



An Introduction to Social Psychology

The Phenomenological Perspective

Dr Darren Langdridge:

First and foremost I think phenomenological social psychology is about lived experience. Experience as people live it in their day to day lives.

Dr Linda Finlay:

It's about focusing in on what it, what it means to be human and, and that, that I just find very exciting.

Very often in psychology people focus in on smaller aspects of people's behaviour, whether it's in their brain or whatever, and you lose the sense of what it means to be human.

Dr Darren Langdridge:

Immediately I encountered the phenomenological approach and the philosophy of the kind of phenomenological philosophers, did I merely kind of think: hello, this is, this is something that resonates with me and my understanding of the world, and what I'd learnt and studied so far.

Dr Linda Finlay:

My path into this really came from practising as a mental health therapist, because there I used all sorts of theoretical perspectives in my work, but the one I favoured was the humanistic approach, where you're trying to look at, kind of taking a holistic view of the person, the individual, trying to understand their, their feelings, their needs, their potential. Trying to empower. And these are the kinds of messages that also phenomenologists pick up on. And so it was a very short jump for me really as, as a therapist to then move into phenomenology .

Dr Darren Langdridge:

What I discovered with phenomenology was an alternative psychoanalysis that had that vast scope, that actually sought to kind of deal with human existence kind of as we live it, in its entirety.

Dr Linda Finlay:

It asks: well what is that experience like for you? So for example, if you were a depressed person and you had a whole room of psychologists here, every single psychologist would probably look at you differently and understand you differently. And you'd have some psychologists perhaps would be very focused on why is it that you've become depressed. Whereas the phenomenologist simply says well, I want to know what is it like for you to be depressed? What is your world? You know, who are you and how are you handling it? What's your pain? What's ... what are your needs, what are your feelings? What is it that gives you meaning in your life? And for me those are the important questions. And of course there a link there then into how one would then help you with your depression.