

Book Reviews

Tranquillity Denied: Stress and its Impact Today. By ANTHONY HORDERN. Sydney, Australia: Rigby. 1976. Pp 489. £12.50.

This book is a most impressive achievement, both because of the breadth of its scope and because of its very readable style.

The first two authoritative chapters give a spine chilling view of technology's accelerating momentum, and affluence and its concomitants, as well as making it very clear why we live in 'an age of anxiety'. For those who like the Emperor Nero enjoy harping on things while Rome burns, there is a wealth of fascinating statistics and quotations in these chapters. For example pollution is termed the crisis of the 1970's, so that even by the beginning of this era the standard of living in some parts of America had produced levels of contamination of the air, food and water that made Californians unfit for human consumption. Their bodies contained amounts of pollutants such as D.D.T. which exceeded the limits in force for food products. We must conclude that not only is eating people wrong, but it can seriously damage your health!

The third chapter 'The future of spaceship earth' might more reasonably have been called 'stop the world I want to get off'. The computerized models of hopelessness produced by the Club of Rome's project called 'The Predicament of Man', make one fervently hope that their statistics are fallible. It does however make the point that the problem is a challenge to the present generation, and cannot be passed on to the next. One can only wish these prophets well in their attempts to convince governments that a deliberate attempt to reach an enduring state of equilibrium by planned measures, rather than by chance or catastrophe must ultimately be founded on a basic change of values and goals at individual, national, and world levels. Like the Club of Rome itself the reader is encouraged to adopt a posture of 'grave concern' but not despair.

The fourth chapter highlights the problems of what is termed the 'Techno-society'. At one end of the scale, disease control has led to a population explosion. At the other, abuse of the possibilities of communication, particularly by television, has led away from the idea that 'Nation shall speak unto Nation' to one where there is a surfeit of violence and other aggression and tension producing material.

The next chapter is an interesting exploration of the 'family under pressure', in which the present state of marriage, the problems of increasing isolation in the aged, and the changing roles of both men and women are considered. In particular there is an especially good discussion of the increasing level of maternal deprivation which results from treating childbirth as an illness, with the resulting neo-natal trauma emphasized by Leboyer, and damage to maternal infant-bonding described by Bowlby. With this background it is not surprising that increasing numbers of the population are turning to non-medical tranquillisers such as alcohol, nicotine and cannabis, which are all dealt with in considerable detail.

Less detailed however is the chapter on 'stress and disease'. After a brief introduction on psychosomatic illness and the possible links between stress and coronary heart disease, other associations between emotional disturbance and organic diseases are virtually dismissed.

Chapter eight gives a broad view of health services in many countries, which the author is uniquely qualified to do, having lived and worked in Great Britain, United States and Australia. It seems to make the point that in none of them are both doctor and patient entirely happy with the prevailing system. In considering 'the doctor's task' the author elaborates one of his main themes that there is over emphasis, both in training and in practice, on intensive care of the hospitalized patient, to the neglect of the long term needs of patients as people and under-valuing of the skills of communication. Whether psychiatry in general, and psychopharmacology in particular, are themselves under-valued as is suggested, is more debatable. After leading us through 'the psychotropic jungle' and highlighting the vast international increase seen in psychotropic drug consumption, as well as the problems which both the family doctor and patient are experiencing with these drugs, and the increase in self poisoning which is occurring, it is difficult to agree with the sweeping statement that psychopharmacology is one of the most hopeful fields of medical advance.

What is more hopeful is the idea raised in the very last part of the book that the world needs a fresh value system in which 'masculine' technology is curbed and 'feminine' qualities are prized, with less

emphasis on productivity and more on creativity. Here as in many other sections, the book has an important point to make and makes it very well.

MALCOLM CARRUTHERS, *Director,
Clinical Laboratories, The Maudsley Hospital, London*

Hypnosis and Behaviour Modification: Imagery Conditioning. By WILLIAM S. KROGER. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1977. Pp 406. £16.80.

This book introduces the topic in a clear and readable way, by a series of concise definitions and clear expositions of major theoretical views. These are followed by helpful sections on the preparation of the subject for hypnosis and on the variety of hypnotic techniques. The discussion broadens into related procedures such as autogenic training and biofeedback and there is a useful discussion of autohypnosis.

Unfortunately the work loses much of its pristine clarity as it continues and the extensive sections on clinical applications become muddled and repetitive. The author would have been better advised to exclude this entire section from the work since he has covered the matter in a second book which appeared since the first edition of the present work.

Most of the sections are well referenced which is of advantage to the serious student and researcher.

Hypnosis in Practice: Its Application in Stress and Disease. By H. LAWRENCE SHAW. London: Baillière Tindall. 1977. Pp 138. £2.75 (limp-back).

This small book, produced in limp cover, is intended to be an introductory work on the topic for interested practitioners. It has the merit of brevity, there are some useful references and on the whole the topic is dealt with clearly.

However, I would not be able to recommend it to my own students, for the emphasis given to induction techniques is too heavily weighted with active instructions instead of passive suggestions. To inform a subject attempting to enter a hypnotic trance that he must raise his right index finger when he has a clear mental image of some scene clearly militates against the easy passage into the hypnotic state. The better alternative is a suggestion that a hand or finger will twitch or move when such a scene is visualized.

PHILIP SNAITH, *Senior Lecturer and
Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist,
Leeds University*

Artificial Intelligence and Natural Man. By MARGARET BODEN. Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press. 1977. Pp 537. £13.50 (cloth), £4.95 (paper).

Enthusiastic testimonials on the dust-cover of a book may tend to make a reviewer feel *de trop*. However, it should be said that in this case at least the enthusiasm is fully warranted, and that this is indeed a book which merits very wide circulation.

Dr Boden defines artificial intelligence as the use of computer programs and programming techniques to cast light on the principles of intelligence in general and human thought in particular. Thus the book's central concern is with questions usually considered in the context of psychology and cognate disciplines, concerning for instance language, creativity and personality. The coverage and discussion of current and previous work is thorough and illuminating. It is also readily assimilable, partly because of the author's limpid, jargon-free prose, partly because of the book's organization. No previous knowledge of computing is assumed. Instead, after a short introduction, two chapters are devoted to outlining a particular computer program, Colby's simulation of a neurotic process, and to discussion of the program's strengths and weaknesses. The following chapters adopt the same strategy of introducing general and abstract discussion via the description of particular programs. The consequence is that the book is stimulating and informative for the specialist and non-specialist alike.

GREGORY V. JONES, *Research Fellow,
Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford*

Meaning and Void: Inner Experience and the Incentives in People's Lives. By ERIC KLINGER. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1977. Pp 364. \$16.50.

It can be daunting to review a 400-page book at the end of which no less than 600 references are given: the more so if the topics they refer to take one from learning theory to clinical psychiatry passing through social psychology, drug addiction, suicide and psychotherapy.

Professor Klinger's avowed intention is to write a 'book about people's sense that their lives are meaningful, about the conditions under which people feel that way and about the conditions that erode that feeling' (p 3). This is plain enough. Indeed in this quotation the general structure of the book is laid out.

The author starts by discussing the notion of meaning. Soon, however, it becomes clear that meaning is considered by him as tantamount to 'incentive'. This term, central to his whole argument,