

69

Mount Grove, the heroism of a battle-
field incident, and the brutality of sur-
vivors of the Titanic clubbing swimmers
with their oars. For every reaction there
is seemingly also its opposite and, al-
though Wolfenstein offers hypotheses
for all, one would be hard put to pre-
dict one or the other alternative in
advance.

The psychologist unacquainted with
the growing disaster literature will be
surprised at what people do under dis-
aster conditions. Pictures of panic are
highly unrealistic. The "disaster syn-
drome" of apathetic withdrawal from
the situation is only part of the sci-
entific prediction. Wolfenstein covers
threat (distant and imminent, denied

and overestimated), impact (in its
"aloneness," "near-miss" survival and
other aspects), and the many facets of
disaster aftermath. In doing so she of-
fers data and interpretations on behav-
ior which are increasingly becoming a
focus for the attention of psychologists.
From the work of Selye on physiologi-
cal mechanisms in stress reaction to the
two recent books by Festinger on cog-
nitive dissonance, there is a spread of
research and theory that is directly per-
tinent to our understanding of disaster
behavior. More books in this broad area
are in press. Wolfenstein's book makes
a timely contribution to this area of in-
quiry that slices across most of the do-
main of psychology.

A few of the authors devote the
of their papers to the more sema-
and philosophic aspects of the con-
ference subject. The others tend to
pense with these matters in their in-
ductory paragraphs or by occasi-
later reference, thus freeing them-
for more substantial contributions
the understanding of developmen-
phenomena that pertain to their gi-
area.

In their own rights the individ-
chapters are largely of high quality. T-
gether they make a collection that
somewhat heterogeneous even by 'inte-
disciplinary' standards, and it may
questioned whether, in this book, the
global properties of the whole are
useful as its parts. Those who con-
that a unification of science is possi-
through general laws that hold equal-
for all levels of organization from ato-
to galaxy may be prompted to search
the book for some skeletal essence of
the developmental concept that will ap-
ply to all systems.

On the other hand, those who believe
that all phenomena can be analyzed and
explained ultimately in physicochemical
terms will find encouragement in Ernes-
Nagel's chapter on *Determinism and
Development*. Here Nagel challenges
the doctrine which asserts that global
properties appearing in the evolution of
a hierarchically organized system can
never be reduced to, nor explained by
the properties of the elementary parts.
He claims, on the contrary, that the
novel, emergent properties can be ex-
plained and predicted in principle, pro-
vided one has a proper theory both for
the given system and for the particular
phenomena in question. He cautions,
however, that there is no a priori proof
that an adequate theory can always be
found, nor plausible ground for suppos-
ing that man will some day construct a
final unifying theory that will account
for every phenomenon ever manifested.

Concepts re a Concept

Dale B. Harris (Ed.)

*The Concept of Development: An Issue in the Study of Human Be-
havior.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957. Pp. x + 287.
\$4.75.

Reviewed by R. W. SPERRY

Dr. Sperry has, since 1954, been Hixon
Professor of Psychobiology at the Cali-
fornia Institute of Technology. After
a doctorate in zoology at the University
of Chicago, he was associated in re-
search with Karl Lashley at the Yerkes
Laboratories of Primate Biology for five
years, and then he taught neuropsychol-
ogy and neuroanatomy at the University
of Chicago for five years more. He has
been especially interested in the devel-
opment of the nervous system as the
basis of perception, learning, and mem-
ory and in the reorganization of the
nervous system in regeneration.

THIS book is the published version
of a conference held at the Uni-
versity of Minnesota in 1955 to recog-
nize the 30th anniversary of the Uni-
versity's Institute of Child Welfare. The
concern of the conference was not with
any special aspect of development nor
with development in general, but rather
with the concept of *development per se*,
particularly with the concept defined as
a temporal process involving the organi-

zation of elemental parts into larger
functional units or 'wholes.' Following
an introductory survey by the editor,
the sixteen authors, representing a wide
gamut of disciplines including philoso-
phy, biology, psychology, anthropology,
languages, medicine, history, social sci-
ence, and education, discuss individually
the use and meaning of the concept of
development and related problems in
their respective fields. Open discussion
is not reported.

The rationale behind the conference
plan may be found in part in the strong
'interdisciplinary' trend of a few years
ago and especially in the movement for
a General System Theory, stemming
back to the writings of Bertalanffy and
others. The editor indicates that there
was no pressure or plan to demonstrate
the unity of science on a physicalist
basis, nor to expound general system
theory; yet one wonders if, in the plan-
ning at least, there was not hope that
some greater concern would be given
these matters than the majority of par-
ticipants actually gave.

*The philosophical mind never wishes to
win an argument, but rather the truth.*

—DAGOBERT D. RUNES