

patient at the start of each phase is given due emphasis. Of particular interest are the detailed procedures by which the patient is trained to examine the objective validity of his beliefs and subsequently to counter any maladaptive beliefs.

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**Primer for the Psychotherapist. 2nd edition.** By JOYCE A. BOCKAR. Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press. 1981. Pp 149. £8.95.

The first edition of this book was known by the less misleading title *Primer for the Non-medical Psychotherapist*. The book will be of little interest to psychiatrists consisting as it does in a sketchy introductory textbook of general psychiatry with only passing mention of psychotherapy. Some of the sections offer 'useful hints' in detecting an organic basis for psychiatric symptoms but the hints are aimed at therapists with minimal medical knowledge. These 'hints' are mixed confusingly with an introduction to interview techniques, mental state examination and a chapter on the 'amine hypotheses' of psychiatric illness. The book does not aim clearly at its intended readership when it gives didactic information about prescribing mixed in with sections on basic psychopharmacology. The style varies from 'chatty', (for example, "If the diagnosis is correct and the optimum dose is reached the response in a few weeks is amazing.") to an extremely didactic form characterized by a liberal use of capitals and italics. A book on basic psychiatry aimed at non medical therapists could find a niche in the library of many psychotherapy departments. Unfortunately this volume by attempting to cover too much will not suitably fill that niche.

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**Anxiety: New Research and Changing Concepts.** Edited by DONALD F. KLEIN and JUDITH G. RABKIN. New York: Raven Press. 1981. Pp 439. \$59.40.

Anxiety is not a subject in which there have been major advances in the last twenty years, so any volume dealing with new research is to be welcomed. This book is one of a series sponsored by the American Psychopathological Association and the contributors all presented their work at the 70th annual meeting of the Association in 1980. Although most of the chapters describe work that has been published elsewhere the book gives a picture of recent developments in the

round that is valuable in putting them into clinical perspective. There are sections on the psychopharmacology of anxiety with useful reviews of the use of antidepressants, beta-blocking drugs and benzodiazepines, genetics, basic pharmacology and psychology, and a mixture of miscellaneous research reports of varying quality.

The chapters I found the most stimulating were the St Louis group's follow-up of patients with anxiety neuroses, illustrating the diagnostic instability of the disorder and its lack of affinity to affective psychoses, Suomi's account of anxiety in the Rhesus monkey, Isaac Marks' review of behavioural and pharmacological approaches in anxious and obsessional disorders, and Klein's synthesis of ethological, evolutionary and clinical concepts of anxiety, summarized in the sentence "I hypothesise that the protest-despair mechanisms have co-evolved over our species history to deal with the regular evolutionary contingency of the lost toddler". There are also three interesting papers on the relationship between mitral valve prolapse, panic and anxiety, a subject that is little mentioned outside the North American literature. Each chapter is extensively referenced and the discussions after the papers amplify and answer some of the issues raised in them. The book lives up to its title and will not disappoint. It is fairly expensive and the contributors must take some share of blame for this. The 439 pages could easily be condensed into 200 without any loss of information, but in these days of word processors and instant transcription verbiage is all too common. The contributors and editors would have done well to remember Bernard Shaw's apology to a correspondent, "I am sorry to have written such a long letter, I did not have time to write a short one".

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**Handbook of Biological Psychiatry [Experimental and Clinical Psychiatry, Volume 1]. Part VI: Practical Applications of Psychotropic Drugs and Other Biological Treatments.** Edited by HERMAN M. VAN PRAAG, MALCOLM H. LADER, OLE J. RAFAELSEN and EDWARD J. SACHAR. New York: Marcel Dekker. 1981. Pp 559. Sfr. 160.-.

This is the sixth part of the first volume in the series entitled *Experimental and Clinical Psychiatry*, but it is not necessarily an integral part and it stands on its own as a substantial treatise. In nineteen chapters the intricacies of a wide variety of relevant topics are excellently reviewed. These are concerned mainly with psychotropic drugs, ECT, sleep treatment and psychosurgery, but the variety of approach offers a richness

of information on such themes as the use of psychotropic drugs in children and in the elderly, classification and evaluation of psychotropic drugs, unwanted effects, lithium and depot phenothiazine clinics and the selection of subjects for research.

