

Husserl, Schutz, “Paul” and me: Reflections on writing phenomenology

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Abstract

This paper is a reflection on the boundaries of academic discourse as I came to be acutely aware of them while attempting to teach a graduate seminar in qualitative research methods. The purpose of the readings in Husserl and Schutz and the writing exercises was to assist students trained in quantitative methods and steeped in positivistic assumptions about research to write phenomenological descriptions of lived experience. “Paul” could not write the assigned papers due to a diagnosed writing “disability” but he did submit fictional stories and sketches which beautifully illustrated the concepts of Husserl and Schutz. Paul’s disability presented a natural “bracketing” experiment which brought the positivistic assumptions surrounding academic research and writing to the forefront. I engaged in verbal dialogues with Paul, in which he discussed the philosophical ideas. My work with Paul highlighted the extent to which the academic lifeworld marginalizes those who seek to write from the heart, disguising even the work of those philosophers who wish to uncover direct experiences.

The “crisis” of the sciences is the loss of meaning for
life. (Husserl, 1970: 5)

I want to touch a person’s heart. I don’t want to just
itemize things. . .that’s why I write the way I do. —
“Paul”

The world, the physical as well as the sociocultural one,
is experienced from the outset in terms of types: there are
mountains, trees, birds, fishes, dogs, and among them
Irish setters . . . they belong to the prepredicative
thinking. The vocabulary and the syntax of the vernacular
of everyday language represent the epitome of the
typifications socially approved by the linguistic group.
(Schutz, 1970: 119–120)

Schutz talked about how we have to live, approach the
world according to how we experience it, what we know,
I pushed it (Schutz may not want it pushed). My idea is
that we don’t really learn about life, or ourselves or
meaning until we challenge the boundaries of our
lifeworld and the kinds of typifications we live according
to. When those boundaries are pushed we get an idea of
the vastness of life. — Paul

Introduction

This is a reflection on my encounter with "Paul" a graduate student who, due to a writing "disability" diagnosed when he was a child, could not write academic essays or papers. Writing evoked deep feelings in him which moved him to write fictional narratives, expressive of his experiences. These ranged in length from brief dialogues and sketches to short stories. He submitted these to me in lieu of the assigned academic papers.

I designed some exercises based upon Husserl's essential phenomenology and Schutz' cultural (lifeworld) phenomenology. My strategy was to provide exercises in which students could bridge from traditional academic social sciences approaches to phenomenology. My relationship with Paul during the two semesters in which he was a student in my seminars, uncovered layers in my academic lifeworld which were previously in the margins of my consciousness but which nevertheless framed the experiences of members of the seminar.

Paul's "disability" highlights the place of the consciousness of the researcher in the production of the text and brings the textual and contextual aspects of academic writing to the forefront (see Polkinghorne, 1988; and Brown, 1987). My work with Paul, as I participated in the "culture" of phenomenologists, opened the way to a deeper appreciation of Husserl's task, what he accomplished, and why phenomenology is critical to revival and renewal in social science. It also brought to the forefront the way phenomenological writing itself puts a particular layer or screen on direct experience which is different from that of creative or fictional writing. My dialogues with Paul occurred while he was reading Husserl for the first time, as a member of my seminar. These dialogues reveal my dilemma as a teacher when student's phenomenological insights run counter to traditional academic expectations. Paul's fictional sketches stood as a challenging backdrop for more sterile academic descriptions which seemed relatively remote and far less expressive of emotional truths.

Paul's challenge

Paul was an intense young man of about thirty, pursuing a master's degree in sociology while working as a counselor in a local jail. I first became aware of his gift for creative writing when in a previous seminar in social psychology he submitted a story in lieu of an assigned essay on the mother/child bond. Paul wrote an account which described in poignant detail the devastating experience of a G.I. who in the midst of war-induced hysteria raped and killed a young Vietnamese peasant girl and then participated in a cover up of the

incident which involved his entire platoon. Since his discharge from the service the young man had been living with his mother. Retreating into the security of this primary bond, he has been unable to establish relationships with women other than his mother. This former honors student worked only at low-skilled, low pay jobs.

When I read the account, I was so moved by it that I cried. I assumed the story was of his own experience in the Vietnam war, but then was confused because he looked to be too young to have been in the military in the 1970s. I made a point of speaking with Paul about this after class the next time the seminar met. Anger, relief and awe were my mixed feelings when he told me the account was fictional. I was relieved that he did not have this horrendous experience and was not in reality emotionally crippled from it. I was angry that I had cried and was intensely moved and concerned about something which did not actually happen to him. I was in awe at his writing ability.

After apologizing adamantly, Paul told me of his "handicap." Ever since primary school, he had difficulty writing essays or analytical term papers:

Early in my school years, I was diagnosed as 'learning disabled' because although I could read I could not write. I was put in a special class, was tested and treated and tested and treated, but to no avail. Later (in the fifth grade) after a break through in therapy, I was able to write when in an intense feeling state. What I write in these states is stories.

When I asked him how he reached graduate school, Paul stated that he was able to graduate from high school and undergraduate college without having to write an essay or analytical term paper. In fact, his classes were usually so large that all the tests were multiple choice or true false. In those cases where a written paper was required, he was able to negotiate giving an oral report instead.

