

PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR BRAZILIAN PSYCHOLOGISTS: AN EMPIRICAL UNDERSTANDING ¹

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ABSTRACT. The present study aimed to clarify the understanding that psychologists have about phenomenology and phenomenological psychology. For that, an exploratory study was carried out, using as research tool a questionnaire developed by the researchers, in which open questions were raised about the understanding on the subject, the appropriation of concepts in professional practice and the possibility (or not) of developing a phenomenological psychotherapy. Data were analyzed using the phenomenological qualitative method of Giorgi and Souza. As a result, it has been found that the Brazilian psychologist understands phenomenological psychology as an approach to psychology and believes that phenomenological psychotherapy is possible. We conclude that the Brazilian psychologist uses several concepts of phenomenology and phenomenological psychology in the description of his/her actions, but there is no correspondence with Husserl's proposal for phenomenology and phenomenological psychology.

Keywords: Phenomenology; Husserl; phenomenological psychology.

FENOMENOLOGIA E PSICOLOGIA FENOMENOLÓGICA PARA PSICÓLOGOS BRASILEIROS: UMA COMPREENSÃO EMPÍRICA

RESUMO. O presente trabalho tem por objetivo desvelar a compreensão que os psicólogos possuem sobre fenomenologia e psicologia fenomenológica. Para tanto foi realizado um estudo de caráter exploratório, que teve como instrumento de pesquisa um questionário desenvolvido pelos pesquisadores, no qual foram levantadas questões abertas sobre a compreensão do referido tema, a apropriação dos conceitos na prática profissional e a possibilidade (ou não) de desenvolver uma psicoterapia fenomenológica. Os dados foram analisados utilizando o método qualitativo fenomenológico de Giorgi e Souza. Como resultado, verificou-se que o psicólogo brasileiro compreende a psicologia fenomenológica como uma abordagem da psicologia, e acredita ser possível uma psicoterapia fenomenológica. Conclui-se que o psicólogo brasileiro utiliza diversos conceitos da fenomenologia e da psicologia fenomenológica na descrição de seus fazeres, porém não há correspondência com a proposta de Husserl para a fenomenologia e a psicologia fenomenológica.

Palavras-chave: Fenomenologia; Husserl; psicologia fenomenológica.

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FENOMENOLOGÍA Y PSICOLOGÍA FENOMENOLÓGICA PARA PSICÓLOGOS BRASILEÑOS: UNA COMPRENSIÓN EMPÍRICA

RESUMEN. En el presente estudio se tiene el objetivo aclarar la comprensión que los psicólogos poseen sobre fenomenología y psicología fenomenológica. Para ello se realizó un estudio de carácter exploratorio, que tuvo como instrumento de investigación un cuestionario desarrollado por los investigadores, en el cual se plantearon cuestiones abiertas sobre la comprensión del referido tema, la apropiación de los conceptos en la práctica profesional y la posibilidad (o no) desarrollar una psicoterapia fenomenológica. Se analizaron los datos utilizando el método cualitativo fenomenológico de Giorgi y Souza. Como resultado, se verificó que el psicólogo brasileño comprende la psicología fenomenológica como un abordaje de la psicología, y cree que es posible una psicoterapia fenomenológica. Se concluye que el psicólogo brasileño utiliza diversos conceptos de la fenomenología y de la psicología fenomenológica en la descripción de sus hechos, pero no hay correspondencia con la propuesta de Husserl para la fenomenología y la psicología fenomenológica.

Palabras clave: Fenomenología; Husserl; psicología fenomenológica.

Introduction

There are many difficulties when demarcating and defining ‘phenomenological psychology’; even greater when one thinks about the feasibility of possible derivations of this, whether in the clinical, research or other context. The point is that ‘phenomenological psychology’ is the expression coined and developed by Edmund Husserl for the study of psychic awareness (psychic experiences) in relation to transcendental consciousness, in order to be a fundamental science for psychology, from the method that encompasses transcendental phenomenology (Husserl, 1990, 2001). With the appropriation of phenomenological methodological assumptions about the study of consciousness (empirical and transcendental), some assistants and collaborators of Husserl – M. Scheler, E. Stein, M. Merleau-Ponty, J. P. Sartre, among others – developed research in this direction, providing the foundation for a definitive psychology called ‘phenomenological’ (Spiegelberg, 1972, 1982; Goto, 2015).

