

**David O. Sears, Jonathan L. Freedman, and Letitia Anne Peplau.** *Social Psychology, 5th ed.* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985) xi, 531 pp., \$27.95.

At a time when social psychology as a field of study has reached a new high and journals and textbooks have proliferated to meet the new demands of social psychologists and students alike, the publication of the fifth edition of a basic social psychology text says something not only about the book's endurance but also about its basic soundness. Over the years, this volume has been used by thousands of students and in many ways has set the standard for other social psychology texts which attempt to give an introduction to the field. With this edition the high standard set back in the early 1970s has been maintained; the present volume is a re-write of an already excellent book.

The years that have passed between the book's first publication in 1970 and the present edition have witnessed some major changes in society and in psychology. This book reflects those changes. One of the original authors has passed away; topics have been added; some chapters have given way to others or the focus has been changed; and finally, the new book reflects the recent trends in the field. But this is one of the book's main strengths. It reflects accurately the major trends in the field while at the same time it is not being "trendy." Each chapter is comprehensive while at the same time it is not encyclopedic; there is a basic core of knowledge and information that can be traced to earlier research.

For minority group members, this book presents a wealth of information and strategies that can be invaluable not only as general knowledge but also as a plan of action. Since the book also focuses on the applied aspects of the field, it gives numerous examples of social psychology at work and how it can relate to minorities. But the book also has appeal in that it treats the various topics in a balanced manner, not over-emphasizing any one current theme. Moreover, the authors are especially aware of the changing population and have tried to gear the book to have appeal to minorities, women, and older students while maintaining a thematic approach.

Perhaps the best part of the new edition is the separate chapter on prejudice and politics. Of the many social psychology texts, none has presented the issues of racism, discrimination, and prejudice so well. The authors strive to present the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of this phenomenon while maintaining objectivity. They have done a masterful job. While many other social psychology texts are happy to treat prejudice as a sub-topic of attitudes formation and change, this book presents it cogently and with sensitivity and understanding. For minority students this chapter would certainly be one of the most important and enjoyable.

Perhaps the hardest test for this book is to pass the minority litmus paper test. That is, would one recommend its use with/for minority students. As a social psychologist, a minority group member, and a teacher, the answer is a strong yes!

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**Mongane Serote. *To Every Birth Its Blood*. African Writers Series 263. (Exeter, NH: Heinemann, 1984) 206 pp., \$6.50 paper.**

Mongane Serote is a poet of considerable merit; this I should have discovered from reading his novel, *To Every Birth Its Blood*, even had I not heard and seen him read his poetry to an African Literature Association Conference in 1975. The novel, however, is not obtrusively poetic; rather, its physical and psychological insights are apt and genuine parts of an integral whole, not ends in and of themselves. Yet a careful reader will respond most positively to such expression. I cite as an example a poignant observation of a loving wife, frustrated in silent pain:

Her husband fell asleep while she listened to her throbbing head, and her eyes seemed to have taken over the beat from the heart.

But for all its exquisite observations and poetic felicity, the novel is to be praised primarily for what it tells and teaches. It is the protest brought up to date (publication 1981) which Southern African writers Paton, Rive, Mhpahlele, La Guma, Nkosi, and Brutus began making to a largely unreading public. It is a book which the Falwells of our world ought to be compelled to read and understand; it is also one which well-meaning intellectuals should read.

It is, in one way, the same story of apartheid and the brutality of many South African whites and of the hypocrisy which “justifies” a sadism