its hold on their respective viewpoints and corresponding knowledge. Knowledge may be shaped, controlled and morphed into ideology, that is, “warped, bent, and distorted” in order to allow the “owners” continued privilege and power. Recognition of the difference between knowledge and ideology becomes crucial.

Today we speak of postmodern, postcolonial, anticolonial, paradigms and deconstruction of prior (and current) views of the world. In opposition to, and complimentary to, dominant ways of knowing, characterized as encompassing a broad spectrum, i.e. White, male, bureaucratic, technological, positivist, linear, hegemonic, imperialist, colonial, militaristic, racist, misogynist, homophobic, hyper-capitalistic, neo-liberal, and so forth, a variety of other viewpoints have evolved. Feminist, Chicana feminist, Black, queer, gay, lesbian, Black lesbian, indigenous, Asian, Latino(a), Indian, colonized, marginalized, and other perceptions are evolving, combining, metamorphosing and being elaborated to give us different qualities, groundings and expressions of world views.

The task of evaluation, determining if it is up to the task of being knowledge (as opposed to delusion, opinion, or ideology) has not gone away. Acceptance of the validity of someone’s, or some groups, unique perspective is one thing. A multitude of epistemologies and ontologies exist, if we base the definitions of these terms to accept this, and I think we can. At the same time, there are universal “truths” of humanness that unite us all as a species, and beyond that as a species-being, with a common genetic package and common potentialities. We need, as a species, to learn that it is our unique capability to fulfill so many various destinies, each valid, truthful and valuable, that unites us all. The current hegemonic regime likes us at odds. We need to end this and human science can help by engaging in this task in inquiry and education and promoting this view and its *praxis*.

Human Science and Being an Intellectual

As Human Science's project is to transform the world, so is it the task of persons who are engaged in the pursuit of Human Science. I would go so far as to say that if you are a human scientist, you are by definition a revolutionary intellectual. As Edward Said so eloquently stated, "the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo at a time when the struggle on behalf of underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seems so unfairly weighted against them" (Said, 1996, p. xvii).

This is where we need to go back in history and clarify a few things. Prior to the twentieth century intellectuals, and even scientists, were viewed as being part of the general cultural elite. There was literally no social difference between writers, musicians, poets, painters, sculptures, dancers, philosophers and others who we might view as being part of the 'intelligentsia' of society. However, in the twentieth century this all changed. The rise of science, especially as it was brought into being a part of the means of production of capitalist economies created a different social role and status for scientists, artists, and philosophers. This was reflected in the division of sciences into various categories and statuses in 'modern' society. Positivism as a philosophical underpinning of science is a product of this incorporation of science into the means of production, that is, it is the narrowing down to a technological view of science to serve certain ends. And in so far as it impacted human or social sciences, positivist views were put forward to support a view that society could be managed like a corporation, through the transformation of institutions of education and other social institutions to create harmony with the needs of the politico-economic ends of a consumer society.

Under this regime of socio-politico-economic domination by capitalism scientists and other technical experts (engineers, doctors, psychologists, academicians, and so on) became incorporated into meeting the needs of specific classes and groups to further their control and domination of the status quo. As Gouldner (1979) has pointed out in a much neglected work, *The future of intellectuals and the rise of the new class*, the splitting of intellectuals into technological 'experts' who serve specific functions in relation to industry and social categories has created a situation where there are "specialized experts addressing other specialize experts in a lingua franca largely unintelligible to unspecialized people" (Said, 1996, p. 9). One of the expressions of this is the view that this language is 'objective' and stands above any special interest thus obfuscating the reality that they serve a real purpose to a given special group (Gouldner, 1979, pp. 28-34). Gouldner even goes so far as to characterize positivism as an ideology which was "a premature bid by the emerging New Class (intelligentsia) to portray itself as the essential source of legitimacy and productivity in modern society" (ibid, p.35). This then is the merger of technocracy with political power to create an authoritarian oligarchy in modern society. In Western capitalism we can see this in the various institutions at work today in running the global economy (the IMF, World Bank, state supported NGOs, and so on) while in the former Soviet Union and in today's China we can see it in the state-capitalist machinery which runs the economy for an elite class which rules by totalitarian means. The difference is not one of kind but of degree between the West and the East. At the end of the day it spells the same outcome for the vast majority of the world's population.

Why is this so? To me it is because a fundamental aspect of humanness is being free. And in the West our 'representative democracy' has proven to be as limiting of freedom and, even more importantly, of having an impact on the decisions made in the name of the society as a whole, as any other oligarchy. Decisions are made by small groups of people in power, relying

on ‘experts,’ with little or no regard to the general populations will, desire or viewpoint. The ongoing wars in the Middle East are clearly the most blatant recent examples of this as a reality (should I say fact?). The decisions are made behind closed doors, in secrecy and without democratic public discourse. And opposition or dissent is characterized as ‘treason’ or worse.

In modern and post-modern discourse, at nearly all levels of society, the question, or problematic, of freedom is nearly universal. As an aspect of individual life, freedom is a modern notion, arising in the Renaissance as a part of the new legal conception of rights of individuals to live life as they prefer (Berlin, 1969, p. 129). Freedom is held to be a fundamental value of being human and a basic value or standard of evaluating life, societies, nations, cultures, art, gender, and a myriad of other aspects of human reality. As such, freedom is at least a metaphysical aspect of humanness, if not an ontological characteristic. The nature of freedom for humans is viewed as the basis of being able to evaluate and comprehend most, if not all, other aspects of human existence. In current human experience, the view that one has on the nature of freedom impacts many arenas of life: ethics, knowledge, expression and art, the scope of political action, the ability to realize potentials, contrasts of opportunity and options in life and death. This position can be deeply philosophical, moral, political, or totally “common sense” depending on the question at hand and the participants in the discussion.

