The Humanistic Psychologist

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/hthp20

Clark Moustakas (1923-2012): Scholar, Teacher, Colleague and Friend

Diane Blau a , Lee Bach a , Marjorie Scott a & Shawn Rubin b

a Michigan School of Professional Psychology
b Saybrook University


To cite this article: Diane Blau, Lee Bach, Marjorie Scott & Shawn Rubin (2013): Clark Moustakas (1923-2012): Scholar, Teacher, Colleague and Friend, The Humanistic Psychologist, 41:1, 97-99

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2013.752695

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
Clark Moustakas (1923–2012)
Scholar, Teacher, Colleague and Friend

Diane Blau, Lee Bach, Marjorie Scott

Michigan School of Professional Psychology

Shawn Rubin
Saybrook University

BEING WITH CLARK MOUSTAKAS

I enter his office filled with a keen sense of anticipation. I have been invited here, all of me. I know there is a dedicated space prepared for me, ready for whatever I bring. I sit and feel his gentle and vital presence, his soft gaze, and a leaning in, a patient waiting. There is a range of possibility open to me: an exploration of self. Then and there, whatever I say, whoever I am will be accepted and respected. For a second I feel carried away, or rather into the moment and I feel free to sit silently, to ponder, to look inward, to speak. If I burst with exuberance, we grasp hands and dance with joy; if sadness spills forth, he sheds tears with me. If outraged, he shares the injustice. We adventure together into places unknown; we find the life thread of my creativity. I feel valued and clarify my own values. I feel empowered and tap my own potency. He honors me with reverence; I celebrate my uniqueness. (Diane Blau)

If one were to attempt to describe Clark Moustakas, one would utilize words that illustrate a phenomenon. He was a man of polarities. He was at once relaxed and energetic, still, yet intense activity waited to be summoned. Exceptionally academic yet delightfully playful. Composed, even-tempered, but with emotions so accessible that his face easily darkened, and his eyes would fill with tears when experiencing distress. In his company, one had the impression of time standing still, moving at top speed, in slow motion, or something in between. His presence was profound and inspiring.

Core themes of Clark’s thinking and writing emphasized valuing the self and one’s inner life, the relational dimension and its therapeutic potential for personal growth, change, and healing. As Clark taught and wrote, people were drawn to his words. He touched many hearts as he spoke of relationship, of love, uniqueness, authenticity, creativity, of being. He carried his ideas all over the world, speaking at workshops and seminars. Moreover, he served as a model of his philosophy about how human beings relate positively and respectfully to one another.

Correspondence should be addressed to Shawn Rubin, Saybrook University, 747 Front Street, 3rd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111. E-mail: shawn@shawnrubin.com
It was apparently no accident that the first book Clark edited was entitled, *The Self* (Moustakas, 1956). For this is what he assisted students to hone, or in his words, to “constantly emerge.” Clark was affirming and appreciative and conveyed a desire for each individual to develop “potentialities.” It was a process of “becoming” that he trusted and that helped others to actualize. Students recognized that Clark lived his core values of responsibility, choice, confrontation and authenticity. It was his congruent way of being which reflected what he believed that deeply moved students.

Clark was instrumental in founding Humanistic Psychology as the third force in American psychology, following Freudian psychoanalysis and Behaviorism. Alongside other pioneers, such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, he bravely rebelled against current trends and in the early 1950’s brought values of uniqueness, creativity, responsibility, and authenticity to the fore. Out of this auspicious gathering of like-minded academics and practitioners, the Association of Humanistic Psychology was formed.

It was at the Merrill Palmer Institute in Detroit, Michigan where Clark’s students first learned new ways of working with children in play therapy. His initial work with children began there in 1947 in its preschool (Moustakas, 1997). Clark tape-recorded every session with a child and studied the verbatim transcripts to understand and advance his effectiveness. Clark understood play as a source for problem solving, and for shaping and directing life rather than being determined by it. Play was the source and the strategy for coming to terms with the challenges of being, relating, and living as a unique and incomparable child (Moustakas, 1959).

