

Part I

Defining Phenomenology and Pure Psychology

In the same way that people would not measure a book with a ruler if they wanted to understand its contents, phenomenology argues that natural scientific psychology cannot adequately grasp meaning and consciousness as they are experienced. The aim of the pure psychology version of phenomenology is to integrate the three registers of the biological, the psychological and the intersubjective around an understanding of meaning for consciousness. For the natural and naturalistic attitudes it is clear that the being of the biological is different from the being of the psychological and the social. Although there is mutual influence between these three regions of being, no scientific approach has yet specified how neurons, chemicals and electrical activity in the brain and genes support consciousness, or specified how the consciousness of one person is connected with the consciousness of others, fully concordant with sharing meaningful events and processes as meaningful, and not focusing only on neurological processes. However, the impact of any piece of research, or the outcome of the psychometrics of a survey of any sort, is apparent when the narrative of the research findings is expressed in simple principles and instructions that the public can follow and colleagues are able to test. Because everyday living is impaired when persons are distressed, the purpose of therapy is promoting self-managed self-care and giving of attention to others through clear discussion. Communication is important because the research findings of psychology require translation of their findings for them to be used by ordinary citizens. The claimants to knowledge are bound to express their positions clearly, when it comes to using their beliefs in the everyday life.

Once a good relationship is built, therapy and mental health care engage clients in thinking, problem-solving and making and maintaining changes: “keep this, increase that, start this, stop that”. Clients’ experiences need to be responded to so that they can work out what do in the specific case of having had a panic attack or how to live more harmoniously with others. One desired outcome is knowing how to cope when there is distress, so it becomes possible to manage it and learn how to re-balance their lives and emotions without on-going assistance. Not only is it the task of therapy to help people manage their personalities and lifestyles; it’s also

for managing activities in contexts of various sorts. Therapy makes itself redundant for those helps. Therapy is not about articles of faith or quasi-religious blind faith. If people are to benefit from its services, let it make its claims clear for empirical testing and the public. The outcome for clients is to permit them to benefit from a treatment that is transparent in its principles and open to questions and challenges. The outcome for therapists is to get the immediate benefit of making their work more accessible to a greater range of the public, with far more complex problems than it was previously possible to help. To make these aims manifest, it is the first-person view that needs to be addressed. Chapter 2 provides some basic information about phenomenology and its manner of argument. A more detailed overview of phenomenology is made in Chapter 3 before defining the details of how it interprets experiences in Chapters 4 and 5. The focus is on the theory and practice of psychotherapy in general. The desired reformation produces a collegiate approach to making psychotherapy a biopsychosocial, wholistic approach around the centrality of meaning for consciousness. This means working with and co-ordinating the biological approaches to psychology and genetics; plus approaches to the psychology of individuals; plus approaches to the social nature of human being.