

now undertaken a series of 'Cropwood Conferences' to enable people who are professionally interested in all aspects of criminology to meet in small groups. This booklet reports the proceedings of the first such conference.

It is a valuable document, which most psychiatrists will find of interest for it contains not only the usual cross-section of views about psychopathy but also a good deal of new data. The key question 'What is a psychopath?' is of course unanswered, but West's brief introductory comment on the use of the term is as informative as one will find anywhere, and a concentration of viewpoints in a slim volume enables the reader to clarify his own thoughts a little.

From an extensive survey of the use of psychiatric services by the courts, Walker, McCabe and Burgess conclude that the term is not really used in a diagnostic sense but as an administrative recommendation for action: doctor rather than punishment. Bearcroft and Donovan had examined 100 psychopathic males referred to them by courts and noted that they were younger than other mentally abnormal offenders, most of them had some degree of family disturbance as a child and a history of a severe disability in interpersonal relationships since childhood. Most of the other writers agree with this view and relentlessly add a long list of other epithets 'indisciplined', 'demanding', 'importunate', 'few friends', 'impulsive', 'aggressive', 'suspicious', 'cold-hearted', 'selfish', 'many suicidal attempts', 'frequent abnormalities of the EEG', 'mood swings', 'childlike', 'vague diffuse anxiety', 'rebellious', 'unwanted', 'prone to sex deviations', 'affectionless', 'primitive', 'egocentric', 'inadequate', etc., etc.

It is difficult to believe that any group of individuals can really be so unpleasant, and one is tempted to think that the psychopath is a twentieth century scapegoat. This is, however, an incorrect view, for the majority of contributors express considerable medical interest, the feeling that we are discussing not so much a scapegoat as a scapegrace who needs assistance. Maybe Walker is right in suggesting that the term is not really a diagnosis but rather a call for a particular kind of action. Maybe to some extent the term is a semantic mechanism whereby we can graciously change our posture towards the persistent offender. At the beginning of this century the idea that the biological sciences, let alone the medical sciences, should become interested in all forms of abnormal human behaviour would have been considered very eccentric; by the end of the century the term 'psychopath' may have lubricated a difficult philosophical metamorphosis. Mitcheson, in his survey of the use of section 60 of the Mental Health Act, concludes that greater use would be made of this

disposal if more facilities were available, implying that attitudes are ahead of resources.

An engaging short article by Scott and Kahn setting the XYY chromosome firmly into perspective rounds off this opuscle. Considering the price it is perhaps churlish to complain of the generally poor technical production, but the lack of an index reduces the usefulness of this publication.

JOHN GUNN.

### SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Exercises in Social Science.** By JOHN LIGGETT and RAYMOND COCHRANE. London: Constable. 1968. Pp. 308. Price 45s.

This modestly titled volume is an extremely useful introductory text-book of the methods and scope of what the authors term 'social science'. The authors are in fact psychologists rather than sociologists, and this fact may explain their workmanlike approach to the systematic study of social behaviour.

The psychiatrist is (or should be) an expert in the techniques of individual case study and in the analysis of data relating to a number of such cases. But studies which utilize only biological and personality variables in trying to understand psychiatric illness are liable to omit a vital part of the explanatory equation. As Birley (1968) has written in a recent article, 'We must follow the modern trend of observing our patients in their natural habitat and studying the interaction between their health and what goes on around them.'

Liggett and Cochrane's text-book should, in this respect, provide the reader with a quick and painless immersion in the sometimes confusing waters of social research. There are valuable chapters on the influence of the family on behaviour; on the variability of behaviour in widely different cultures; on the interpretation of criminal statistics; on the techniques of sampling public opinion; on attitude scale construction; and on the modification of behaviour and attitudes in a social context. Extensive exercises are appended to each chapter. These exercises also contain an introduction to elementary statistical methods, an introduction which has the merit of being tied to the practical examples presented in the text. There is also a brief introduction to the use of card sorters and electronic desk calculators.

