

### WORLD TECHNIQUE

**The Lowenfeld World Technique; Studies in Personality.** By RUTH BOWYER. Pergamon Press. 1970. Pp. 223 + xiv. Price: 40s. hardback, 25s. flex. cover.

Most child psychologists and child psychiatrists will agree that young children sometimes re-enact personal problems whilst playing with small toys. The problem is to differentiate fictitious, imaginative play from revealing recapitulations. The idea of presenting the child with a standard set of toys and a sand tray on which to place them has obvious attractions for those who believe that communication with young children is facilitated through their play. The Lowenfeld World Technique goes further, and claims that the child's personality is revealed in the 'World' he constructs in the sand tray.

Bowyer's work first failed to see light of day when it was prepared for a book which was never published. She chose, in this second attempt, to summarize previously published papers—both her own and others—although this involved some repetition. For this reviewer, the high point of the book is reached on page 90 where Charlotte Bühler changes sex unexpectedly on the last line. Otherwise, little else relieved the tedium of reading uncritically paraphrased papers presented in a series of disconnected, but repetitive chapters.

Anastasi long ago pointed out that one of the major problems in using projective techniques is that '... the interpreting of scores is often as projective for the examiner as the stimuli are for the subject'. Where there are unstandardized scoring procedures, the need for reporting inter-scorer reliability is great. Despite this, the reliability of the World Technique is mentioned only in passing, and is reported to be 'High'.

Validity is examined in a very quaint way. The 'Worlds' of 159 mental defectives were assessed, and descriptions of each patient's personality and intelligence written. These were read out by an experimenter, and ten members of the hospital staff voted as to whether the description was like the patient or not. The staff were not asked to rate the patients independently beforehand, so that criterion contamination was maximized.

Elsewhere, the discussions on validity follow the now familiar pattern of special pleading one expects from champions of the projective hypothesis. Firstly, this is not a 'test', it is a 'technique'. 'It's not a test in the usual sense of the word, and its standardization is not relevant'. (p. 69). Secondly, '... their validity depends on how they are used, and cannot be shown beforehand to have a general coefficient of validity out of context.' (p. 77).

This book is not a very critical account of the sparse literature on the World technique. Bowyer frequently cites work which was in progress many years ago, the results of which were not available at the time the original papers were written. The very least one could have expected when the papers were translated into chapters was an up-dating of the findings. Even this modest expectation was not fulfilled.

Whilst the use of play material will continue to contribute to the form of communication between adults and children, there is still a great need to evaluate the validity of play techniques as diagnostic aides as opposed to exploratory interior techniques.

WILLIAM YULE.

### THE STUDY OF THE WHOLE MAN

**An Introduction to Hominology.** By THEODORE C. KAHN. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas. 1969. Pp. 365. Price \$12.50.

This book was primarily written to describe the course of studies originated and developed by the author at the Southern Colorado State College, where he is Head of the Department of Behavioral Science. An integrated study of mankind, embracing his origins, development, cultures and future, is clearly necessary, as even so traditional a university as Oxford has recently decided, but it is a pity that Dr. Kahn has chosen such an inelegant, hybrid title as 'Hominology'. It may give to many in this country an impression of something rather bogus (which it certainly is not), in the way that people regard astrology, phrenology or scientology. A more descriptive title, such as 'An Integrated Study of Mankind' or even his own subtitle 'The Study of the Whole Man', might well be more acceptable.

The author describes in bits and pieces throughout the book what he means by hominology and its aims, and it would be helpful if this were fully propounded in the beginning. In particular, the first four pages of the last chapter, with slight modification, might well be integrated into the introductory chapter.

In summary it might be said that hominology was designed (1) to facilitate the comprehensive study of mankind, by providing an essentially non-disciplinary framework for impartial consideration of all pertinent facts and theories, (2) to provide a forum for students and experts in the numerous disciplines concerned with mankind, from palaeontology to philosophy, to ascertain the basic facts and theories of each discipline, and thereby broaden their horizons and help to effect greater tolerance

of conflicting viewpoints. It is stressed that hominology is non-disciplinary and does not produce new data, but by integrating and organizing existing data, it may find new and fruitful interpretations.