However, this original conception of ‘phenomenological psychology’ was being forgotten and no longer thematized by psychologists (Goto, 2015; Goto, Holanda & Costa, 2018), mainly with the ‘reception’ and ‘circulation’ of phenomenology in the USA (Branco, 2014), on the one hand – a reception that was given, even by the clinicians of the time, who appropriated such concepts, searching for diverse available sources, and which ended up elaborating their own understandings and distinct applications of the phenomenologists’ original way of thinking (Spiegelberg, 1972) – and, on the other hand, by the progressive distancing of European psychiatrists and psychologists from the Husserlian project, towards other ways of understanding phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1972; Gomes & Castro, 2010; Holanda, 2014; Portugal & Holanda, 2018). These understandings and applications thus constituted, mainly in clinical psychology, some of the so-called ‘humanist/existential-phenomenological approaches’, while in empirical psychological research emerged the so-called ‘phenomenological qualitative research’ linked to the group of psychologists associated with Duquesne University (Giorgi, 1985; DeCastro & Gomes, 2011; Branco,

2014), but which followed different directions from those of Husserl's own phenomenological psychology (Goto, 2015; Reis, Holanda, & Goto, 2016).

The concept of research of Duquesne University has been refined and disseminated as an 'empirical-phenomenological research', traditionally organized in four steps (Giorgi & Souza, 2010): (a) Establishment of the General Sense, (b) Discrimination of Meaning Units, (c) Transformation into Psychological Language, and (d) Synthesis. In Brazil, this model knows several adaptations and questions, as we have in Gomes (1997), who presents the possibility of three steps (phenomenological description, phenomenological reduction and phenomenological interpretation), or Amatuzzi (2009); and Feijoo and Goto (2016); Goto, Costa and Schievano (2019), which point out criticisms of Giorgi's method, characterizing it more as hermeneutic than empirical-psychological, thus seeking a closer approach to Husserl's phenomenological psychology.

This article, far from wanting to unravel such issues, seeks to recover the dialogue between phenomenological psychology and the various forms of psychology, in the sense of enriching and broadening it, even if its divergences have to be highlighted. Therefore, it seeks to include: a) a brief historical, methodological and conceptual report of the relationship between psychology and phenomenology; and b) the results of an empirical study entitled 'What the Psychologist understands as phenomenological psychology'.

Phenomenological psychology was developed by Husserl throughout his work, integrated with philosophical phenomenology. Seeking to understand the possibility of knowledge, Husserl begins to problematize psychology in the preface to *Investigações Lógicas* (2014). In this work, the philosopher states that he had started from the conviction that the logic of the deductive sciences should come from psychology, but the form in which it was constituted - as a natural, empirical science - did not satisfy him (Husserl, 2014). In the same work, Husserl then defined phenomenology as a 'descriptive psychology' - unlike Franz Brentano - because it cannot exclude psychic experiences in the characterization of knowledge. It is worth remembering that in Brentano - Husserl's teacher and friend - consciousness, for being characterized as 'intentional', and for delimiting the direct relationship between the knowing subject and the represented object; maintained a kind of thinking called 'psychologist', because it was based on a psychological-natural foundation of representations, strongly based on psychic life (Goto, Holanda & Costa, 2018).

Thus, in the second edition of the *Investigações*, Husserl corrects this initial position, distinguishing phenomenology from psychology, even without totally alienating them, considering the important psychic phenomena in the production of knowledge (Husserl, 2014). The philosopher comments that the phenomenological descriptions are in opposition to the psychological descriptions (of Brentano, for example), because "[...] they do not concern the experiences or classes of experiences of empirical people [...] about such experiences, the phenomenology does not raise questions, does not seek determinations or elaborate hypotheses" (Husserl, 2014, p. 23). Porta (2013) adds that for Husserl, phenomenology shares with psychology the principle of immanence, albeit reformulated by reduction. And that only through psychology is it made explicit what, after all, is really essential, subjectivity itself.

In Göttingen, Husserl publishes *A ideia da fenomenologia: cinco lições* (1986), a work in which he postulates *epoché* (εποχή) and phenomenological reduction. The philosopher presents them in the scope of a method to distinguish the 'pure phenomenon' - object of phenomenology - from the 'psychological phenomenon', object of psychology. *Epoché* is the basal methodological foundation, an attitude of calling into question all that is previously assumed to exist in order to reach at the apodictic.

If I question the self and the world and the experience of the self as such, then the simply intuitive reflection turned to the given in the apperception of the considered experience, for my self, reveals the phenomenon of this apperception; for example, the phenomenon 'perception perceived as my perception' (Husserl, 1986, p. 70-71, author's emphasis).