Clark was also among the first to write about working with the parents of children in play therapy and included transcripts of his consultations with parents in his writings. In the early ‘50s, only a small group of psychologists were practicing play therapy. Clark’s pioneering writings are recognized as among the most significant in broadening the field of play therapy. It is no exaggeration to say that his theories and clinical applications of play therapy are as influential for clinical work with children as Carl Rogers’ client-centered therapy was for clinical work with adults.

Over the years, Clark’s reputation in the areas of play therapy and humanistic psychology proliferated. In 1970, responding to student requests, he and Cereta Perry launched a two-year program entitled “Enhancing Human Potentials” (EHP) at the Merrill Palmer Institute. The program flourished and in 1978 an MA degree curriculum in Humanistic and Clinical Psychology was established.

When the programs were in jeopardy due to the closing of The Merrill-Palmer Institute, Clark was undaunted and, along with Cereta Perry, Diane Blau, and Bruce Douglass, moved bravely across the street to open a new school: The Center for Humanistic Studies Graduate School (CHS). Quickly accredited due to the solidity of the programs, as well as Clark’s optimism and ability to inspire colleagues and students, CHS granted MA and Specialist (Psy.S.) Degrees in Humanistic and Clinical Psychology and Education.

At CHS, colleagues and students were familiar with Clark’s pattern of entering the school building at dawn. They knew that he had slept a few requisite hours, written several pages, perhaps even a chapter or two, prior to preparations for a full day. Clark’s writings during that time advanced the theory and practice of human science research with the development of heuristic inquiry and a modification of Amadeus Giorgi’s phenomenological methodology.

The creation of the heuristic model (Moustakas, 1990) validated the use of the self of the researcher in scientific studies of human experience. Clark’s transcendental phenomenology
IN MEMORIAM

(Moustakas, 1994b) provided an existential lens in which to explore lived experience. Applications of heuristic and transcendental phenomenological research have been applied to the fields of clinical psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, and sociology throughout the world. Additionally, Clark utilized the processes and phases of his research methods in his work with clients and eventually developed heuristic and phenomenological applications for clinical practice, which expanded the scope and reach of humanistic-existential models of psychotherapy (Moustakas, 1995). Within his therapeutic work and academic and training courses, Clark employed his original existential-phenomenological model of dream interpretation (1994a) to expand and deepen one’s understanding of their psychological life and clarify their intentions for future actions and growth.

Clark’s ability to integrate his knowledge in philosophy and psychology partnered with his capacity for creative articulation of his ideas and amazing energy produced volumes of published works. He is often referred to as a firebrand, having entered and won many battles for nontraditional schools of psychology, alternative perspectives, and causes. Pages could list the organizations he established, the licensing laws impacted, and the institutions he influenced including the Merrill Palmer Institute, Saybrook Institute, Union Institute and University and probably his proudest accomplishment, The Center for Humanistic Studies Graduate School, now the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.

Well into his 80s, Clark continued to teach and write and inspire new generations of humanistic psychologists to practice with a relational foundation of care, respect and commitment to immersion and engagement in the process of therapy and research. He created the legacy of a humanistic school of professional psychology in which learners value and seek to understand the complexity and resilience of the human spirit. Clark’s lifetime of innovation generated insight, growth and change in the lives of all who came to know him.

REFERENCES


AUTHOR NOTE

Diane Blau, Ph.D., is Co-Founder and President of the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.
Lee Bach, Ph.D., is Chair of the Psy.D. Program in Clinical Psychology at the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.
Marjorie Scott serves on the Faculty of the Michigan School of Professional Psychology.
Shawn Rubin, Psy.D., serves as Chair of the School of Clinical Psychology at Saybrook University and Editor in Chief of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology.