

intercourse; elsewhere it is surmised that development of cancer in a psychotherapy patient may be an unconscious attempt to sabotage treatment and defeat the therapist: and there is a detailed chapter on Reich's theory of the 'carcinomatous shrinking biopathy'. Such a difficult area of medicine demands a more scientific approach than this.

The sections on treatment of cancer by individual, group or family psychotherapy are better. The chapter describing an experimental therapy group for cancer outpatients and the chapter about cancer in children are especially good, and some other chapters contain relevant descriptions of the emotional problems of cancer patients, their families and their therapists. Many contributors advocate that patients should participate actively in their treatment and 'fight' their disease using visual imagery techniques, but I found it difficult to imagine most British cancer patients or their therapists adopting such an aggressive approach towards their disease or their oncologists as recommended here.

In summary, although parts of this book would be useful for psychotherapists working with cancer patients, it is too ambitious in scope and contains many exaggerated claims which could mislead the reader.

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Social Therapy in Psychiatry. By DAVID H. CLARK. Edinburgh and London: Churchill Livingstone. 1981. Pp 126. £2.95.

The name of David Clark has been synonymous with social therapy for a long time; his first book on it appeared nearly twenty years ago, and this one was originally published in 1974. It has been substantially revised now and, although sophisticated in its concepts, is written clearly and with a mainly non-medical readership in mind.

It is pointed out that while social therapy was to some extent part of a general revolt against authority, managerial *tasks* remain in any organization, and have to be done by someone. The major function of a therapeutic milieu is described as providing opportunities for the egos of damaged people to face challenges, find better ways of resolving them, and thus grow stronger. There is no coherent body of theory behind social therapy, which developed pragmatically, though several viewpoints—including systems theory—are helpful in understanding it. Such techniques as token economy and reality orientation may be valuable in arousing enthusiasm amongst those responsible for chronic patients, who

otherwise may readily be affected by 'staff burnout'. This particularly applies to nurses—the key figures in the social process of hospitalization.

The one aspect with which I would take issue here is the rather uncritical references to the work of Laing, especially since readers may not have the wider background to allow them to be critical enough themselves. Sedgwick's analysis in *Psycho Politics* shows that Laing's approach to schizophrenia has been neither as coherent nor as consistent as might appear from this text. Nevertheless, this is essential reading for every psychiatric trainee, as well as for others who need refreshing on what has tended to become part of the conventional wisdom of the subject.

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Social Learning Practice in Residential Child Care. By BARRY J. BROWN and MARILYN CHRISTIE. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 1981. Pp 187. £11.00, £5.50 (flexicover).

Evaluative Research in Social Care. Edited by E. MATILDA GOLDBERG and NAOMI CONNELLY. London: Heinemann Educational. Pp 320. £15.00, £7.50 (paperback).

Brown and Christie attempt an introduction to the theory and practice of social learning models in residential child care. Broadly this approach characterizes delinquent behaviour as a socially learned response. Therapy in this case consists in learning anew a socially sanctioned way of relating to self and others through participation in a token economy. Unfortunately, and as is so often the case with introductory texts, important issues tend to be glossed over.

Little attention is directed to specifying the range of behaviour or conditions which can be modified by such techniques; or to what the authors describe as "weaning the child away from the token economy" (i.e. rehabilitation). This is unfortunate for the suspicion remains that the approach fosters more problems than it solves, e.g. inflation in the token economy (p. 78). Aimed presumably at a practitioner audience the book is written in a simple though rather flat style with early chapters covering basic principles of the approach and subsequent chapters dealing with issues of practical utilization and staff, though not family, support mechanisms. As outlined here the approach seems primarily to be a method of social control systemizing what may anyway be fairly commonsense practice in many institutions. Again, this is unfortunate for control must surely come from within rather than outside of the individual and be