In this way, itself (my perception) becomes, by phenomenological reduction, a pure phenomenon (experienced perception). Thus, "[...] to every psychic experience corresponds, through phenomenological reduction, a pure phenomenon, which exhibits its immanent essence (singularly taken) as absolute" (Husserl, 1986, p. 71). In the text *Ideias para uma fenomenologia pura e uma filosofia fenomenológica*, from 1913, Husserl deals with the search for the foundations of subjectivity from the already constituted phenomenology. He recovers and modifies Brentano's conception of intentional consciousness until his new elaboration: "[...] everything we call as 'object', [...], which we have before our eyes as effectiveness, which we consider possible or credible, [...], it is for this very reason the object of consciousness" (Husserl, 2006, p. 298, author's emphasis), that is, all consciousness is an act directed to an object that shows itself to this consciousness. Each object has in itself eidetic, essential, determined, and apprehensive characteristics, despite the myriad possible modes of apprehension. At the same time, it presents a possible plurality, that is, a set of layers of 'self' and 'experiences' that make possible the intersubjective identification of this something as the same object (Husserl, 2006). Husserl also takes up the Greek concepts of *noesis* (νοησις) and *noema* (νοημα), characterizing them as the two poles of intentional experiences. The noetic pole characterized by intentionalities directed at an object (real, imaginative, perceptive, etc.); the noematic pole, corresponding to its correlate, that is, the intended object.

To the multiple data of the real, noetic content corresponds a multiplicity of data, shown in pure effective intuition, in a correlative 'noematic content', or in short, in the *noema* [...]. Perception, for example, has its noema, at its lowest level, its perceptive sense, that is, the 'perceived as such' (Husserl, /2006, pp. 203-204, author's emphasis).

These are some postulates reached by Husserl that have been favoring the idea of a phenomenological psychology. Thus, it can be said that Husserl, from the phenomenological analyses of intentional consciousness, arrived at a conception of phenomenological psychology or, in a psychological-phenomenological way, facing the need to clarify the psychic life, its concretely experienced structures and modes of psychic-empirical consciousness (Husserl, 2001). Phenomenological psychology is not an empirical psychology (as it marks the relationship to the physical), like scientific psychology and other contemporary forms of investigative psychology, but is constituted as a 'pure psychology', a psychology that investigates psychic experiences and which surpasses any psychophysical relationship. "Pure psychology knows nothing but the subjective, and to admit there as something objective exists is to have already given it up" (Husserl, 2012, p. 209).

Nowadays, the idea of a phenomenological psychology has grown in the Brazilian academic environment, however, this interest has also been surrounded by particular understandings and, consequently, by conceptual misunderstandings (Goto, 2015). The fact is that its beginning on Brazilian ground was constituted by diverse sources, mainly from the US (humanist and existential) psychologies, leading to the development of an unsystematic orientation, poorly based on the assumptions of Husserl's phenomenology. Goto (2015) goes on to state that the philosopher's original goal was to formulate a 'pure psychology', rational and non-experimental for the study of psychic subjectivity and its relation to transcendental life.

History tells that, in Brazil, phenomenology landed in the 1930s, inaugurating phenomenology as a methodological possibility for psychology (Goto, 2015; Holanda, 2016). It was in the 1960s and 1970s that the relationship between phenomenology and psychology developed most significantly, as phenomenology began to be linked to clinical psychology. Several authors point out that the development of phenomenological psychology in our country is related to humanistic psychologists, linked to Carl Rogers' Person Centered Approach (Guimarães, 2000; Gomes, Holanda & Gauer, 2004; Paim, 2010; Gomes & Castro, 2010; DeCastro & Gomes, 2011; Holanda, 2014, 2016; Branco, 2015). On the other hand, Gomes et al. (2004) also indicate a psychotherapeutic orientation followed by professionals identified with the existential perspectives of Heidegger, Binswanger, Boss, Minkowski and Sartre; besides pointing out that the professionals most directly involved with empirical research also follow Merleau-Ponty.

Gomes and Castro (2010) corroborate the above thesis, and add that the association between phenomenology and existential philosophy occurred by identifying a continuity of reflection from the study of Husserl's intentional invariants to existential structures in Heidegger or corporeality in Merleau-Ponty. This position is interesting because recognition of this relationship has always been rejected by Husserl, because, according to him, "[...] those [*Existenzphilosophie*] gentlemen who insist on talking about 'phenomena' and 'intentionality' were in fact unaware of the essentials of phenomenology" (Moura, 2001, p. 160, author's emphasis).

