

attention which do not however, detract significantly from the importance of the book. Vanderpool states (p. 11) that "Christians recognize that man is made of body and soul; the soul is the vital principle for the animal body." In the Catholic Church at least, such a dualistic emphasis is a pre-Vatican construct; the modern Conciliar documents emphasize the vital and essential *unity* of man by calling him "enfleshed spirit" or simply "person," as the author himself does in the title. The author then goes on to describe what he calls 'animal drives' (p. 15) and 'animal emotions' (p. 19). It is the opinion of this reviewer that it is important to identify these irrational emotions or drives as 'human' rather than 'animal' since they in fact constitute an important part of the fabric of our humanity. Vanderpool is right in insisting that those (human) emotions which are irrational and arise spontaneously should not be the cause of guilt feelings. On the contrary, it is important to be in touch with *all* our emotions in order to understand what they are telling us and to bring them under the guidance of reason and will.

Vanderpool states (p. 12) that "Human organisms, like all organisms, tend to homostatic equilibrium — that is to a state of balance, rest and stability." This is indeed part of the situation. On the other hand, human growth and maturation also depend on what Selye calls 'creative' tension or stress, or the "disequilibrium" Piaget refers to as he describes several stages of growth-producing imbalance. Some clients fail to mature or cope adequately precisely because they are too placid and complacent in their "rest"; the counsellor's task may be to raise their tension level and disturb their equilibrium!

Perhaps it is a reflection of this reviewer's own counselling experience of the past few years, but here are two areas which would seem to have deserved a little more attention. These are 1) marital breakdowns in our society; and, 2) within the total context of homosexuality, homosexual behaviour on the part of those who are disturbed by their homosexual behaviour and interests. The latter topic receives only two sentences of comment on page 78, yet this is a difficult area encountered by many counsellors and clients. It should be noted at this point that Vanderpool has provided at the end of the book a helpful bibliography organized according to the major parts of the book.

Vanderpool has produced a well organized and carefully written handbook which this reviewer highly recommends to all pastoral counsellors, especially those in a parish or a university setting, where one meets persons with a wide variety of human problems. If even just a little of Vanderpool's sensitivity and great respect for

persons rubs off on the reader, he will be well rewarded for responding to his students' persistence that he write such a book.

Experiencing: A Humanistic Theory of Psychology and Psychiatry, Alvin R. Mahrer, New York: Brunner/Mazel Publishers, 1978, 884 pp., \$22.50.

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As I began to review *Experiencing: A Humanistic Theory of Psychology and Psychiatry* I was struck by two features of the book: it is a very large work and it is, in my opinion, a very important work.

First I have a few remarks to make about the size of the book itself. It has 834 pages of text virtually unbroken by figures or tables. This is followed by 31 pages of references (approximately 744 separate entries), which testifies to the considerable scholarship upon which the text is based. A book of this density is not for the (intellectually) faint of heart!

The author's favourite sources, as one might guess, are mainly existential thinkers: Binswanger, Boss, Buytendijk, Ellenberger, Esterson, Laing and May. The Psychoanalysts Adler, Arieti, Freud, Fenichel and Jung are also relied on extensively. Surprisingly, three behaviourists: Skinner, Dollard and Bandura are frequently drawn from. Finally, Maslow, Rogers and Bühler appear rather often in the text. One feature of the book which is impressive is the wide range of literature from which the author is able to draw. References range from the esotericist Ouspensky to the positivist B.F. Skinner.

What is Mahrer attempting to do in this tome? In his own words:

My aim is to take the basic conceptions of humanistic thinking and to stretch them into a full-fledged personality theory (p. 9).

Does the author accomplish this aim? This is a question which each reader will have to answer upon reading the book. For my part, I believe that at least some quite important stages are taken toward the avowed goal and it is to the highlights which I now turn.

