between the participants, which is characterized by both mutual following (of one another's behaviors) and by mutual support. In other words, solutions to cognitive problems emerge that reflect the joint contributions of each individual.

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that even when individuals are involved alone in an activity, the nonpersonal environment still plays a significant role as a collaborator. That is, every environment is organized — whether by intent or not — to foster some behaviors over others. For example, a child's playground that has swings and slides but no climbing bars obviously makes possible some motor behaviors rather than others. The same analogy can be extended to much of the human environment, which is *socially constructed* in such a way as to support or encourage some behaviors. Such social constructions are sometimes referred to as the *human factors* of a learning experience. Several examples of the human factors of a learning situation include the design of human tools and buildings to facilitate certain types of interaction. Such human factors orientations to cognitive development and human learning have yet to make a significant impact on cognitive psychology. Clearly, this is not a fault of the Rebok textbook, which, at least, recognizes the significance of a contextualists approach.

The Rebok volume contains a fairly traditional set of topics or chapters, including theories and methods, perceptual and attentional development, language development, memory, problem solving and creativity, and intellectual development and complex thinking processes (e.g., psychometric models of intelligence, formal operations, and "wisdom"). In addition, the book covers several topics that are unusual for cognitive development texts, such as spatial cognition and imagery, social cognitive development (e.g., social cognition, the search for identity, self-concept in adulthood, role-taking, and moral development), and intervention in cognitive development. In contrast to other cognitive development texts, this one places greater emphasis on methodology and design issues. As the author indicates, such an emphasis reflects the focus of life-span developmental researchers on methods and research designs that are sensitive to both long periods of time and multiple sources of influence and causation. Several learning aids are included in the book, such as boxed inserts, chapter overviews and summaries, and definitions and key terms. In summary, the book is well written, well organized, and provides a much needed life-span focus that will be beneficial to both students and their mentors.

The Me I Know: A Study of Adult Identity, by S. K. Whitbourne. Springer-Verlag, New York, 1986, 264 pp., $29.95 (softcover).

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In this book Whitbourne, a developmental psychologist, explores the processes by which adults go about answering the fundamental question, "Who am I?" She takes as a central assumption the notion emanating from James and Mead that we learn about who we are through the results of our actions and the effects that we observe ourselves having on others. The crux of the identity-building process is to see ourselves as competent, loving, and good.

Whitbourne bases her discussion on interviews of approximately 2 hours with 94 men and women between the ages of 24 and 61. Attitudes toward family, work, age, and values were explored. She claims to have focused on the "average adult who is living a reasonably average life in relatively average circumstances," although she also argues that her sample was diverse from the standpoint of socioeconomic status and family situations. She identifies her method of analysis as primarily phenomenological in that she became totally immersed in the entire interview as a unit in order to get a sense of the kind of identity needed to produce certain responses.

Whitbourne challenges the view taken by Levinson and others that there are regular, predictable points of personality and identity transition in adulthood. Instead, she argues that identity changes in adulthood when there is the right combination of circumstances and individual readiness. However, she finds the overwhelming evidence from her study to be on the side of constancy in identity. Theoretically she puts identity development and reconstruction into Piaget's framework of adaptation to situations of disequilibrium through the processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation* — that is, challenges to identity are met either through incorporating and interpreting experiences in terms of an existing identity (assimilation) or through redefinitions of what contributes to one's identity as a worthwhile person (accommodation).

The major portion of the book is devoted to exploring identity in the areas of family and work. She presumes that these areas are central to the construction and reconstruction of identity and that they permeate other areas of identity. There are lengthy descriptions illustrated by quotations from the interviews of the many different areas of work and family life that contribute to identity formation and maintenance. Of particular interest is her discussion of some of the ways in which people accommodate the conflicts between these two areas of identity. Conceptually she distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in both the family and work areas and examines the interplay of these in making sense of what really matters as the individuals in her sample went about making and remaking their identities. She challenges the common notion in the literature that the bases of identity in men and women are basically different; instead, she found that both men and women were driven by the same needs to be competent, loving, and good and that they both did this in similar ways in the realms of family and work.

Some aspects of the book were problematic for this reviewer. Although the book does a good job of describing some of the important contributors to identity formation, it seems to lack any real analysis of patterns to the process. Whitbourne's use of Piaget's concepts of assimilation and accommodation provides some framework for the descriptive material, but this reviewer was left with little sense of how her study has advanced the understanding of identity beyond the work of Erikson, Rosenberg, Stryker, and others. Many of her observations have been made in somewhat different language, particularly in the literature on self-concept and self-esteem. In addition, in her contention that she wants to describe the "average" adult she seems to pass too easily over some of the dimensions of identity that must go along with one's socioeconomic and ethnic location in the society and one's place in the cohort flow. The interplay between one's family and work life and these broader structural factors simply cannot be overlooked in a complete analysis of adult identity.

Whitbourne does not explain why age 61 was the upper limit of her sample, but her analysis might take on additional meaning with the addition of older adults. She acknowledges that health is really a more important determiner of identity than age, but she might have been able to explore the implications of this idea more fully by including older persons in her sample.

This book could be of interest as supplementary reading in upper undergraduate courses or lower level graduate courses on adult development. It can be a useful starting point for those interested in exploring how identities are formed and maintained.

Established Populations for Epidemiologic Studies of the Elderly Resource Data Book, J. Cornoni-Huntley, D. W. Brock, A. M.

Ostfeld, J. O. Taylor, & R. M. Wallace (Eds.). National Institute on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, NIH Publication No. 86-2 Bethesda, MD, 1986, 428 pp., Free (hardcover).