It is also worth noting that - in the Brazilian scenario - the appropriation of phenomenology came in tow of an 'existentialist idea' (Guimarães, 2000), that is, from the reading of late works by several great names of post-Husserlian phenomenology - notably, Sartre, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Holanda, 2016) - which represents a significant modification of the ontological logic with respect to human nature, with consequent diverse appropriations of the meaning of phenomenological doing.

In this direction, there is a long tradition of authors of philosophy - such as Ernildo Stein, Emanuel Carneiro Leão, Zeljko Loparic, Gerd Bornheim, Maria do Carmo Miranda, Creusa Capalbo, N. A. von Zuben, Urbano Zilles, Benedito Nunes, among others - who develop 'existential phenomenology', making important bridges with psychology, either through translations or comments and elaborations (Holanda, 2016). In relation to Brazilian psychology, the researchers that stand out in relation to an existential phenomenology are: Daniela Schneider, Yolanda Forghieri and Mauro Amatuzzi (Gomes & Castro, 2010). Schneider (2006, p. 109) conducted an analysis of Sartre's thinking towards the psychological clinic, stating that existential psychotherapy performs a "[...] psychological radiograph of the subject [...] defined from the rescue of his project of being [...]" and that puts the person's 'being' in its own hands. Forghieri (1997, p. 92), in turn, described the therapeutic process from his experience as a therapist and from patient reports, pointing out that "[...] the phenomenological approach of the human being in Psychology seeks to investigate the immediate experience of the human being as it is captured by himself". Amatuzzi (2009) raises the question of speech and dialogue in the therapeutic process, noting that Husserl clarified the phenomenological path to human thought: acts of consciousness, reach of knowledge, how the world presents itself.

We can also cite Holanda (2014), who highlights the need to look at phenomenology beyond 'approaches', not confusing it with psychological theories, but recognizing it as a 'thinking' reality that can sustain a way of doing psychology, based on the valuation of conscious subjectivity and its interrelationships, being a perspective in which all the complexity of the human phenomenon would be privileged. In short, he proposes to see

human reality as complex and broad as possible. In the same direction of more contemporary interpretations of phenomenology in Brazil, Krüger (2014) states that Goto is an author who has highlighted the essential elements of Husserl's phenomenological psychology, for whom it is necessary to resume Husserl's original conceptualization in which phenomenological psychology has the intention to be a 'new psychology' whose objective is to investigate and clarify its main concepts (consciousness, perception, affectivity, imagination, cognition, etc.) from the psychological-eidetic reduction, that is, from the very identity and constitution of psychological processes (Goto, 2015; Goto, Costa & Schievano, 2019).

Method

The present study seeks to analyze the current understanding of the Brazilian psychologist regarding phenomenological psychology and its interpretations, and the viability of a phenomenological psychotherapy. For its development, an exploratory study was conducted (CEP-Saúde/UFPR, protocol 1818086), from November 11 to 30, 2016, with the aim of studying their understanding of phenomenology and phenomenological psychology. The study was based on a questionnaire applied online. The invitation-contact to the participants was made by electronic means (email, mailing and social networks) with call directed to groups related to psychology and phenomenology. To answer the questionnaire, the person declared to be a psychologist and to agree to the Informed Consent (IC).

A total of 100 participants answered the questionnaire, but two declared a graduation date after data collection and were excluded; thus, the research had 98 participants, all self-declared psychologists. It was found that 81.7% had contact with phenomenology through subjects - specific or not - during the undergraduate course. Participants mentioned various names to the subjects considered specific to 'phenomenology', among them several of the phenomenology itself or the psychological approaches that follow this tradition. Also, as expected, names were reported relating existentialism and humanism to phenomenology; for example, Existential-Phenomenological Psychology and Humanistic-Existential-Phenomenological Psychology. This is believed to be due to the fact that philosophical phenomenology landed in Brazil preliminarily with texts by Heidegger and Sartre; and in the case of psychology, phenomenology has been brought by authors linked to humanism (Branco, 2015; Holanda, 2016). In the same study, 79 psychologists declared themselves to be 'phenomenologists', and in response to questions related to the baseline assumptions of phenomenology, their lack of understanding of this knowledge was noted: only 27.5% agree that phenomenology has the claim to be the basis for all sciences; similarly, just under half of the same psychologists understand that only phenomenology can convert the sciences into genuine sciences. On the other hand, 81% 'phenomenologist' psychologists understand that phenomenology is capable of overcoming radicalism and dichotomies (subjectivism-objectivism, rationalism-empiricism, etc.). In the same vein, 68.3% of these psychologists agree that phenomenology is the science of transcendental intersubjectivity.

