

among scholars tend not to attract readers outside the field. Laymen confronted with such volumes assume the status of Wimbledon spectators. And students assigned a work given largely to examining the "worth" of a mandatory subject not surprisingly question its timeliness.

Now the good news. Given its professional orientation, *Foundations Studies* . . . provides balance. In Part One, John Laska describes foundations' historical shift from dependence to independence, introducing widely contrasting pieces by such writers as James Bryant Conant who deplora patched-up foundations curricula, and James L. Kueth who optimistically heralds a discipline of education. Enjoying Margaret Gillett's witty introduction, Parts Two and Three look respectively at teacher preparation and new directions, scanning the range of concerns from R. Freeman Butts' views on methodology, through Colin Greer's critical stance regarding historical revisionism, to Paul Nash's elegant words on humanistic and behavioral studies in teacher education.

On balance, here is a useful collection principally addressed to professors of the variously-described foundations subjects. Perhaps it will help us clarify what we hope to achieve in educating teachers. Possibly, too, in some indirect way, it will remind us of our ultimate clientele, the girls and boys in our schools.

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Rodney W. Napier &  
Matti K. Gershenfeld.  
**GROUPS:  
THEORY AND EXPERIENCE.**  
Boston:  
Houghton Mifflin, 1973.  
311 pp. \$9.50.

This book, with an accompanying instructor's manual, is intended as a non-technical guide and text to small group processes. Its intended audience consists primarily of those who are not specifically trained in

group dynamics — students, community leaders, mental health workers, business and organizational consultants, etc. The format consists of eight chapters, an authors' preface, an editor's introduction, an appendix and an index. Each chapter contains two parts — a theoretical section which provides a conceptual framework and presumably gives the reader a "language for observing groups as they operate"; and an experiential section which suggests a number of applied training exercises which have the supposed effect of supplementing theoretical understanding with first-hand observations of "groups-in-action." During the course of the eight chapters, problems of perception, communication, membership, norms, goals, leadership, decision making and group movement are all tackled. The appendix focuses on the skills which a group facilitator (i.e. the reader) must acquire before he begins to intervene in groups using the skill exercises given in each chapter.

In the reviewer's opinion, the value of Napier and Gershenfeld's contribution is highly suspect. Most portions of the text are replete with vague, over-generalized statements about group phenomena such as: "Among strangers the norm is usually to participate, while among friends it is easy to become sidetracked" (p. 30). The authors attempt to mitigate skeptical reactions to such statements by surrounding them with more esoteric phrases like "the feedback process," "defensive communication," "group maintenance roles" and "group harmony." Unfortunately, little effort has gone into defining such verbiage in terms of the empirical reality of the small group situation. Thus, while the authors may be correct in suggesting that the reader acquires a language for talking about groups, it is doubtful that he will understand what he is talking about. The countless illustrations and examples — some taken from group encounters, some from other

## Reviews

sources — which are sprinkled lavishly throughout the book do not offset this criticism. These are of a highly subjective, anecdotal or testimonial nature and can, in no way, replace or substitute for objective factual data.

But Napier and Gershenfeld do not seem to be fully aware of this difference. The reader is confronted with a host of opinions and theories but is given no means of evaluating them other than through "trial-by-immersion" (i.e., by completing the skill exercises in each chapter). Other more scientifically legitimate methods of acquiring knowledge of group dynamics such as the use of Bales' *Interaction Process Analysis* are given only fleeting recognition.

But the real question here is: How do beginning students of group dynamics, without any ability to observe objectively and evaluate group processes and learnings (even *after* reading the appendix on "practical skills for facilitators"), and with little idea of the necessity for such, suddenly qualify as facilitators in order that they might do their "home-work assignments"? The fact that the authors seem to have no difficulty with this question is seriously disturbing.

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Paul Shephard &  
Daniel McKinley.  
**ENVIRON/MENTAL:  
ESSAYS ON THE PLANET  
AS A HOME.**

Don Mills, Ontario:  
Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1971.  
300 pp. \$6.50.

R. H. Horwood.  
**INQUIRY INTO  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLLUTION.**

Toronto:  
Macmillan, 1973.  
116 pp. \$2.95.

Among the many influences which eventually combined to establish in the mind of the American public

an acute awareness of the delicate state of the world's ecology was the appearance during 1969 of a publication entitled *The Subversive Science: Essays Toward an Ecology of Man*. It was an anthology of articles by leading ecologists, sociologists, and economists, whose object was to accentuate the transitory nature of human activities when seen in the broader and more enduring matrix of ecological inter-relationships.

*Environ/mental* is its sequel. In this second collection by the same editors, Paul Shepard and Daniel McKinley, the emphasis is more on man himself. The essays are "intended to illustrate the scope of current environmental disorder and the variety of possible perspectives on it," and to this end are divided into four parts. The first of these deals with man in the natural environment, followed by the problems pertaining to human societies, particularly factors related to our increasing numbers; the articles in the third section are concerned with the values which determine human activity in the environment, and the last group covers some of the prescriptions offered for the more pressing environmental ailments. There naturally tends to be a good deal of overlapping as many of the papers were not originally written to be compartmented in this fashion. Besides the bibliographies contained in many of the individual essays, the editors have supplied, at the end of the book, an extremely generous and valuable reading list for each of the above sections.

While this anthology, like its predecessor, provides much useful reading, the impact of its possible educational contribution has been reduced with the passage of time. In short, if its object is to alert us to certain aspects of living in a healthy environment, well, fortunately we have already been alerted many times over. For our collective consciousness of the whole man-environment question has evolved considerably during the past three or four years, owing to the well deserved coverage it