

Summary:

This book aims at giving a comprehensive survey of extant and recent findings and discussion in the field of developmental psychology focusing on the philosophical implications of said findings. It is a book perfectly well suited to help bridging the fields of psychology and philosophy.

Quite often philosophers venture on certain discussions without the benefit of recent developments in scientific psychology and psychologists deal with conceptual problems in order to run forward their research without a minimal knowledge of philosophical issues. This typical interdisciplinary deficit might be addressed by a book such as this one.

It is true that in recent years some books have been published in which there are contributions by philosophers and psychologists on a given definite topic, but to my knowledge there is nothing as general and systematic like this book regarding the philosophical implications of work on developmental psychology. I think that his book would be welcome both by professional philosophers and developmental psychologists and by students enrolled in postgraduate psychology and philosophy programs, especially in interdisciplinary programs.

The author is a good philosopher with a perfect command of the field of developmental psychology. He offers then the perfect professional profile for carrying out the task of writing this book quite successfully.

Let me add that I find it very important that books like this, with a clear interdisciplinary approach, begin to appear and be accessible both to students and professionals. After all, true cutting-edge research is interdisciplinary most of the time and certainly there are a number of issues in philosophical research and also in psychological research which require an informed opinion of the developments in both fields of inquiry.

There exists an American Society for Philosophy and Psychology and also, more recently, an European Society for Philosophy and Psychology. Each one organizes an annual conference and also a joint conference has taken place a few years ago. Yet, to carry forward this interdisciplinary undertaking it is essential that there exist books like the one being proposed.

I think the book will be well suited for graduate programs in philosophy and psychology, especially those with a interdisciplinary approach (such interdisciplinary programs are becoming increasingly important, especially those oriented at research, since research itself is usually interdisciplinary). Also for professional philosophers (not just philosophers of mind, also metaphysicians, epistemologists and philosophers of action should be quite interested) and professional psychologists, especially those working in the field of developmental psychology.

As regards undergraduate students and general readers I'm afraid the text might be too demanding.

As the book is written on a thematic approach, with individual chapters devoted to each topic (knowledge of numbers, actions, mental states, etc.), this will, I think, render it helpful for many different advanced courses both in philosophy and psychology, there being probably no need to read it through in some cases.

1. If you teach a related course, what text(s) are you currently using, and at what level do you teach?

I teach undergraduate and graduate courses. I teach a course on emotions in a graduate interdisciplinary program in Barcelona called "Cognitive Science and Language" with three branches: psychology, philosophy and linguistics.

My course on emotions is not directly related to the topics covered in the book proposed but, as I said, earlier, it would be extremely helpful to have at our disposal a book like this, covering recent research in developmental psychology and addressing its philosophical implications. In the field of emotions, for example, it is a central issue which part of the emotional system has evolutionary origins and which part is acquired.

This is an issue with very important philosophical consequences. So I would very probably recommend to my students reading this book or at least some chapters of it.

We do not have a book like this, as far as I know, for the topic of emotions, namely, a book covering the most important developments in affective science and their philosophical implications. Such a book would certainly be most welcome.

2. What do you think of the selection, range and level of the proposed contents?

I think it is quite correct.

3. Are the contents pitched at an appropriate level for the market?

As I said, I think the book best suited for professional philosophers and psychologists and graduate students of both fields, especially if they are enrolled, or they are interested in pursuing, interdisciplinary programs.

It would probably prove too demanding for the general reader with no formation on philosophy and psychology and certainly for basic undergraduate courses. This is however as it may be, I think, if the book has to be, as I understand it is intended, a good tool to enable and promote serious interdisciplinary research.

4. Is there anything that you would add or remove from the contents?

I would only suggest to the author to think of adding a glossary of technical terms, things like 'core knowledge' or 'modular representations', to name but a few. I am quite aware that these terms, introduced by prominent theories in the field, are themselves a matter of controversy as to their precise meaning. Yet, to the extent that they play an important role in the discussions contained in the book, it would, I think, be very useful if this intended role could be spelled out (even in a rough way) in a separate part of the book, so that the reader may refer to it easily while reading the book.

5. Can you list the relative strengths and weaknesses of your current text?

See answer to question 1.

6. Do you know of any other courses (either parts of a whole or dedicated courses) for which this book would be suitable?

As I said above, we in Barcelona run a graduate interdisciplinary program (for twenty years now). This book would of course be of interest for many courses in the three branches. There are similar

graduate interdisciplinary programs across Europe and United States. I'm sure that this book, which actually would fill up an empty space, will be widely appreciated at these academic levels.

7. *Would you use this text as a basis for teaching a course in this subject?*

Yes I would. As I said earlier, however, the thematic organization of the book would also encourage using only parts of it depending on the topic of the course. The chapter on knowledge of numbers, for instance, might be of interest for a course on epistemology; the chapter on knowledge of intentional action would be well suited for a general course on the philosophy of action, to name only two possible applications.

8. *What are the strengths and weaknesses of this book?*

I think that in general I have already answered to that. Only one thing more. I have just praised the thematic organization of the book, but this might also incur the risk of a book without a common thread or argument. I think it would be helpful if the author, at some point (perhaps in the introduction), tries to relate the different chapters and explain their sequence in the book. A final section of conclusions would also, I think, be a good idea.

9. *Do you have any comments on the author's/editor's suitability for the task?*

I have already answered to that. Let me just add that the research team in Warwick produce some of the best works in this interdisciplinary approach.

10. *What other competing texts are you aware of (author/title/publisher/price/year if known)? How do they compare to the proposed title?*

See previous remarks.

11. *Would you recommend that we publish this book?*

Yes, definitely.