In this article, we present the results of the third part of the questionnaire, composed of four open and one closed (yes/no) questions, all of facultative answer, aiming to ascertain what psychologists understand by phenomenological psychology. These questions were as follows: question 22: What is phenomenological psychology? (open question); question 23: What are your professional practice actions based on phenomenology? (open question);

question 24: Is it possible to develop a phenomenological PSYCHOTHERAPY⁵? (closed question, with answer option 'yes' or 'no' - with the answer 'yes', the participant was directed to question 25 and with the answer 'no', the participant was directed to question 26); question 25: What would a phenomenological PSYCHOTHERAPY⁶ consist of? (open question); and question 26: Justify such an impossibility. The questions in this part were developed by the researchers with broad questions to accommodate the answers as authentically as possible.

The answers were analyzed using the empirical-phenomenological method of Amedeo Giorgi, even assuming the criticism of Feijoo and Goto (2016); Goto, Costa and Schievano (2019) and Branco (2014) in relation to the legitimacy of this method authentically constituted as a 'phenomenological psychology', as advocated by Husserl. However, the method is assumed because it allows the analysis of meaning from its four steps (Giorgi & Souza, 2010).

Results and discussion

The third part of the questionnaire, focus of this article, had a number of answers varying depending on the question, since they were not mandatory. Question number 22, 'What is phenomenological psychology?' got 81 answers, 68 being declared as 'phenomenological psychologists' and 13 as 'non-phenomenological psychologists'.

Table 1 presents the units of meaning identified, and the number of participants (N) 'phenomenological psychologists' and 'non-phenomenological psychologists' who employed them. Some answers had more than one unit of sense. The data obtained suggest that, for the psychologist ('phenomenologist' or not), phenomenological psychology deals with the study or description of phenomena, with concern for their essence. A careful approach to using the terms of phenomenology appears in the answers: 'phenomenon', 'essence', 'suspension of a priori', however, it is not clear what the psychologist understands by these terms, nor how such concepts would be appropriate in their daily lives. When it comes to psychology, it is believed that the 'phenomenon' referred to here, for example, is the 'psychological phenomenon', which would likewise require a definition. It is equally clear to the psychologist that a phenomenological psychology calls for a suspension of judgments (phenomenological method) and [of concepts] *a priori*⁷; it also advocates respect for the subjectivity and uniqueness of his/her client. It is difficult to establish from the answers given to this question whether the research participant described here understands phenomenological psychology as a possibility of investigation of the psychological phenomenon, as a psychological science, or as a psychotherapeutic approach, as it appears in various responses the unit of meaning 'study of phenomena', accompanied by the word 'client'.

⁵ Original emphasis on the questionnaire.

⁶ Original emphasis on the questionnaire.

⁷ In *Ideias I*, Husserl distinguishes two concepts for *a priori*: a) knowledge of essences and b) knowledge of concepts that 'as a category' have meaning of 'principles' and of the essential laws founded on such concepts (Quijano, 1990).

Table 1. Question ‘What is phenomenological psychology?’

Unit of sense	‘Phenomenologists’		‘Non-phenomenologists’	
	N	Examples	N	Examples
Description/observation/study of phenomena or grounded in phenomenology	34	It takes care of the phenomenon as it appears. It is concerned with the essence of the phenomenon. [P75]	6	A way of understanding phenomena, subjectivity. [P65]
Suspension of <i>a priori</i>	11	The one in which the psychologist is willing to observe the phenomenon without preconceptions. [P96]	1	Suppression of concepts for the study of phenomena. [P34]
Respect for uniqueness/subjectivity/Individuality	9	It is about understanding the subject as he/she presents him/herself and perceives him/herself in the present moment. [P51]		
Form of psychotherapy/intervention	7	To base his/her intervention as a facilitator in processes of the psyche ethically based on the phenomena of this process. [P62]	1	Treatment and cure. [P37]
Psychology Approach	4	It is a psychological approach. [P25]	2	Theoretical line, way of understanding the world. [P41]
Others	1	Articulation of Psychology between the set of experiences of a subject, his/her psyche, his/her social phenomena, his/her family, ethical and subjective phenomena. Thus, it goes through a complex process and intense work of elaboration, and elucubration where this same subject is able to better face the questions that diminish his/her power to act in front of life. [P78]	3	From the experience/their own lived facts. [P98]

Source: The autor.

