

of the Royal College of General Practitioners. Regrettably, the production is marred by poor editing and proof-reading.

B. COOPER.

INDIAN TEXTBOOK

Elementary Psychiatry for Medical Undergraduates. By ROSHEN MASTER. London: Asia Publishing House. 1968. Pp. 427. Price 40s.

This book on general psychiatry is intended for medical students.

The first part gives the history of psychiatry and an account of the psychodynamics of human behaviour, the second part details of aetiological factors and the symptomatology of mental disorders. The remainder of the book is devoted to various psychiatric disorders and accounts are given of child and social psychiatry. The subject of forensic psychiatry deals with the legal provisions applicable to India.

The book contains a great deal of useful information, but the part dealing with genetics is poor, and many of its definitions are imprecise, such as that of obsession. It is not correct to define stupor as a disorder of consciousness, or to say that depersonalization is necessarily an affective disorder. Data on epidemiological aspects of psychiatric disorders are inadequate. In the part dealing with psychosomatic medicine not enough attention is given to the multiplicity of aetiological factors which are found in most psychosomatic disorders. There is a good account of physical treatments but there is no adequate account of behaviour therapy. There is a useful glossary.

This book is primarily written for Indian students, and in the highly competitive field of undergraduate textbooks on psychiatry it is unlikely to prove attractive to students in this country.

W. LINFORD REES.

SKINNERIAN PSYCHIATRY

A Psychological Approach to Abnormal Behaviour. By LEONARD ULLMAN and LEONARD KRASNER. New Jersey and Hemel Hempstead: Prentice-Hall International. 1969. No price stated.

Textbooks in psychiatry and abnormal psychology, unlike those in physics, tend to be written from the point of view of a particular school. In the past, this has often meant that the standpoint selected was psychoanalytically oriented. This new textbook also has a very definite orientation, but it is to B. F.

Skinner rather than to Freud. This simple statement will probably immediately cause many psychiatrists to give up any thought of reading it, but this would be a great mistake. Admittedly the concepts, theories, and facts included are entirely different from those which form the backbone of traditional texts, but unless one assumes that the traditional approach is near perfect and its value established beyond reasonable doubt, alternative ways of looking at the facts and alternative suggestions for treatment should not be dismissed. Prospective readers may be reassured that the book is very well written, contains very little jargon, and carefully documents the points made; it is without a doubt a major contribution to the literature, and one that should be on every psychiatrist's shelf. It is, of course, a one-sided presentation, just as traditional textbooks give one-sided presentations; it is precisely for this reason that it is here recommended so strongly. Until the time arrives when a textbook can be written which will embody the contributions of all schools, and evaluate them on a factual basis, the only way to overcome the biases of one side is to read and digest the contributions of the other. There is little danger that psychiatrists will be unaware of what the psychoanalytic literature has to offer; this book will give them an idea of what contribution behaviourism has to make.

Praising the book as I have done does not of course mean that even from the behaviouristic viewpoint I must agree with everything said in it. Consider, for example, the discussion of psychotic disorders, particularly the schizophrenic varieties. The authors suggest that these are due to faulty reinforcement schedules applied during childhood, and go on to suggest that much of the psychotic behaviour seen in chronic patients is in fact due to faulty reinforcement schedules applied in hospital. The latter point is well documented, and almost certainly has much truth in it; furthermore, there is much evidence (as in the work of Ayllon and Azrin on 'Token Economies') that the process of psychotic deterioration in hospital can be reversed by instituting suitable schedules of reinforcement. The former point however is almost empty of content; the particular patterns of reinforcement supposed to give rise to schizophrenic disorders are not described in sufficient detail to make experimental testing possible, and the well-known genetic aspects of schizophrenia are left out of account altogether. Thus the book has weaknesses as well as strength, but the existence of the former should not lead one to underrate the importance of the latter. Conditioning theories will play an ever increasing role in theoretical and applied psychiatry, and it is important to know what these theories are, and what applications they lead to. There is of course

