

Book Reviews

RACISM AND SEXISM IN CORPORATE LIFE by John P. Fernandez.
Lexington Books 1981.

This is a rather thorough study which is based on all the available data already published, plus a major piece of research (4209 managers) carried out by the author himself. It is American, and most of the findings refer to American law and practice, but many of the conclusions are likely to apply to any industrial culture, such as that which we have in Britain, where racism and sexism operate.

Some of the findings are fascinating. For example, it appears that small improvements in the law or in local practices are seen as minimal by those discriminated against, but as major by those in a favoured position.

Any loss from exclusivity is viewed as great, while small gains from exclusion are not viewed as being important.

This was one surprising finding. Another had to do with the focus of the research. At the start, it was designed to find out whether minorities and women needed special training to help them to become effective managers in organizations.

This, of course, assumed that women and minorities were the cause of problems, rather than white men. The results of the preliminary interviews suggested that the source of many problems and the real need for special training may lie with white men.

This was particularly so in the area of awareness. White men tended to be very unaware of their own racism, their own discriminatory practices, their own prejudices, and to deny them wholesale.

In other words, given an identical work situation, one out of every two black managers sees evidence of racism that would be perceived by only one out of twenty white male managers.

The difference in the way in which reality is perceived, even though the evidence shows quite clearly that the blacks are right and the whites wrong, easily makes the blacks feel that they are the ones who are out of step - maybe they are over-sensitive, maybe they have a chip on the shoulder, maybe they are paranoid.

To maintain a high degree of suspicion toward the motives of every white man, and at the same time never to allow this suspicion to impair the grasp of reality, is walking a very thin tightrope.

And of all the groups entitled to be suspicious, it is black women who get the rawest deal. Black women in the US are beginning to realise that sexism is quite independent of, and additional to, racism. This makes them the most hostile of any of the groups interviewed.

In short, black women are the most critical about the present situation and treatment of women in corporations, not only because they suffer sexist discrimination as all women do but also because they face the extreme form of racial discrimination that black men face.

If black women are at one extreme, white men are at the other. They are the ones who are most inclined to deny that there are any sexist problems. They do not want any change in the existing set-up, and do not see that any change is really needed in relation to sexism.

This fact is not surprising since they are the ones who will lose most in any equal treatment of women. Remember that white men represent only 37 percent of the population, yet they have controlled 95 percent of the lucrative positions in all society's institutions. Any movement towards equality necessarily means a threat to their dominant position. In addition, they will not only be threatened in the work environment but also in the home environment.

Yet it is important for society that something should be done about sexism and racism. In terms of mental health these two forces are more pervasive and serious than childhood schizophrenia, mental retardation, psychoneurosis or any other emotional derangement.

Their destructive forces severely cripple the growth and development of millions of Americans regardless of age, race and sex. Yearly, they directly and indirectly cause more fatalities, disabilities and economic loss than any other single factor.

Although it recognises these ugly facts, this book is in the end not depressing, because it shows that there can be ways out. In particular, it points to the management ideas which are coming in now about work design and career development as being favourable to constructive changes in work attitudes for all managers.

Corporations must recognise the need for jobs that offer a sense of wholeness, satisfaction, significance and autonomy.

This is, of course, the management thinking which comes out of humanistic psychology, which has been so influential in organizations in recent years, with its emphasis on treating the organization as a whole system. At the moment, far less attention is paid to the design of women's jobs than to the design of men's jobs. This is something which could change quite easily. Detailed recommendations are also made for improving the existing career planning arrangements.

Perhaps the most controversial recommendation, but certainly the most important, is special training for white men.

The many whites who isolate themselves from minorities and are unable or unwilling, or both, to interact successfully with them are the ones in need of special training.

Whether this will happen is anybody's guess - the conditions of recession probably make it less likely rather than more likely. What is crystal clear from this book is that there is a real necessity here for action.

The book gives full definitions of racism and sexism in a special appendix - very necessary in a society where white men habitually use these words in a loose way which loses their essential meaning. It also discusses neoracism and neosexism - the updated, more sophisticated forms most current in our present culture, where it is considered a bit crude to talk about "wogs" or "cows".

If this research were to be repeated in Britain, some of the detailed findings might change: for example, in this country

Pakistanis have always faced more discrimination than Jamaicans, Barbadians, etc. But it is probably true to say that the main lines would still hold, and that the basic position would be very similar. This is, therefore, a very valuable book for anyone concerned with these problems, and it can be strongly recommended.

Lucy Biko

REVIEW OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY No. 1, by Ladd Wheeler (ed). Sage Publications 1980.

This is the first of a new annual series originated by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (Division 8 of the American Psychological Association) as an international update on selected fields. Each article is original to the book and summarises a whole area of emerging interest.