It is relevant to highlight the answer of participant P54, which synthesizes the understanding ‘phenomenological psychologists’ have about what ‘phenomenological psychology’ would be:

Phenomenology means ‘study of phenomena’, that is, it studies everything that is shown to one’s consciousness. Thus, phenomenological psychology ‘is based on the phenomenological method’ developed by Husserl, which ‘deals with the client without trying to fit him/her into theories’, as some approaches do, is also ‘free of techniques’ to know the phenomenon as it presents itself. ‘Phenomenological reduction is also used’, that is, the ‘therapist’ must set aside all preconceptions, beliefs, ideologies, etc., to meet the client (P54, author’s emphasis).

It is noticed that it is a very formalistic answer, which brings elements of philosophical phenomenology, such as “[...] study of phenomena [...] that shows itself to consciousness [...]”; also, “[...] to know the phenomenon as it presents itself [...]”, and still, “[...] uses the phenomenological reduction”. The uncertainty remains about the participant’s understanding of these concepts, since he then uses terms such as ‘therapist’ and ‘client’, even indicating that the phenomenological method does not presuppose therapy. Another

issue may be psychologists' understanding of psychology as necessarily being understood as therapy.

In contrast, some of the participants responded differently from the rest of the group, for example: participant P82 replied that it is "[...] each one's energy field [...]"; and, for participant P33, "[...] it is about investigating the phenomenon as it shows itself, unveiling the meanings that are shown in the settled historical horizon". In addition to these, two other participants (P81 and P99) defined philosophical phenomenology and not phenomenological psychology as requested. Question 23, 'What are your professional practice actions based on phenomenology?' was answered by 73 'phenomenological psychologists' participants and 13 'non-phenomenological psychologists' participants, out of a total of 80 answers. As in the previous question, there were some very different answers from the rest of the scope, such as, for example, that of participant P82, who stated his doing based on phenomenology, as 'aura cleansing'.

Table 2 lists the units of meaning identified for this question, the number of participants using them, and an example of how it appears in the answers. As in the previous question, some answers present more than one unit of sense.

The answers to this question show that the researchers failed to define it, since they were intended to describe concrete doings of their practice and to demonstrate the way the foundations of phenomenology arrive at the professional work of the psychologist. A significant number of participants answered this question with their field of activity, such as 'school', 'clinic', and many others. The participants who answered the question as expected by the researchers, that is, through their practice, described an action based on empathy, listening without preconception and appreciation of the client's experience, that is, elements that, in fact, should constitute objects of phenomenological investigation understood as a professional action or attitude. Here, too, there is a certain formalism in the responses, an attention to using the terms of phenomenology. However, the influence of so-called 'humanistic' psychology is more strongly observed here. The response of participant 67 is quite representative of the answers to the question.

I believe that mainly being 'with the other in an open manner, putting in parentheses prior knowledge', values and judgments so that 'I have access to the meanings of his/her experience'; do not look at him/her with diagnostic lenses. I seek to refrain from such knowledge to understand the other's world, which is different from mine. 'I also work only with what the client addresses', not rescuing issues worked on in previous sessions or investigating his/her past, because what he/she brings to me is what is present in his/her phenomenological field (P67, author's emphasis).

The point is that Husserl (2006, p. 28, author's emphasis) defined phenomenology as 'science of essences', 'eidetic science'; whether "[...] as a science that purports to establish exclusively 'knowledge of essences' and by no means 'facts'". Still, Husserl (1990) says that there is a specific field of phenomenology, 'phenomenological psychology', a subject that results from the analysis of the fundamental character of consciousness, of intentionality. Quite different from Husserl's conception, it was found in most of the answers, reference to acting in the clinical field (understood here as the psychotherapy clinic). It is also interesting to highlight the four responses that specifically refer to Gestalt therapy as a synonym for phenomenological psychology. It is necessary to explain that they were spontaneous answers to the question, since there was no question specific to either 'approach' in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Question: ‘What are your professional practice actions based on phenomenology?’