no monolith called learning theory to which all behaviour therapists subscribe; there are considerable differences between the Hullian approach of Wolpe, for instance, and the Skinnerian approach of those who favour operant conditioning. Curiously enough, this distinction almost exactly coincides with that between the treatment of neurotic and psychotic patients; desensitization and aversion therapy are practically restricted to neurotic disorders, whereas operant conditioning is almost entirely used with psychotics, autistic children and the like. Ullman and Krasner, although more committed to a Skinnerian approach, give a good account of all relevant theories. It is a sign of the times that a book such as this not only did not exist ten years ago, but could not have existed; nearly all the developments it describes are recent ones. When a second edition becomes available, we should know the answer to many of the questions Ullman and Krasner still have to leave unanswered.

H. J. EYSENCK.

POSSESSION

Trance and Possession States. Editor, RAYMOND PRINCE. Montreal: R. M. Bucke Memorial Society. 1968. Pp. 200. Price \$4.00.

This little book contains fourteen papers contributed to a multi-disciplinary conference on the theme of its title; there are also introductory remarks by Dr. Prince and an epilogue by D. H. Salman, vice-president of the R. M. Bucke Memorial Society, which is devoted to the study of areas common to religion and society.

The conference must have been of considerable interest, since in addition to the papers here published the participants also saw Dr. Sargant's films of trance states in the West Indies, in Kentucky, in the Sudan and in the Home Counties, and Mr. and Mrs. L. K. Marshall's film on trance states among bushmen of the Kalahari desert. It opened with a scholarly review of the world-wide distribution of such states, by the anthropologist Erika Bourguignon, followed by a series of accounts, both descriptive and interpretative, of the phenomenon as observed in Africa, India, Iran and the Caribbean. The social function of such states was discussed in terms of psychotherapy by Ari Kiev, of social cybernetics by Raymond Prince, and of their religious significance by Alex Wayman and Taghi Modarressi. Finally, there was a panel discussion (to which the very brief notes here recorded must surely do less than justice) on the attitude of the major world religions towards such states of possession.

The book contains several vivid and evocative

descriptions of the phenomena of possession, but it remains, inevitably, a very partial account of a remarkably widespread and varied type of behaviour. Those whose interests have been quickened might be referred to an earlier work *Possession, Demoniacal and Other* by T. K. Oesterreich, who surveyed the literature of his time with Germanic thoroughness. On the other hand, the chapter by A. M. Ludwig on the general psychological characteristics reads like the author's notes for a much more extended treatment of the subject, and it, in turn, evoked in this reviewer's mind memories of William James' discussion of the same theme in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

G. M. CARSTAIRS.

GERONTOLOGY

Human Aging and Behaviour: Recent Advances in Research and Theory. Edited by GEORGE A. TALLAND. New York and London: Academic Press. 1968. Pp. 322. Price \$12.

The word 'behaviour' in the title of a book is never very informative; the prospective reader still has to rifle through the pages to find out what sort of behaviour is being subjected to scrutiny. Perhaps, though, that is not necessary with the present volume; the name of Professor Talland as editor gives a fairly strong clue to the nature and the quality of the contributions. Of the ten papers, nine are concerned with laboratory-based experimental work—often they are essentially progress reports of on-going research, with the additional interest that many of the authors are now moving away from purely descriptive models towards attempting to suggest more explanatory, biological-based ones.

Most of the authors are acknowledged experts in the field of gerontological psychology. Szafran brings us up to date with his work on the relationship between psychological and physiological variables in airline pilots. Surwillo relates response latencies to various peripheral and central factors with especial interest in the EEG alpha-rhythm. Two papers are concerned with pacing; Davies with its effect on performance at inspection tasks and Eisdorfer with that on verbal learning. Learning is also the main subject of Canestrari, who concentrates on the acquisition phase, of Craik, who looks at the relevance of content on short-term memory, and of Talland, himself, who contributes a chapter on span of immediate recall. Rabbitt concentrates on the processing of information, and Riegel puts forward a model to explore linguistic changes with age. The