Was I taken in by Paul to the point where he fooled me with his story about his "handicap," the same way he misled me about the first story of his I read? Is his emotionally appealing fiction a microcosm of his way of life? Is his "disability" yet another fictionalized presentation of himself to me? What does it mean that Paul presented himself first to me in disguised form, as one who was guilty of an atrocious crime and hence unable to function? This inability to function took the form of a young man who stayed "tied to his mother's apron strings." Was this his symbolic way of tying himself to me – for academic survival, and at the same time telling me he was a liar? These thoughts occurred to me occasionally in the months during which we worked together. However, I came to believe the truth of Paul's disclosures and came to see him as a person of integrity.

Despite his inability to write academic style term papers, Paul was able to

discuss the fine points of the difficult texts assigned in the seminars. Nevertheless, he received an "incomplete" in his first seminar with me, because he had not submitted a term paper but several short stories instead. He said that he continued to undergo therapy to deal with the problem and hoped to turn in the papers presently.

In the qualitative research seminar, the second seminar Paul took with me, it soon became apparent that it would have been ironic for me to fail Paul because he continued to submit "stories" instead of academic papers. His stories illustrated the methodological issues which students were asked to address in their written exercises. More significantly, they embodied and demonstrated solutions to the critiques of positivism of Husserl and Schutz. I felt a gnawing sense of uneasiness when I anticipated failing him because he did not produce the required work in the required form. It would have been contradictory to the spirit of the subject I was teaching for me, a professor, to fail a student who by his nature was unable to exhibit the methodological flaws of positivistic methodology.

On the other hand, if I changed my standards to accommodate his work, was I being soft? erratic? inconsistent? arbitrary? manipulated? Would this be encouraging Paul to remain in this state? After intense dialogue with Paul I was convinced this was not the case. Paul was in serious academic trouble with other classes with incompletes, waiting only for term papers. If Paul were dishonest, he could easily have purchased term papers at one of the term paper "mills" surrounding the campus, frequently advertising on bulletin boards in not so very disguised language. Indeed, Paul was quite shy and did not ask for special favors or waivers. He simply turned in his stories and, when prompted, explained his dilemma and his current efforts, with therapists, tutors, and friends, to overcome his "handicap."

As I struggled to teach phenomenology to a group of graduate students steeped in positivism I lost sight of the horizons and sedimentations surrounding me. Indeed, it was only "safe" allowable and possible for the seminar to take place under a large positivistic frame of reference. The course itself was not catalogued as phenomenology (and I believe that such a course could not have passed the curriculum committee). Rather I taught it under the rubric of a topic in a seminar on "qualitative methodology." The qualitative/quantitative distinction itself is made within the scientific tradition to allow analyses to encompass a greater variety of observations or those which were not predicted and coded prior to the research. The seminar was only thought safe as a supplement to courses on quantitative research and statistics.

Reflecting on my dilemma with Paul brought me in touch with the way voices from other places, from different lifeworlds and settings, are carefully screened out of academic environments. The purveyors of such worlds are quickly labelled "other" and discarded. Only because he had the genius of a

lone wolf had Paul survived so long. I have seen others of high intellect and fine sensitivity who either leave and go into the arts or turn to alcohol or drugs to relieve the stress of these strictures on their creative energies.

Creating a clear space in consciousness for inquiry: "Origin"

In the spirit of this critique of positivism and of the hegemonic way of knowing in the social sciences, I worked with students to reach points of "origin." Origin is a place in the psyche which is not at all similar to logical grounding, but reaches beneath/beyond this point. This place is the inner well spring of poetry, music, science – where there is no contradiction between intuition and judgement. It is what Schrag (1980: 69) refers to as the place of the "origin" of the human sciences.

By origin Schrag is not talking about "epistemology" or "foundations" as traditionally construed by philosophers, nor does "origin" imply a place of temporal beginning. Schrag calls for an epoche (suspension) of epistemological thinking. (1980: 11) This move requires an expanded sense of reason as well as a broader sense of experience. It is also a move which leads to an "end of philosophy" in its traditional sense as the sole arbitrator of reason and gate-keeper for valid knowledge. It responds to the call to open up ways of knowing to diverse forms emanating from multiple cultures and lifeworlds. It resonates to feminist critique (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986; see also Smith, 1990). The place of origins reverses the critique of everyday life understandings and reveals the lifeworld as the ground of all knowledge.

Phenomenology is not an alternative scientific methodology but is rather a deeper level of knowing. It is the place of "origin" that provides a center for conducting inquiry in the post-positivist sense. From this "original" consciousness, one can anchor ones' inquiries and at the same time be open to the multiplicity of cultures and forms of knowing. Students who would become phenomenologists must be guided to the place of origin. It is only from here, not from the place of prestructured analytical thinking, that descriptions of phenomena can be approached.

Husserl (1970: 210) reached towards the "origin" in his concept of the "transcendental ego":

I know through my phenomenological studies that I, the previously naive ego, was none other than the transcendental ego in the mode of naive hiddenness; I know that to me, as the ego again straightforwardly perceived as a human being, there belongs inseparably a reverse side which constitutes and thus really first produces my full concreteness, I know of this whole dimension of transcendental functions, interwoven with one another throughout and extending into the infinite.

