

BOOK REVIEWS

Humanistic Psychology: Concepts and criticisms by Joseph R. Royce and Leendert P. Mos (eds). Plenum Press 1981.

The main title of this book is **Humanistic Psychology**, and this is all it says on the spine. The ordinary book-buyer or library-frequenter might be pardoned for believing that the book would be an account of humanistic psychology, or might tell him something useful about humanistic psychology; it would no doubt be written by humanistic psychologists, or by people who had made a special study of humanistic psychology. None of these expectations would be satisfied.

It is a sustained attack on humanistic psychology by fourteen authors, none of whom appear to have been anywhere near humanistic psychology or to know much about it. Somehow or other they persuaded Carl Rogers to give them one of his old speeches to print as a Foreword; and somehow or other they persuaded Floyd Matson to write a nine-page Epilogue which contains no rebuttals at all. What amazes me is the sheer effrontery of the thing.

It is difficult to know what to do about reviewing a book like this. If I dismiss it in a few lines, as really seems appropriate, I may be accused of not taking criticisms seriously; while if I spend a lot of time rebutting the arguments, I may give the impression that this is a book to be taken seriously - a book which represents a real contribution to scientific debate. It is certainly not the latter. Perhaps a compromise would be to give just thumbnail comments on each chapter.

The introduction sets the tone of the book. "The fourteen chapters included in this volume are intended to provide a selective and critical examination of some of humanistic psychology's contributions to date. They do so by concentrating on the conceptual presuppositions and theoretical formulations of the movement".

Carl Graumann writes about classical humanism, socialist humanism and critical humanism, none of which has any great relevance to humanistic psychology. One of the elementary confusions we always have to combat is that humanism has much to do with humanistic psychology. Graumann eventually comes down to talking about what he is really interested in, which is "the scien-

tific study of the situated person". His criticism of humanistic psychology is that it pays insufficient attention to the environment. He wants a phenomenological psychology whose main emphasis is on the person/world relationship. However, he does not give a single example of what this is like - the article is purely programmatic.

Amadeo Giorgi writes his usual chapter on phenomenological psychology - he is, after all, one of its best-known proponents - dropping along the way various unsupported gibes against humanistic psychology: it displays "a lack of unity, a philosophical naïveté, and a lack of genuine communication among its members"; it only makes "superficial progress"; genuinely critical issues are dealt with in a "merely verbal way"; it does not encourage "thinking and conceptualization"; and "younger thinkers of high calibre are not being attracted to the movement". Giorgi gives us a long disquisition on the word "human", at the end of which he comes down to his own definition, in which the term is used to describe the features which "set man apart from other living creatures".

- (1) The ability of man to overturn any given structure in which he finds himself.
- (2) His symbolic power, and
- (3) His power to reflect on his own lived experience.

It seems to me that this is exactly what humanistic psychology says about people, the only difference being, perhaps, that we would say "people", or "we", rather than "man". But again Giorgi ends his chapter with the confession - "I am painfully aware that this chapter falls into the category of 'exhortation' rather than achievement . . ." - or in other words this is again a programmatic statement rather than any real practical improvement on humanistic psychology.

Thaddeus E. Weckowicz writes on "The impact of phenomenological and existential philosophies on psychiatry and psychotherapy". Out of its twenty-four pages, most of which are devoted to Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre, there are five devoted to humanistic psychology, in which he accuses Maslow of inconsistency and praises Rogers for being at least a little existential.

Joseph Lyons has a chapter on "Discontinuities: or theory as prayer" which does not seem to belong in this book at all. It

goes from catatonia to God to scientific theory to memory and says a number of stimulating things, some of which I quite liked, but it has no particular relevance to this book.

John Charles Cooper writes a chapter about facts and values without ever realizing that Maslow tilled this ground much more ably and interestingly years before.

Harold G. Coward and Joseph R. Royce write an extraordinary chapter called "Toward an epistemological basis for humanistic psychology" in which they make more or less every possible mistake in locating the nature of the stance which has to be taken up in doing research from a humanistic point of view. The only good thing in this chapter is a reference to a paper by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, which says some good things, all of which are totally at odds with the rest of the chapter. Cantwell Smith seems very much in line with the position taken up in **Human inquiry**, which is a guide to this whole area written from the inside, rather than from the outside.

