BOOK REVIEWS

OFFERINGS by Anna Shaw and Jan Graves. New Avalonia Designs. 1986 - pp.80 £6.95

This is a lovely book - the poems by Anna Shaw are beautifully complemented by the very strong and female line drawings by Jan Graves.

Anna Shaw was born in New Zealand and now lives in Glastonbury, where she met Jan Graves. The poems are often very short, some in the form of **haikus** - those Zen poems of seventeen syllables which contain so much in so little space. One of them brilliantly combines the Japanese feel of the **haiku** with the Anglo-Saxon alliteration of the old sagas. Many of them refer to old pagan sites and rituals.

Some of the longer poems are about her baby daughter. One of the poems is about a poetry workshop, which sounds like a creativity group run by someone in or around the AHP.

There is also a mysterious and magical story about a whirlwind and a mother and daughter. And one of the poems seems to tell of a magical experience (dream or fantasy or pathworking?) on the Tor.

But what I liked best of all was the way in which the drawings added so much strength and relevant support to the poems. They reminded me very much of the work of my daughter, Peri, which has appeared at times on the cover of **Self and Society** and on the covers of my books. They have that same smoothness and power which I admire so much.

This is a book which I hope will be read and looked at and appreciated as much as I liked it. The same publishers have produced a set of postcards based on the book, which can be obtained from them at New Avalonia Designs, West End, Street, Nr. Glastonbury, Somerset, BA16 0LQ.

John Rowan

Social psychology (2nd ed) by Kenneth J. Gergen & Mary M. Gergen. Springer Verlag, Berlin, 1986. pp 453 DM 49.

Social psychology: The second edition by Roger Brown. The Free Press, New York, 1986. pp 704. £14.95

Human relationships: An introduction to social psychology by Steve Duck. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills 1986. pp 271. £5.95

It was fascinating to come back to social psychology after some time away from it, and see how it had got on in the meantime. The last textbook I had seen was dated 1978, and I hadn't been much impressed by that. Would another eight years see an improvement?

Of course the star of the bunch was Roger Brown. He brought out his great text in 1965, and it had been reprinted and reprinted over and over again in the years since then. It was excellent - well written, well structured, relevant, critical, everything a textbook should be - but it was going more and more out of date with every year that passed. What would the update be like?

It is better than anything I could have imagined. The author says in introducing it - "Hardly any sentences from the 1965 edition appear here". And he gives as the reason for this - "I think the best way to introduce social psychology is in terms of the pros and cons of currently interesting arguments". He does this, and it makes the book come alive all the way through. This is one of the best books I have ever seen on any subject.

And just because of this it is fascinating to see the topics which have been dropped and those which have been taken up. The study of attitudes and attitude change, which were so central in most texts, has disappeared completely - the word "attitude" does not appear in the index. Some of the areas of applied attitude study do come in, however, under the headings of ethnic conflict and sex-role stereotyping. There is hardly anything on work - again one of the main subjects in most texts. So we have here quite a narrow selection of topics, rather than the wide-ranging overview we had before. I found I couldn't use this book for more than nine lectures out of the twenty-four I had to give.

Gergen & Gergen, on the other hand, gave me twelve. They still had a section on attitudes, and they also covered leadership - another topic dropped by Roger Brown.

Kenneth Gergen is of course one of the most interesting and open-minded of social psychologists, who has made some interesting contributions to the study of the self, actually putting forward the idea that people may have more than one subself - what we would normally call subpersonalities. But

none of this experimentally validated material finds its way into this text, which I think is a pity. This is in fact a rather restrained and unambitious book, which keeps well within the orthodox pathways all the way through.

For example, in the section on aggression it says nothing about the rather good work of Brown & Tedeschi, which for me illuminates social aggression more than anything else I have seen, nor does it mention the work of Rollo May which, while rather more speculative, does make an awful lot of sense to me. But at least they do devote some time to aggression, which Roger Brown does not - he mentions it briefly under the heading on inequity, whereas of course there are far more types of hostility than those arising out of unfairness.