Because of his disability, Paul could only write from the point of origin. Paul had been diagnosed at about nine as suffering from dyslexia, writer's block, acute anxiety, and a generalized learning disorder. Paul's disability reveals essential aspects of academic, analytical writing which are disguised in the taken for granted norms of academia. In this regard the case study of Paul reflects the techniques of Merleau-Ponty and Harold Garfinkel. The person who has amnesia, and cannot recognize the names of colors, reveals to the investigator the way the normal person, by contrast, categorizes colors based on their relationship to other colors in the surroundings (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 190f.). "Agnes," formerly a male who became a female through surgery, similarly reveals the way each of us constructs our gender identity in everyday life (Garfinkel, 1967: 174f.). Paul's inability to write "academic" style prose elucidates its functional blindnesses. Constitutionally unable to be a positivist, Paul could not do the assignment because he was unable to adopt the academic "objective" attitude when he wrote. While he could discuss the points in difficult texts orally in the seminars, due to his "disability" he was incapable of writing in the "scientific," analytical way. He could only write "from the heart."

Paul was capable of discussing analytical concepts, but not writing about them because to him writing necessarily took him to the place of "origins." As he said in a letter:

I will try to give you a call or stop by next week to see if I can maybe explain some of the more analytical workings of the thing. I can talk about all that stuff fine, just can't write it – no emotion.

Husserl's eidos, and Paul's "fiction"

The freedom of eidetic research also necessarily demands operating in phantasy. (Husserl, 1982: 132)

As human beings we have to order the world by telling stories; by making stories. In that way we can live more fully. – Paul

We follow our universal principle that every individual event has its essence, which can be seized upon in eidetic purity and, in this purity, must belong to a field of possible eidetic research. (Husserl, 1982: 67)

Pure phenomenology, is neither a science of facts not a science of what is real. It is a science of phenomena which have been transcendently reduced. The end of eidetic phenomenology is the essence. This essence is not the same thing as consciousness of an essence. Essences, like other objects of consciousness, can be attended to correctly or incorrectly. (as in false geometrical thinking). Precise

apprehension of essences is necessary, (Husserl, 1982: 43) therefore such apprehension is similar to sensory perception.

Data: We don't need more facts, we have all the facts we need. We need to make it palatable. A big issue with me in my chosen area, sociology, is that sociology is supposed to generate more data . . . that is not what people want or need. . . - Paul

Husserl delineates two levels of bracketing in the distillation of essences. The epoches asked for in eidetic phenomenology are different from the setting aside of biases. Neither are the epoches a way station in the development of supposedly theory-free or concept-free observations:

The whole prediscovered world posited in the natural attitude, actually found in experience and taken with perfect "freedom from theories" as it is actually experienced, as it clearly shows itself in the concatenations of experiences, is now without validity for us, without being tested and also without being contested, it shall be parenthesized. In like manner all theories and sciences which relate to this world, no matter how well they may be grounded positivistically or otherwise, shall meet the same fate. (Husserl, 1982: 62)

First, one brackets the assumptions based in the sciences, including the social sciences. It becomes clear that the sciences themselves occur in practices embedded and intermingled with the world of everyday life. Next, one must bracket assumptions about a phenomenon which come from the lifeworld. If one is describing not an essence of a specific experience or object of consciousness, but rather is describing the flow of consciousness itself, one must even bracket the belief in the existence of the lifeworld. What is left is the transcendental ego, the constituting consciousness as it intuits phenomena. However, Husserl recognized that all of this takes place within the lifeworld.

Members of the seminar had great difficulty learning to recognize and then bracketing (setting aside) the assumptions of traditional science which they had been so carefully taught. Having accomplished such bracketing, they were to write fresh descriptions of the phenomena they wished to study. Primary aspects of positivism which they were to set aside were the separation of oneself from the objects of study (Giddens, 1974: 22) and the ignoring or repressing of emotional responses.

Paul could not bracket positivistic assumptions because he had not been able to "learn" them in the first place. His existence provided a natural "bracketing" of the assumptions of the lifeworld and of the social sciences. When Paul sat down to write, as he thought about a concept, such as Husserl's idea of consciousness, the intuition he experienced was itself prepredicative and preverbal. It involved the whole sensuous, emotional tone of his body. As he attempted to describe the intuition of this experience in writing, he could not

honestly do this in the form of academic literal realism. The descriptions of the essences came out in "fictional" forms. Their creation occurred in acts of imagination. The eidetic phenomena is not the resulting description. But the description is the closest which Paul could come. Are Paul's imaginative constructions of the essence of these experiences closer to the phenomena than those of the students who wrote academic style papers?

Was Paul, when writing from the heart, writing from the place of the Husserlian phenomenologist? By way of process, the answer is yes, because Paul reached to a direct experience, allowed himself to be with it, then wrote fiction. By example, the answer is no, because Paul did not write descriptions of consciousness as an earnest philosopher, making his processes explicit and analyzing them.

Similarly, Paul could not write a paper on Schutz' theory of "typifications" as they structure action in the lifeworld. However, he could and did write a beautiful short story of how racial typifications had a tremendously negative impact on his life as a child. Paul understood the way stocks of common knowledge, vantage points, biography, relevances and typifications are aspects of everyday life. He was well aware of variations in the levels of awareness and the web of multiple realities. He could illustrate this with stories. But he could not write about the theory of the lifeworld, because he could not disassociate writing from feelings. In Paul's words:

Nothing less than uncovering the truth will satisfy, striving to reach and uncover life's essence in all its fullness . . . and, I can now understand, can see why it is that I cannot write analytical papers, have never written one. . . because to do so would be a betrayal of everything I have hoped and dreamed for. (Paul in conversation)

Paul's words were enhanced by his presence. Paul was good looking, and exuded a sense of intellectual and emotional excitement. In his presence I always felt that he understood what was being discussed, he was excited by new ideas, he was driven by matters of internal importance, he had a passion for seeking justice, for reconciling things. He spoke with a slightly country/Texas accent, which heightened my sense of him as in touch with everyday truths.