Harold G. McCurdy writes on "The duality of experience and the perplexities of method"; an odd chapter which tries to bring together science and poetry; but only succeeds in producing a mish-mash.

Donald Kuiken writes on descriptive methods - another cheeky chapter where he tries to teach humanistic researchers to suck eggs. He gives a purely programmatic account of how research might be done, only backed up by one half-cocked experiment he conducted himself. In **Human inquiry** we gave many examples of actual work done, none of which Kuiken, or any of these people, seems to know about.

Harry Garfinkle writes about "The anthropological foundations of a humane psychology" - an extraordinary load of sociohistorical gobbledegook, with eight pages of references.

Richard Jung tells us about naturalism, humanism and the theory of action. After some discussion, not mentioning humanistic psychology in any way, the author plumps for his own theory, which he calls cybernetic phenomenology.

Herman Tennessen has a brief essay in which he seems to be trying to show that humanistic psychology (new paradigm) depends for its very existence on opposing hard science (old paradigm).

He argues that the old paradigm does not exist any more - if indeed it ever did - so that there is no place and no need for a new paradigm.

Funnily enough the very next chapter is written by Daniel Berlyne, who stands foursquare on the old paradigm which Tennessen said was dead and gone. It's dead but it won't lie down. Berlyne says that psychology based on objective scientific experiment is science, and that anything else is not science at all; he claims that the Oxford English Dictionary supports him. This is exactly the same position that Hans Eysenck took up when I debated with him a couple of years ago. Berlyne contrasts nomothetic and idiographic investigations, and concludes that only the nomothetic counts. If humanistic psychologists want to do idiographic research, they should call what they do "humanistic scholarship", not psychology or science. Berlyne tries to combat some of the humanistic criticisms of old paradigm psychology, but I didn't find his arguments convincing. In any case, he missed out some of the most important criticisms, dealing only with five.

The Epilogue by Floyd Matson is not bad, but weak in relation to the book as a whole. There was a marvellous opportunity here to do a massive rebuttal of this whole mad enterprise, or to refuse to do anything at all.

The sheer nerve of this whole thing is what gets me. Half the authors come from the University of Alberta, which makes me extra angry, because my uncle Harry used to be a professor there. What a downer!

John Rowan

Reference

Peter Reason & John Rowan (eds) **Human Inquiry: A sourcebook of new paradigm research**. John Wiley & Sons 1981

HUMAN INQUIRY. Edited by Peter Reason and John Rowan. Wiley. 530p.p.

This is an important and controversial book. It is also well presented and for the most part well argued. It is sub-titled 'A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research' and in this sense the editors have achieved

their aim. There are 39 chapters of papers; an absolute wealth of material. It is intended for social science researchers but, at times, seems to make a mountain out of a molehill for anyone else.

The essential theme is that the old paradigm of objective, quantitative and non-participative research is highly suspect. It is claimed that it can, and often does, produce invalid, superficial and value laden results. I do not doubt that this is true. The new paradigm of being objectively subjective is seen as a means of restoring qualitative and meaningful research in many situations. In my own humble and highly subjective opinion the book does much to make one think but in practice demands a quality of researcher that may or may not exist at large. A point often made in the book itself.

In my opinion this book deserves to be read by anyone claiming to be a social researcher or who has a real interest in the work of such people. This book has given me much food for thought and a few headaches. I do not intend to comment on any particular contribution and I shall use only one quote.

One point made often in the book is that most funding for social research is very often 'loaded' against new paradigm research. In fact a whole chapter is devoted to funding. One point not made, or perhaps missed by myself, is that there would seem ample opportunity for such research to 'piggy back' on more conventional research. At quite minimal cost new paradigm research could be used to add depth and meaning to a large conventional project. If it also cast doubts on the true value of the major project then so much the better for future funding.

