

BOOK REVIEWS

Personality: Research and Theory. By Nathan Brody. Academic Press. 1972. Pp. xii + 364.

Time was when one could rely upon a book with the terms "personality" and "theory" juxtaposed in its title being an exposition and appraisal of one or more of the classical personality theories. The latest decade, however, while still offering accounts of what Freud, for example, really said, has seen a lesser emphasis on such accounts and an increasing number of works summarising empirical work in particular areas of experience and behaviour not all of which might have been thought proper in the classical approaches to personality. Representatives of this trend are Byrne, Sarason and Maher, and the tenor of their texts and series may be judged by the terms "objective," "research", and "experimental" in their titles.

At first glance, Brody's book is another such topics-in-personality text. Indeed, each chapter taken by itself may be taken as a good account of the current scene in areas of research and controversy such as those of the trait approach to the study of individual differences, Spence's theory of anxiety, achievement motivation, clinical vs. actuarial description and prediction of behaviour, the supposed operation of the subconscious (a particularly useful chapter), the effectiveness of psychotherapy and behaviour therapy, and social learning theory. Each of these reviews is complete in itself, but is not undertaken simply because these areas are currently of interest, for Brody is not a mere scholarly mole busily burrowing in the archives only to throw up heaps of research findings in these various fields. His own bias is to use the hypothetico-deductive method in the experimental study of personality. For this reason he likes Eysenck's approach and the purpose of this book is to show how, for example, a relatively small number of traits (including "intelligence") may account for much of the variance in behaviour, and that a de-emphasis on the subconscious as traditionally defined is empirically justified. Given that Eysenck's theory of the acquisition of behaviour is scanty, Brody is concerned to show how it could be enriched by the incorporation of concepts and findings from work on social learning, with its emphasis on human learning processes. That is, Brody is not pro-Eysenck's theory as a theory so much as a way to arrive at a theory of human behaviour incorporating the best of the empirical work on cognition, genetics, social learning, and so on.

These bald statements must do this book less than justice. While any individual critic may well find reviews of his favourite bits of evidence omitted from any given section, Brody's attempted integration of work from fields as diverse as creativity and signal detection is certainly a valuable essay not in creating yet another premature comprehensive theory of personality structure and function, but in delineating a basis for attaining an adequate theory in terms of the existing evidence, as well as offering guidelines for the acquisition of further

evidence. This is a scholarly and closely-argued book, ideal for Honours and post-graduate seminar courses, and one which both stimulates and rewards careful study.

Alan R. Forbes

N.Z. Society, Contemporary Perspectives. Edited by S. D. Webb and J. Collette. Sydney: J. Wiley and Sons (1973), cloth A\$9.00, paperback A\$6.75.

The editors of this collection of forty-one readings, state that the major aim of the book is to introduce a wide range of reading on the structure and processes of New Zealand society thereby providing a foundation to which the student may tie theoretical and abstract ideas. Certainly the range is wide. The book drawing upon material from a variety of disciplines, contains sixteen original and twenty-five reprinted papers, together with brief statements introducing the five major sections: the emergent structure, the everyday process, social institutions, population dynamics and social control and deviance.

The choice of readings was apparently determined by their relevance to the book's two underlying themes—Maori/Pakeha relations and immigration, and also by the editors' endeavour "to include only those articles which make a theoretical contribution and have a sound empirical foundation." Twenty-six of the readings contain data, sixteen utilizing mainly demographic material drawn particularly from government publications, while ten reported data from the investigators' own surveys. Only two papers, one on Asian student adjustment by Hines and the other on network studies and attitudes to change by Levett and Bradley, are hitherto unpublished empirical studies.

The data-free papers include some speculative studies that are mainly descriptive or at best analytical treatments of current issues, and psychologists will judge few of these as representing genuine theoretical contributions. It is probable, however, that such biases are not unrepresentative of the contemporary social literature in this country.

The readings in the book are contemporary. Only two, the well-known Ausubel study on the Maori, and Porterfield and Gibbs study of suicide, were prepared prior to 1966, with the majority of readings having been produced in the last three years. Yet it is both unfortunate and indicative of the difficulties facing those who would undertake social research in New Zealand, when 1973 studies must rest on the 1966 census as the most recent data source appropriate to several topics.

Technically the book is quite well presented. The format is attractive and there are relatively few printing errors, but, like many books of readings, the index is inadequate.

In this reviewer's opinion, the book will be of only marginal interest to psychologists. As members of New Zealand society they might for example, become better informed by reading Sinclair's view of why race relations in New Zealand are better than in South Africa, South Australia or South Dakota; by considering Jones' analysis of the

Ombudsman's lay function as a defender of the current social system; or by noting Northey's demonstration that the New Zealander's home is not his castle. But they will find little of direct professional interest in the volume. For social psychologists, the book may prove of more direct value, but many will find that they are already familiar with some of the more significant papers or material they contain. For undergraduate sociology students the book will fill in some of the relevant background to contemporary social issues. If nothing else, these readings should help to demonstrate that the social psychologist who ignores contextual system variables in social problem research does so at his or her peril.