Paul stimulated me to reflect on the academic structuring of writing. Even to accept the writing of papers, "compositions" along phenomenological themes takes one away only from the realm, of social sciences. The exercises were designed to cut away these assumptions, like the rope on which an acrobat walks. The net into which the acrobat falls is that of humanities discourses structured according to the rules of composition. Working with Paul taught me that standard academic prose is remote from descriptions of direct experience, and usually bears no relationship to phenomenological essences.

The rules of writing term papers taught in courses traditionally called "Freshmen Composition" are a structural format for academic discourse. Here one learns that one must make one assertion per paragraph and follow this up with supporting evidence. In some colleges, this is accompanied by other core courses such as logic, speech (based on principles of argumentation) math, science and a social science which usually includes the canons of "the scientific method." A theme which runs through these courses is not to trust the knowledge of the lifeworld because it is either erroneous or inconsistent. All of this is reinforced in accordance with conformity to these standards. Paul managed to get through all of this, and with his command of logic, multiple choice tests came easy. Writing was to him too personal, too sacred to force into composition. Only stories could get close to the truth of his experience.

According to Husserl, poetry and fiction are primary aspects of phenomenological thinking. Free variations are imaginings designed to clarify essential elements of phenomena. Phantasies are informed by eidetic intuition. Phantasies also clarify such intuitions:

...one can say in strict truth, that "feigning" ["fiction"] makes up the vital element of phenomenology as of every other eidetic science, that feigning is the source from which the cognition of "eternal truths" is fed. (Husserl, 1982: 133)

The subject matter of the seminar, led directly to questioning the distinction between writing which is considered "factual" and "fiction." Consequently Paul and the other students read Denzin's work which makes this issue thematic. There are "factual" accounts which are so removed or distorted as to be fictional and fictional accounts which are so true to experience that they are more real than renditions which are presented as factual. (Denzin, 1990: 23f.). Whether the writer intends to be truthful or not, the relationship between fiction and fact, and truth and falsehood is complex.

Did Paul's "handicap" therefore, from the point of view of "scientific academics", give him an advantage as a phenomenologist? As Paul said:

As human beings we have to order the world by telling stories, by making stories. In that way we can live more fully. We have lost that in modern society, we don't know how to tell stories or interpret them as well. The Dake tribe in Southwest Africa – their work, their life and spiritual journey were all one thing. At night the mother and father and children would tell stories and sing them and it was a beautiful type of singing. This laced the whole community together. A big thing to me is that we've lost that. There are a lot of stories there but people don't know how to interpret them or help us make connections to use the stories in our lives. In all those qualitative methods we are altering reality by imposing a framework on it. All these methods are building a story. They are saying: this

phenomenon has a beginning, middle and end, there is a journey of sorts. Folks like Heidegger were saying that is how we order the world. We have to have a story as our guidepost.

Dialogues with Paul

Paul was capable of interpreting complex texts, analyzing their logic, and creating typologies in speech and in discussions. Indeed, his oral discussion on the writings of Husserl, Schutz and others showed considerable insight. Feeding my concern for maintaining academic standards, I asked Paul to come by my office to discuss each assignment. I wanted to be certain as to his intentions in writing each story relative to the theories we were reading. Upon our first such encounter I became so impressed with his understanding of the issues and his ability to verbally discuss them that I began to write them down verbatim, with his permission.

In the first dialogue I asked Paul to comment on his reading of Husserl in relation to the story he had submitted. Paul said:

Look at the experience of writing. For most of us there is a dual mode of consciousness, one is analytical and one is creative. When one is on the other one must stay off. This is a way of being, not just neurologically based. Look at my writing . . . When I sit down to write I must put myself in a certain state of awareness where I'm not forcing myself but am open to my imagination. I let the images congeal and then write it down. O.K. when I sit down to write the writing blocks if I try to analyze.

Twelve years ago (age eighteen) a teacher told me to write down what I said. I can write stream of consciousness if I have a character who is doing that.

I used to panic whenever the idea of writing came up. It used to be that way. I don't like that panicky feeling.

When I asked Paul how the story he had submitted, called "The Motions of the Wind" related to Husserl he said:

After I wrote it I thought of how I approach writing. All of us have separate and distinct modes of consciousness. When one is engaged the other is suppressed. They take place separately. They don't take place in the same moment. Some people are good at switching back and forth rapidly. I used relaxation exercises to get at the creative mode. To get to the analytical mode this shuts down and I must build it up again.

Looking back at some of our experiences that is the creative aspect of us. We are encouraged to isolate it from the whole person. I have a panicky attitude about writing. When I was young I wrote then I stopped at one point. In the fifth grade I had trouble writing legibly. I was labelled a slow learner in the fifth grade, this squelched that part of my personality. Some-

one who has a "Pooh Bear" personality" way of perceiving the world is in the minority. I had problems with schedules and numbers until age thirty.

The next week I asked Paul to continue his commentary on the relationship between his writing and Husserl. He said:

When I started to take Husserl's idea that there are structures of consciousness as they related to objects in the environment and that you can't separate subject and object of consciousness I started to do imaginative variations on those modes of consciousness in my experiences and how they are arranged. I made a diagram.

Paul showed me a diagram. Then later he said:

I am normally very much in a feeling, non-logical mode. When I write I go back and forth between observation mode and application. I cannot be in both at the same time, most people go back and forth more rapidly. I have trouble shifting. I have to shift to write stuff down.

