

may seem to have been chosen rather arbitrarily to non-psychiatrist readers. It might have been illuminating to introduce the chapter by emphasising that these are often disabling conditions and more narrowly the province of psychiatrists than of similar other professionals.

There follow two chapters on psychosocial aspects of physical disorders, which should be particularly helpful to trainees without paediatric experience. The first and shorter of these is on general issues, such as hospitalisation and the care of the dying child; the second goes systematically through the range of specific physical conditions. The eighth chapter covers treatment approaches briefly but clearly, and it is here that the only illustrative case descriptions in the book are to be found. (It is of some comfort too that not all the cases described were unqualified therapeutic successes!).

Next comes a helpful chapter on children's services in general, clarifying the inter-relationships between different professionals and their services and pointing up the similarities and differences and the areas of overlap. The last, all too brief, chapter is on prevention. Each chapter ends with a short list of suggestions for further reading and there is a comprehensive (over thirty pages) reference list at the end of the book.

This is a splendid but very down-to-earth introductory text which, in spite of my initial reservations, I must agree fulfils the specific need identified by its author. I have already taken the opportunity of recommending it wholeheartedly to different groups of community physicians and GP trainees to whom I have lectured recently.

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Object Relations, the Self, and the Group: A Conceptual Paradigm. By CHARLES ASHBACH and VICTOR L. SCHERMER. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1987. 313 pp. £25.00.

The authors of this book have tried to create a synthesis between individual and group therapy. Psychoanalysis was originally only concerned with the structure of the psyche and its disturbances, and many psychoanalysts have remained sceptical of the attempts of group therapy to treat people within and as a group. On the other hand, Foulkes, the originator of group analysis in this country, after recommending a combination of individual and group therapy in the beginning, emphasised in his later writings the capacity of group analysis to deal with most kinds of disturbance. In this way, the gap between two approaches grew.

More recent developments within psychoanalysis focused on the inter-psychic elements in human growth. Object relations theory and self psychology see the interaction between mother and child as crucial for the child's development. One could say that already mother

and child form a sort of mini-group with its own kind of dynamics. At this point the barrier between the intra-psychic and the inter-psychic breaks down, and the way is open for an attempt to relate individual and group therapy to each other.

Within group therapy the authors distinguish between three 'systems': the intra-psychic, the interactive (the relationship between the individual group members) and the group-qua-group. All three systems interact with each other in a great many different ways, and these are plotted in great detail in a 'group analytic grid'. It is impossible to do justice in a short review to this fundamental and scholarly contribution to an important area of theory and practice.

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Criminal Law and Psychiatry. By D. POWER and D. H. D. SELWOOD. London: Kluwer Law Publishers. 1987. 265 pp. £50.00.

Power is a former senior prison medical officer, and Selwood a member of the army legal service and a crown court recorder. The main part of the book comprises a number of chapters on the association between crime and sexual deviation, psychosis, psychoneurosis, mental impairment, and psychopathy. It opens with a clear account of the elements of crime, a section on the law of homicide, and a description of exemptions from criminal responsibility. The first chapter concludes with a discussion on chromosomes, which is both misplaced and has paragraphs of the text transposed. The references to the chapter on young offenders have been omitted altogether.

Other chapters which discuss social factors in crime, young offenders, and illicit drug-taking are notable for the authors' anecdotal style and dubious moral judgements. The references are almost wholly out-dated: for example, the major studies on psychosis and crime, and on delinquency, are completely ignored.

The book is overly concerned with the bureaucracy which prison medical officers suffer, and the final chapter on military psychiatry involves such unlikely bedfellows as indoctrination, brainwashing, battle fatigue, exhaustion, assassination, and urban guerilla warfare.

Pages 21-26 contain numerous errors. The prosecution cannot accept "strong evidence" of unfitness to plead, since the matter is always decided by a jury. The authors state that restriction orders are always added to hospital orders in homicide cases and that these Section 37/41 Mental Health Act 1983 cases go to special hospitals. Both assertions are incorrect.