The current volume contains a number of interesting articles - McClelland on projective tests, a critique of Janis' theory of groupthink, a piece on sex stereotypes through the life cycle, two important theoretical pieces by Ginsburg and by Gergen & Morawski, a long piece on jury behaviour (which somehow manages to avoid mentioning Phil Sealy), and so on.

But the paper of greatest interest to me personally was one on **Subselves** by Colin Martindale. What this does is to take the idea of subpersonalities as put forward by Assagioli and others, and relate it to cognitive theory - particularly as outlined by Tim Shallice in his work on the dominant action system. He shows that it is compatible with the work on neurology by Konorski, and capable of understanding in line with Hilgard's work on hypnosis, etc. This is an important piece of bridge-building, which I think will be very helpful in legitimising the idea of subpersonalities, and showing that it is not just the province of a few psychotherapists.

This is not really a book - more a collection of above-average journal articles - but the standard is high on the whole, and the article by Colin Martindale of interest to anyone who wants to relate psychology to psychotherapy.

John Rowan

IMPROVING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS by Cary L. Cooper.
Gower Press 1981. pp.129 £11.50

This is a compilation by several authors, apparently produced at the behest of the Manpower Services Commission. The idea behind it is supposedly to compare and contrast various approaches to social skill training, for the benefit of personnel managers, directors of training and others whose job it is to send managers on courses.

The area of interpersonal relations is probably the one most important area which managers need to master. All the research ever done in organizations says that the difference between an effective manager and a less successful one is that the former has learnt how to handle people well. Training for this purpose is, therefore, absolutely central to any attempt to get a higher standard of management in British industry, which God know is badly enough needed. But what do we get in this slim volume?

We get one chapter on Transactional Analysis by Dave Barker & Keri Phillips from Roffey Park, which is a straight plug for TA, full of ego states, strokes, life positions, transactions, games, the drama triangle, time structuring, stamps, rackets, scripts and all that.

We then get a chapter on interaction analysis by Damien A. Dyar & W. John Giles, also from Roffey Park. This is written in a very different way, quite academic and solemn, and is all about measuring social interaction by counting "behaviours". They give details of six different ways of doing this.

The next chapter is on assertiveness training, and is by Sandra V. Langrish from UMIST (from whence Cary Cooper also comes) and is again a straight plug for this technique. It is the shortest chapter in the book, and omits all the criticisms which have been published over the past ten years or so - all the references are to popular paperbacks. The contrast with the previous rather formal and plonking chapter is extraordinary. It finishes up with the stirring words - "Assertiveness training is an ideal tool for personal development and increasing effectiveness".

Then we have the chapter by Peter B. Smith on the T-group approach. Peter is one of the world's greatest experts on T-groups, and has done a lot of research on them, but this is a curiously muffled chapter. It is neither a rah-rah plug for T-groups (like

the chapters on TA and assertiveness training) nor a careful academic analysis of T-groups (like the chapter on interaction analysis), but rather a gingerly attempt to show that T-groups are safe, very safe, completely safe. Unfortunately, this means that the main point of T-groups - self-actualization - is never mentioned. The notion that T-groups could be emancipatory or liberatory in any way is not even mentioned; presumably this might then make them sound dangerous, too dangerous.

T-group methods are those in which a group of people discuss their own relationships with one another. The goals of the method are to achieve increases in the trainees' sensitivity, diagnostic ability and action skill.

This capitulation to conservatism is quite unnecessary. (I have seen another book, published in the same year by the same publisher, which quite clearly takes up a liberatory stance, while also being addressed to managers.) I don't know whether to blame the Manpower Services Commission, or Cary Cooper, or Peter Smith himself, but this is a pretty pitiful performance.

Then comes the final and weirdest chapter of them all, by the editor himself. It is entitled **A comparative evaluation**, and we would naturally expect exactly that, except that he has already done that in the Introduction. It turns out, however, that what the chapter contains is something quite different: a straight report by Cooper on his own research on the harm done by experiential groups to their participants. He studied twelve one-week programmes put on by five different training organizations, all of which involved small groups focussing on interpersonal feelings rather than on a task. And he was specifically concerned with the question of casualties - was anybody harmed by having their emotions stirred up in this way?

The results come out in the typical academic way: in other words, there are so many qualifications and figures and different measures at different times that it is hard to see what the outcome really is. The sentence which says most to me is -

However, our data indicate that short term psychological distress may lead to long term benefit for a majority of participants identified as "high risk" trainees.

The findings do suggest, however, that the person most likely to be harmed by a group is the one who sits scared in a corner,

completely intimidated by everyone else's expressions of emotion, and feeling more and more inadequate as time wears on. And this is particularly so if the leader pushes for a high level of emotional intensity in the group. This is something which all group leaders would do well to be aware of.

But why this chapter wasn't entitled "The Harm Done By Groups" or some such is a matter for wonder. It does not compare different approaches at all, but on the contrary puts all twelve of the programmes together into one homogeneous lump.

This book has no index.