Paul said that after making the diagram he did not like it:

When I try to write I usually will come up with some type of emotion. An image is tied up with an emotion. I let myself feel what that is. I let it become some kind of story. Then characters emerge. Usually when I start to write it down it flees. It is a task to get it. In school they put me in special education. I had a problem of writing. I was superior in reading, lousy in what they called "penmanship." They had me come after school every day and write my letters. I was pissed off being separated from everyone and put in the special education class. In counseling they did desensitization with me. A sense of anger and dread surrounds these experiences.

I am an auditory type, what is more important is the sound of the words as they go together. Even if everything else works I can't tolerate it unless it sounds right.

Writing has been a reactionary part of my life. For me writing is going to be right there by my soul. Whenever I decide it is something I am going to do it is at that level, an engagement with my soul. It is frightening. So I am always trying to stay away from it.

Every time I sit down to write something scholarly and academic I won't let myself do it. I may decide not to put myself in a position to be asked again. If I write it will be because it will be something that needs to be said, that is worthwhile. I made it through undergraduate all the way through with honors without writing more than a three page paper. I use a Dictaphone at work to complete my counseling records.

I thought about how I may encourage him to complete his assignment to do a conversational analysis. I asked him: "Can you write a story in which a character was asked to write and record a conversation and analyze it?" He said:

When I do write it must come from that part of me that is potent – the creativity, there is a part of me that has a need to express myself creatively. I must take a step, make a commitment. . . if you do something through love you may as well give it everything you've got, you're going to have to risk everything, go with what is there, just write because it has to be done. Whatever comes out won't count for anything otherwise.

My fear has to do with being in that place for a sustained period of time, and being the whole of that and the structure component (school, work life, etc.) has to be managed. I need to make a commitment. I need to get my master's and then get a full time job and write on the side.

It (writing) is frightening because it means really going into that place, doing it consistently, disciplining myself to do it. That will teach me more than anything else I could do. That's there. . . That's why I'm sad, like everyone we have a point where we ask about whether we are taking the right path, pursuing the truth. I have feelings of not having been connected with my true purpose. It sounds kind of hokey.

I said that it doesn't sound hokey to me.

Paul continued:

I have a unique way of seeing the world, I've always felt ashamed of it. I now accept that that's the way I am. If other people don't like it – tough. I can be valuable if I follow my own music, doing that is risky, but I must do it to be satisfied. I haven't been able to take the pragmatic attitude.

Sensing a deep spiritual sense in Paul, I asked him: "Are you religious?" (Asking the question seemed oddly to disperse the strong sense of spiritual energy which seemed present.) Paul replied:

I'm Catholic. I'm very religious. I'm not practicing. We (in our society) have lost the connection to the spiritual part of everyday existence.

The following week Paul announced that he decided to finish his master's degree. He spoke of his anger at being labelled "disabled." He spoke of his anger at the use of the word about a classmate who described his stepson with this term. Paul said:

I am not "disabled." I am ambivalent about this. I want to be evaluated by the same standards as everyone else, yet I feel I am different. I have to come at writing from a different angle. For me writing is tied to emotions and a situation.

In dialogue, both parties are changed. Paul was changed in his determination to finish his M.A. I was changed more profoundly than I realized at the time. At the time, I thought more deeply about the way in which the structures of academic discourse, even of phenomenological discourse are slanted win-

dows on a much richer direct experience. The window panes frame and direct the gaze through the glass which muffles the sounds of pain and joy and leaves the observer out of touch with the living flesh of those inside. Now I see this experience with Paul and my fascination with it as a push towards my coming into my own truth as a writer of "fiction."

Schutz and Paul

Paul, like other students in the seminar, read Schutz (1970). Taking Husserl (1970) as a starting point, especially his later delineation of the importance of intersubjectivity (1982, 1989), Schutz contended that it was of crucial importance that the social sciences clarify their foundations in the lifeworld which they study. Only in this way could they come to be aware of the connection between their concepts and those held by persons in everyday life. Schutz refined Max Weber's important notion of the ideal type by reference to Husserl. Weber was acutely aware of the way social scientists understand and interpret social reality based on models of typical courses of action and typical actors. Schutz made it clear that this process is similar to the way each member of a community structures the understanding of social life. Social scientists merely clarify this process and make it explicit. The social scientist, said Schutz (1970: 28), creates "puppets" or constructs to indicate typical actors likely traits and actions. For example, economists base their predictions on the model "rational man" who can be expected to act predictably to maximize his wealth. Skinner's "behaving organism" responds predictably to positive and negative reinforcement.

Schutz (1970: 121), explains some of the tensions of human existence in terms of the dissonance between privately held typifications and those which are socially approved. One of Paul's stories addressed typifications about race and how these had profoundly effected his growing up. The story exemplifies forms of experiences of social contradictions and social injustices.

In speaking of his attempt to write about Schutz' concept of typifications in the lifeworld and how they are challenged and change he wrote a story of a white boy who grew up with an abusive father. He and his mother left the father when he was about eight or nine to live with his aunt and uncle "Ishmael." The scene was the late 1960s in a university town. Ishmael was a Black Panther. While Paul could not write an academic paper about the concept of typifications he could write a story about how important the experience of typifications can be:

This story is about a boy with a white abusive father who cannot relate. His uncle is a black man. . .society cannot allow this relationship but the black man is the "father-in-love" in the sense of father and son. . .the boy has to

resolve that but never does. . . all he knows is the person who taught him to love is Ishmael.