A chapter on endocrine effects of psychotropic drugs gives explanations linking a number of apparently unrelated findings, and a field which often falls between the themes of textbooks, the use of drugs and psychotherapy, receives its share of discussion. Of particular note are the chapters on biological and physiological predictors of drug response, and the use of animal models. The work is well annotated.

In keeping with developments in practice, a section on the problems of using psychotropic drugs or ECT in liaison psychiatry would have harmonized well in such a comprehensive setting. It was surprising to find that the role of endocrine therapy, as such, was not given more prominence.

Inevitably, in some chapters the approach is towards concepts surrounding clinical practice rather than precise clinical management, and whereas this should extend the life of this large work, it limits its usefulness in clinical companionship.

These are small limitations in a book of stature which includes outstanding contributions. It is most likely to be useful to the experienced psychiatrist, as a medium for pooling and integrating information about what must be today's most rapidly expanding yield of scientific research.

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**Dynamic Approaches to the Understanding and Treatment of Alcoholism.** By MARGARET H. BEAN, EDWARD J. KHANTZIAN, JOHN E. MACK, GEORGE E. VAILLANT and NORMAN E. ZINBERG. New York: The Free Press. 1981, Pp 214. \$15.95.

This book contains the opinions of five North American psychiatrists on the nature of alcoholism. Despite the fact that all five are psychoanalysts and despite the presence of the word 'dynamic' in the title, the contributions are surprisingly non-dynamic in content. Indeed, Vaillant, making use of his celebrated follow-up data on college students, argues that alcoholics are no different from non-alcoholics in their psychological make-up at the outset of heavy drinking. He regards complaints of psychological ill-health—depression, anxiety, social phobia—as mere “confabulation in order that the patient can continue his chronic addiction”. These are strange words in a book on dynamic approaches to alcoholism. He then comes to the logical conclusion that psychotherapy is not only ineffective in the management of alcoholism but

dangerous. Another contributor makes a plea for more awareness of the social context in which drinking occurs; psychological factors are relegated to second place. One contributor notes the denial which characterises alcoholics' accounts of their drinking, and sees an analogy with the type of denial described by Goldstein following brain damage. Denial in alcoholics, it is implied, may be more organic than psychodynamic in origin. The remaining contributors give an orthodox psychoanalytic account of the alcoholic as abnormal in personality, with the most prominent trait that of dependence.

In summary, the contributions are an odd assortment of opinions. All psychiatrists must be already aware of these viewpoints and I would not place this book high on my list of priorities were I in charge of the hospital library. The case histories quoted are, however, delightful. They are more alive than those found in British textbooks or journals. I particularly liked the description of someone “living with B-movie intensity”.

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**Controlled Drinking.** By NICK HEATHER and IAN ROBERTSON. London: Methuen. 1981. Pp 294. £14.95.

Many non-ethanologists, currently presented with an increasing number of patients with alcohol problems, are aware of the agonising choice between abstinence versus controlled drinking. This book tries to redress the balance which the authors consider has been too weighted towards a disease concept—abstinence goal compared to a learned behaviour—controlled drinking goal. A careful review of available evidence suggests that 5–15 per cent of former alcoholics 'spontaneously' resume normal drinking; this figure can be improved using psychological treatment methods, to about one-third for 'clinic alcoholics' and to just under one-half for 'problem drinkers'. Psychotherapeutic, behavioural and cognitive methods of treatment are used. An intriguing chapter considers the evidence for and against the concepts of loss of control and craving, although one wonders whether many of the experiments with human subjects would satisfy current ethical committees. No clear answers to the clinicians' basic problem of selection of patients for treatment can be given but knowledge of current research gives some help as well as spelling out the limitations of prediction.

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