Page 23 refers to "mental responsibilities" where it should read "responsibility". On the same page it states that three persons were tried for murder in 1963, whereas the actual figure is nearer 300. The reference to "statistics for England and Wales" should read "Criminal

Statistics". On page 24 'mental responsibility' is applied only to the exercise of will-power, but the judgement in the case of *R. v Byrne* [1960] 3 All ER 1 states: "The expression 'mental responsibility for his acts' points to a consideration of the extent to which the accused's mind is answerable for his physical acts which must include a consideration of the extent of his ability to exercise will-power to control his physical acts".

There are two major errors on page 25: that homicide committed during the course of acute psychotic illness would come within the McNaughton rules; and that psychopathy coming within the Mental Health Act 1983 definition would amount to diminished responsibility.

The publishers' blurb states that the book is the first serious attempt to counteract misunderstandings by endeavouring to bridge the gap between the criminal law and psychiatry. For those who use this text, misunderstandings will be multiplied and, following the allegory, the bridge is used at the peril of those attempting to cross.

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Issues in Diagnostic Research. Edited by CYNTHIA LAST and MICHEL HERSEN. New York: Plenum. 1987. 349 pp. \$45.00.

This book would not have been published if DSM-III had not been invented. One of the main results of the introduction of DSM-III has been much greater interest in the diagnostic process. This volume is therefore a timely look at the methodology of diagnostic assessment and broader issues about its aims, achievements, and pitfalls.

The first chapter, by Theodore Millon, is 84 pages long but represents a distillate of the principles of classification that could easily have been expanded to a book in itself. It is a masterly review of different approaches to classification and emphasises the modesty of the true taxonomist. However successful our diagnoses appear to be, we must "bear in mind that these labels and transformations are not 'realities' ". The rest of this section is concerned with general issues in classification, and include a particularly useful discussion by Grove of methods of recording reliability of psychiatric diagnosis. The second section is concerned with methodological issues, the particular problems of making psychiatric diagnoses during development and over a lifetime, and biological and genetic approaches. The latter are particularly valuable because they point to other ways of achieving diagnosis, now or in the future; their advantage is that they do not depend on the vagaries of clinical symptomatology. The third part of the book is less well integrated, and discusses diagnostic problems with special subjects. These include child psychiatry, where diagnosis still appears to be much less

important to its practitioners than in other parts of psychiatry, and an interesting chapter on computer-generated diagnosis by Headlund & Biewig.

Although this book is primarily for the taxonomist and research worker, it would be of value for others to read to see the directions in which psychiatry is going. The time has not yet come whereby a clinician's diagnosis is likely to be independently validated by other measures, but there are glimmerings of this on the horizon. We are all diagnosticians now.

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Self and Identity: Psychosocial Perspectives. Edited by KRYSIA YARDLEY and TERRY HONESS. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. 1987. 332 pp. £28.00.

This book is a curious mixture of psychology, psychiatry, and sociology with sociology as the dominant perspective. It takes the problem of the self, one of the key issues in modern philosophy, and explores the theoretical and practical implications of the concept for sociology and psychiatry.

Like any collection of essays, some of them, such as the analysis of Eastern concepts of the self, are excellent, while others are at best pedestrian. Psychoanalytic concepts of identity and object relations are well reviewed, but the contribution of the existentialists and existential analysts such as Victor Frankl and Rollo May are, for unexplained reasons, ignored.

This is primarily an Academic work with a capital A, rich in references but rather short on insights and practical strategies for clinical practice. The academic, the research worker, and the armchair theoretician will find the depth and width of scholarship in this book a rich source. The practicing clinician, however, will probably find it rather arcane and alien to the world of patient care.

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The Psychological Experience of Surgery. (Wiley Series in General and Clinical Psychiatry). Edited by Richard S. Blacher. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. 1987. 236 pp. £30.45.

This is a valuable collection of essays, which I would recommend highly to liaison psychiatrists and, more particularly, surgeons and other professionals concerned with the impact of surgery on patients. Written by twelve authors, it has the advantage of avoiding monotony of style; it varies from the beautifully written chapter on denial, with nine general references, to the comprehensive chapter on superobesity with 98. There is a tendency, however, for the theme of surgical