

In his view psychiatric treatment "leaves the patient in a state of lethargy. Nobody has tried to delve into his everyday life, to help make his existence more meaningful; instead he is probably told that 'the whole thing will go over in time'." The psychiatrist, in the author's view, is limited to using drugs and ECT and never speaks to the family...well hardly ever.

It is a pity that this otherwise comprehensive and useful book is marred by an unreal view of contemporary psychiatry. Perhaps psychiatry must work harder at presenting a better image to the public and to professional colleagues: we must be seen to be comprehensive in our treatments, especially of depression.

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The Clinical Treatment of Substance Abuse. By LEON BRILL. New York: The Free Press. Pp 250. No price stated.

The author—a well known and very experienced American therapist and research worker in the field of drug dependence—attempts in this book to describe dynamics and the specific modes and techniques of treatment of drug abuse (including alcoholism) in some detail, and he succeeds well in his aim. He advocates (as is now generally accepted) a multidisciplinary approach and addresses himself to all the professional disciplines concerned with the problem as well as to interested laymen. He deplores the confused terminology prevalent in this field and society's moralistic and judgmental attitudes, reflected for example in the division into "hard" and "soft" drugs; and he advocates a "rational approach to drug abuse; that is directed towards greater objectivity and centres on the user rather than on the drug. Numerous case illustrations and theoretical discussions provide the bulk of the book; the cases have been chosen from five representative American treatment centres and reflect the somewhat different therapeutic approaches and models needed to cope with the diversity of clients. The book is arranged in three parts, Overview, Treatment of Substance Abuse, and Adjuncts of Treatment followed by a Summary and Retrospect and two Appendices. Much sound information (based on the writer's own vast experience

and American findings and observations in general) is presented in a very lucid form by a writer with a great understanding of the drug abuser's problems, his plight and the need for adequate help.

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Crimes of Violence by Mentally Abnormal Offenders. A Psychiatric and Epidemiological Study in the Federal German Republic. By H. HAFNER and W. BÖKER. Cambridge University Press. 1982. Pp 384. £20.00.

This book, an English translation of a German monograph (published in 1973), contains the results of an epidemiological survey of all men and women detained as legally irresponsible (diminished responsibility or unfitness to plead) in the Federal Republic of Germany between 1955 and 1964, suffering from psychosis or serious degrees of subnormality after committing homicide or intended but unsuccessful homicide. For certain aspects of their study a control group of non-violent mentally ill persons detained in mental hospitals was used.

In style (and content) it equates with a research thesis and the data is examined in exhaustive and painstaking detail. Their main conclusion, that mentally ill or subnormal patients are no more or no less likely to commit homicide than the mentally healthy (a finding not out of keeping with other studies of the period particular for this somewhat restricted "violent group") is probably of less interest than in their very detailed description and analysis of the interaction of the many factors that they study.

With modern laws and regulations for the protection of confidentiality and personal data in almost all Western nations, such studies are unlikely ever to be repeated and for this alone it is worth having this translation. It is unfortunate that the form of typesetting used makes continuous reading very difficult. However as this is a book for libraries specializing in forensic psychiatry and to be dipped into rather than read, this may not be so serious a problem.

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