

BOOK REVIEWS

MARK COOK: *Personnel Selection and Productivity*. J. Wiley, New York (1990). Series: Psychology & Productivity at Work. 267 pp. £14.95. Paperback, ISBN 0 471 92967 0.

This book, as the title proclaims, deals with personnel selection and productivity. The two are of course closely linked—productivity is dependent on proper selection, and one would have thought that any advances in selection would be quickly adopted by managers in competitive industries and commercial institutions. Alas, methods that have been shown many times to be inefficient, such as astrology, graphology and interviewing, are still much more widely used than are proper psychological testing procedures; as Cook makes clear, the latter are without a doubt greatly superior in increasing productivity, and have been shown to be so. The book is an outstanding example of how such introductions to a practical field should be written, being clear, incisive, short and well-referenced without showing any pedantic over-inclusion. Few readers will come away without a firm impression of the true state of affairs, and hopefully with the desire to institute better practices than are at present usual in British commercial institutions—Americans are much more likely to have absorbed the essence of Cook's argument. Continental countries like Germany and particularly France are even less advanced in this respect than England, and horror stories come much more frequently from these countries.

The book deals in a series of short and well organized chapters with all the relevant questions—the value of good employees, job description and job analysis, the interview, references and ratings, application blanks and biodata, tests of cognitive ability, personality tests, assessment centres, miscellaneous methods, validity in criteria productivity, and the value of good selection. It even deals with minorities, "fairness" and the Law. There is little to criticize and much to praise. On one or two points one might raise an eyebrow. Cook seems to be under the impression that a test cannot be more valid than its reliability, but that should surely be the square root of its reliability? (Unlikely though it may be that in actual fact validity will ever exceed reliability.)

In his treatment of personality tests Cook fails to remember Kurt Lewin's famous saying that there's nothing as practical as a good theory; he doesn't mention the importance of theory, and comes to what I believe is a much too low estimate of the validity of personality tests. The fact that large numbers of studies using shot-gun tests like the MMPI or the CPI give poor results because they do not incorporate any kind of theoretical conceptions of what is needed cannot counter-balance the very positive results which can be achieved when appropriate theories are being tested with the use of appropriate questionnaires. However, these are minor points and they do not counter-balance the excellence of the book for the purpose for which it is intended.

H. J. EYSENCK

MARGARET S. CLARK (Ed.): *Prosocial Behavior*. Sage, London (1991). 327 pp. Paperback.

This volume of *Review of Personality and Social Psychology* provides 12 chapters representing work typical of APA Division 8 social-personality psychologists. Therein lies the book's strengths and weaknesses, depending on your orientation. The research is more social than personality, more laboratory-experimental than field-correlational, and more cognitive than biological. There are two reviews of developmental influences (by J. E. Grusec, and by N. Eisenberg and R. A. Fabes), several on motivational processes, such as empathy and affect arousal (by C. D. Batson and K. C. Oleson, by J. F. Dovidio *et al.*, and by P. Salovey *et al.*) and others on the consequences of helping for the helper or helpee (by E. G. Clary and M. Snyder, by E. Midlarsky, and by A. Nadler). For diversification there is a chapter by T. A. Wills on the benefits of social support systems from epidemiological field studies, one on sociobiology by R. Buck and B. Ginsburg, and one on the social anthropology of West Africa by A. P. Fiske. There is also a brief introduction by the editor and an overview commentary by J. M. Darley.

The editor and authors can be congratulated for opening windows in a social psychology that remains one of the more hermetically sealed of disciplines. Some chapters generalize prosocial behavior to other domains, particularly to volunteering in society. Here innovative methodologies, including the use of Gallup polls and other survey techniques, provide insights (Clary and Snyder). Other chapters also report novel techniques, including Grusec on training mothers to observe their children's altruism in the family setting, and Eisenberg and Fabes on the use of facial indices of empathy. Unfortunately, however, despite it being 1991, there is still no discussion of genetic influences. Indeed, Buck and Ginsburg conclude: "We find no evidence for the existence of genes for altruistic behavior . . ." (p. 172), a surprising position given that Ginsburg is a behavioral geneticist and twin studies of altruism have appeared in mainstream journals. Curiouser and curiouser, Batson, one of the most tireless advocates of the "empathy-leads-to-altruism" hypothesis, does not mention even his *own* co-authored twin study (*Journal of Personality*, 1981, 49, 237–247) showing fully 71% of the variance in empathy to be due to genetic influences. Can he not quite bring himself to accept the findings? Socially-oriented psychologists have not always been in the forefront of highlighting the genetic basis of the regularities that lie beyond their deconstructions.

J. PHILLIPPE RUSHTON

M. J. STRUBE (Ed.): *Type A Behavior*. Select Press, Corte Madera, Calif. (1990). 461 pp. \$20 Paperback.

This book is a reprint of a 1990 special issue of the *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality* which was devoted to the theory, measurement, correlates, and consequences of the Type A behaviour pattern. The book comes with subject and author indices, so it is not difficult to navigate around.