Steve Duck, on the other hand, only helped me with two lectures. This is one of the weirdest texts on social psychology I have seen or could imagine. It doesn't really seem to be about social psychology at all. Hardly any of the great social psychologists or the great social-psychological topics are mentioned - nothing on attitudes, nothing on ethnic hostility, nothing on equity, nothing on attribution, nothing on group polarization, certainly nothing on work. I don't know who this is intended for, but it would certainly be no help for any examination I can think of, in spite of the panoply of references and boxes. Even the index is very poor.

So after the abyss of Steve Duck, and the respectable but rather low-key work of Gergen & Gergen, we come back to the narrow but undeniable triumph of Roger Brown. Someone who went to this book would not only find a good rundown on some of the central topics in social psychology, but would also find a rattling good read. The very first secion, for example, entitled "Social forces in obedience and rebellion" is a fascinating story, well worth anyone's time and trouble; anyone reading this would come out at the end feeling they knew more and had more sense of the subject than they did before. His chapter on group polarization is excellent, too, spending quite some time on analysing the film "Twelve Angry Men", until we understand exactly how and why the film works as it does. And the implications for real jury deliberations are drawn out with the help of many many experiments and observations, so that the reader comes out at the end feeling wiser as well as more knowledgeable.

It seems that the final conclusion on this interesting selection of books must be that Steve Duck can be ignored completely, Roger Brown is the best if you want some good insights within the field of social psychology and a good read, and Gergen & Gergen is the best one for passing examinations with.

John Rowan

Self, Situations and Social Behavior - Edited by Phillip Shaver. London Sage, 1985. £33.00 (paperback £15.50)

Culture and Self: Asian and Western Perspectives - Edited by Anthony Marsella and others. London. Tavistock, 1985. £8.95

The first book is written by academic psychologists for academic psychologists and is likely to be difficult to comprehend and boring unless you are an academic working in the area of personality. Presented like a book it is in fact Vol. 6 of a journal called **Review of Personality and Social Psychology** which has five editors and a board of about 50 professors who are mainly American with one or two from Europe and Australia. As one would expect, it is cautious, science bound, well written but bunged up with defensive qualifications and references to other literature.

Don't be misled by the word self in the title. The book is in fact about personality defined as what can be abstracted from tests, mainly paper and pencil ones, and how to make coherent sense out of how this meaning of personality links with our environment to produce patterns of behaviour. The influence (not a bad one in my view) of George Kelly's 'constructs' is detectable. The key term these days is 'social cognition'.

Some of the issues tackled in this book are important. A chapter by Kabassa tackles the link between personality (or temperament?) and health. It points up the slim evidence for saying that particular diseases are linked with personality. So if you want to say (and some psychologists do) that cancer is repressed feeling or that arthritis is repressed anger, you will have problems proving it. Hobfall's chapter on stress, and chapters on self knowledge drive at interesting topics. They look at what occurs, as **averages** of the people they study, which is O.K. as far as it goes, but it tells us nothing about how individual people **can** grow and develop themselves using modern innovative systems. Humanistic psychology is ignored. This leaves some odd holes. For example, the authors of a chapter called 'The multiplicity of personal identity' have obviously never heard of Assagioli and never been near a psychosynthesis workshop. I hope I live long enough to see the glorious fruits of the cross-fertilization of intelligent scientific study (which can be found in nuggets in this book) with the experiential integrity of the human potential movement.

Culture and Self is a collection of eight chapters by different authors, American based but with knowledge of Asia. The concept of self in Europe, Japan, India and China is described and linked with cultural forms and religious systems especially Christian, Hindu, Confucian, Buddhist and Shinto. This book clearly shows how the Western countries emphasize individual and material aspects of self identity, living independently from others, and valuing autonomy (I am a male teacher, etc., etc.) whereas Asian countries emphasize collective and non-material identities valuing

being-at-one-with. (I am of Hrothgar's lineage, in Wandsworth and of Pilai house). All this is well described.

