HURRELMANN, KLAUS. Social Structure and Personality Development: The Individual as a Productive Processor of Reality. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988. ix+163 p. $34.50 (cloth); $12.95 (paper).

This monograph summarizes the author’s views on socialization after lecturing on the topic for the past 10 years at the University of Bielefeld. The book is organized into 4 chapters. Chapter 1 examines the core constructs of social learning theory, psychoanalysis, cognitive developmental theory, ecological theory, systems theory, action theory, and the theory of social structure. The author claims that points of convergence and agreement can be captured in a contextualistic model that conceptualizes human development as an interaction between individuals who are actively producing and processing reality and a changing social context that influences these actions. Chapter 2 suggests how we might study individuals as “active processors of reality,” and Chapter 3 offers ways of examining the effect of social context on development. The final chapter discusses the concepts of “successful” and “unsuccessful” socialization. The monograph is an excellent summary of the contextualistic approach to personality development. It clearly sketches the broad outlines of how research might be conducted from this perspective. The book is highly condensed, however. To fully appreciate it, a reader should have previous familiarity with the theories outlined in the first chapter and with the work of philosophers Stephen Pepper and Jürgen Habermas.—J. A. Johnson.