Personal autonomy and equality are two of the main components of this view of liberty, or freedom, and much of the historical, and ongoing, debate is over the range and quality of these two aspects of socio-political life. What does this freedom or liberty entail? Different positions or orientations have traditionally been taken to answer this question from the beginnings of philosophical thought which have explored the basis of freedom and liberty in connection with free will, ethics and morality, aesthetics and beauty, and, of course, democracy and equality. Conditions of personal autonomy should have certain aspects in order to fulfill the nature of liberty as a right. Freedom from violence or the threat of violence, either in the everyday aspects of life or from the political force of the state is one of the first essential aspects of freedom. The free relationship of the individual to the state, even within a democratic regime, is not a guarantee that the positive definition of freedom is realized by it. The ability to manifest my own desires, that is, the *freedom to do or be*, is not the same as the *freedom from constraints*.

We can see the continuation of this historical tension in myriad current events: unsettled reality of the post-Arab Spring, the disarray in Afghanistan and Iraq, Mubarak without Mubarak in Egypt, civil war in Syria, Libya and elsewhere, the repression in Pakistan, and the on-going intensity of the occupation in Palestine, the subjugation of entire nations and their economies by other nation’s banks in the Eurozone, and our own political sclerosis and government by surveillance in the United States. These are but a few examples that point to a deepening of the fact of the dismissal of freedoms in exchange for the interests of the state. The new twist on this, however, may be the complete disregard for even the interests of the state versus the needs of an international globalized elite who have no allegiance to anyone except their own cohort.

Discourse about the nature of freedom in the face of the barbarism of the Islamic State may seem esoteric or even irrelevant for the unfortunate souls swept up in its immediate brutality. But the question of what constitutes freedom is actually profoundly in need of exposition and redefinition, especially in regards to who controls society and the social institutions embodied in the state and the culture as a whole. The consequences for people all over the globe are that access to an imagining of a different reality, of a life lived otherwise, has been under assault for decades. Freedom from violence, or the threat of violence, from stereotyping, discrimination, religious intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, hunger and

starvation, lack of opportunity, access to basic cleanliness, health care, shelter, nutrition, the ability to appreciate beauty and have peace of mind are all imbedded in this one concept, *freedom*.

Again, quoting Said, “The purpose of the intellectual’s activity is to advance human freedom and knowledge. This is still true, I believe, despite the often repeated charge that ‘grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment’ . . . are pronounced as no longer having any currency in the era of postmodernism” (Said, 1997, pp. 17-18). Having technical skills, knowledge, expertise, or intelligence does not make someone an intellectual, nor does fame or having a platform to promulgate one’s views. The key to being an intellectual is stand for the desire for more human freedom and realization of human potential. In present reality, this demands that we are challenging the status quo of global capitalism and the havoc it is laying down on the earth and its inhabitants. As Sartre once said “There is no such thing as a right-wing intellectual.” This is the legacy of all of the people, known and unknown, who have taken a stand to challenge the reality they faced and decide that it is unacceptable to allow it to go unchanged. Without this, we are no better than robots, living from day to day in a honey-colored haze. “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. He who believes himself the master of others does not escape being more of a slave than they. How did this change take place” (Rousseau, 1762/1987, p. 141)? Over two-hundred and fifty years following Rousseau’s declaration, we are still searching for an answer that can create another level of change and a quality of freedom worthy of humanness.

So, I guess this is a challenge to all of us as we take on the task of creating and building H.S.I. and making it a transdisciplinary learning community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to creating a humane and ecologically sustainable global future through education and research. How do we answer this challenge? Given the miserable mess the world is in, do we have an alternative? ‘Progress’ is not inevitable, but more barbarism may be. What do you all think?

References

- Bentz, V.M. & Shapiro, J.J. (1998). *Mindful inquiry in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.
- Berlin, I. (1969). Two concepts of liberty. In *Four essays on liberty*. 118-172, London, UK. Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles, CA. Sage.
- Gouldner, A. (1979). *The future of the intellectuals and the rise of a new class*. New York, NY. Oxford University press.
- Habermas, J. (1973). *Theory and practice*. Boston, MA. Beacon Press.
- Locke, L.F., Spirduso, W.W., & Silverman, S.J. (2014). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals*. Los Angeles, CA. Sage.

Human Science Perspectives, 2016, Vol.1, No.1

Marx, K. (1967). *Writings of the young Marx on philosophy and society*. L.D. Easton & K.H. Guddat (Eds. & Trans). Garden City, NY. Anchor Books.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research*. Chichester, UK. Wiley & Sons.

Rothberg, D. (1991). Inquiry in the realm of meanings: The idea of human sciences. *Theories of Inquiry Learning Guide*. PDF for Saybrook Resources.

Rousseau, J-J. (1987). *The political writings*. Indianapolis, IN. Hackett Publishing.

Said, E. W. (1997). *Representations of the intellectual*. New York, NY. Random House.