

FRANK C. RICHARDSON, BLAINE J. FOWERS, AND CHARLES B. GUIGNON. *Re-envisioning Psychology: Moral Dimensions of Theory and Practice*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1999, 368 pp., \$39.95, ISBN 07879-4384-3.

Do psychological studies and the theories that produce them provide relevant representations of how people actually live their lives? Pose this question to the authors—Frank C. Richardson, a Professor, Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas, Austin, Blaine J. Fowers, an Assistant Professor, Department of Educational and Psychological Studies at the University of Miami, and Charles B. Guignon, a Professor, Department of Philosophy at the University of Vermont. No, the authors claim, not if psychological achievements are judged by the scientific standards psychology has established as its criteria for evaluation.

In a well-written, abundantly documented, and persuasively argued account, the authors contend that the great difficulties psychologists have in securing a genuine empirical theory is because their epistemological attempts to model psychology as primarily a science appear to be inappropriate. In other words, the guiding principle of the methodologies used to obtain empirical data is guided to a far greater extent than is natural science by unrecognized or unacknowledged systems of values. As the subject of inquiry is embedded in a network of intricate, interlocking relations, predicated on the personal meanings the subject ascribes to these relations, the proper system of an analysis of the subject should not be an experimental design. Rather, it must be an interpretative inquiry that recognizes and carefully examines the nature and context of the meanings given to the subject's sundry relations. Crucial in this recognition is the inevitable moral stance of the investigation, a stance antagonistic to value-neutrality in the natural science paradigm. For example, "liberal individualism in some form is the disguised ideology of much modern psychology and psychotherapy" (p. 52). As a second example, "Freud's view of healing is based on an 'analytic attitude' that explicitly rejects all objective moral laws (p. 55) (yet) Freud himself strayed significantly from this narrow path and gave voice to deeply held moral and philosophical prejudices" (p. 56).

The authors soundly criticize mainstream psychologists for eschewing an interpretative approach. They explain, "Much academic psychology has managed to seal itself off from contemporary debates about the nature of knowledge, its own historical embeddedness or the extent to which it is socially constructed, and its entanglement with moral values and political forces. Few psychologists critically evaluate the metaphysical and moral underpinnings of their methods or theories" (p. 173).

The solution they recommend for rethinking the unexamined social and philosophic assumptions contained in psychological theory is ontological hermeneutics. This is a method of interpretation "which aims to clarify the being of the entities that interpret and understand, namely, ourselves" (p. 200). It is based on the notion that psychological science is deeply shaped by various moral standpoints and that this is a necessary aspect of social science, just as it is with any

human endeavor . . . by recognizing the inherent moral dimension of psychology, we can begin to explicitly acknowledge the genuine moral impulses that guide our inquiry (p. 304).

This is an important book that squarely faces the conceptual assumptions and social attitudes plaguing psychology and psychotherapy as we enter a new millennium. However, for the clinician reader, this sometimes abstract and overargued book has a major limitation. For most clinicians the ultimate test of a text is its ability to elucidate problematic clinical cases. The application of ontological hermeneutics to one or more clinical vignettes is absent in this fine book.

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FRANK L. SUMMERS: *Transcending the Self: An Object Relations Model of Psychoanalytic Therapy*. The Analytic Press, Hillsdale, NJ, 1999, 268 pp., \$45.00, ISBN 0-88163-231-7.

It is widely recognized that two of Sigmund Freud's most notable legacies to the fields of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy are rather antithetical and contradictory. On the one hand, he bequeathed seminal insights and discoveries about the human personality that provided empowering hope to those engaged in the professional practice of ameliorating human suffering. On the other hand, he also conferred a stultifying, gloomy judgment about the general inefficacy of even deep psychotherapeutic interventions to produce hoped-for outcomes, dismally suggesting that analysis, at best, can only transform neurotic misery into common unhappiness.

In this book, Frank Summers, an Associate Professor of Psychiatry and the Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University, propounds a psychoanalytic model that can, he alleges, facilitate a psychological process that ultimately enables patients to achieve radical personality change as well as genuine and lasting happiness. Object relations analysis, as described by Summers, begins with several basic assumptions. First, in contrast to drive theory, the human personality is viewed as an active agent of its own destiny from the time of its very birth. Summers decries the tenet of drive theory that tends to view the human personality as the rather defenseless, immutable prey of tyrannical instinctual drives. Instead, he posits the more positivistic viewpoint that aggression is not so much an instinct as it is an innate capacity that holds the potential for growth enhancement. According to Summers, the hostilities and sadistic tendencies of troubled persons are not at bottom the perverse workings of destructive drives. Rather, they are the telltale enactments of frustrated and thwarted quests for self-realization. And the quest for self-realization, according to this object relations theorist, is a primary and precious human striving that must be safeguarded and nurtured in order to help emotionally distressed persons evolve and grow to their fullest potential.

Although friendly and sympathetic to self-psychological theory, Summers parts ways with this theoretical school when he argues against the Kohutian concept of early childhood grandiosity. He refers to infant research demonstrating that normal