What is not clear in this book is the part played by awareness in the different systems. Western approaches tend to treat consciousness as a product of physiology, label it an epiphenomenon and then ignore it.

Asian religion and ritual gives importance to awareness but the part played by it in the concept of self is largely ignored by the authors. Perhaps it is not very clear in the Asian systems themselves. I would have liked some discussion of this point. One thing everyone seems agreed on is that negative experiences in childhood become part of the adult being although different cultures conceptualize the processes in different ways.

A. David Jones

THE PROBLEM OF ALTRUISM by C.R. Badcock. Basil Blackwell, 1986. pp.197 £14.95

I was delighted by this book, particularly by the exquisitely precise, logical inevitability of the argument. An argument carefully synthesised and supported by many quotations, especially from Freud, Darwin and Trivew, its main aim is to demonstrate to us that there is no such thing as altruism as an act inspired by the goodness of people's hearts. In case we miss the point, Badcock actually says: "human beings are good out of the badness of their hearts." (p. 72).

His own "dynamic theory of the gene-behaviour interface" tells us that we are the slaves of our own selfish genes : "I do not doubt for one moment that, ultimately, all behaviour has genetic determinants, since it seems likely that anything which an organism does must finally be accounted for by its genes and their interaction with its environment" (p.161)

In building up his argument Badcock says that, fundamentally, there are three different kinds of altruism. Those are (1) Reciprocal altruism (2) Kin altruism (3) Induced altruism.

In cases of reciprocal altruism one organism performs a service or makes a sacrifice for another organism which then reciprocates in some way so that the sacrifice of the provider is balanced by a corresponding service or sacrifice by the recipient." (p.37) This is Badcock's definition and he also stresses "The elaborate development of reciprocal altruism which has characterized human social evolution" (p.67) even since hominids began to cooperate in hunting game. He gives us some examples of reciprocal altruism from the animal world, and describes how organisms that cheat always score over those that keep to the rules of the system.

Kin altruism operates on the principle of inclusive fitness, which is a term taken from Darwin and means reproductive success, Because "kin" will have a higher proportion of identical genes than unrelated persons, kin altruism describes acts which benefit a close relative. Badcock explains that this is why parents and offspring are happy to make an investment (in terms of time or effort) in each other. He also describes at length, and to his own satisfaction at least, that Oedipal conflict is an attempt by children, who have been given more or less investment than the norm, to exaggerate a normal strategy and so gain extra parental investment. He also discusses altruism which is motivated through identification with the recipient, the incest taboo, masochistic altruism and the phenomenon of adolescent counter-culture among industrial peoples.

"Whenever one organism promotes the fitness of another at its own expense and without reciprocal benefit to itself or benefit to its genes present in the recipient it has perforce performed an act of induced altruism". (p.121) Here Badcock assumes that some kind of deception is being practised by the recipient in order to persuade the donor to give a benefit.

He claims that biological and cultural determinist theories are too simplistic as explanations of human nature; that Freud's principle of repression is accurate in so far as we repress our utterly selfish motives in order to make our actions acceptable to ourselves and thus more credible to others. Even human language, he says, has evolved as an ambiguous way of exchanging information when it could have been a system as precise as mathematics. It is used to enhance our deceptions on each other.

Badcock's views are materialistic and they give us a depressingly negative mechanistic and ungenerous view of human nature; his logic is compelling, but any acknowledgement of a spiritual dimension in people is totally absent. The essential humanness of people has been discounted, discredited and "disproven". And, at the end, is this a political book ? Page 194 talks of Marx and Keynes; we are told that the best political system is one in which the innate selfishness of the individual can be best utilised: typical Thatcherism. If you want to be made sad or angry, read this book.

Jane Carlisle

Self, situations and social behaviour by Phillip Shaver (ed). Sage Publications, Beverly Hills. pp 311 £16.50

This is actually the sixth number of the annual Review of Personality and Social Psychology. This year we have such topics as social intelligence, shyness, self-knowledge, person perception, romantic love, jealousy, stress resistance and some others. These are interesting enough in themselves.

