

in the continuing debate between existential and psychoanalytical thinkers. It is to be hoped, perhaps after the arrival of a Freud figure in the existential domain, that some further synthesis to this dialectic might be reached.

**Nicholas Zinovieff.**

*Readings in Existential Psychology & Psychiatry* is a collection of essays that covers the gamut of existential issues, which are part and parcel of human experience. The book's main strength lies in the scope and diversity of the papers it presents such as: existential anxiety, guilt, imagination and myth, the unconscious, schizophrenia, suicide, just to mention a few. The present review's weakness lies in its selectivity.

Perhaps of particular interest to readers of this Journal will be the two articles presented on the unconscious - an issue on which there is a paucity of literature within the Existential domain.

One of the articles is by Medard Boss, the other by Mark Conkling - who is presenting Sartre's view on the subject. The two authors strongly argue against Freud's theory of the unconscious.

They suggest that our basic ideas and actions cannot be the result of dark, irrational forces in the unconscious and do not view man as the product of his biological and psychological antecedents as Freud believed. However, their arguments originate from different sources. Boss is engrossed in Heidegger's ontology. It is worth mentioning that without some knowledge of Heidegger's basic concepts the reader might experience some difficulty in understanding or following Boss's argumentation.

Boss has criticised Freud for not having elucidated on the concept of consciousness, but then doesn't do that himself. He views Freud's theory of the unconscious as ambiguous and having originated in self-deception.

By voicing the need for a radically new understanding of human being, Boss is stressing that this cannot be arrived at by "dilettantish" - referring to Freud - but rather only by thinkers such as philosophers. He refers in particular to Heidegger's Phenomenological ontology and argues that whatever we have once perceived is always retained and part of our world (reality) and present in it in different modes. Something to be repressed is equally present in the world-realm of that existence as something perceptible.

Boss concludes that the therapist can help to broaden the patient's openness to the world by tuning into the patient's world: first by accepting

where the patient is and then encouraging him/her to become that which he/she is essentially meant to be.

M. Conkling explores in detail and pinpoints with great clarity the areas where Freud and Sartre are in disagreement. He skilfully presents Sartre's argument by which he rejects the existence of the unconscious (as proposed by Freud). Sartre adheres to Husserl's principle of the intentionality of Consciousness, and represents the antithesis of determinism. The strongest weapon of Sartre's argument that renders Freud's notion of the unconscious a contradiction in terms is attributed to his position on the nature of the consciousness itself. The two levels of consciousness, respectively pre-reflective and reflective, proposed by Sartre, are connected to awareness, imagination and knowledge. Through consciousness and imagination we create ourselves by continuously making choices. When we stop this process we are deceiving ourselves and are in bad-faith.

Conkling's conclusion is that if we accept Sartre's explanation of consciousness and that of bad faith as valid, then the Freudian theory of unconsciousness cannot be accepted.

Rollo May briefly touches on the issue of the unconscious in his article "On the Phenomenological basis of psychotherapy". He admits that we have experiences which indeed could not be accounted for as belonging to the realm of consciousness. May defines "unconscious" as belonging to the category of experiences in which man cannot or rather will not actualise his potentialities, in which definition one can recognise a humanistic flavour.

I rather go along with May's view, which allows space for both Freud's and Sartre's stances on the issue of the unconscious. As threatening as it may seem for some we have to admit that we are equally rational and irrational beings. Believing that life is full of paradoxes this can be considered as being one of them. Paraphrasing Tillich, of necessity philosophical ideas, "appear in pairs of contrasting concepts" (i.e. irrational, rational).

On the whole I recommend this book very highly for anyone who is interested in existential issues, and particularly to those who are interested in working with people from an existential perspective.

**Lucia Moja-Strasser**