There are always structural conditions that funnel us into types of relationships and ways of interacting with others. . . That was my understanding of "typifications." Pasts are imposed on us by society.

How are typifications challenged? Changed? I was trying to get at how these typifications alter. That period of time, like the 60s, were times when typifications were challenged. This leads to new typifications that have a certain structure. During the middle period, when types are challenged, this always happens with marginal people. It is in part due to their biographies, their sense of right and wrong, their feelings about what is right and wrong.

The central character, the boy, which is "me" as a boy was marginal to everything. The only male who taught him to love was black and a Muslim, living with a white woman and later married to her and had kids with her. The boys stayed on the fringe — that was all he knew — he would not change one way or another.

In the story of the boy and Ishmael, the boy's realization of the negative typifications of blacks he grew up with was challenged when he visited his father and step mother who lived in a small Midwestern town. One day a mixed racial couple - black man and white woman - passed by his grandfather's porch. His father and step mother made snide remarks about the couple. The boy said nothing.

On his grandfather's porch - he had knowledge in his heart but was not able to apply it due to previous typifications. The boy betrays his relationship with Ishmael - the only man he loved as a father - and this was a private betrayal of himself. . . I sold out for the easy life. . . That story brings home to me that a lot of the ideas of the 60s were ungenune, so many of us have sold out totally.

Schutz, Paul, Husserl, and me: Strangers all?

The stranger "becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group." (Schutz, 1976: 119-120)

I have a unique way of seeing the world, I've always felt ashamed of it. I now accept that that's the way I am. If other people don't like it - tough. I can be valuable only if I follow my own music. Doing that is risky, but I must do it to be satisfied. - Paul

Schutz was an immigrant, refugee, banker, scholar, activist. He was an economist, musician and philosopher, close to both the Vienna circle and Husserl. Schutz lived in statuses of multiple marginality. Schutz was like a stranger in that he lived and worked primarily as an economist and banker although his intellectual interests were in phenomenology and the social sciences, where he practiced as a scholar and teacher. During the Nazi period, he fled Europe, settling permanently in New York. (Wagner, 1983: 374) Schutz was in a

marginal academic position, in that for the most of his academic career in the United States he taught part time at the New School for Social Research. Moving as he did from the lifeworld of the banker to that of the scholar he lived the sense of "multiple realities" which he wrote about. He was a quintessential "stranger." Similarly Paul, in his role as a writer and as a student with his diagnosed "disability," was a "stranger" among graduate social science students. Paul was excluded from the world of those who disconnect from their emotions as they write.

The stranger, says Simmel, is unaware of the "recipes" by which normal everyday life activities are carried out. Consequently, he has to discover, learn, make explicit what everyone else takes for granted. The stranger:

becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group. (Schutz, 1976: 96)

Excluded from the past history of the group, he is to the members of the group a "man without history" (1976: 97). The stranger similarly cannot distinguish between the typical and the individual. Suppose that in his inquiry into the ways of behaving in the culture he happens upon first of all a deviant, who not only mispronounces words, but who is a social outcast because he does not follow established norms. The stranger would come to think of these ways of behaving as different because they are not like his, but mistake them for the new norms of the culture in which he is living. As Schutz (1976: 103) says: "He is inclined to take mere individual traits as typical ones."

In addition, the stranger may see problems with the cultural patterns taken for granted which those within the setting do not see:

The stranger discerns, frequently with a grievous clear-sightedness, the rising of a crisis which may menace the whole foundation of the "relatively natural conception of the world," while all those symptoms pass unnoticed by the members of the in-group, who rely on the continuance of their customary way of life. (1976: 104)

The lack of immediate acceptance of customs and norms puts the stranger in a suspect position vis a vis the group:

The reproach of doubtful loyalty originates in the astonishment of the members of the in-group that the stranger does not accept the total of its cultural pattern as the natural and appropriate way of life and as the best of all possible solutions of any problem. The stranger is called ungrateful, since he refuses to acknowledge that the cultural pattern offered to him grants him shelter and protection. But these people do not understand that the stranger in the state of transition does not consider this pattern as a protect-

ing shelter at all but as a labyrinth in which he has lost all sense of his bearings. (1976: 104-105)

At the end of the his second term with me, Paul wrote me a letter, attached to the draft of a novella he had written. The letter expresses his attempt to fulfill the "incomplete" in social psychology by explaining the reasons for the novel, and his decision to devote himself totally to writing. His letter expressed the marginality of those who have a passionate commitment to some creative endeavor which may never bring fulfillment and which is not generally socially rewarded. Paul expressed the fear of failure and that failure if he tried wholly and totally could lead him to wish to die. At the same time he said that he realized now that not to try would be a greater failure. He wrote of his writing as having to come from a place of experiential truth:

Nothing less than uncovering the truth will satisfy, striving to reach and uncover life's essence in all its fullness . . . and, I can now understand, can see why it is that I cannot write analytical papers, have never written one . . . because to do so would be a betrayal of everything I have hoped and dreamed for.

He explained once again why he did not tell me this in person. He said that he cries when he speaks of it and was crying as he wrote of it:

Whenever I write (and this is how, I have finally come to realize, I first developed my block) the tears come flowing, and I have never understood from whence they come, or know why or what they are about, but they come, and it used to frighten me, and the way I coped with it was just not to write period.