James Crippledini

Creative Listening by Rachel Pinney. Self-published 1981 (3rd revised edition) pp 16. 75p

This is a useful pamphlet, giving details of a number of ways in which people can learn to listen better. The main point she makes is that it is hard to listen if you are busy rehearsing your reply. So she suggests ways of separating the reply from the listening, or avoiding it altogether.

Some of her suggestions - she has nine altogether - remind me of procedures developed within the women's movement, while others remind me of Carl Rogers. As with Rogers, she extends the method to education, and makes some interesting comments on the value of Learner Directed Learning. She also has helpful things to say about applying her methods to children generally, who are listened to rather little.

The writing is straightforward and unpretentious, and really this pamphlet could be useful to anyone who is interested in better communication between people.

James Crippledini

A dialectical Psychology by Allan R. Buss. Irvington Publishers 1979

It seems to be quite a regular thing for books with "dialectics" in the title to be disappointing. This one is no exception.

Again, it seems to be the rule that such books consist of a ragbag of individual papers with little in the way of a connecting link - never mind anything like a dialectical structure!

In this particular case, the individual papers are mostly very thin –there is not one which could be confidently recommended as living up to the promise of the overall title.

There are chapters with exciting titles - "Development of dialectics and development of humanistic psychology", "Counter-culture and counter-psychology", "Humanistic Psychology and the liberal tradition: Maslow's theory", and so on - but the contents are poor. It is not even that one disagrees with them - they just don't say very much. Certainly they stress the social implications of humanistic psychology, but they actually say less about this than do the humanistic psychologists themselves.

Towards the end there are some highly technical chapters on life-span developmental methodology, attribution theory and the trait-situation controversy, which might interest specialists in these areas.

John Rowan

Juliette Alvin, *MUSIC THERAPY*, 1966/75, Hutchinson, £4.25, 181pp

At a recent editorial board meeting I shared my feelings of having found unexpected happiness during the last year, risking ribald remarks from the well-intentioned! Later, during my habitual perusal of the 'books for review' shelf, I noticed that this book had remained untouched, apparently, since its publication five years ago, and I felt sorry for this, because I knew that its author, Juliette Alvin, had pioneered music therapy in Britain in the 50's, and that, due to her knowledge, enthusiasm and skill, its joys and benefits had encouraged vital new relationships and experiences amongst many people in situations of illness, handicap and the doldrums.* I also recalled how little attention is paid to the other 'creative therapies' by most journals of psychotherapy, which seem more currently involved in promulgating the more esoteric forms of consciousness-raising or reducing. So I have just read the book, and have come to the present conclusion that my recent increased happiness is largely due to the fact that, for the first time in 50 years, I have begun to *sing* — with our University Choir, in programmes of madrigals, West Indian jazz, and great spiritual works like Faure's *Requiem*. It took this beautifully written book to make me realize what had been happening to me — loosening me, changing my resonances, awakening my deepest feelings, helping me create, with others, the most exciting, the most sublime, the most satisfying personal and collective experiences.

Forgive me if this sounds like another version of the middle-age need either to find a new lover, grow a beard / your tresses, or take up music, for such choices might well be combined if the first two aren't prohibitive for various reasons. On the contrary, Juliette Alvin's makes a superb case for music being the great liberator, fulfiller of potential and world harmonizer for *all* of us, offering experiences in which the mentally subnormal can join with the sophisticated.

She describes simply but exactly, with excellent illustrations and references, the way in which various civilizations have used the music they make for transcendental purposes, for common rituals, for healing, worship, entertainment, and to express basic human internal rhythms and intensities. She then describes the physiological and psychological effects which music can have, on both the healthy and the impaired, following this with a discussion of the role of the music therapist. Here she persuasively shows that empathy and training are necessary to avoid the harm which the inexperienced may cause by projecting their own limited ways with instruments and music on to particularly sensitive or damaged people. For she shows how music helps to break up our inner defences and creates new links between our realities and unrealities. Yet its main healing characteristic is that it carries no moralism and is a non-verbal aesthetic experience, which expresses the unspeakable and even the undesirable in an acceptable form. Music's wonderful powers of dissolving tensions and aiding relaxation whilst enjoyed receptively, and its safe, easy potential for helping any of us to become an instrumentalist transforming feelings into created forms of beauty and order, make it one of the oldest, time-tested therapies, and one which has no critics.

Also, interestingly, although it has a practicum, it has no vast sacred theory to underpin it, no competing gurus, no divisive elements, no mandarin cults. For music therapy largely works through voluntary groups and non-professionals, and has never attracted the hostility suffered by other workers in the growth movement. Above all, it has helped hundreds of *children*.

Yvonne Craig

*To put the record straight Music Therapy had *not* sat there untouched for five years: it had been bought for hard cash by the Editor when he was preparing a dance workshop three years ago. But it's a good book and deserves a review even at this stage. *V.M.*

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