B. D. Jamieson

The Homosexual Dialectic. Edited by Joseph A. McCaffrey. Prentice-Hall (1972).

The title of this paperback collection of readings is misleading, as its contents do not provide a logical disputation on the topic of homosexuality and homosexuals. In the first part, material on homosexuality is provided that is already well known, such as excerpts from the Kinsey report on male sexual behaviour (1948) and the Final Report of the Task Force on Homosexuality, (N.I.M.H., 1969) the American equivalent of the Wolfenden Report (1957). This section deals with "Straight Perspectives" and includes articles by "such psychologists and social scientists as Irving Bieber, Martin Hoffman, Laud Humphreys and Thomas Szasz" (where psychologist is synonymous with psychoanalyst).

The second part deals with "Radical Gay Perspectives" as expressed by practising homosexuals and sympathisers with the Gay Liberation movement in America. They voice their protest against the non-acceptance of their way of life by current legal and social codes, and against the view that homosexuals are psychologically sick. This is the more useful section of the book as the sources are not so readily available in this country, but it is also the section that will date more quickly.

From the way the readings are grouped the impression is given that the researchers and the researched are on opposite sides. This is strengthened by the editor's observation that a "solution to the moral, psychological, pastoral, and legal problems of the homosexual cannot be had by consulting Kinsey or, worse still, consulting the popular stereotypes of the day, whether conjured up by the homosexual or the heterosexual." It is evidence reported by such as Kinsey and Wolfenden that will be largely instrumental in bringing about legal and social change rather than by statements from members of Gay Lib, although these may help to accelerate change.

A major omission in the book is any reference in either section to a learning theory account of the development of homosexuality or of its treatment by behavioural means. One might have expected that of all treatments, aversion therapy would rank highest on the list for

attack by those who seek "a cessation of harassment by lawmakers and police, employers and psychologists alike."

W. A. M. Black

The Psychology of Anomalous Experience: A Cognitive Approach by G. Reed. London: Hutchinson (1972).

This book sets out to be modest and simple and to provide a survey of experience rather than behaviour with a cognitive slant. It necessarily touches on abnormal behaviour but the approach is from the viewpoint of mainstream psychology, and many phenomena which are rare, but not necessarily pathological, are discussed. Professor Reed has done a valuable service in bringing together at an elementary level material which can be presented coherently and does not have to be buried in the by-ways of parapsychology or psychopathology. It provides a useful and reasonably inexpensive bridge between mainstream cognitive psychology and some clinical fields.

R. A. M. Gregson

Organisation in Animal Communities by Hilary O. Box. London: Butterworths (1973). Price in U.K. £5.00; limp edition £2.50.

There are a number of books available about social behaviour in animals, but none covers the same ground as this book. Dr. Box takes the broad definition of social behaviour and includes material on both interspecific and intraspecific relationships. There are sections dealing with the varieties of social organisation in the animal kingdom, domestication, isolation, overcrowding, the regulation of animal numbers in natural communities, social communication and the experimental approach to social behaviour.

Dr. Box clearly believes that a study of intraspecific relations is not enough for a proper understanding of social behaviour and that each species must be studied in an evolutionary and ecological perspective. This means that every species must be studied in the wild, in semi-natural surroundings (such as in large enclosures or a zoo) and in the laboratory, so that the complex interrelationships which determine social behaviour may be understood.

Dr. Box approaches the available evidence with caution and does not extrapolate results from animal experiments to man. She emphasises the many gaps in our knowledge and points out that so little systematic work has been done on even one species under different conditions, that two studies on the same species may not yield identical results. The author has not dealt with all topics equally successfully and what will please one reader, may not necessarily please the next. I was particularly impressed by the discussion on the viewpoints of Lack and Wynne-Edwards about the regulation of animal numbers in natural populations, but I was disappointed by the section on isolation which dealt exclusively with mammals. Many New Zealanders will be glad to see a section on farm animals.

Dr. Box has been selective about the examples which she has chosen to describe in her book. Several have been taken from New

Zealand, which Dr. Box has visited on two occasions. It is a pity that the scientific name of Tuatara is mis-spelt, as is "Tairaroa," in Tairaroa Head in connection with the Royal Albatross colony on Otago Peninsula. Soper (1963) is the reference given for Royal Albatrosses at Otago, but the credit should go to Richdale (1939, and 1942 a and b). There are a number of other spelling mistakes in the book, e.g. Bombadier beetle and arthropods (p. 207), genitalia (p. 209), anemones (p. 95 and following) and there are two misleading examples, the first on page 95, where a sea urchin (Phylum : Echinodermata) is confused with sea anemones (Phylum : Coelenterata) and the second, on page 183, when a spider is used as an example of sound communication in insects.

This book with its broad view of social organisation will be most welcome to psychologists and zoologists, and possibly to sociologists and anthropologists as well. There is a brief glossary at the back which defines key words which are important to the text but it does not include such technical terms as nematocyst (p. 96), gonadotropic (LH) (p. 87), sympatric (p. 190) and aposematic (p. 207), which may be unfamiliar to some readers.

The greatest strength of this book is the stimulating way the author has drawn attention to the many gaps in our knowledge and the many research topics which she suggests for future study.

REFERENCES

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