Paul writes of his own feeling of marginality because of his deeply felt empathy with those around him. This sense has caused him to experience feelings of others intensely and at the same time ironically feel isolated from others who are seemingly oblivious to this level of awareness. He says he has always felt like an outsider because of this, although he recognizes that there are fellow outsiders.

Paul goes on to explain the plot of his novella, the beginning sketches of which were attached:

I wanted to explore the theme of how people living under marginal circumstances - who are denied access to the communities in which they live, constantly struggling to find a sense of place, longing to belong, looking for solace in the love of another but ultimately realizing that they are truly alone, as they fight off, in whatever way they can, the resulting feelings of alienation - and to explore reality, because of course, that is the only way of coping with such a predicament.

The main character of Paul's novella is a nineteen year old orphaned slave boy living on a Texas plantation at the time of the civil war. The boy has a vision in which he negotiates a meaning for his life at the hour of his death. He was hung because it was found out that he was having sex with a deaf white girl. Paul's empathy with the boy stems from his own experience as a marginalized stranger with a "disability."

Schutz' description of the stranger bears similarities to Husserl's description of the activities of a transcendental ego as it intuits essences. Husserl's background as a mathematician sets him apart from the more typical philosopher. His relentless and courageous critique of traditional philosophy and scientific epistemology placed him at odds with his entire contemporary culture. Husserl lived his life in a cultural sense as an epoche on the dominant culture. In this sense, Paul was also like Husserl and Schutz in being a "stranger" in the academic mainstream.

Here, too I am a stranger like them, as are most phenomenologists in the social sciences. Even there, in the comfort of my accepting peers, I must move to the margins to write my truths. Even there I feel like we do not attend closely to each other, but tend to focus more attention on our own pursuits and goals.

Vietnam, Native-Americans, wolves, phenomenologists and other strangers

Perhaps it was an omen that my first encounter with Paul was his story of Vietnam, of rape and murder, or victimage. The culture of positivism everywhere seeks to clear the world of resistance. Stripped of their economic base, the spirit and language of their lifeworld, Native Americans were pushed into "reserves," yet from this territory are building a vital cultural force in their own voice. What has been known of other lifeworlds we have filtered through the lens of positivistic anthropology. (Clifford, 1983)² Now they are speaking for themselves, or choose to remain silent. In the face of the reaction of non-Western peoples to the position of the subject in anthropological research, ethnography has come to question its "authority." As James Clifford (1983: 12) says:

If ethnography produces cultural interpretations through intense research experiences, how is unruly experience transformed into an authoritative written account? How, precisely is a garrulous, overdetermined, cross cultural encounter shot through with power relations and personal cross purposes circumscribed as an adequate version of a more-or-less discrete "other world," composed by an individual author?

The model of the objective ethnography interpreting a circumscribed reality of the "other," is no longer acceptable, but is seen as "colonial" representation. Clifford replaced such a stance with hermeneutical dialogical model, followed the leads of Heidegger, Ricoeur and Gadamer. Yet even recognizing interpretation as dialogical and fluid, there remains the question of the text as an authoritative organizing power for "coherent presentation presupposes a controlling mode of authority." (Clifford, 1983: 133)

Scholarly writings are characterized by the non-voice, the absent author, the godlike stance of objectivity without body, spirit, hunger, desire. Continually these voices bring into presence the great giant of the power of the academic disciplines. In their linking to these disciplines these writers constitute their power. In the great army of cultural production, they are the generals, engineers, majors. As producers of knowledge they remain in hiding.

Courageous researchers reach down and describe their feelings, or the way their consciousness is entering into the processes of definition. Some describe the way their self was affected, constituted and reconstituted in the activity. Indeed, for some this will be the study. (Paget, 1983; Williams, 1985) On the cutting edge of critical ethnography, Hamabata (1986: 367) writes self-reflectively in his own voice, commenting on his own narrative as a form of "personal exorcism" of the person he was doing fieldwork in Toyko. Some may be offended by these frank excursions, breaks in the text, entries of the self and even the self as other. Echoing the scientism of the past, they characterize it as "crude subjectivism" or as indistinguishable from a "self-awareness" movement. I write from a position of multiple marginality. Because I get by, and in my positions of relative power, I forget my own marginality.

Looking in the mirror which Paul presents to me I acknowledge some aspects of myself as also a "stranger." I am a woman, raised in a conglomerate environment, with aspects of aristocracy, middle and working class cultures, primarily Lutheran, partially Catholic, with an undercurrent of female witches, medicine women and saints on both sides. I became a therapist, a sociologist, marginalized in sociology as a woman and as one who criticized the dominant paradigm almost from the beginning. I gave up tenure at a university where I had developed a following for phenomenology, qualitative methods, hermeneutics and other non-traditional endeavors. This university itself was marginalized because it was a woman's university. I now work as an associate dean and faculty in a non-traditional graduate program where faculty are seen primarily as facilitators for the ideas of their students. This I did just at a time in my life when I had finally given voice to my first book. This book itself is marginalized because it is a study of women. Even my existence as a scholar is due to my work being accepted by male colleagues and editors. I am excluded by gender even from Schutz' discussions of the stranger as a "man."

Conclusions and implications

This exploration of Paul's inability to write analytically highlights issues in social sciences epistemology. Standards of academic analytical style require an alienation from one's emotions in the act of writing, a distancing of self from the objects of study, a rejection of the imaginary, a reification of the fact/fiction distinction, a rejection of the story form and an alienation from the reader. Because to him writing was a personally sacred act involving deep feelings, Paul either refused these experiences or was "disabled" in relation to them. Since academic culture is based on positivism, the person who writes from her whole non-alienated self becomes marginalized, a "stranger" among a world of objectivating selves.

