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Volume 4

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Annals of Theoretical Psychology

Volume 4

Edited by

LEENDERT P. MOS

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Preface

This discipline has become more reflective in recent years. It has also become blatantly philosophical, which is itself cause for reflection. The philosophy of psychology has not been exactly a burgeoning field, and yet psychologists and philosophers of all persuasions are writing philosophical psychology. Perhaps all this activity merely reflects the uneasy bifurcation of psychology into biological and cognitive domains. After all, there were similar flurries in the 1920s and 1950s when the discipline assumed new directions. But, before, there were too many things to do; scientific knowing seemed so compelling and so singular in methodology. Today, the entire enterprise is much more uncertain, and not just psychology, but all human scientific inquiry. The fundamental questions remain much the same, of course; what has changed is that philosophers are explicitly addressing questions of psychology and psychologists are at least implicitly engaged in philosophy. The boundaries are no longer clear cut! Theoretical psychology is as much the doing of philosophy as it is of experimental research. Volume 4 of these *Annals* attests to this state of affairs. The psychologists' style reflects their philosophical understanding; the philosophers differ according to what they take to be psychological knowledge.

In the tradition of empirical semantics, the philosopher Herman Tennessen is skeptical about the possibility of articulating whole world views, including scientific world views, but his advice to try to do so is accepted as a challenge in all the subsequent contributions. Anders Lindseth, a philosopher in the hermeneutic tradition, and Fred Vollmer, a psychologist in the tradition of ordinary language analysis, address the fledgling domain of personality theory. In doing so they manage to raise most of the issues of philosophical psychology: the nature of explanation, reductionism, the role of evidence, causal determination, the validation of theoretical constructs, and measurement. Lindseth presses for a hermeneutic science and in the process contributes to sub-

stantive psychoanalytic theory. Vollmer proposes a theory of mind on the basis of ordinary language use which puts into question Cartesian dualism and the role of nomological-deductive explanation. In these two papers, together with the commentaries and replies, the reader is treated to clashes of world views and, within each of these, a rich array of subtleties in theory and of metatheory. Harry Hunt's revival of the subjective within psychology clarifies the currently exclusive concern with information rather than meaning. His paper exemplifies Tennesen's claim that world views are rooted in an intuitive, "totalitarian," disposition: the subjective meaning core of all cognition. Hunt's efforts serve to fill out those by Lindseth and Vollmer, who would probably find his proposal quite congenial. Owen Egan's explication of the concept of belief as he finds it in his splendid review of the psychological literature draws criticism from all his commentators. His paper, the commentaries, and the reply demonstrate just how difficult it is to do theoretical work when both experimental research and conceptual schemes are brought to bear. Finally, James Deese's review of Daniel Robinson's recent book is a sympathetic treatment by a research psychologist who has actually let the issues of philosophical psychology inform his work.

Tennesen's contribution was submitted in 1982! Commentaries were available in the following year when he retired from the University of Alberta to his native Norway. He reworked the manuscript and wrote a reply at the University of Oslo in 1984. Lindseth's contribution came by way of Tennesen; the two met in Dubrovnik in 1982. Commentaries and Lindseth's reply were completed in the fall of 1984. Vollmer's paper was first submitted in 1983 and a revised version, much reduced in length, was accepted the following year. Commentaries and Vollmer's reply were available in 1985. Egan's contribution was submitted in 1983, followed by John Macnamara's commentary six weeks later! The other two commentaries and Egan's reply were completed in 1985. Deese's review of Robinson's *Philosophy of Psychology* was written last summer following the former's visit to our Center, where he used a prepublication draft of the book in his lectures.

The University of Alberta continues to support my involvement in the preparation of these volumes. I am grateful to Mrs. Evelyn Murison for her secretarial and editorial assistance. My thanks also to Mr. James Voogd who ran down references and did an early reading of the manuscript noting numerous anomalies in the text (all of which, I hope, have been corrected).

I have dedicated this volume to Professor Herman Tennesen. He, together with Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1901-1972) and Joseph Royce,

founded our Center in 1967. Even since his retirement he remains an active participant. A scholar of remarkable breadth, he has always engaged psychologists and philosophers in an effort best called *philosophical psychology*.

LEENDERT P. MOS

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