

l'abus des drogues et l'alcoolisme; il y ajoute une brève analyse de l'obésité — éclipsant le problème plus épineux actuellement de l'anorexie mentale — et termine par une réflexion intéressante sur le problème du chômage chez les jeunes. Le chômage représente, selon M. Cloutier, un échec à réussir l'autonomie sociale, une "adolescence forcée", et a pour conséquence de ternir "le lustre des valeurs sociales proposées par les adultes" (p. 287) et de diminuer la confiance des adolescents en leur avenir.

Somme toute, ce livre écrit par Richard Cloutier est certes bienvenu, surtout dans le monde de l'enseignement, en raison de ses qualités de recherche et de ses atouts pédagogiques indéniables.

Christensen, C., & Pass, L. *A Social Interactional Approach to Counselling/Psychotherapy*. Toronto: O.I.S.E. Press, 1983.

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The reigning criterion for originality in the field of psychotherapy, as the 20th century soon sums itself up, is the degree to which its authors can verify substantive healing and simultaneously not be counted among the many children of Freud. I justify the presumption of assuming the seat of criticism over the authors, my former teachers, by dint of just having read the book, the two published articles (Cole, Klarreich, & Fryatt, 1980, 1982), ten related, unpublished doctoral theses, as well as viewing some of the videotape evidence not mentioned in the book. Furthermore, countless hours of clinical conversation with the authors have afforded me a knowledge of their cognitive style, an important variable in grasping the wellsprings of the book.

The first half of the book is occupied with theoretical formulations. In almost all instances, the authors align themselves with the most brilliant psychologists who are also the most severe critics, including Paul Meehl, L.J. Cronbach, and Sigmund Koch. They believe that psychology could have been a formidable discipline with cumulative advances if only the wrong theory and the wrong method hadn't been chosen at crucial points in its modern history. The book presents the new and radical view of perception as propounded by Gibson, the cognitive theories of emotion as explained by Magda Arnold and Richard

Lazarus, counterpoised to the more traditional view of these central psychological concepts. Aside from its intended purpose of providing the base for a reconceptualization of the way the mind works, this 50 page introduction is a wonderfully lucid summary of current issues in psychological thought and can easily serve as a source book for honours courses and graduate seminars where students are invited to tread the precipice of creativity.

The book's social interactional approach is based on the assumption that pathology originates when some fundamental cognitive processes operate ineffectively. It is hypothesized that anyone who can discriminate and attend to social stimuli, differentiate between observation, inference and appraisal, and can vary behavior and observe the consequences, has the basic cognitive skills to acquire and maintain psychological health. The therapist is viewed as a teacher who instructs the client through his lessons: forming a disturbing mental image of social origin (e.g. father yelling at the client) and maintaining that image without attempting to escape or freeze in its presence. The therapist suggests a different evaluation of that social stimulus and asks that he imaginatively alter his response to the criticism of the significant other.

The authors conceptualize the therapeutic process into three distinct components: a) desensitization which exposes the client to the interfering social stimuli; b) rational analysis which aims to convince the client that from an objective standpoint those stimuli he experiences as most distressing are in fact rather innocuous; c) behavioral variation is the suggestion to the client that he first imaginatively considers alternative responses to the distressing stimulus and then perhaps experimentally enacts the new behavior in the presence of the social stimulus which has until now enjoyed too much control over him. Apparently the authors are of the opinion that the misery of mankind proceeds not from any overpowering evil, but from vexations of short duration frequently repeated.

My review of both the published and unpublished data leads me to accept the authors' claim that they have developed an effective short-term method of counselling. Social competence is enhanced and neurotic anxiety is decreased. The uniformly high quality craftsmanship of the experiments and the simple endearment which bound the senior author to his students, are among the most soothing rewards this life has to offer. It is therefore with moderate perplexity that I

viewed some of the videotapes in which the senior author counselled volunteer clients from the university student population. All three cases were bright, young and female. Case A found it hard to follow instructions. The complexities of her life made it difficult to isolate potent social stimuli with accuracy. She had already experienced professional counselling. Her childhood history included frequent doses of mild to moderate physical abuse. Although she appeared to obtain something useful from the sessions, no clinical improvement was obvious.

Case B was gifted with an intellectual apparatus that enabled her to view life with sustained clarity. She made it apparent to the counselor that her identify role as a woman was the heart of her problem. Yet she appeared jolted and hesitant of speech when the counsellor asked some simple questions. Conjecturally, I feel that as an expert counsellor herself, she had a set for a radically different form of therapy and found it hard to relinquish rapidly an approach she knew from experience to be effective. After the last session I asked her why she chose to return to work in a small town which she reported had few single men her age. She could make no reply.

Case C was vulnerable to those piercing tiger-like eyes of her mother. The counsellor first asked her to imagine a scene in which she was the tiger-tamer in a circus. The dangerous animals roam about, growling and flashing those piercing eyes. But she was an animal trainer with a whip in her hands. The client thought she was to whip the tiger and the notion of injuring her mother triggered a sudden revulsion. Immediately the counsellor instructed her to change the image – of course she wasn't to hurt mother, only to crack the whip whose sharp sound frightened the animals into line. The therapeutic effects were instantaneous, unmistakable and irreversible. She voluntarily mused over the image and her facial expression slowly beamed joy. It was a fortuitous moment in the history of counselling when genius intersected with chance to produce an image of unexampled power to heal.

