

Book Reviews

James Fadiman & Robert Frager. *Personality and personal growth*, Harper & Row 1976. pp.489.

This is a systematic book, covering the personality theories of Freud, Jung, Adler, Reich, Perls, James, Skinner, Rogers and Maslow, and the approaches of Zen, Yoga and Sufism. There is also an appendix on the psychology of women, plus a lengthy annotated bibliography of the available literature on that subject. Each chapter follows the same structure.

Personal History	Will
Intellectual Antecedents	Emotions
Major Concepts	Intellect
Dynamics	Self
Psychological growth	Therapist (or teacher)
Obstacles to growth	Evaluation
Structure	The Theory First Hand
Body	Exercises
Social relationships	Annotated Bibliography

Accordingly this book is an excellent one for the student studying for examinations. The 'compare and contrast' questions are almost answered in advance!

But this book is much more than that. It is written in a very human, sympathetic way, which really tries to do justice to each of the points of view with which it deals. And in every case, the authors seem to know what they are talking about. So that the student shall know, too, each chapter contains suggestions for experiential exercises to explore the concepts of each theory in a practical way.

The whole book is very well thought out and attractively presented. It is written in language which is understandable and insightful. It has a definite emphasis on being genuinely useful to the student, rather than concentrating on the niceties of research. It is a book that someone might read for pleasure.

And of course it is of particular interest that this is the first book I have seen on personality theories which deals in a serious way with Eastern approaches.

Many of the Eastern systems include a theory of personality structure and fundamental rules for behaviour and character change. These systems cover many of the same topics as Western personality theories, and they have influenced many of the theories and techniques current in the human potential movement. They tend to deal more explicitly with transpersonal and religious experience and with the role of values and morals in human behaviour.

One more thing about this book - it is extremely up-to-date. All the references are fresh, and clearly not dug up from old courses and old reading lists. This may be because, as the authors say, 'The students in the Seminar or Personality Theory at the University of California at Santa Cruz went over each chapter line by line.'

This is a book, in short, which could be read with interest by any reader of this journal, but which would be ideal for students and for lecturers who want a better book for their classes on personality. It actually tells you what you want to know, and doesn't burden you with a whole lot of stuff you don't want to know. And it breathes a genuine interest in people.

John Rowan

Carolyn Wood Sherif. *Orientation in Social Psychology.*
Harper & Row. 441 p.p. £6.25.

The title of this book is well chosen. It is written in a natural way and provides a good overview of what social psychology's focus is and its implications for our social lives. While it is not 'humanistic' in emphasis it does contain many useful guidelines for our movement. Both to protect us from in-group weakness and to help in creating understanding for our views.

A main emphasis is the concern of the authoress with the complexity of social situations and the errors and dangers which have occurred due to research findings being used for commercial or manipulative purposes generally. She also points out that most research is paid for or directed by privileged or power holding sponsors and is therefore prone to bias. An example of a 'community control' programme in Harlem is given. It appears that the programme was an outstanding success and was reported as such by a social psychologist to the authorities concerned. Despite this the programme was dropped and remote control imposed. No reasons are given.

One very interesting section deals with the dangers of therapists or social psychologists functioning as technicians of attitude change. The point is, that social power and consequent injustice are necessary factors to be considered before the adjustments, of individuals or groups, is attempted. Without this ethical or humanitarian emphasis it is possible that the 'technicians' become a part of the problem, breeding new dilemmas through their efforts to cope with the old ones.

This point is made brilliantly and with 'para-power' in the film *One flew over the cuckoo's nest*.

One of the most interesting chapters is concerned with the factors which allow information to influence us. While guilty of over simplification the gist is still complex. Activists are very hard to influence and tend to reject even moderate views. Ambiguity of the situation or of proper behaviour encourages acceptance. Extremists are useful as they make moderate proposals more acceptable.

This whole chapter devoted to change is fascinating and ends with the following. ' . . . a set of life circumstances in which alternatives suddenly increase, the future is ambiguous, or the usual grooves of daily living are upset. People who find themselves in such plights are likely to be highly involved in a personal way and they also may be ripe for change. Such individuals are found in growing numbers in periods of rapid change with massive contradictions and cultural lags. The times are full of us . . . The natural laboratory for studying them (such problems) is the world around us, particularly its social movements.'

The final chapter examines the 'women's movement' as an example. It is a clear and fascinating analysis and is in no way spoilt by her own clear involvement. I confess to respect and affection for Carolyn Wood Sherif and her ability to be both professionally objective but very much present as a person in her writing. Her final words sum up very well the tone, style and aim of this book which I wish every success.

'On the other hand, the methods and findings from their (social psychologists) efforts can be and should be part of the information on which decisions are based. This is one reason why I wrote this book: to share what I know with you. Your part in decisions affecting the future is as great as mine, and the future begins today'.

Mark Matthews

Fritz Perls. *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy*, Bantam 1976 (1973).

This is two separate booklets joined within the same cover. The first is a 115-page exposition of some of the thinking behind Gestalt therapy. The introduction by Robert Spitzer says:

Fritz wrote most of The Gestalt Approach in the 1950s, before residing at Esalen during the 1960s. He continued to work on it at Cowichan where he moved in May of 1969.

