

Book Reviews

Douglas & Johnson, *Existential Sociology*, 327pp £14 Cambridge University Press.

This book is intended for sociologists particularly those who work in research, teaching, or theoretical formulation. Over half the book is devoted to relating this approach to previous orthodoxies and assumptions. Considerable amounts of this space are concerned with existential philosophy. The authors and the other contributors are all American and are concerned with the science of sociology.

As a lay person I found the book very hard going. The initial chapters were full of jargon and therefore boring. To the extent that I have understood the message I find the main points of their argument to be:

- 1/ *That the training and practice of sociologists have failed to understand the reality.*
- 2/ *That to the extent an individual practitioner was aware, he would select and edit his reports to meet professional expectations of 'objective' research.*
- 3/ *That the central omission is the rejection of the relevance of feeling, both in researcher and subject.*
- 4/ *That social research, in order to be truly 'scientific' and deal with reality as it exists must demand an existential entry on the part of the researcher who will interact with as well as observe the situation.*
- 5/ *That all social situations are created, negotiated, tested by the participants rather than being pre-existent roles or values or orientations.*

While I regard this book as making a valuable contribution to the thinking of their profession, it is obvious to any intelligent person that it calls into question the whole contribution of the 'science'. The issue lies between what we know as human beings, our private life, and what we subscribe to as citizens, our professional life.

Social life depends on shared expectations which are rewarding. There is no doubt in my mind that the so called experts are out of their depth: this book only confirms my worst fears.

Mark Matthews

Canfield J. and Wells H. C. *100 Ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom: A handbook for teachers and parents.* Prentice-Hall 1976.

It was Sidney Simon himself, who referred to this book as belonging 'in the Christmas stocking of every teacher in America!' I would like to see it in the classroom of every teacher and in the home of every parent in England. It is undoubtedly one of the neatest books in the field of personal growth and self-awareness that I have ever met - and one of the liveliest. Despite its essentially practical flavour, the authors have managed to incorporate into the main text a variety of subtle and informative psychological learnings and almost every growth game has a short quotation relevant to its focus from writing by Rogers, Stevens, Watts, Jersild, and Lowen amongst many others, there is a very clear and concise introduction on self-concept, how to use the book, and encouragement to 'have a go', and each of the 100 ways is perfectly clear as to its purpose, method and evaluation. To round off the treat, so to speak, there is a valuable bibliography which is indicative of Canfield and Wells' extensive knowledge of the humanistic field and which encapsulates books, materials, resources and organisations in a relatively short account. To make the book even less of a 'manual' there are delightful photographs of kids, happy people, cartoons etc. all of which add joy and pleasure to the process of growing and becoming aware of self.

I have used this much-valued resource with students taking Health Education, teacher-counsellors involved in self-awareness skills, clergy groups in personal growth process, and student-teachers looking for personal-relations material to use in the classroom. One of my teacher-counsellor group used it as a pilot text for the human relations module which he begins in September in his Sheffield Comprehensive School. That as it happens, was related to how your Review Editor came to know of it! If you have anything to do with personal growth, self-awareness, kids. . . . people in relationship, and haven't yet come across this book, you're really missing out.

Donald Anders-Richards

P. S. Watch our for Canfield and Klimek's latest follow-on to the above *Teaching Student to love themselves*, to be published in 1979 by Prentice-Hall.