Unit of sense	‘Phenomenologists’		‘Non-phenomenologists’	
	N	Examples	N	Examples
Empathy/understanding/Pre judice-free listening/ Suspension of judgments	16	I seek to promote a space for free listening, based on empathy and unconditional acceptance , so that the subject assign a new meaning to his/her story and makes authentic choices. [P7]	3	Understand the person through its unique perception of him/herself, the world and others. [P65]
Gestalt-therapy	4	I use the foundations of phenomenology because my approach is gestalt . [P31]		
Other ‘phenomenological’ actions	18	It serves as a basis being flexible when conducting the therapeutic process with regard to facilitating the individual’s awareness to achieve the therapeutic goal and better quality of life. [P62]	1	I believe my practice at CREAS is grounded in phenomenology but I could not indicate. [P61]
Field/activity	33	Psychotherapeutic care. [P25]		
Others	2	Pay attention to patients’ sensations and perceptions at each moment of the session. [P24]	9	See the ‘phenomena’ [P94]

Source: The autor.

In question 24: ‘Is it possible to develop a phenomenological PSYCHOTHERAPY?’, 95 responded to it, being 76 ‘phenomenological psychologists’ and 19 ‘non-phenomenological psychologists’. It was found that 72 (95%) of the 76 ‘phenomenological’ psychologists believe it is possible to establish phenomenological psychotherapy. The proportion is also higher among the ‘non-phenomenologists’, being 17 (89%) in a universe of 19. Thus, it can be said that both the ‘phenomenologist’ and the ‘non-phenomenologist’ Brazilian psychologist understand perfectly possible to develop a phenomenological psychotherapy, even though it has no specific knowledge of ‘phenomenology’ and ‘phenomena’, for example, as already seen above.

Question 25: ‘What would a phenomenological PSYCHOTHERAPY consist of?’ was answered by 60 ‘phenomenological psychologists’ and 11 ‘non-phenomenological psychologists’ making up a total of 71 respondent participants. Two of the answers were quite complex, with several units of meaning, yet they were considered in their entirety, along with four others, such as having certain doubts about the possibility of developing phenomenological psychotherapy. The following is one of them:

I think that strictly speaking we can elaborate a phenomenology of psychotherapy, but a phenomenological psychotherapy is complicated, because the phenomenology is philosophical and not exactly therapeutic. However, there are several approaches that are somehow grounded in phenomenological reflections and end up bearing the title of phenomenological, or phenomenological-existential, or existential psychotherapies (and note, philosophical existentialism relies heavily on the phenomenological method), or even humanistic-phenomenological. But generally I would say that the assumptions of ‘phenomenological psychotherapy’ would be a return to experience itself, without theoretically distorting what is experienced; another assumption would be the relevance of sense and meaning that are unveiled in the therapeutic situation; ‘phenomenological psychotherapy’ also dispenses the natural attitude and ‘thinks’ through the phenomenological attitude and this leads, I think, to the escape of an ideal model of man, that is, ‘phenomenological psychotherapy’ is open to existential

possibilities; I finally believe that one assumption is that we have universally structured experiences, but the content is particular. As goals we could raise the unveiling of existential senses and meanings and openness to greater freedom on the part of the patient (client) (P26, author's emphasis).

For the Brazilian psychologist, a phenomenological psychotherapy would consist of a comprehensive method, focusing on the here-now and with an anti-judgmental stance. The answers suggest that, among psychologists, there is more an appropriation of phenomenological concepts and reflections than a psychotherapy founded 'from' a 'phenomenological psychological science'. It is also important to highlight that two participants answered the question by identifying with an analytical-existential approach, as if *Daseinsanalysis* was synonymous with phenomenological psychotherapy. Interestingly, in this question, participants who previously (question 23) had made direct reference to Gestalt therapy responded without direct identification with the approach. Table 3 lists the units of meaning identified for question 25, the number of participants using them, and an example:

Table 3. Question: 'What would a phenomenological PSYCHOTHERAPY consist of?'

Unit of sense	'Phenomenologists'		'Non-phenomenologists'	
	N	Examples	N	Examples
Understand the client/patient in his/her world without judgment	42	Consists of a psychotherapy that is sincere in understanding the other from the other's gaze (suspension of the self/empathy) which in turn is intentionally related to the world. [P57]	5	Phenomenological psychotherapy aims to understand the uniqueness of people, working with the intentionality of consciousness , broaden their perception of themselves and the things and thus lead the client to develop. [P65]
Focus on here and now	8	The one that prioritizes what is revealed in the here and now , the present, as signaled by Brentano, before Husserl, when he pointed to the psychology of the act, which includes the intentionality of the subject in the act, in the phenomenon, in what is revealed in the relationship, what appears, and, is unveiled in the present movement in act. [P30]		
Daseinsanalysis	2	It would be the Daseinsanalysis. I don't work with this particular psychotherapy. My focus is more existential Sartrian. [P12]		

