

**Latent Meaning versus Manifest Content. Interpretation in Psychology and Social Science—
New Approach or a Neglected Tradition? Jochen Fahrenberg**

From: Vanguard2@googlegroups.com [mailto:Vanguard2@googlegroups.com] **On Behalf Of**
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Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2009 11:00

To: Vanguard2@googlegroups.com

Subject: [Vanguard2] Re: Fahrenberg

Thanks for this - any kind of projective testing has fallen on hard times recently. This is very useful information.

Jane

D. A. Gauthier wrote:

Stan, Shaikie and all,

I was in touch with Prof Fahrenberg a couple of years ago to help him track down a former German graphologist who had immigrated to England.

He is presently retired but wrote a book titled "Psychologische Interpretation" proposing a new "interpretative paradigm" in order to give a sound scientific grounding to the various projective techniques (including graphology) . He is putting less emphasis on the "quantitative approach only" in psychology and trying to rehabilitate the various projective techniques along the line of qualitative research. This is indeed a most interesting approach and we should follow this development.

He took over Heiss's post in the 70 but more or less left out graphological studies to concentrate more on the field of neuro and psycho physiology. He is now interested in coming back to graphology in a more global aspect of validity.

For those interested, the following short text may give some ideas about this book and some of his thinking: **Interpretation in Psychology and Social Science—New Approach or a Neglected Tradition?**

Jochen Fahrenberg

The recent claims for an emergent interpretative paradigm in psychology and the social sciences are evaluated in the context of the long tradition of such methodologies in psychology. Fifty years ago, the qualitative analysis of biographical interviews, of projective tests and dreams (and even graphology) was widely used. Much effort and time was put into developing and refining elaborated systems of rules and assessment strategies. At times, this approach has been the dominant methodology in academic psychology—at least at many departments of Psychology in Germany.

This practice was increasingly challenged by pointing out obvious discrepancies between distinct systems and teachings and, moreover, by empirical evidence that indicated questionable validities. A further concern was the time-consuming effort required for training and application of such methods in assessing personality or arriving at clinical diagnosis. Thus,

the use of projective techniques was nearly abandoned and, at present, apparently, is of comparatively little impact in university departments, although it is still used in clinical psychology.

Likewise, the comprehensive training in interview-methods was generally reduced. Not much of the assets, that is, the large body of know-how about the common principles and basic rules, inherent to this methodology, survived the general trend as evidenced by present-day textbooks. In this context, many of the recent suggestions referring to the interpretative paradigm, appear to be a reintroduction of the past, however, omitting or neglecting essential aspects and, in particular, the explanations for what reasons the extensive training and use was abandoned in many fields.

In continuation of the long tradition of interpretative methodologies in psychology, several issues were raised. These issues include: the **latent meaning versus manifest content**; the interactive testing of an interpretative hypothesis according to FREUD's basic concept; the mutual relationship between depth and divergence of interpretative hypotheses; controlled evaluation based on independent and, as well, joint analysis; rule-based, transparent procedures to further establish aspects of reliability and validity; and the integration of interpretative methods in over-all assessment strategies in the applied fields.

Furthermore, obvious deficits regarding communication between fields and disciplines were indicated and issues in training students. Appropriate steps to serve this aim in curricula of undergraduate and graduate studies in psychology and the social sciences are suggested.

Hoping this is of interest,

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