



Australian  
National  
University

---

THESES SIS/LIBRARY  
R.G. MENZIES LIBRARY BUILDING NO:2  
THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
CANBERRA ACT 0200 AUSTRALIA

TELEPHONE: +61 2 6125 4631  
FACSIMILE: +61 2 6125 4063  
EMAIL: [library.theses@anu.edu.au](mailto:library.theses@anu.edu.au)

## USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes  
of private study and research only.  
Passages from the thesis may not be  
copied or closely paraphrased without the  
written consent of the author.

REFLECTIVE PSYCHOTHERAPY:  
AN EXTRAPOLATION FROM JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S  
EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

BY  
Y. K. GOH

Thesis submitted to the Psychology Department of  
Australian National University  
in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Science Degree in Psychological Counseling.

1972



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Australian National University for the Master Scholarship which made the undertaking of this study possible. I am greatly indebted to Professor P. Pentony whose patience, encouragement and suggestion have been most helpful throughout the year.

Thanks are also expressed to the Canberra College of Advanced Education and the Psychiatric Services, A.C.T., who have been kind enough to accomodate me throughout the year for my practicum.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE	1 - 3
CHAPTER I. Introduction: the Role of Consciousness In Psychotherapy.	4 - 10
CHAPTER II. The Concepts of Consciousness and Reflection: A Theoretical Framework.	11 - 32
"Being" and "Existence"	11
The Sartrean Concept of Consciousness	14
The For-itself in constant pursuit of the In-itself:	
Man in constant pursuit of a Self	17
The Concepts of Negation and Freedom	19
Pre-reflective and Reflective Consciousness	20
Being-for-other	25
The Concept of "Bad Faith"	30
CHAPTER III. Pre-reflective Consciousness and Reflection: Its Implication for Psychopathology.	33 - 52
Psychopathology	34
Two types of Alienation or Neurosis	38
Symptomology of the two types of Alienation	42
CHAPTER IV. Reflection: Its Implication for the Process of Psychotherapy.	53 - 83
"Pure" and "Impure" Reflection	54
The two-phase structure of Pure Reflection	58
The distinction between Unreflective Emotion and Reflective Feeling	61
Rogers' "Reflection of Feeling" - A Clarification	65
"Intellectual" and "Emotional" Insights	71
The Interactive Process of Psychotherapy	75
CHAPTER V. Techniques of Reflection in Psychotherapy.	84 - 126
"Acting on - Reacting to" as compared to "Interacting with"	87
Frankl's Logotherapeutic Technique of Paradoxical Intention	91
Haley's Therapeutic Paradox	95
Wolpe's Systematic Desensitization	103
The use of Imagery in Psychotherapy	107
Gendlin's Experiential Therapy	118
CHAPTER VI. Summary and Conclusion.	127 - 132
REFERENCES	133 - 139

## PREFACE

The final form that this essay has taken arises from an initial impetus to investigate the role of imagery in psychotherapy. Three recent articles (Singer, 1970; Singer, 1971; Cordner, 1970) reviewed the recent upsurge of interest in the use of imagery in psychotherapy. These authors did not find any systematic account capable of integrating the various uses of imagery in psychotherapy; nor did they provide any useful theoretical integration themselves.

The use of imagery in psychotherapy varies from the traditional psychoanalytic use of "free associated" fantasy to Assagioli's (1965) extensive system of psychotherapy called Psychosynthesis which relies solely on image visualization and on to Gendlin's (1970) technique of Experiential Focusing and Wolpe's (1958) procedure of Systematic Desensitization.

In attempting to integrate these diversified theoretical frameworks into a meaningful conceptual system, I am struck by the lack of reference to the role of the activity of imagining on the part of the patient in psychotherapy. Most psychotherapists have put the emphasis on the content of imagery in accounting for their therapeutic

effectiveness.

This led to an exploration into the process of imagining. Subjectively, when I engage in an act of imagining I find myself changing the focus of consciousness. In other words there is an alteration in what I am conscious of. This brought me back to the issue of consciousness which is the topic of the present essay - the implication of the concept of Consciousness and its component element of Reflection in psychotherapy. Specifically, it is an examination of one particular conceptual system of consciousness - Jean-Paul Sartre's Existential Philosophy of Consciousness - for its implication in the practice of psychotherapy.

I hope to show that what has commonly been referred to as "the mysticism of Existentialism" can be understood in practical psychotherapeutic terms. Most important of all, I hope to show that the process of psychotherapy can be better understood using the concept of reflection in terms of the change in level of consciousness. It is thus an attempt towards providing a general theory of psychotherapy based upon Sartre's version of Existentialism.

Chapter I takes a quick look at the concept of consciousness in general psychotherapeutic literature. In this chapter, the purpose of this essay will be further elaborated. Chapter II introduces Sartre's conceptual

system of consciousness and reflection which will be applied in a general discussion of psychopathology in Chapter III. In the next two chapters the focus is specifically on the process of psychotherapy, with Chapter IV attempting to relate the concept of reflection to the general process of psychotherapy and Chapter V to further illustrate this through a discussion of some specific techniques of psychotherapy. This is followed by the conclusion to the essay in Chapter VI.