Unit of sense	'Phenomenologists'		'Non-phenomenologists'	
	N	Examples	N	Examples
Doubt as to the possibility	6	I am not sure if we can define a particular objective for this type of psychotherapeutic attention , however, we can see that it consists of a comprehensive and descriptive method that aims to keep any previous ontological positioning in suspension in order to clarify the meaning of the experiences. [P8].		
Others	15	The objective is the same as any psychotherapy, to provide mental health . The way is different for using different assumptions. Although I know a little about only phenomenological psychotherapy, I believe that its combination with existential philosophy allows it the necessary basis for the whole therapeutic process. I understand phenomenology more as a technique . [P68]	11	I suppose it is to present to the subject a description of the observations made. [P39]

Source: The autor.

Question 26: 'Justify such an impossibility' was answered by four of the six participants who answered 'no' to question 24. Of these, three are 'phenomenological psychologists' and one is not. The reasons for the impossibility of developing a phenomenological psychotherapy are that a theory of personality, a set of techniques would be missing and that in the therapeutic environment there is no place for the neutrality that phenomenology would offer.

The researchers did not consider the response of participant P92 (emphasis added) as a valid argument, since he stated the following: "Because there is no psi', of psychotherapy, within the phenomenological approach 'can only do a therapeutic work'". Given what has already been exposed in this article, it is clear that Husserl was preoccupied with determining exactly what would be exclusively 'psi' and at no point in his studies did he mention any 'therapy' as a 'great phenomenological doing'. It is also important to emphasize that in this period of Husserl's phenomenological investigations, psychotherapy and therapy - in the sense of psychological treatment - were present only in Freud's psychoanalysis and Jung's analytical psychology. It is unclear how much Husserl knew or was unaware of these psychotherapies, but Fink's annex XXI (at § 46) can be highlighted in "The crisis of european sciences and transcendental phenomenology [...]" entitled 'On the problem of the unconscious', which explores the problem of the relationship of consciousness with the unconscious; and especially the text *Fenomenologia da inconsciência e os grandes*

problemas do nascimento, sono e morte = Phänomenologie des Unbewusstseins und die Grenzprobleme von Geburt, Schlaf und Tod from 1930. In the course of the annex cited it is questioned whether it would be a growing trend, especially of the 'depth psychology' and the 'realistic and irrationalistic philosophies', to consider the conscious being only as a stratum of the human being. This indicates that Husserl might know something of this 'depth psychology'.

Final considerations

This study evidenced that the Brazilian psychologist understands phenomenological psychology as an 'approach' to psychology, linked - identified - almost synonymous - with humanistic and existential psychologies and believes that phenomenological psychotherapy is perfectly possible. The study shows that psychologists use concepts from Husserlian phenomenology, such as the 'noetic-noematic' perspective, *epoché* and the 'phenomenological reductions', highlighting that phenomenology could emerge as a method of research of psychological phenomena, and may still be a bridge between philosophy and the psychotherapeutic practice. Here it is important to point out that, in the Husserlian project, the intention was to 'describe' and 'understand' the phenomenon 'as it presents itself', with its various possibilities of 'presentations', which is in accordance with the intention of research in psychology. There was not, in Husserl's original conception, the prerogative of a directive 'change' of the phenomenon, or any psychological change via intervention, because when thinking about therapy, one presupposes change of state, modification. Indeed, for Husserl, phenomenological psychology is constituted as a 'science of psychic subjectivity' and must describe and know rigorously and fundamentally the psychic experiences. However, we cannot deny that today psychology is much more identified as a profession. In this sense, in order to be able to identify this doing as a phenomenological doing, the constitution of a previous, basic psychology of phenomenologically described psychological processes (perception, development, etc.), as proposed by Husserl, would be fundamental. With this, we want to highlight the premise of phenomenology as a science of the foundations - according to Husserl (1990) - and, as such, necessary for the construction of a psychological science.

In the present study, we highlight distant variations of this proposal; variations based on 'approaches' that had their own developments and concepts, even non-phenomenological concepts. Nevertheless, it was also possible here to cover a tiny part of this Brazilian vast area of psychology that is assumed to have a phenomenological orientation. As a preliminary study, several questions were raised, rather than answers, to the questions posed. Thus, further studies are required to fill in the gaps opened here, as, for example, in relation to what the psychologist is understanding as a 'phenomenon' (psychological or not) or 'essence'; as well, if there is an appropriation of the concepts of phenomenology or just a formal use of its expressions.

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