As the book is based on the author's courses in hominology, a considerable amount of space is given to his teaching methods. For instance, he describes in detail his Criteria of Reality, a form of classification which helps the student to realize how he comes to accept or reject the information he receives. The importance of training students in self-evaluation is rightly stressed, but many general readers may be content to skim the sections devoted to the author's 'hominolograms', which he defines as 'visual representations, in the form of histograms or line graphs, of six Criteria of Reality applied to eight phenomenological Life Areas'.

In spite of these criticisms I found most of the book absorbingly interesting and stimulating. For me its greatest value lies in the immense amount of information provided, derived from the many specialities concerned with the origins, development, culture and ethics of mankind, and particularly in the short extracts from and analyses of the works of numerous writers in these and kindred fields.

The palaeontological survey (Ch. 10) makes fascinating reading, as does Ch. 2, entitled 'What is Human about Humans?', in which the various factors that make man unique are examined. Due importance is given to his helplessness in infancy and to his lengthy period of maturation and dependency on his parents, but the concept of neoteny is not specifically mentioned. In Ch. 12 man's moral and ethical values are classified and critically discussed. They are categorized into the Graces (representing self-control), Virtues (self-denial), Duties (obligations) and Dedications (ideals). No mention is made of tolerance or moderation, admittedly difficult to place in the author's classification, but surely needed most urgently by man, if he is to make anything of his future. Dr. Kahn stresses the importance of his highest moral value, Dedication, and is fully alive to the pitfalls of what he terms 'Pseudo-dedications', but I wish he had gone further in this. Bigoted idealism amounting to gross intolerance, whether religious or political, extreme Right or extreme Left, has for many centuries caused havoc throughout the world, and shows little sign of decline. It is perhaps man's most tragic failing that he appears to have forgotten the classical aphorisms of 'Festina lente' and 'τὸ μῆδὲν ἀγαν'.

In the final chapter Dr. Kahn discusses some of the most critical and controversial problems facing the contemporary world. These include the exhaustion of the world's resources, the danger of

thermo-nuclear war, poverty and overpopulation, racial discrimination, and the increase in crime. Here at last he breaks his general rule of neutrality and gives his own opinions with becoming modesty and lack of dogma.

Altogether, this is an invaluable reference book, which cannot fail to stimulate its readers to further study, and to which I certainly shall repeatedly refer.

L. C. COOK.

### EXISTENTIALISM

**Medicine in Metamorphosis.** By M. SHRALA.  
Tavistock Publications. 1969. Pp. 164. Price 38s.

This book is written by a specialist in speech disorders in children. Using a small number of case histories as a basis he expounds an existentialist viewpoint of aetiology, treatment and prognosis. Both in the resounding title and in the text he suggests that the existential approach is achieving a revolution in medical thinking. There is little, if anything, in the book to support this contention. Much of the writing embodies humanistic attitudes to the whole patient which, although sometimes rejected by individual doctors, have been the essence of medicine since it was first practised. The use of existentialist jargon sometimes obscures the message completely, as in the following:

'The child can only speak and behave in accord with his age level and other presuppositions in conditions where he experiences himself as directly and continuously present to his fellow-men.'

In other places one feels it could all be said much less pretentiously. Surely the following passage conveys no more than 'make the best of a bad job'.

'The defect contains a hidden and undeveloped potentiality, needing expression, demanded by life as a debt, a return for the offer of life. Life demands life. As a debt to life, the defect thus constitutes a challenge—to search for a way through the defect to the 'hidden treasure' that underlies it'.

The one theory that is put forward here is that of von Weizsäcker who postulated a causal chain extending from an individual's 'unlived debt to life' to dysfunction of one of his organs. In other words, the frustrations suffered by a person come to be expressed symbolically by a part of his body. This is not too far-fetched an idea, as the experiments on stress and peptic ulcer have shown. However, when it is used as the exclusive explanation of all bodily malfunction it becomes ridiculous, as in the following:

'The mother was also clearly dissatisfied, but not in an active or hopeful way. She was inclined to tears,