Husserl thought that the sciences in Europe had brought humanity to the edge of cultural disaster because of their analytical and ethically neutral stance. He believed logical positivism was a "sham philosophy" which in its efforts towards precision could not address questions of crucial importance. Its net result was to increase skepticism to the point of cultural disaster:

We make our beginning with a change which set in at the turn of the past century in the general evaluation of the sciences. It concerns not the scientific character of the sciences but rather what they say, or what science in general, had meant and could mean for human existence. (Husserl, 1970: 5-6)

As I taught and practiced phenomenology through my own research³ (Bentz, 1989) (Malhotra, 1981, 1985, 1988, 1988) as well as through the supervision of dissertations and research projects, I became aware of the way the research culture at the university where I taught and the lifeworld in which I lived supported positivism. Whenever I uncovered layers of a question, unexplored aspects of frameworks and boundaries, indeed, every place marked out and given the stamp of academic and scholarly approval was imbued with positivism and its limitations.

The assumptions of positivism undergirded the norms of research throughout the university. The dissertation proposal format required by the graduate school asked for "hypotheses," "data collection," and "data analysis" strategies as did the outline of proposals for sponsored faculty research. The titles of the committees on which I served to review the ethics of proposed research were called "human subjects" and "animal subjects." Researchers were asked to state why the contributions of the research justified possible harm to human subjects. They were asked to spell out the possible ways of alleviating such harmful effects, through "debriefing" or through referrals to psychotherapists. Harm, injury or death to animal subjects did not need justification. The animal researchers merely were asked to state compliance with minimum federal stand-

ards for the conditions of laboratory animals. No theoretical, grounded theory, ethnography or phenomenological research was funded by the graduate school. Theses and dissertations using non-positivistic methods had to be framed to fit the hypothesis testing format or an argument had to be made for a special dispensation. Heresies, like phenomenology, were only tolerated in the cracks, in potholes. I brought it into the sociology graduate program under the rubric of "social psychology" or "qualitative methods" seminars.

As a writer of fiction motivated by deep and profoundly emotional intuitions, Paul was able to tap into Husserl's eidetic realm – forms of experience purified by the bracketing of both scientific assumptions and norms of the lifeworld of practicing graduate students. Paul's moments of writing reached to his and our common origins. From this point his stories carried a critique of repressive typifications in the lifeworld.

Who was closer to resolving the "crisis" of European science and culture? Paul? Or Edmund? Edmund had the pride of the academic philosopher who saw his work as that of a prophet with a "calling" to lead humans towards salvation. However, as Marcuse points out, this stance bears affinities with the pride of the scientist detached from cultural values. To Marcuse, Husserl reverted to the Kantian position, giving primacy to theory to the neglect of practice. Husserl does not just leave praxis out of the picture. He remains behind the curtain of his exquisitely refined intellectuality. Edmund's emotions are hidden from those who read him, even from those who devote lifetimes to the pursuit. As such Edmund is a great guru of the mind, but not of the whole being. As a pioneer phenomenologist, Husserl was extraordinary. Due to his "disability" Paul could not take this path. In his stories Paul wrote more directly of emotions and social practices. Yet his own emotions and body are hidden in them as well as revealed.

Working with Paul intensified my inquiry into the essence of phenomenology. In this inquiry, I became aware of the radically different way of being of the phenomenologist. Phenomenology is not a "research method." Rather it is a way of being of constant radical inquiry. (van Manen, 1990) As a teacher, I became more aware of the reasons why it is important to read and re-read the masters. I became aware of why, despite the work of Alfred Schutz and of Helmut Wagner, I needed to return to Husserl. The place of origins is the transcendental ego. Even social "scientists" can benefit from being in touch with this source. It is the soul of each of us which modern science has tried so hard to repress.⁴

Notes

1. "Paul" is the pseudonym I gave to the student who serves as the resource for this paper. I appreciate his talent and admire his courage and humanity.

2. I owe a debt of gratitude to Matthews Hamabata, whose work as a critical ethnographer has encouraged me as I develop a critical phenomenology.
3. My work prior to 1989 was published under the name "Malhotra."
4. This repression is what Charles E. Lindblom (1990: 59f. and 180f.), a lately reformed positivist, has called "impairment" which produces the "impaired inquiry" which he says is characteristic of the social sciences, as well as the inquiry of persons in everyday life. Although seemingly unaware of the whole tradition of phenomenology, Lindblom has nevertheless recreated some of its tenets. These impairments in inquiry, Lindblom believes, have led to ineffective and contradictory attempts at social problem solving. What Lindblom advocates is a strategy of constant "probing" (a rather unfortunate choice of words, a violent term, laden, in my opinion, with unnecessary baggage from the fields of dentistry and surgery, not to mention its obvious phallic overtone). In Lindblom's words:

The aspiration to improve social problem solving does not follow the spirit of Francis Bacon's advocacy of a cleansing of minds in a "humiliation of the human spirit," for probing minds do not passively record but actively shape such understandings, all imperfect, as they can (Lindblom, 1990: 30).

Eventually, this probing will lead to enough consensus to take meaningful action on a problem. Lindblom's approach is remarkably consistent with the approach of phenomenological investigation which relies on the integrity of the process and a gradual but never final inquiry into forms of understanding which are supportable by informed experience.

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