But the reason for this review is that there are two papers here which break relatively new ground in the theory of personality and social psychology, right on the junction point of these two disciplines. They are about subpersonalities. Readers of this journal will need no reminding that subpersonalities are those little people within us who get up to so many tricks and have so many different names, such as: superego, ego and id; parent, adult and child; father and mother complexes; internal objects; archetypes; subselves; little I's; topdog and underdog; imagos and so on. They are best defined as semi-permanent semi-autonomous regions of the personality.

The first of these two papers is by Seymour Rosenberg ' Michael Gara, and is entitled **The multiplicity of personal identity.** In this paper the authors espouse a hierarchical model of the person, whereby the same person may play many roles, each of which has its own identity. This does seem to restrict the notion of identity to roles, whereas I would argue that multiple identities do not necessarily come from multiple roles. Roles, in my book, are only one of six different sources of subpersonalities.

The actual method used by the authors in their research is that "people are asked to describe, in their own terms, each of from 20 to 50 personal identities, one at a time, and to list as exhaustively as possible the characteristics and feelings (features) associated with each of these". This, they say, takes several hours to do. Even so, the information obtained in this way is quite limited, and not very exciting. It is subjected to a hierarchical statistical analysis which is appropriate but not thrilling.

The other paper is by Dan McAdams, and is entitled **The imago: A key narrative component of identity.** This takes the Jungian concept of an imago (close to the concept of a subpersonality) and uses it brilliantly in trying to understand how such concepts can be used in social psychology. The author looks at insights from psychoanalysis and clinical psychology (closed areas for most social psychologists), insights from personality and social psychology (for example the notion of a self-schema as used by Markus & Sentis and the notion of a prototype as used by Cantor & Mischel), and then goes on to look at imagoes as "main characters" in the story of a person's life.

His research in fact proceeded through interviews in which he asked people to think of their lives as a story with chapters, in such a way that he could then look for *an origin myth, a significant other person, a set of personality traits, a set of goals and wishes, a set of behavioural incidents, a philosophy of life or underlying theme, and an anti-imago* for each of the main characters so obtained.

Unfortunately, after such a promising start, he then went on very quickly to develop a classification of the subpersonalities so obtained, all based on the names of Greek gods, and dividing them up according to Bakan's categories

of Agency and Communion (masculine and feminine characteristics, broadly speaking). This part of his work seems to me rushing to tight categories, when he would have done better to keep things loose for much longer. Also he is not very hot on his mythology, and some of the attributions are insultingly ridiculous.

However, McAdams redeems himself by some interesting further ideas, such as the importance of the anti-imago. He suggests that one test of the maturity of a person is the extent to which they have integrated the pairs of opposite imagoes which in the less developed person are in destructive conflict. The idea that imagoes must always come in pairs is a typically Jungian piece of exaggeration, but the idea that subpersonalities have to be integrated seems basic wisdom.

And McAdams also goes on, much more speculatively, to suggest that imagoes are some of the main influences on interpersonal relations, determining which kinds of relationships will be sought out and cultivated. And the degree of integration will then determine which relationships can be successfully sustained.

John Rowan

Dictionary of Key Words in Psychology by Frank J. Bruno, 1986, Routledge & Kegan Paul, £16.95.

This book covers the terms you would come across in studying psychology at college in the U.S.A. In other words, it covers everything you would study in Britain plus more because psychology in the U.S.A. is not defined so narrowly as it is here. Each term is defined and illustrated. The explanations are succinct and accurate: much better than a dictionary but obviously not as informative as a text book. Prominent psychologists are also included with a description of their main work. Laing, Maslow, Rogers are there along with Skinner and Pavlov. There are one or two omissions. I was surprised not to find 'catharsis' and pleased not to find 'Eysenck' though he ought to be included in the entry on 'extraversion'.

A. David Jones