The following generalizations are derived from a study of these videotapes. The authors are perfectly correct, they have formulated a didactic mode of treatment. The tapes illustrate the natural difficulties inherent in any teaching endeavor. One must counter vagrant attention, one can only teach as fast as the learner will learn, and the identification and correction of

absurd misapprehensions of the simplest idea will always be part of the teaching profession. Case C raises the possibility that the private practice of social interactional therapy is a different form of therapy than the one packaged and presented in Part III of the book. The education of Case C was very rapid, more similar to a suddenly changed perception or cognition than to anything one generally finds along a learning curve. One reads the experiments and finds it easy to visualize what happened. But so singular is the method presented on the tapes, that without a practicum experience every reader must remain ignorant of its principles and insensible of its effects. The counsellor disregards the client's explanation of his problems, generally presented in ambiguous layman's language or clothed in pseudo-Freudian misapplications. He methodically extinguishes the client's verbal reports with inattention if they do not play into his therapeutic scheme. The counsellor's fund of mental images is inexhaustible, and his unfailing ability to select the appropriate one for the client requires a plausible explanation if we are to distance ourselves from a belief in mind reading. The counsellor's apparent artlessness which disguises the highest art has stopped me from using these as teaching tapes to counsellors in training. They have no understanding of what they view.

The senior author may be characterized as a man who delights in the perpetual exercise of his ratiocinative faculties. In his conversation strong reason always predominates over quick sensibility. Gifted with a copious memory he began from an early age to incline himself to observing people in the great diversity of their local manners. He applied a steady attention to the details of life and stored for future use the images of the constantly changing scene. Whatever was lost in speculative philosophy and generalized truths about the human condition, was compensated by the certainty of his knowledge.

These personal factors may explain a paradox. The therapeutic package, though labelled a social interactional approach, relies heavily on the client's ability to produce a variety of mental images. Yet in the theoretical formulation (p. 30) the authors relegate the role of mental images to a secondary position. This is one area in which I predict the authors and their readers will not be of the same conviction. The theses and the tapes reveal the creative, protean force of a mental image. But

men of powerful reason do not delight in the emotional delicacies of Rogerian empathy or place much value on the airy fantasies of mental images.

At intermittent intervals over the years I have presented the senior author with some details about my clients. He instantaneously produced a diagnosis which later evidence always confirmed and never confuted. I gather that by a system of taking the details I presented, and comparing them to the nearest scene of life encoded in the vast storagehouse of his memory, a similar case and its diagnosis was retrieved. And yet in their theoretical formulation, memory and analogue encoding of new information are not the preferred explanatory mechanisms, given a choice.

In surveying the intellectual growth of the authors, one notes some fundamental elements. From their extensive counselling experience they concluded that clients are afraid of things that cannot hurt them; that these fears most often appear in association with a very limited number of significant others; that their clients have developed the unwholesome habit of using large words for little things; and that the number of social stimuli creating distress are few and readily categorized. From this wealth of observation and fact they produced an innovative therapeutic approach, it appears, using the method of induction. Why then is inductive logic vilified on pp. 17, 18 and 19, as that method whose mortal taste brought death into the world of scientific psychology and all our woes?

One may reduce a client's anxiety to pigeons or spiders without much consulting the moral consequences of therapeutic success. But in a program whose aim is to alter the relationship of one man to another, some moral statement must be made. The book is missing a moral chapter. Perhaps therapists are so accustomed to making men happy, that the task of making them wise or good is left to someone else. I gleaned the following moral statement on p. 107; it is part of the therapist's script.

Your evaluations of the stimulus of a 'teacher criticizing' vary quite a bit... these kinds of results aren't unusual. As I said before, learned evaluations are arbitrary because they depend on the particular experiences that an individual has had... And if the evaluations that were learned in the first place are dis-

treasing it suggests that some other more helpful evaluation can be learned.

At first glance, the authors appear to rely on the philosophy of hedonism as their moral yardstick.

In defense of the authors, I suggest that they, like so many of the counsellors working in North America today, are true Americans, fulfilling the aims of democracy:

The purpose of democracy – supplanting old beliefs in the necessary absoluteness of established dynastic rulership... as furnishing the only security against chaos, crime and ignorance – is... to illustrate, at all hazards, this doctrine or theory that man, properly trained in sanest, highest freedom, may and must become a law, a series of laws, unto himself, surrounding and providing for, not only his own personal control but all his relations to other individuals... (p. 501)

Is the reader surprised to discover the goals of 20th century counselling so eloquently elaborated in Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, published in 1871? This belief that man trained to be free of encumbrances would naturally evoke a proper set of controls for himself and express a similar set of interpersonal laws is thoroughly transcendental, and in harmony with many of the genetic assumptions about man which our authors are willing to hazard.

By now the reader has seen how far the present therapeutic program has removed itself from the fatherhood of Freud. Here, emotions are subservient to cognition, as feelings are viewed as responses not stimuli. Nowhere do we find the tripartite institutions of the mind, absent are the problems of resistance, and countertransference, motivational variables are laid to rest, and the instincts, if they do exist, must be retranslated into social terms, because our authors firmly believe, along with Macmurray, that alone, man is nothing.

This then is the praise of our authors – that their mode of thinking is highly original, although this fact is obscured but not diminished by the more conventional way the ideas are expressed. Their desensitization is no more the desensitization of Joseph Wolpe, than their rational thinking is the rational emotive therapy of Albert Ellis. Instructing a client not to push against an image to alter

it, or asking him to report concrete details of the image, illustrate how little our authors have borrowed from other men; how easily they slip into a train of thought peculiar to themselves, and how they have deviated from the common path of making a book from other books.

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