

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

face, as Rembrandt penetrates behind the human face. But Louis Wain's subjects defeated him, for in the end behind the cat faces he drew is something unknowable.

His sketches of cats in group activities, like the Christmas party, are utterly delightful. Every small cat and kitten should be looked at, to see what it is up to. The author is an admirer and collector of Wain's art; and though he must have had mixed feelings in recounting the tragic facts of the artist's life, it was pains well spent. When we remember growing up, we remember the drawings which have charmed us; and the new generations who read this book may learn to love them too.

Dr. Davies has given us an adequate account of Wain's schizophrenic illness. The appendices of Wain's writings are embarrassing in their tortured silliness. We are shown cats from the Maclay Guttman collection. Starting with a cat portrait almost sentimental in conception, the face develops into surface decoration and changes to pattern upon intricate pattern, which at the end is submerged in intricacy without meaning, as we feel the artist himself has been submerged. We have to thank Louis Wain for his life's work and pity him for his terrible mental state at the end.

The book is handsomely produced, profusely illustrated and well indexed.

J. F. SLATER.

THE OCCULT

Strange Things. The Enquiry by the Society for Psychical Research into Second Sight in the Scottish Highlands, the Story of Ada Goodrich Freer, the Ballechin House ghost hunt, and the stories and folklore collected by Fr. Allan McDonald of Eriskay. By JOHN L. CAMPBELL and TREVOR H. HALL. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1968. Pp. xvi + 350. Price 55s.

The folklore enshrined in an age-old oral and unwritten tradition, protected by an ancient and almost obsolete language, confined to a remote and isolated people, is a subject of research which must be both interesting and important. The continued existence of such a culture into the twentieth century is like the survival of a living fossil. Only a scholarly man, and one native to the language and the people, could hope to study it at first hand; but for him it could be a challenge to high endeavour. Fr. Allan McDonald was an ascetic Catholic priest who devoted his short life to this work, in such free intervals as he could get, from 1884, when he was sent to a parish in the Western Isles, until his death in 1905. He was a man of saintly character and noble

mind, but of such innocence that he fell a defenceless victim to a ruthless and capable adventuress. This lady, for long known in spiritualist circles as Miss X, was sent by the Society for Psychical Research to the Highlands to study 'second sight'; she met Fr. McDonald, and fixed herself upon him. He made freely available to her his notebooks of strange local stories and beliefs; and he never knew how far she went in exploiting his work and claiming for herself the credit. She did in fact gain a reputation in learned circles which she enjoyed till she died at the age of 72, twenty-six years after the death in obscurity of her master, benefactor and dupe.

Strange Things is the record of an enquiry that demanded two entirely different kinds of scholarship, and it unfolds a story which had to be built up by detective work on two fronts. Dr. Campbell discovered the work done by McDonald, and succeeded eventually in tracking down four of his six notebooks; in the last eighty pages of the book he shows the calibre of the man by providing a substantial selection of the stories of ghosts and 'second sight' which he had collected from the islanders. Dr. Campbell has also recovered from limbo and has published before now a Gaelic vocabulary and a volume of poems in Gaelic, also by McDonald. In the course of his searches he came upon evidence of the fraudulence

CYBERNETICS

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A book of particular value to all those interested in cybernetics, including doctors, psychologists, engineers, chemists and physicists. It covers all aspects of this wide ranging subject impartially and reviews the vast amount of recent work while also considering present controversies and future possibilities. The structure and behaviour of animal and human central nervous control systems are described in considerable detail, and there is an extensive review of the various attempts which have been made to simulate such control systems with man-made machines.

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