One of the occasional pleasures of reviewing books chosen by computerized lists is that due to errors, one may read a book about another subject. 'Genetic epistemology' has nothing to do with genetics, but is, in its literal sense, a child's guide to knowledge, in which Piaget summarizes part of his life's work in asking children questions which some philosophers have made incomprehensible, especially to themselves, and in attempting a scientific study of philosophical assertions by assuming some phylogenetic and ontogenetic equivalence in the genesis of thought. This approach is strangely lacking among the great British empiricists who modestly regarded their own endowments as typical. In some ways his approach is complementary to the problems of communicating with automatons.

Piaget casually dismisses the claims of many of those who labour to spin new clothes for their emperors. Even Whitehead and Russell are challenged on their definition of numbers as classes, on the apparently incontrovertible ground that children can define numerical equality without explicit pairing.

Children, to Piaget, are strangely uniform and there is little here of aberrant, or of exceptional, responses; the linguistic arguments are restricted to Indo-European languages, and the author does not venture into the strange worlds of the deaf or the blind.

The book is translated, but the publishers were unable to provide an original which is hard on the reviewer, and may be hard on the author.

J. H. Edwards


This volume reports the Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Twin Studies held in Rome in September 1969. There are 102 papers: 65 in English, 26 in Italian, 10 in French, and one in German; the papers in foreign languages are not summarized in English. The subjects covered include the epidemiology of twinning as well as the use of twins in genetic studies, though most of the papers are concerned with the latter field. The standard of the papers is very variable. Many are merely summaries of work published in full elsewhere, or preliminary reports on work in progress; some of the other papers are very thin. There is only room here to single out one or two of the more interesting papers for special mention.

Nylander reports data on the inheritance of dizygotic twinning in western Nigeria, which is of great interest both because of the high twinning rate in that region, and because the practice of polygamy provides an opportunity of separating paternal and maternal factors; the same author also reports on the placentation of Nigerian twins.

Among the twin studies on the heritability of normal and pathological characters, there is an interesting...