

Bekhterev) ever put forward.

The next chapter, by Igor Kon, raises some intriguing methodological and theoretical problems surrounding the concept of self. The author succeeds in demonstrating that the self is a *social* psychological phenomenon and thus prepares us for much that follows regarding the relation of the individual to the collective. As if to further develop this theme, the next chapter, by Boris Lomov and Vera Kol'tsova, deals with the influence of communication on individual cognitive processes. The idea is extended in the succeeding chapter, by Galina Andreeva, who introduces us to the idea of a "collective subject of activity," implying a concept of "group cognitive structure."

A chapter by Alexei Bodalev and Georgi Kovalev on interpersonal cognition as seen "within the context of the entire process of communication" does not mention collectives, but other chapters will make explicit what is implicit in this one: that interpersonal cognition and communication are (as we might well expect) integral to the collective process.

This brings us back to Petrovskii, who has more to say about the structure and dynamics of collectives. The following chapter, by Alexandre Chernyshev, is about self-discipline, which, we learn, is a property of a highly developed collective (like the hockey team?). The author describes some fascinating pieces of apparatus designed to evaluate, model, and study the functioning of collectives. Remaining chapters, by Anatoli Zhurvalev and Ekaterina Shorokhova, and Eugene Kuz'min and Vladimir Trusov, deal with problems of management and

communication within collectives in applied settings.

It would be a tragic mistake for the reader to lay this book aside because we don't have any "collectives" in Canada. The fact is, of course, that we do have them, and where we don't (as in most hockey teams, psychology departments, and university committees), understanding why we don't might be of considerable value. The contributions to this book, in any case, provide some interesting new perspectives on some old social psychological problems.

The book is, however, not without its difficulties. The main one is a certain opacity characteristic (in my experience) of English translations of Russian scientific works — this despite every evidence in this case of a highly competent job of translating. It is probably attributable finally to something akin to *narodnost*' (see p. 164). What it means to the reader is that the going will be a little slower (and perhaps tougher) than if it had all been re-written in his own words by Pierre Berton. The editor acknowledges and discusses this problem in an afterword. He has also provided the reader with an informative preface that explains how the book came about, and each chapter is headed by a brief but helpful introduction.

Now, if we could get it translated into the language of hockey coaches. . .

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Edmund V. Sullivan

A Critical Psychology: Interpretation of the Personal World

New York: Plenum Press, 1984 (195 pages)

Reviewed by Kurt Danziger

Edmund Sullivan is a professor in the departments of Applied Psychology and History and Philosophy of Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Dr. Sullivan has previously taught at Harvard and Simon Fraser universities. He is the author of numerous books and has contributed many articles to various religious and educational journals.

This book is not for those who have never doubted that the goal of psychology is the prediction and control of behaviour and whose

notions of critical analysis are represented by the latest manual of experimental design. Their world is one that the author would see as an

expression of psychology's unique situation: the fact that it is the only social science discipline that completely lacks a self-reflective critical perspective. In other words, psychologists commonly fail to take into account the way in which both the objects they investigate and their own theories are embedded in a particular socio-cultural matrix. As a result they become the unwitting legitimators and perpetrators of existing power relationships in their society.

Those who have some acquaintance with the writings of psychologists such as Klaus Riegel and Allan Buss, or perhaps with the critical comments of Sampson or of Sarason, will therefore find themselves on familiar territory when they pick up this book. However, the author's main contribution lies in developing this general perspective in a positive direction so as to give an indication of what an alternative psychology might look like. In doing this he draws on the ideas of a number of European philosophers and social scientists whose work has been generally ignored by North American psychologists. One American intellectual tradition that Sullivan does incorporate in his psychology is that which originates in the work of G. H. Mead.

The "personal world" of the title emphatically does not refer to the kind of phenomenology of isolated individuals that has been popularized by so-called humanistic psychology. For Sullivan this latter approach is yet another incarnation of that pervasive individualism that he sees as the root bias of contemporary psychology. His preferred unit of analysis is not the abstraction of the individual but persons-in-relation. Hence the real object of psychological investigation is not the behaviour of individuals but communicative interaction.

This has important methodological implications, especially as the psychologist cannot avoid being part of this interaction. It means that psychology must be a hermeneutic rather than a natural science. Following Ricoeur, Sullivan suggests that human action provides a text to be interpreted. The meaning of human acts is ambiguous and is not to be found inside the heads of individual actors. Interpreting the meaning of acts involves showing their relationship to the larger cultural totalities of which they are a part. However, the psychologist's own involvement in these totalities sets limits to the kind of interpretation that is possible. For instance, if interpreter and interpreted are trap-

ped in the same cultural forms, the act of interpretation of the one is likely to confirm the fundamental bias of the other. But in any case, psychological investigation involves dialogue with the object of study rather than analysis at a distance.