The volume contains a section on personality testing which is adequate for the social science student; but the psychiatrist would do better to refer to the work of Eysenck and Vernon on this subject, for the authors' treatment is necessarily brief. Liggett takes the opportunity of reproducing figures from his own projection test in which subjects are required to

rate the personalities of a series of blurred photographs of human faces. But Liggett does not produce enough evidence for the reader to be able to evaluate whether or not this test can usefully be added to the already overpopulated family of such projective techniques.

C. R. BAGLEY.

#### REFERENCE

BIRLEY, J. L. T. (1968). 'A social psychiatrist's view of medical care.' *Lancet*, ii, 1181-4.

**Marriage under Stress.** By GERALD SANCTUARY. London: George Allen and Unwin Limited. 1968. Pp. 197. Price 35s.

It is estimated that some eight per cent of marriages in England and Wales end in divorce and that the figure in the United States is nearer twenty per cent. Divorce is but one aspect of the complex picture of marital breakdown, and this book gives a comprehensive picture of the world-wide work of marriage counselling. It is a sombre picture of devoted effort combating severe shortage of trained personnel, money and general facilities. It is also one that should stir the consciences of the medical profession, particularly of psychiatrists. It is clear that there will never be enough professionally trained specialists to undertake the work of marital reconciliation, but their expertise is needed urgently for basic research into the causes of marital breakdown, and for the undertaking of an expanding programme of supervision and training of suitable workers in the excellent voluntary organizations that exist for this work.

J. DOMINIAN.

#### GROUP THERAPY

**Experiences in Groups and Other Papers.** By W. R. BION. London: Tavistock Publications. Pp. 198. Price 15s.

Bion is a self-confessed Kleinian. The great Melanie was breast-obsessed, but unfortunately most of our patients were bottle-fed. Also, the reviewer has always had difficulties with oedipal concepts.

New definitions are introduced. The Work Group should experience only 'friendly feelings'. The group analyst is being manipulated. The group pairs off. Messianic hopes result in fight-flight. Basic group assumption includes the existence of a leader. The use of Christian names is a group proposal arising from the desire for flight in a fight-flight situation. There is no need to postulate the existence of a herd instinct. Analytic techniques are essential.

McDougall's attempt at raising group levels are compared with Freud's assumption that the group intensifies individual emotions. Where is the quarrel?

The message of messianic hopes, striving after ultimate truth, panic intensification, badness and goodness, difficulties in verbalization, are all well-known group and individual phenomena. The group is seen by the author as an attempt at 'furthering the task-in-hand'. Surely this applies to non-therapeutic groups even more. The author concludes that groups emanate meaningful phenomena which need further elucidation. Too true.

Before all this, the author gives excellent insight into various group activities. He is inclined to preach to the converted, his language is sometimes over-complex, he sounds astounded at finding such things as preoccupation, and his interpretations are, *eo ipso*, analytical.

I found the book heavy going and rebelled against some conclusions. The analyst will revel in it. The author describes what all group therapists had in mind; he puts it into words, his own words. The book is very good even if it might not be everybody's cup of tea.

G. C. HELLER.

#### PSYCHOTIC ART

**Louis Wain, The Man who drew Cats.** By RODNEY DALE, with a section on the nature of Louis Wain's illness by Dr. D. L. DAVIES. London: William Kimber. Pp. xii + 204. Price 42s.

To read about the man who drew cats is an interesting experience, because all we seem to need are the pictures to look at. This means that in many ways the author starts at a disadvantage. Of course facts about creative artists in any field are always intriguing. We would like to find out what makes them tick and to discover the secret of their originality. Every time we fail, and back we go to the work, the real contribution of the man's life. When the author quotes, as he does at length all over the book, from Wain's own writings, it is so sad and pathetic that we want to hurry back to the drawings. All that we learn from the facts of his life is that he was mad, and in spite of this left so much to love and be grateful for.

Even as a little boy he suffered from his abnormal condition, and this stayed with him all his life. Perhaps it was because of it that he chose cats for constant observation and exploration. A kitten entered his life at the time of his wife's serious illness, and it was at first for her pleasure that he drew it again and again. Peter the cat stayed with him after his wife's death, and no doubt became a symbol and a reminder of happier days. True it is that his portraits of the cat's face are almost Rembrandtesque in their exploration. He tries to tell us about the cat's mind behind the