My one quote is the final sentence of the book and as a single sentence it does not do justice to the paragraph. 'In order to oppose a research project along these lines, a research committee would have to be rigid and unreasonable, and therefore open to public scorn and ridicule'. This is not untypical of authority or the public; both are notorious for rigidity from the former and scorn from the latter. An original thought? Hardly!!

Mark Matthews

RELATIONSHIP AND IDENTITY by David Spangler, 1978, Findhorn, 94pp, £1.95

That a book should encompass both a theological understanding of group marriage, with a psychodynamic interpretation of Jesus (and, by extrapolation homosexuals) as sexually completed, suggests

that it may strongly attract or repulse readers. AHP members, familiar with the Findhorn community lifestyle, will know the deep values enshrined in David Spangler's work there, and also that it is through his understanding of the forces of magnetism and retraction that he has been able to evolve his philosophy of the way in which we relate our own personality components to each other, as well as to those of other people. His affirmation that our most important level of consciousness is the soul, and that it is by purity that we achieve synthesis of our differentiated inner energies will rejoice the religious, although it may be too oceanic for those who prefer earthy language in the description of sex, which is one of the main topics of the book, based on a series of lectures in 1972.

However, those who have begun to experience dissatisfaction with serial sexual relationships, yet another therapy, or their own state of maturity, may find, as I did, that David Spangler really knows and describes well and simply the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (astral and etheric) parts of ourselves which eventually become open to our consciousness. I liked the way in which he suggests that the individual can have the experience of marriage within himself or herself in as much as feminine/masculine and other attributes are synthesised. Indeed, he insists that it is because we do not love ourselves - an experience which comes through the reconciliation and full expression of our energies - that we are always searching to complete our needs in others, often using them and leaving them. I also enjoyed his explanation of the traditional role of marriage as "to keep concentrated the vibrational patterns of creativity between couples" so that they create new energies for the family and community, instead of dissipating them through dispersed liaisons.

Nonetheless, he is aware of changing personal needs in what he calls the New Age of relationships, and that lifelong partnerships may appear outgrown unless the couple can live harmoniously in an extended family or community, the former being a cultural and historical custom, the latter being the experimental basis of communities like Findhorn. So he gives wise criteria of how group marriage is distinguished from group sex - even suggesting that the fellowship of the Church is a model of group marriage - and shows that it provides a challenging ambience for the exchange of energies, the sharing of life rhythms, and the excitements of loving, which sex, seen only as a delivery mechanism, cannot provide alone.

Yvonne Craig

PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONAL GROWTH (2nd ed), by Abe Arkoff. Allyn & Bacon 1980.

This is an excellent introductory book of readings, arranged into five main sections: Shaping identity; Reaching out; Exploring feelings; Fulfilling potential; and Making commitments.

Shaping identity deals with the self, with subpersonalities, with the body and with sex roles. It has some first-rate articles -Kenneth Gergen and James Vargiu on subpersonalities, Bernard Gunther on sensory awakening, Theodora Wells on the psychology of women, the marvellous piece by Lois Gould called "X: A fabulous child's story", among others.

Reaching out deals with loneliness, assertion and sexuality. Jerry Greenwald, Laura Huxley, Martin Shepard, Carl Rogers and others have very good articles here, ending up with the Boston Women's Health Book Collective.

Exploring feelings deals mainly with anxiety and happiness, and has articles by Albert Ellis, Hermann Hesse, Abraham Maslow and others, which are very balanced, insightful and helpful.

Fulfilling potential deals with defence, growth and death. Herbert Otto, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Raymond Moody are good here, and some of the authors mentioned earlier also come back in this section.

Making commitments deals with loving, pairing, parenting and life-style. Some of the authors are Erich Fromm, Claude Steiner, Eda LeShan, Ellen Peck and Wayne Oates.

All these chapters are short, which makes it a very readable book, but a lot of them are taken from previously published work, so in no sense is this a book limited to a particular audience. I would like to see all adolescents (of whatever age up to 100 or so) read this book, because it speaks so well of the joys and pains of growing and changing. But really I can't think of anyone who wouldn't benefit from its humanity. It is one of the best introductions to an up-to-date humanistic psychology that I know.

Brian Rainbow