Pervin’s brief discussion inserted into the Rogers chapter for this third edition.

The two major differences in coverage, however, concern the neo-Freudian and the social learning theorists. One of the advantages of Hergenhahn’s text is full coverage of each of four neo-Freudian theorists (Jung, Adler, Horney, and Erikson), whereas Pervin provides only a 12-page section (a new section in this third edition, in which brief attention is given to Jung, Adler, Horney, and Sullivan). In contrast, one of the major advantages of Pervin’s text is an excellent treatment of the developments of Language and Thought: Esch and his theory is important for students because it combines humanistic and psychoanalytic insights. Social learning theory is an essential topic because in studying it students are exposed to personality theory as a current endeavor, progressing in step with other areas of psychology.

Why Not Communicate About Communication?

Mark H. Bickhard
Cognition, Convention, and Communication

Review by
Roy D. Pea

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The increasingly pervasive treatment of cognition, communication, and language from social-interactionist perspectives during the last decade (e.g., Ochs & Schieffelin, 1979; Olson, 1980) has generally not been accompanied by the necessary conceptual analyses of fundamental theoretical terms. In the absence of such analyses, we run the risks of uncritical eclecticism, in which unanalyzed concepts are adopted in rote fashion from theories that are fundamentally incompatible. This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in accounts of communicative development. So the appearance of a book with the express purpose of tracing “the internal logic of the development of a model of language on an interactive knowing base” (p. vii) portends a clarification of the metatheoretical issues ingredient to any efforts at explaining the emergence of language from the nexus of social interactions.

The author’s aims are to “present a metatheoretical perspective for the study of mental phenomena,” and to demonstrate the viability of that approach by using it to explicate a model of communication and language. Thus, the strategy of approach:

First, psychological communication systems are to be analyzed and differentiated within the category of general psychological action systems. Second, action systems are considered from within a mentalistic perspective, that is, action system conceptualizations are developed in terms of the mental structures and processes that constitute those systems. Third, mental structures are taken to be explicable as control structures, and mental processes as executions of those structures. Fourth and last, control structures and processes are taken to be explicable in terms of abstract machine theory. (pp. 2–3)

These goals are pursued in the five main chapters of the book. In the first, as ground-clearing, “picture models of knowledge” (e.g., early Wittgenstein) and “transmission models of communication” (e.g., most research in psycholinguistics) are rejected in favor of “interactive models of knowledge” (e.g., proceduralism in cognitive science) and “transformational models of communication” (e.g., phenomenological sociologists such as Cicourel). The second chapter explicates interaction, cognition, and situation, and the key concepts of “knowing,” “apperception,” “situation image,” and “world image.” At the core of the approach in the third chapter is the definition of situation convention as “a consensual understanding about a social situation among the participants in that situation” (p. 49). This extension of Goffman’s definition of the situation has been markedly influenced by David Lewis’s philosophical work on the notion of convention. Situation conventions, rather than minds, are considered to be the “interactive objects” that communicative acts “transform.” The fourth chapter sets out the resultant approach to meaning and language, and the fifth (which constitutes half the book) develops an argument that “yields a sequence of increasingly language-like action systems, each differentiated within the preceding, culminating in an explication of language in terms of both its goal structure and its transformational structure” (p. 90).

These are weighty concerns indeed. Is the promise fulfilled? Not as far as I can tell. The lines of argument are strung out like so many tangled kitestrings, bedraggled with myriad definitions, essay-length asides, and diffuse footnotes covering 40 pages. Defined terms become the jargonist’s gist of subsequent arguments, a recursive procedure leading to such results as the following:

The potential regress of explicit intentions is eliminated by constraints on what constitutes a convention (symmetry and equivalence): since self-contradicting reflexivities are incompatible with the nature of situation conventions and since meanings have the ontology of situation conventions such self-contradicting reflexivities are therefore derivatively eliminated in the goal or apperceptive structures that constitute meanings, without having to invoke a regress of positive (non-contradicting) reflexivities to avoid them. (p. 82)

No small irony that a text on communication is so uncommunicative. The architecture of these common sentences, much less the arguments in which they play a role, is utterly impenetrable. Notwithstanding Heidegger’s influence, it does not have to be this way. For a model to be to cogent, it first must be made communicable. The value of its claims cannot be assessed otherwise.

Students of language, communication, or cognitive development that desire to relate this theoretical framework to existing or future empirical observations would be hopelessly caught up in these linguistic brambles. This is truly unfortunate, for I among many others have great sympathy for aspects of the spirit of the model, such as the transformational conception of communication, currently in need of establishment as a viable approach.
A number of criteria can be used to evaluate a developmental psychology text. The first is a requirement: The book must represent accurately current knowledge in the field. This implies presentation of significant contradictory evidence as well as reasonable interpretation of research findings. With respect to several other criteria, legitimate arguments exist about the best positions to take. One has to do with the balance between theoretical, empirical, and applied content. Another has to do with the range of theoretical orientations described and the relative emphasis given to each. This is a matter of choice given that the first requirement is not violated. The range of topics covered is a third criterion. There is usually a trade-off between this and the depth of detail presented on topics unless the book takes the form of the student's nemesis—the encyclopedic text. None of the books considered here fits that description.

Two of the texts, the one by Papalia and Olds and the one by Helms and Turner, follow a chronological arrangement. The Papalia and Olds book is the only one that covers development across the life span. With 600 pages this is also the longest book. The additional 100 pages in Human Development, however, hardly allow for comparable coverage of an age range three times that covered in the other books. Discussion of most topics is terse. Papalia and Olds balance the theoretical and empirical components. Although, they include little explicitly applied material, many of the topics covered have obvious practical applications (e.g., toilet training, school phobia, planning for retirement). Furthermore, a number of the suggested readings provide detailed sug-

### References


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**Apples and Oranges**

Helen Bee  

Donald B. Helms and Jeffrey S. Turner  

Richard C. LaBarba  
**Foundations of Developmental Psychology** New York: Academic Press, 1981. 559 pp. $18.95

Diane E. Papalia and Sally Wendkos Olds  
**Human Development. 2nd ed.** New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. 683 pp. $18.95

Frank Wesley and Edith Sullivan  
**Human Growth and Development: A Psychological Approach** New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980. 263 pp. $16.95 cloth; $8.95 paper

Review by Lawrence V. Clark

Helen Bee, author of the first book under review, is senior research associate in the Department of Psychology and the School of Nursing at the University of Washington. She is coauthor of The Developing Person with S. Mitchell. Donald B. Helms and Jeffrey S. Turner, are both affiliated with the Department of Psychology at Mitchell College (New London, Connecticut), where Helms is a member of the faculty and Turner is chairperson. They are also coauthors of Life Span Development. Richard C. LaBarba, is professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Florida. He is coauthor with D. B. Carlson of a chapter in X. Serafino's *Psychological Problems Related to Cancer*. Diane E. Papalia-Finlay is professor of child and family studies at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. Her coauthor, Sally Wendkos Olds, is an author living in Port Washington, New York. The two have written *A Child's World*. Frank Wesley (author of Childrearing Psychology) and Edith Sullivan, coauthor with Wesley, are both professors of psychology at Portland State University. Lawrence V. Clark, reviewer, is assistant professor of psychology at Southeast Missouri University (Cape Girardeau). His primary research interests are in the areas of social cognitive development and family and peer relations.

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