Mahrer believes that the advance of psychological practice depends upon a fortuitous coupling of practice with theory and research. Informal practice requires an *explicit* theory. Implicit theories are dangerous because they

permit, even encourage, one to *do* without knowing *why* one is doing.

Humanistic-existential theories are emerging out of the present historical context as a “big school,” a significant paradigm for the conduct of research, theorizing and practice in clinical social science, including psychotherapy and counselling. In attempting to establish a comprehensive humanistic theory, Mahrer is constrained to do just that: that is, *theorize* and relate his theorizing to much of the research knowledge generated by other theories. He does not describe any research method, nor does he report a body of empirical observations, nor suggest a set of therapeutic techniques.

According to Mahrer (and many other humanistic theorists before him) humanistic theory tries to discover *distinctively* human questions and issues and is derived from the investigations and explanations of the humanistic “family” which includes as its members Gestalt, phenomenology, Daseinanalysis, existential and experientialism. Rather than superficially reviewing this book in total, and in order to give the flavour of Mahrer’s thinking I am going to select the concept of “potentials” which is the key in his work and discuss it in some detail.

A central question in developing a humanistic personality theory (at least in a clinical context) is not “how is the person to be classified?”, i.e., normal or neurotic, nor is the theoretical concern with traits; but rather, the central question is: “what is *this* individual experiencing, and how, in *this* specific situation?”

In developing a humanistic theory, an investigation of behaviour is not sufficient. There is “something more” than behaviour. That “something more” is identified (first by Boss and then by Mahrer) as *potential* for experiencing. “Potential,” which is always bodily located, is offered as the basic unit for the conception of personality. The “paradigm” of *potential for experiencing* is the phenomenological description of specific being-states such as being rejected, being loved, being helped, being overpowered, being involved, etc. Potentials are not construed to have a motive force as implied, for example, by the construct “drive.” Potentials are being-states. Description of a potential is a precise description of experiencing, not a “naming” of behaviours. Behaviours are the *means* whereby potentials are experienced.

Potentials are “beyond” mere behaviour. The aim of describing the potential of, for example, “being-sexual” is not simply to explain sexual behaviour; the aim is to fully and accurately describe, thus understand and explain, the nature of sexual experiencing. Sex, in this theoretical

context, in other words, is more than behaviour — it *is* that, but it is more: a protean, mutable experience.

Behaviourists are correct in claiming that “inner” constructs such as need, drive, motive, etc., are actually re-statements of behaviour, thus redundant and unnecessary. They are wrong, however, that exorcising mentalistic concepts leaves us only behaviour. This “radical operationalism” is scientifically attractive but bereft of *agency* and thus seriously misleading. [Behaviour theorists are cognizant of this flaw as evidenced by the current attempts to convert the behaviourist paradigm into a “cognitive-behavioural paradigm.” “Cognitive” is the behaviourist’s attempt to say “agency.”]

Beyond behaviour is the *presence* of the person — the experiencing *agent* who organizes behaviour into meaningful patterns. The (personality of) agent is constituted from two categories of potential. First, a person *is* potentials for talking, walking, listening, etc. — *operating* potentials which convert directly into behaviour. Other potentials such as masculinity, willfulness, creative expression, etc., are located on a “deeper” level. These deeper levels may or may not be realized in behaviour; their function is mediational — one less frequently *is* them, experiences them from within — yet one *may* experience them; that is, find them transformed from “deeper” into “operating” potentials.

Mahrer claims that it is the *relationship* between operating and deeper potentials which is the major determinant of personality well-being.

I am uneasy with the author’s willingness to imbue the “deeper potentials” with a life of their own, each potential construed virtually as “world of its own.” Thus, as a deeper potential rises toward actualization, (as in sexuality) *it* (the potential) is said to *happen*. The image of the existential self as agent is seemingly disavowed, the “I” is lost. Mahrer describes the “critical moment” in which the person chooses (or does he?) between the options of letting the deeper potential occur or not. Perhaps, in this existential moment the agent *chooses* and internal, deeper potentials do not simply “happen” like a flood breaking a dike.