George A. Kaplan, *Human Population Laboratory, California Department of Health Services.*

This is an important book, not so much for what it contains as for what it portends. The volume represents the first major publication of data from the National Institute on Aging's largest epidemiologic study, by acronym the EPESE. These studies, begun in 1980, involve more than 10,000 persons over 65 years of age who are being followed from 1981-82 to 1987-88 with annual data collection. Reported are baseline data from the first three EPESE sites: east Boston, MA; Iowa and Washington Counties, IA; and New Haven, CT. A fourth site in Durham, NC, was initiated in 1984 to broaden the representation of elderly Black adults, but due to its later initiation, data were not available for this volume.

Chapter 1 gives a thorough description of the sociodemographic characteristics of the populations being studied in the three sites. The next six chapters introduce the areas of measurement in the EPESE study, provide a short introduction to the rationale underlying the measures chosen, and, most importantly, present basic tables describing baseline data for each sample by sex, age, and, in New Haven, by race. The investigators and NIA endeavored to ask most questions in the same way, facilitating the grouping of data from the different sites as well as comparisons between sites. Chapters present the results for measures of social functioning (living arrangements and social network participation), physical functioning (plus self-reported hearing and vision), prevalence of chronic conditions (including systolic and diastolic blood pressure), other health problems (incontinence, depression, mental status, and sleep problems), health habits (smoking, alcohol consumption, and use of digitalis glycosides), and health services utilization (dental, hospital, and nursing home services). Finally, the complete questionnaires from the three sites are included in appendices.

Although the presentation of the data is not sufficiently detailed to allow the reader to perform any but the simplest of analyses, it is still quite useful, representing a variety of important domains of measurement with data obtained from three large population-based efforts. The data will be useful for those needing quick estimates for policy purposes, for the planning of new studies, and for hypothesis generation. But, by far, the greatest value of this volume is that it allows the reader to look forward to what are sure to be important contributions from the EPESE investigators as the data accumulate from the yearly follow-up of study participants. To see this volume, and the NIA support which underlies it, is ample evidence that, for epidemiologists, age is no longer just something for which you adjust.

The Obsolete Self: Philosophical Dimensions of Aging, by J. L. Esposito. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1987, 256 pp., $25.00 (hardcover).

Elizabeth W. Markson, *Boston University Gerontology Center.*

In *The Obsolete Self,* Esposito presents a penetrating and controversial analysis of human aging from a philosophical perspective. From the broad perspective of philosophy — "the most general science" — the author is concerned with the nature of reality, knowledge, meaning, and truth of aging. Drawing from findings of the empirical sciences, he is primarily concerned with conceptual problems and analysis of the basic assumptions and concepts of inquiry used in biological, psychological, and sociopolitical investigations of aging. What began as a fascination "with aging as a problem in metaphysics and the philosophy of science . . . expanded to include issues of social identity and obsolescence" (pp. 6-7), all of which are contained within the seven chapters of this volume.

The role of the philosopher traditionally has been that of gadfly: to annoy, stimulate, and arouse. Esposito has succeeded in this gadfly role, as biologists, psychologists, sociologists, and practitioners might be provoked to both anger and thought about basic assumptions of their disciplines. Theories of biological aging, developmental and ego psychology, the social clock, ageism, social and distributive justice, law, ways of dying: All are examined in search of ways to accomplish "enlightened aging."

Thus, central to *The Obsolete Self* is both an epistomological and an ontological investigation of aging. From an epistomological perspective, awkward issues are raised for those who value building on previous theories and replicating experiments. Some biologists, for example, might be challenged by arguments such as, in Chapter 1, that their work to date has suffered from persistent methodological problems, including whether aging is cause or result of alteration in bodily functions. The concept of the biological clock is viewed as a quasitheological supernatural entity; species-specific age span, viewed as at least as theoretically suspect a part of biological theory, might prove to be as much of a barrier to further knowledge of aging as the 16th century belief that heavenly bodies were divine creatures was to astronomy. The social clock of aging receives similar criticism, as do theories of life-span development and sociolegal policies.

But there is more here than a critique of our assumptions about aging. At the core is concern for the human meaning of time and the experience of becoming and being in time in different eras and political systems. Thus, Esposito notes that, if a psychosocial theory of life cycle is to be developed, the ontology (that is, persons and their activities) of being alive must be studied to establish categories that characterize the process of life from *birth* to *death* (p. 81). Reviewing life-span theories in chapter 2, Esposito finds most of them lacking. Freud, for example, was not only too entranced with the cell-organism analogy in explaining the life cycle, but he viewed the aging individual's destiny as grim: becoming a symbol of the dead father weighted by guilt for having survived him. Jung's analysis of the life cycle is a parabola: from rest (before birth) to action (life) to rest (death) and life a temporary break from stasis. Erikson's model, like many other stage theories, has a tinge of failure, as each stage has the possibility of failure, flawing successful movement to the next stage. In lieu of these and other theories, Esposito proposes a far simpler stage theory: (a) emergence and (b) maintenance of the ultimate self (entire person); the ultimate self "maintains itself timelessly . . . no chronological age . . . not old or young but only wise or foolish" (p. 103). Therefore, strictly speaking there are no stages after maturity but, rather, revelations, discoveries, confusions, and inconsistencies (p. 107).

Chapter 3 focuses on the social clock — age stratification, age norms and taboos, and engagement/disengagement from social life. Chapter 4 is devoted to a discussion of ageism and social justice. Esposito proposes two basic conditions for the realization of social justice for aged people: Capitalist societies must relinquish their concern with acquisition and competition; and, conversely, socialism must abandon its view of capitalism as false consciousness. Specific proposals include the following: First, age segregation and conformity to the social clock must cease. Second, the meaning of work must be rethought so that individual economic value is no longer equated with the value of one's self. Third, interpretations of the meaning of life must change to emphasize