Lest this sound rather abstract and unfamiliar, Sullivan supplies a list of a few published research studies that illustrate what a critical psychology might look like. These include one historical biography and a number of in-depth studies of groups in real-life settings. Needless to say, the list includes no experimental or quantitative studies. There is also an extended criticism of a well-known example of the new ethogenic approach, which at first sight might have been thought to have much in common with Sullivan's research programme. However, he points out that ethogenic accounts are apt to reproduce uncritically the illusions of the individuals studied. Because of their refusal to link local social orders to the wider context in which they are embedded, such accounts once again reinforce the social status quo and give a quasi-biological interpretation of patterns that are really social products.

What distinguishes Sullivan's critical psychology from other alternatives to the mainstream, therefore, is his insistence that the conditions for human action be traced not simply to the intentional activity of individuals but to the social structures of domination in which individual intentions are embedded. These are the structures of ethnicity, gender, and class. What Sullivan criticizes is that "psychologists take structural relationships of power such as capital over labour, men over women, and change them into intrapsychic phenomena."

He goes somewhat further than previous critics in developing a conceptual framework for a type of analysis that would not repeat this traditional error while yet being psychological rather than sociological in nature. The key to this framework is provided by two polarities. On the personal level there is the polarity of *identity* and *individuation*, the former being conferred on the individual by his or her social situation, while the latter "expresses the possibility of some uniqueness and resistance to a dominant culture." This leads to an analysis of social conditions in terms of their "enabling" or "disabling" potential for individual agents. The precise relationship between these polarities is not as clear as it might be. Sullivan seems to define

enabling and disabling social conditions in terms of their contribution to the process of individuation. But in that case the distinction between his approach and the mistaken individualism of conventional psychology would essentially reduce to this, that he takes as an ideal end point what conventional psychology assumes to exist from the beginning. I am not sure that that is what Sullivan really intends, but it is what he seems at times to be saying.

These ambiguities may stem from the fact that the identity/individuation distinction is not quite consistent with other aspects of Sullivan's position. It plainly constitutes the kind of universalistic, ahistorical generalization for which he faults traditional psychology. What is not considered is the possibility that the salience of this polarity may itself be a product of rather specific historical conditions and that quite different polarities may become important under different conditions. In other words, the author's general position seems to require a more historical and less schematic analysis than the one he presents

in parts of this book.

Nevertheless, this is an important contribution to the growing literature on alternatives to mainstream psychology. It is distinguished by its intellectual sophistication and by its marshalling of perspectives that run counter to local cultural traditions. At the very least it is a volume that ought to provoke an expansion of all too narrow disciplinary horizons. Incidentally, the very concept of intellectual "horizon" is one that the author analyses in a particularly constructive way, showing its relevance in the context of psychological research.

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Jean-Claude Brief

Beyond Piaget: A Philosophical Psychology
New York: Teachers College Press, 1983

Reviewed by Juan Pascual-Leone

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Dr. Brief's book is a serious attempt by a philosopher to draw epistemological and general psychological implications from Piaget's life work. In substance the book offers Dr. Brief's own neo-Piagetian model of cognitive development and genetic epistemology. Dr. Brief's is a purely theoretical reformulation of Piaget's enterprise. Its interest for psychologists lies in the fact that this is a philosophically more explicit reformulation, quite similar to other currently popular neo-Piagetian views.

The book is well written, but psychologists may find, particularly in the second half, that the notions and considerations discussed are not explicit enough, or familiar enough, to add clarity to their understanding. In this regard a few more explicit definitions, concrete illustrations, or a glossary at the end of the book could

have been helpful. Still, the book is a very thoughtful addition to the vast literature related to Piaget.

A philosophical psychology, however, cannot be cogently evaluated without considering the philosophical tradition of the author. Dr. Brief's line of interpretation of Piaget's work, the references, the authors with whom he contrasts Piaget, and last, but not least, the fact that Professor Patrick Suppes of Stanford University has had a "formation influence" on him, all suggest that Dr. Brief comes from a logical empiricist background and perhaps, with the help of Piaget, has gone beyond empiricism; but not beyond Piaget.

To convey to readers unacquainted with Piaget's detailed theorizing the significance of Dr. Brief's neo-Piagetian stand, I must now