Mahrer asserts that the humanistic concept of “actualization” is insufficient. In its place he claims that the twin concepts of “potential” and “experiencing” should be given priority. Specifically, he proposes that:

- 1) behaviour is the *means* for establishing and maintaining with the external world those relationships [integrative vs. disintegrative] among the individual’s potentials for experiencing.
- 2) behaviour is also the individual’s *means* of experiencing potentials.

Hence, our understanding of the individual requires not only a description of his behaviour but also description of the experiencing which accompanies the behaviour. "Insight" and "behavioural" methods should be replaced [at least in part] by "experience-description" methods.

While the main thrust of this book is to develop a humanistic theory and apply this theory to human development, the author does have a few things to say to the helper.

For example, in the author's opinion the helper/helpee enterprise is currently misguided and reformation is needed. Specifically what is called for is removal of the intent to change society. The authentic work of the counsellor and therapist is with the individual client and the client's own inferiority.

The movement toward maturity requires a commitment to the "internal journey" as well as an ability to reflect — that is, be able to articulate both what oneself and others are privately thinking and feeling.

I think that the author's discussion of the state of "unfeeling" (pp. 374-380) is especially significant for the counsellor. I say this because many of the clients I work with are entrapped to some degree in states of "unfeeling" which in effect, *seals off access to potentials* and turns responsibility for personal fate to external determinants.

I recommend this book for the serious student of humanistic thought and as a reference work for advanced studies in personality, human development, and humanistically-oriented counselling and psychotherapy studies.

Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology, R. Valle & M. King, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 392 pp.

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According to the authors, this book attempts to present, at an introductory level, a wide range of psychological topics "as understood and worked through by those [psychologists] who examine these issues from an existential-phenomenological approach".

Following a Foreword by Rollo May, the editor-author's Introduction provides a perspective for the following chapters and presents a working definition of the existential-phenomenological alternative [to positivist psychologies].

Existential-phenomenological psychology is "that psychological discipline which seeks to explicate the *essence, structure*, or *form* of both human experience and human behaviour as revealed through essentially *descriptive* techniques including disciplined reflection".

The remainder of the book is organized into five clusters of chapters, each written especially for this text. The first cluster of chapters discusses such topics as "The history of existential-phenomenological thought", "Psychology and science", and "Psychological research from the phenomenological perspective".

The second cluster of chapters is devoted to traditional psychological topics: body-image, perception, learning, and memory. The third set of chapters is organized around personality and social psychological topics.

The fourth chapter [probably of strongest interest to most reader of this journal] discusses counselling, psychotherapy, and psychopathologies from an existential-phenomenological perspective. The final two chapters examine "passions" and "aesthetic consciousness".

Although this book has been written as an introductory textbook, it is not easy reading, especially for the reader who is unaccustomed to the heavy, and, at times convoluted language of phenomenology. Nonetheless, in my opinion, this book is the best available introduction to a variety of psychological topics presented from an existential-phenomenological perspective.

There are three chapters which seem to me to have special significance for the counsellor and counsellor educator. The first chapter is on "Psychological research as the phenomenologist views it", written by Paul Colaizzi, a learning theorist who describes himself as an "evolving" phenomenological psychologist.

Colaizzi presents an example of research, including procedures used, which could easily be a prototypical model for research into counselling topics. Further, Colaizzi outlines the essential differences between phenomenological and traditional research. Finally, the author describes characteristics of existentially significant research — perhaps the most powerful assertion being that "All human research, particularly psychological research is a mode of *existential therapy*, or at least should proceed within the horizon of existential therapy . . ." (p. 69). This assertion rests upon a number of assumptions, the most important being: existential research *rejects* the categories of "researcher" and "subjects"; existential research requires a base of *trust*; existential research passes beyond research "conclusions" in the conventional sense and proceeds to existential *insight*; existential research