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Quantum Psychology: Steps to a Postmodern Ecology of Being

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the increased myocardial infarction rate as being due to rapid social change, specifically the change in family and community participation.

This reviewer questions accepting the rapid social change interpretation on two grounds. The first is the move from strenuous occupations to a more sedentary work life. While exercise is mentioned as a possible factor it was not controlled for.

The second is that it is not the rapidity of the social change but its absoluteness that makes the difference. Social isolation experienced as deprivation has never predicted a healthy life. Other research shows that family contact and support mechanisms continue to exist even when people become widely separated. What is missing is the face-to-face contact. Loose, all-purpose explanations, like rapid social change, explain nothing. This work contributes more to showing the importance of checking out social factors in medical practice than it does to the sociology of medicine.

Despite this reviewer's differences in interpretation this is a highly useful work. It reflects the importance of the slowly dying tradition of field research in sociology. It is to be hoped that the authors continue and refine their work in Roseto. They have a chance to make a contribution to unraveling the tangled relationships between social and biological factors related to health.

Quantum Psychology: Steps to a Postmodern Ecology of Being, by Stephen T. DeBerry. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993. 201 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-275-94171-x.
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An alternative title might have been "Postmodernism and the Schizoid Condition of Being." While the author seeks to introduce a quantum approach to analyzing and understanding contemporary social process, the primary vehicle for doing so is in explicating the schizoid condition, the "cornerstone" for understanding postmodern culture.

The author, a clinical psychologist, has sought an audience beyond psychology, while acknowledging his relative lack of grounding in other social sciences. Indeed, clinical sociologists might re-frame easily much content within such sociological paradigms as symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, role theory, alienation theory, and the sociology of knowledge. The wise reader, however, might do well to resist such temptation, since what the author proposes is a means of conceptualization and change going far beyond the explanatory

powers of any single field, let alone subfield. It is with the quantum approach that the author proposes dissolving the artificial boundaries separating the social sciences from each other, from other sciences, and from other means of grasping our world.

By “quantum,” what is intended is a basis for thought and action, borrowing from physics, that is non-linear and holistic, among other things. Working primarily from within the framework of clinical psychology, the author contrasts this model, and its application to social problems, with the current, or “classical,” model and its assumptions of linearity, reductionism, and abnormality. The author argues that, in the “real” world, not only is the latter inadequate for addressing many of our, seemingly, more intractable problems, but, in some instances, actually worsens matters, in its simplistic cause/effect assumptions underlying decision-making. Rather than supplanting the classical model, the quantum model is inclusive of it: “Together, the combination leads to a more questioning, accepting and less rigid method of understanding behavior (p. 46).”

In analyzing postmodern culture, the author focuses particularly upon the fragmenting social conditions of human life. The resultant estrangement is marked, the author believes, by emotional splitting and the “as if” personality: “In public, the individual can appear one way and yet act and feel in contradictory ways in private. Separate and distinct lines of inner and outer Self-development become manifest (p. 95).”

This reviewer found *Quantum Psychology*, overall, thought-provoking and worthwhile reading. Unfortunately, at times, the author seemed strident, for instance, as in the apparent view that humans, most assuredly, are headed down a ruinous path: “As a species, we are increasingly evolving in a distorted manner—one of self absorption (p. 148).” Little of positive note seems present, yet, in diagnosing the condition, the author proposes little corrective. Also, premises are occasionally stated as fact, as with:

Although there is no doubt that true biological homosexuality exists, it is still a relatively rare phenomenon. The majority of homosexuals I have had experience with were not hormonally predisposed, but rather manifested extreme identity confusion and disturbed interpersonal relationships with the opposite sex. . . . By *assuming* a homosexual personality . . . a person can avoid the turmoil and conflict intrinsic to relating to unresolved, or split-off, parts of the self system (p. 88).

A preference, too, would have been for either greater explication of the material covered, especially of the quantum model itself, or less material covered,

in greater detail, within the same number of pages. As it was, even given the clearly introductory nature of the book, this reviewer was left feeling vaguely dissatisfied. What might have been more satisfying would have been the same attention given to all subjects as that given to, in the opinion of this reviewer, the excellent chapters "The Deconstruction of the Self" and "The Ecology of Being."

Trouble on Board: The Plight of the International Seafarers, by Paul K. Chapman, with an introduction by Clifford B. Donn. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1992. 176 pp. NPI. \$32.00 cloth. ISBN 0-87546-180-8. \$14.95 paper. ISBN 0-87546-181-6.

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The book documents rather thoroughly the scandalous treatment of international seafarers and by so doing should provoke much further research. Much of the book consists of case material drawn from over 1600 report forms sent by seafarers to chaplains who apparently then forwarded the forms to the Center for Seafarers Rights. The latter organization was established by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey. A lawyer was hired by the Center to research laws and regulations pertinent to seafarers so that the Center's staff could be of better assistance to seafarers. As part of this effort, the author of the book under review began to publish a column on "Know Your Rights" in a newspaper for seafarers distributed free by the Missions to Seamen in London.

The book consists of an Introduction and seven chapters. The Introduction, by economist Clifford B. Donn, serves to place the issues raised in subsequent chapters in the context of the international organization of the commercial cargo maritime industry. Donn distinguishes between liners and bulk carriers. Liners are organized like common carriers in railroading and trucking, carrying almost any cargo at rates established by cartel-like liner conferences. Bulk carriers, by contrast, transport single cargoes for single shippers, so there is a constant turnover of crews. Price competition is high and therefore there is considerable pressure to reduce wage costs. Not surprisingly, most of the mistreatment of seafarers documented in the rest of the book occurs on bulk carriers. One way for the latter to reduce costs is to operate under the flag, i.e., the jurisdiction, of a nation which has few regulations and/or little interest in enforcing regulations. As Donn points out, many Third World nations have found that registering ships is a low cost way to raise revenue. In addition, it is from the very poorest of Third World nations that most international seafarers are now recruited. Furthermore, technology has affected life on board: very large cargo ships now require