

Developmental psychology

James Russell

Human Development. By T.G.R. Bower. Pp.473. (Freeman: San Francisco and Reading, 1979.) \$15; £8.40. *The Functions of Language and Cognition.* Edited by G.J. Whitehurst and B.J. Zimmerman. Pp.313. (Academic: New York and London, 1979.) \$21; £13.65.

THE impression gained from reading these books in succession is that the aim of the Bower book is to review in order to teach and that of the Whitehurst and Zimmerman volume to review in order to present the case for modern functionalism. This is not to imply that Bower's book lacks a consistent theoretical standpoint; rather that the differentiation model which he espouses here, as in his other books, is such a broad one that there is much scope for eclecticism. Thinkers as different as Leibniz, Herbert Spencer, Piaget and, of course, Heinz Werner have presented differentiation models of development, and in Bower's case the framework allows him to support such diverse positions as neo-Piagetianism, social learning theory, and Laingian theory. There is much to agree with in his treatment of the standard developmental topics, but I think that his statement of the differentiation position as implying that concepts develop from the

abstract to the concrete is needlessly paradoxical.

One of Bower's main neo-Piagetian themes is the notion that concepts and skills develop by being replicated on progressively higher levels. Given this, it is difficult to resist the facetious comment that Bower's own writings appear as points on a similar spiral: ideas explored in the early 1970s have now been presented a number of times each with slightly wider degrees of generality and very slightly wider data bases. It is a pleasure to encounter some of Bower's adventurous theorising at his current level (for example, the INRC group being first expressed in infant action) but less than a pleasure to find oneself noting how little of the referenced work has ever or will ever appear in journal form. Bower also evokes the same prissy reflexes by his too brisk treatment of certain topics: the evidence for the genetic basis of schizophrenia, personal construct theory are two such. But in general this book will make an excellent initial text for developmental courses so long as the course leader is at least as healthily sceptical as Bower himself.

Anyone who is at all familiar with the contents of the past three or four years of American developmental journals will feel at home in the Whitehurst and Zimmerman volume. The strength of the book lies in the fact that — as the editors point out — the writers were actively encouraged to make their contributions cohere. They succeed in the attempt, but given that most youngish American developmental psychologists

have already been channelled towards a very definite stylistic and theoretical consensus I doubt if they had to try very hard. This is not meant negatively: the contribution of 'cognitive social learning theory' taken as a whole has been considerable even if the results of individual studies are seldom breathtaking.

Piagetian theory provided the impetus for much of the work reviewed here, but the Pragmatist tradition and experimental methodologies determined its orientation. Most of the contributors repudiate structuralism in cognitive (Piaget), linguistic (Chomsky), moral (Kohlberg) and memory (multistore models) development and most rely on the efficacy of social modelling, concept teaching and verbal rule learning in their arguments. There are many good things to be found: Ornstein provides an excellent comparative review of adult and child experimental work on memory and tries to show where cross fertilisation is and is not possible; Liebert directs a well aimed dart at the Kohlberg bubble; and Rosenthal forges some links between laboratory data and social and clinical problems. Overall this book will prove a useful text for advanced students and researchers who will find the rigorous referencing particularly useful. My only real misgiving is that the 'cognitive' in 'cognitive social learning theory' is being done less than justice here, as elsewhere. Why, after all, do modelling and training work? □

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Personality assessment

Graham F. Wagstaff

Personality. By R. Forgas and B. Shulman. Pp.434. (Prentice-Hall International: Hemel Hempstead, UK, 1979.) £11. *Personal Enquiry and Application.* By M. Sherman. Pp.546. (Pergamon: Oxford and New York, 1979.) £7.95.

I AM sure that anyone involved with the study of personality will find these books valuable reading. Contrary to the approach adopted by a number of recent textbooks in the area, these volumes do not attempt to give an overview of a vast number of theoretical approaches, but attempt to view the subject matter from more specific perspectives. The authors recognise that the area of personality is confusingly diffuse and it is particularly difficult to select material, other than that concerned with descriptions of major theoretical approaches, that does not seem

to give a superficial coverage of virtually all areas of psychology.

In the first two sections of his book Sherman provides a very useful and easily read critical presentation of methodology in the study of psychology, including the basic concepts of experimental design and analysis, correlation research, ethics of research, reliability and validity, and a review of interviewing, questionnaire, projective and behavioural techniques of assessment. In the final section he presents a critical discussion of psychoanalytic and cognitive learning approaches to personality, spending a considerable amount of space on the behaviourism/situationism issue. However, due to this latter emphasis detailed description of individual personality theories is very restricted, and those readers with a more phenomenological bias or who have interests in factor analytic trait theories, may feel that much of the extensive discussion of the principles of behaviourism is unnecessary and gives an unbalanced view of the issues in personality which is not specified in the title of the book.

Ironically, although Forgas and Shulman specify that their approach is a cognitive one, the reader may find that the content is more representative of the general area of personality than that covered by Sherman. The initial discussion seems to be more pertinent to the area of personality and includes guiding postulates for personality theory, and definitions and constructs used in personality theory. This is followed by critical overviews of a variety of personality theories including Freud, Erikson, Murray, Rogers and Lewin. It is not until chapters 5 and 6 that the cognitive orientation is clearly emphasised, and just as Sherman indulges in a description of behaviouristic principles, Forgas and Shulman engage in a discussion of the relationships of the perceptual system to need-related stimuli. In this way they attempt to construe personality within the context of motivation and the way events are perceived. Consequently they reinstate the concept of motivation as a primary concept in the study of personality. This analysis is then applied to personality development, interpersonal behaviour and psychopathology. Although Forgas and