Now all the internal evidence points to very little of it having been written in the 1960s. All the way through there is talk of 'the patient' and even of 'the neurotic', as if the therapist/patient (one-to-one) model/were being taken for granted. Yet one of the main contributions of Gestalt therapy has been to show how a group can be used to accentuate and accelerate the growth process. Another of its main contributions has been to question the difference between 'the normal' and 'the neurotic', and to talk about growth rather than therapy.

So this book is not the one we were waiting for - the one that would really do justice to Perls' own changing work in the growth movement. It is really pre-Esalen. We shall have to look to others for the great post-Esalen integration. (Some of the materials for

this may be found in the Penguin compilation *Gestalt Therapy Now*, and in Vol.4 No.4 of *The Counselling Psychologist*.)

Even so, there is much in it which is of real interest and value. Perls lays great stress on *interruption* - the way in which we stop ourselves going forward in the here and now. And he sums up neatly by saying:

The neurotic's general way of meeting situations is to interrupt himself; the criminal's pattern is to interrupt the environment.

Interruption, he says, is a great clue to therapy. And indeed it does make a lot of sense as he gives example after example.

If our patient learns the how of his own interruptions - past and present - if he actually experiences himself interrupting himself, and feels the ways in which his is doing it, he can work through his interruptions into his real self and the activities he wants to carry out.

Possibly the best chapter is the fourth, entitled *Here and Now Therapy*, which contains many very useful insights into the process of Gestalt therapy.

The second booklet is a 90-page set of transcripts from the films made by Aquarian Productions, which many people in this country have now seen. They are: *What is Gestalt?*; *Awareness*; *Marriage*; *Gestalt Prayer*; *Couples No.1*; *Couples No.2*; *Memory and Pride*; and *Fritz, Friend and Freud*.

These transcripts are appallingly badly done, with virtually nothing but the actual dialogue given. No descriptions of the people or the scene, no stage directions, no observations, no indications of pause lengths, no real time or trouble spent on them at all. Richard Bandler is credited with the work of editing this part of the book, and I don't like him now. He doesn't seem to have loved what he was doing, or even to have had much ordinary professional conscience about it.

The brief introductions by Perls which lead off each film are much more in line with his later thinking and practice.

We have to become aware of the obvious. If we understand the obvious, everything is there.

What a relief that is for therapists! They don't have to be brilliant, knowledgeable, intuitive, insightful, thoughtful, balanced, mature, centred or whole. They just have to notice the obvious. But if that is true, then they don't need to have MDs or PhDs or any of the other academic garbage.

Be that as it may, there are some beautiful things in these transcripts for those who have patience to look for them. Madeline's *Dream* still moves me even in the transcript, though this may be because I did see the film. But one film I haven't seen was *Fritz, Friend and Freud*, which ends with the patient putting Fritz on the hot seat

and asking to talk to Sigmund Freud on the empty chair.

Professor Freud . . . a great man . . . but very sick . . . you can't let anyone touch you. You've got to say what it is and your word is holy gospel. I wish you would listen to me. In a certain way I know more than you do. You could have solved the neurosis question. And here I am . . . a simple citizen . . . by the grace of God having discovered the simple secret that what is, is. I haven't even discovered this. Gertrude Stein has discovered this. I just copy her. No, copy is not right. I got in the same way of living - thinking with her. Not as an intellectual, but just as a human plant, animal - and this is where you were blind. You moralized and defended sex; taking this out of the total context of life. So you missed life. (There is quiet in the room for several moments. Then Fritz turns to Barbara.) So, your copy of Fritz wasn't so bad. (Gives Barbara a kiss.) You did something for me.

O. Void

Robert L. Karen *An Introduction to Behaviour and its Applications.*
Harper Crow Publisher, 1974

' . . . from the point of view of behaviour theory, the key to understanding choice behaviour lies in the individual's reinforcement history and the stimuli in the presence of which reinforcements have occurred! . . . R. Karen in above.

If you wish to be put off or bored for good by learning theory and behaviourism this is the right book to choose.

Although its title says 'An Introduction to Behaviour Theory and its Applications' the book only represents the most narrow, simplistic and mechanistic of all behavioristic models of Man: B.F. Skinner's model which is also considered simplistic by more sophisticated behaviourists.

The Skinnerian model is elaborated, comprehensible and comprehensive in this book. If you need/want to get acquainted with it for study or work, this book will provide more than an introduction. Fairly easy to read, the book covers all major aspects of Skinnerian Behaviorism including some applications much as 'behavioral management', 'stimulus control', etc., which amongst others have their place in rehabilitation programmes in mental hospitals, in work with autistic children, the mentally handicapped. Here the applications of the Skinnerian behaviorism have shown remarkable successes such as helping to improve speech, social-action, 'maladjusted' habits, toilet training and others via conditioning methods.

A fairly academic book presenting a very narrow model of man: $S \times O = R$.

'O' stands for organism. The way 'O' operates is by the input of 'S' stimulus and out comes 'R' (reaction). Only our R's are of interest to Skinner, not what happens in 'O' that is *us*.

Lilly Stuart
