

BOOK REVIEWS

MA'SHARATI NAFSIYAT

By

DR. C. A. QADIR

Publisher West Pakistan Urdu Academy

The book let is second publication in the monograph series undertaken by the West Pakistan Urdu Academy. The author is well known for his writings in Urdu on Psychology. The book under review is his fourth book on Psychology. It is a useful introduction to Social Psychology in as much as all the major topics pertaining to Social Psychology have been dealt with in a masterly manner. The statements made are fully documented and the author has projected different points of views and assessed their relative merits quite objectively. What lends charm to his treatment of various topics is that he has chosen present day society in the sub-continent for elaborating his point.

The book comprises ten chapters. The two main sections into which the field of Social Psychology can be conveniently divided viz; (i) Social interaction and the fundamental interrelations of individual group and culture and (ii) Collective behaviour, group dynamics, leadership, crowd behaviour, public opinion, media of mass communication and propaganda, have not been kept apart in the arrangement of the chapters. The chapters on Socialisation and Perceiving and Judging are followed by the Chapter on Language and Communication which again is followed by the Chapter on Personality and Culture. A little rearrangement of chapters on the basis of the two sections would make the presentation more logical and cogent.

The author rightly laments that practically nothing has been done to conduct research on various problems of Social Psychology in the Colleges and Universities of the country. There are some stray efforts visible in

some departments but no co-ordinated effort is being made to work out the group dynamics which have rocked the campuses and pose a constant threat to even democratically installed governments. Social stratification on the basis of occupation and wealth results in a highly complex linkage of statuses in modern society. Pakistani Youth no more finds full satisfaction in participation in family life. Institutional participation, with its myriad groupings, attract him for the satisfaction which in the 18th and 19th centuries he could fully get from his participation in his family. The problem of maintaining self-esteem in a status and prestige system of modern urbanised society makes very exacting demands on him. He finds little guidance from his peers and leaders in this respect.

Since the author was writing a monograph one could not expect a detailed treatment of various topics from him. But still one has a feeling that he could have devoted a little more space while discussing, e.g., the role of identification and conscience in the process called socialization. Again he has just devoted only half a page to Group Communication. His treatment of Leadership, Attitudes and Prejudice, however, is superb.

The book is indeed a useful addition to the literature available on Social Psychology in Urdu.

K. G. SADIQ

WAJOODIAT

By

QAZI JAVED HUSSAIN

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This little book on Existentialism is quite in line with the Monograph series on Psychology undertaken by West Pakistan Urdu Academy. Quite a few articles in Urdu have appeared on existentialism in some journals but no book had yet been written in Urdu on Existentialism—The 20th Century Continental Philosophy. The author has already published a book on analytical philosophy (BEESWEEN SADI KA FALSAFA) and the present book is thus his second book on philosophy. Original books on philosophy in Urdu are only a few and Mr. Hussain has done a really useful service both to the subject and the national language in producing this work.

The author has discussed eight modern thinkers besides dilating on what is Existentialism in the introduction to the book. The eight thinkers are: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, Sartre, Camus and Colin Wilson.

In discussing the circumstances which brought Existentialism into clear focus of the modern man the author has rightly regarded the two great world wars and their aftermath as the chief reason for the momentum and popularity that this movement in modern thought gained in Europe. It is, of course, a revolt against the over-regimentation consequent upon strict adherence to scientific method in various fields of human endeavour and a reaction against idealistic systems that appeared in the 19th century Europe. The machine age reduces the individual to a cog in a big human complex while Hegelian thought equally degrades the individual to an insignificant unit in the Absolute. Wedged in these extremes the indivi-

dual stands alienated. Dread, anxiety, absurdity commitment, become his prized concepts. He is forced to look within and realise the great contradiction in the values preached by his society and the practice he has lived through. From such considerations what constitutes value emerges as a relevant issue.

Mr. Hussain has fully elaborated some aspects and tenets of Existentialism which you come across in the writings of Existentialist thinkers. He has very categorically stated that Existentialism is past its prime and is now on the decline as no fresh ideas have been added to the Existential thought in the last two decades. He also positively negates the unfounded claim that Existentialism is a cafe philosophy. No doubt cafe waiter is an individual and has to be labelled for his efficiency as a victim of bad faith but the philosophy preached is based on some profound insight into the structure of being.

It is surprizing that Mr. Hussain has not included Husserl in his list. Nor has he made any explicit statement on Husserl's phenomenology. It is true that Husserl is not an Existentialist but any account of Heidegger and Sartre remains incomplete without reference to Husserl.

Mr. Hussain's treatment of Heidegger, Sartre and Colin Wilson is indeed very refreshing. Kierkegaard deserves a little more detailed treatment than has been accorded to him. His rejection of the aesthetic and moral stages for religious stage needs a little explanation.

The book on the whole makes a very interesting reading and provides a good introduction to Existentialism.

K. G. SADIQ



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