



## **An Introduction to Social Psychology**

### *Phenomenological Psychology*

#### **Narrator (vo):**

There are several key features which distinguish the phenomenological from other perspectives in social psychology.

#### **Dr Darren Langdridge:**

We seek to approach things with, with a sense of naivety, with a sense of not coming at it, knowing what we're going to find. I mean this is, this is actually called epokay, which is kind of a Greek word, which is, which is a kind of ... the process by which we try and approach things without preconceptions.

#### **Dr Linda Finlay:**

The epokay is often a misunderstood process, and people think of it as something about becoming objective and unbiased. And it really is absolutely not that. It's about suspending the researchers presuppositions and prior understandings.

But it's not putting them away forever, it's just bracketing them, holding them to one side in order to be open to the phenomena or to be open to the person and, and see what emerges.

#### **Dr Darren Langdridge:**

So we for instance try and horizontalize. We don't put things into hierarchies of meaning straight away. So when somebody tells us that their cat died, and that they're worried about their mother's illness, we don't assume that their mother's illness is necessarily more important than their cat dying. It might not be the case for that person. I don't know. I need to find out.

#### **Dr Linda Finlay:**

It's very important for the researcher to be, to be aware self-conscious of how they impact on the data collection, the data analysis, the writing up, and in the whole research process. Because it's not simply hearing the person's story.

#### **Dr Darren Langdridge:**

Like the social psychoanalytic approach, we take field notes very seriously, and are very interested in our experience of what happens in relationships with an interviewee, before and after, and our relationship with the subject too.

#### **Dr Linda Finlay:**

As the person is telling their story, the researchers are part of the story that's being told. They're, they're in a sense co-producing the findings.

#### **Dr Darren Langdridge:**

There's something about an intrinsic interconnection that people have with each other, and that this interconnection is the stuff of phenomenology, this is the material out there between people that is the core of what we do

#### **Dr Linda Finlay:**

Phenomenologists are concerned to understand the lived embodied experience of the person and how they relate to others. So it's about their self identity, it's about their sense of embodiment, it's about their relationships with others. But a part of that is actually trying to capture something of what's called lived, the temporality and spatiality, lived time and lived space.

**Dr Darren Langdridge:**

We all live in a three dimensional spatial world and that that will have impacts on us. So we might feel in a certain environment closed in, kind of you know, confined, and it might not be because the environment is small, it might just be the experience we have of that space.

**Dr Linda Finlay:**

With lived time, you know how you sometimes feel that time is rushing by, you know, when you're feeling happy it seems to go very quickly, and then when you're feeling bored or tired, time goes very slowly. So that's the kind of thing you try and pick up in a phenomenological analysis. Time's going quickly, slowly. Is it discontinuous? Is it fragmented? Is it both, fast and slow?

**Dr Darren Langdridge:**

We describe rather than interpret. The first principle is that we always seek to approach any subject in a descriptive way. We actually try and stay with the thing as it's presented to us, and describe it, in kind of vivid rich detail.

Sartre about us being condemned to be free and being kind of an emptiness and that what we're trying to do in our every day lives is fill that up. So we're kind of constantly becoming. So human nature is an active process, where we're meaning makers, we're kind of machines that are seeking to kind of find the meaning in the world, and that's what we're, we're doing. We don't have anything kind of core essential, any personality that's fixed or in traits that, that are there, you know, for all eternity. We're not inherently extroverts or introverts. It will depend on what's going on for us and our experience as we live it, day to day.