

actual improvement rates? The non standardized clinical interview is the most biased outcome measure available. Questionnaire or standardized interview measures would have greatly bolstered the credibility of claims as to the efficacy of the short-term model. The central test of any counselling service is whether clients achieve significant improvements that persist over time. The author assured the majority of couples described in the text that improvements would continue through their own efforts. However the complicated question of when is longer term intervention ideal was not discussed. Agreedly low motivated couples should not (and cannot) be kept in consultation against their will. However, the risk that some (or many) good candidates for longer term couple therapy would prematurely terminate with inappropriate advice ("you don't need more therapy" or "you can settle your remaining complaints") goes undiscussed. One risk of the short-term model, if too rigidly applied, is that couples who terminate (or are terminated) prematurely change from the improved to the no change or deterioration group (Gurman & Kniskern, 1978).

Undoubtedly this book offers a promising intervention model for couples but unfortunately the author does not provide either data or an operational framework for deciding how many.

Reference

- Gurman, A.S., & Kniskern, D.P. Research on marital and family therapy: Progress, perspective and prospect. In S. Garfield & A. Bergin (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley, 1978.
- Hayim, G.J. *The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Sartre*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

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Over the last decade there has appeared a strong voice of criticism against various psychologies: against positivistic psychology for its inclination to reduce human reality to material reality; against humanistic psychology for its one-sided interest in individualism and subjectivity, to cite two examples. While readers of this journal may not be completely caught up in such criticisms, I believe that they may have some concern since many important concepts and principles of counselling and psychotherapy are derived from

those psychologies. Revisions in theory have consequences, in due time, for applications derived from these theories.

It seems to me that one of the most trenchant criticisms against psychologically-based counselling and psychotherapy is the criticism that current therapeutic methods by and large fail to place themselves on firm social footing. Man is a social being, meaning arises through social exchanges, social order is *negotiated* order, and actions are socially derived. Yet our counselling and therapy approaches seem to fall either on the side of subjectivity or exterior behaviour.

If the reader is concerned with the conceptual issues I have only hinted at the preceding paragraphs, then Hayim's essay on *The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Sartre* should provide welcome and provocative reading.

The late French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, worked out his method of social enquiry in two volumes: *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Probably because of the size of these works as well as the difficulty in terminology, Sartre has been badly understood, according to Hayim. Sartre has been accused of championing the irrational in human life and advocating a wholly subjective position. Hayim claims that both these claims are entirely unjustified. Instead, Hayim's view is that Sartre developed a theory of *social action* in which the actor, the group, and the field of practical action are all interconnected. In brief, Sartre's works should not be interpreted as either nihilism nor solipsism. Rather, these two works of Sartre represent a "real effort to afford moral guidance for an age in which values are threatened and men have lost the traditional authorities that once direct their lives" (Allen, 1973).

For Sartre, a person is the sum total of his acts. One is what one does. Sartre attacks the long-standing philosophical claim of dual realities. In his view each human act of expression indicates itself and conceals nothing. The act reveals all of the capabilities of the individual (at that moment). The acting person cannot truthfully make excuses by referring to "hidden" capabilities of the self.

In Sartre's work freedom takes on two connotations which are complimentary. In *Being and Nothingness* freedom is explicated as a radical condition resting on the ontological status of person *qua* person. In the *Critique* freedom is linked indissolubly with responsibility, i.e., to the constrictions of human affiliation, social obligation, material scarcity

and so on. For Sartre, freedom requires that one take up an active stance toward the world; it requires praxis. Freedom always entails the concept of responsibility. The person "is condemned to be free". Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet in other respects free; because once thrown into the world (one) is responsible for everything (one) does" (Sartre, 1957). Sartre affirms again and again that individuals can only be held responsible for their actions. Since human reality has no *a priori* essence, nature or deity to fall back on humans have no excuses. This is a staggering concept of freedom – one that brings on anguish which itself is a reflective attitude toward one's own possibilities. As I stand on the edge of a mountain precipice I do not fear that I will fall for I am sure of foot. Yet the possibility that I may *throw* myself over arises and I am engulfed in anguish – the possibility of this free act is terrifying.

In the first chapter of her book Professor Hayim interprets Sartre's themes of freedom, anguish and bad faith, especially in comparison with the sociological thought of Max Weber. These themes along with time, the experience of absence, the spirit of seriousness, voluntarism and the act of valuation are a foundation upon which to examine Sartre's theory of social action and his analysis of various forms of human groups: *Serial* groups (individuals collected at a bus stop); *praxis* groups (groups in revolt against inhumane treatment); *organized* groups (groups in which members act *as* members of *this* group carrying out functional transactions with the material world). One of the most powerful ideas which Sartre expresses about groups is, to me, that there "is no common aim that an individual cannot set himself, *provided* that, in the unity of the project, he tries to constitute a group to realize it" (*Critique*, p. 50). A person comprehends the action of a group to the extent that he understands his own action. According to Sartre, common action and individual action show a genuine homogeneity. Every group

operates both as *praxis* (goal directed choosing) and process (instrumentality). Praxis and process, like *pour-soi* and *en-soi*, constitute the dialectics of self-production. Every person is (for himself) both an object and a subject. Within an organized group each member acts as a self-creating being. At the same time each member's freedom (a condition of all members) is limited by pledges and commitments. The ability of the group to transform a member is potent only so long as the individual is *active* in the group and so long as the individual as member, is *seen* by others, *studied* by others or confronted by others *from the outside*. When a member sinks into the obscure comfort of the group, the object-reality *outside* of the group disappears for the member. Mediation (learning, transformation) by means of the other ceases to occur.

Hayim develops an interpretation of Sartre's ideas on social action through an analysis of institutions and authority, concluding with a discussion on the "recovery of human experience".

I believe that one might say that Sartre presents two modes of being: a life lived in passivity and bad faith all the while bound to the exigencies and the pretexts of givens-practico-inert existence *vs* the life lived in praxis which knows itself to be freely chosen and bears the accompanying responsibility. The virtue of Hayim's volume is that it decidedly and in a penetrating manner examines Sartrean themes from the perspective of his ideas on groups and social action. This work is a good extension of the volumes by Desan (1974) and Craib (1976).

The counsellor or counsellor educator who wishes to remain abreast of existential thought or who wishes to be stimulated in re-thinking the principles of group methods in counselling, or both, will find Hayim's essay incisive.