

is nothing from Bales, Cartwright, Festinger, Merton or Parsons, to mention but a few of the distinguished contributors to this restricted field, and no attempt is made to show how the papers that are printed may be of relevance to group treatment.

Part II gives an historical account of the development of group psychotherapy by means of articles which describe how the ideas of Adler, Burrow, Freud, Horney, Jung, Sullivan and others were modified and applied. In Part III various theories and methods are illustrated. A paper by Sherif tackles the problem of technique experimentally, and two others systematically describe what goes on in a therapeutic group. Part IV contains general articles on the application of group treatment in mental hospitals, a military neurosis centre (by S. H. Foulkes), and to psychotics, defectives, alcoholics and the elderly. Although Maxwell Jones is briefly mentioned once or twice, no paper about his ideas is included. Parts V and VI contain papers on training and new trends.

Taken overall the book is inevitably almost unreadable. It gives very little idea of the interest that studies in social psychology (to say nothing of other fields of science) should have for those who wish to influence the behaviour and attitudes of people in small groups. Much of the writing is dull or declamatory, few of the authors think it worthwhile to mention that even experts are necessarily fairly ignorant in this field, and fact is rarely distinguishable from opinion.

J. K. WING.

**Group Therapy: A Practical Approach.** By JAMES A. JOHNSON. McGraw Hill. 1963. Pp. 467. Price 85s.

The recent spate of books on the theory and practice of group therapy is an obvious sign of the popularity of this form of treatment, which promises to reduce the awkward gap between the large number of patients in apparent need of psychotherapy and the small number of psychotherapists available to meet this need. Theories and practices, however, vary widely; and this book reviews many of them with commendable thoroughness, though with a less commendable disregard of verbal economy.

The most outstanding contribution of the book is a session-by-session report on an out-patient therapeutic group, which occupies over 200 pages, or about half the book. The group consisted originally of eight members, but after several months of treatment two new patients were added to make up for a few defections. There were 70 sessions extending over 19 months.

It is interesting to examine the record of group attendance, which the author summarizes in a chart that gives a wrong impression because it is made up of percentages calculated from different totals of group membership. During the first 28 sessions, the median attendance was 7. The therapist then had a holiday of two weeks. In the next 13 sessions group attendance decreased, and its median was only 5. Two new members were then added, but the median attendance was unchanged in the 13 sessions that followed. During the remaining sessions, it went down to 4. During the last five group meetings, there were in fact only four patients left, of whom three were original members. Improvement was reported by these four patients only during a follow-up after one year.

The author's theory and technique are abundantly demonstrated. His main concern is with the anxiety aroused in group meetings, and the members are encouraged to assess the group-situational reasons for such emotional reactions. Most sessions are reported in a summary form which is followed by a consideration of the themes discussed, the group dynamics revealed, the therapist's technique, and often also a general discussion that ranged more widely afield. Four sessions are presented in greater detail: a shortened version of the verbal interactions is given, interspersed with remarks about the group's theme and dynamics and the therapist's technique; and the same topics are again reviewed in a final summing up after each of these sessions. There is endless repetition, sometimes inexcusably trite as in this example: "Mr. Smith: There's something else. We talked about sex at the last meeting. It made me uncomfortable. I got angry talking about it." Here the author inserts this "explanation": "Theme and Dynamics. The subject of sexual feelings that was discussed at the previous meeting is re-introduced." It might be added in passing that the discussion of sexual themes was deliberately prevented by the therapist for over a year.

The most disconcerting aspect of the book is the impression conveyed that, for the purpose of group therapy, psychiatric and neuropsychiatric diseases can be ignored. This is in accordance with a contemporary trend of psychiatric thought that hitches its aetiological beliefs to the remunerative bandwagon of psychoanalysis, and proclaims it as an axiom that the personality of psychiatric patients is abnormal from childhood. It follows from this that the task of psychotherapy consists merely in an emotional readjustment of the patient's personality, and that this can be done without paying due attention to the body of clinical, though purely descriptive, knowledge of psychiatric disease. This

anosognosic attitude is, in the reviewer's opinion, not without dangers, as it encourages a disregard of psychiatric warning signals. It is particularly highlighted in the diagnostic assessment of one of the members of the out-patient group reported. During an interval in group treatment, occasioned by the therapist's holiday, the patient was admitted to a hospital, and an astrocytoma of the right temporal lobe diagnosed. The tumour was removed by neurosurgery, followed by cobalt treatment. The patient continued to attend the group occasionally, but his clinical condition gradually deteriorated. In spite of this obvious neuropsychiatric disease, the diagnosis remained unamended. It continued to be "passive, dependent personality".

F. KRÄUPL TAYLOR.

**Ego and Milieu Theory and Practice of Environmental Therapy.** By JOHN CUMMING and ELAINE CUMMING. New York: Atherton Press. 1962. Pp. 275. Price 60s.

This is an important book, not only because of its contents, but because of its timing and its wider significance. Since the war the social conscience of psychiatry has shifted. This is true of other countries as well as Britain. Amongst other changes has been acceptance of the therapeutic needs of *categories* of people, supplementing traditional acceptance of the needs of the individual. So the concern of society about its own attitude to the mentally ill is pressing us; and with this has developed a desire to understand better the part that the environment plays both in the engendering of illness and its cure. We have become clinically self-conscious about society as well as ourselves; and our hospitals are part of our society.

The Cummings are well known for their consistent and developing approach to the problems of the psychiatric hospital patient; and in this book they have carried their formulations a step further. The book is in three parts—an exposition of conceptual theory; an analysis of the hospital milieu in terms of ego concepts; and a discussion of the subjective experiences of the milieu by patients in the course of treatment. It is a very large subject, but work such as this helps greatly to focus attention on specific issues which are meaningful for treatment. Those psychiatrists who have already set out to make use of social scientific knowledge about the interaction of people in large groups—in therapeutic community programmes, rehabilitation and hostel projects, organization of sheltered work, administrative therapy, and community mental health, for example

## **Criminal Responsibility and Mental Illness**

by **F. A. Whitlock**, M.D.(Cantab), M.R.C.P. D.P.M.

156 pages

40s.

'Of the many books on this subject published in recent years this is by far the best. It is rare to find a forensic psychiatrist with his feet so firmly on the ground and judicially so well-informed. This well-documented work discusses the law of insanity before and since M'Naghten; Mens Rea; Freewill, Determinism and Responsibility; special problems of drunkenness and automatism and details of procedure. An excellent text.'—*Lector Medicus*.

## **Psychogenic Psychoses**

A Description and Follow-up of  
Psychoses following Psychological Stress

By **Poul M. Faergeman**, M.D.

268 pages

42s.

A valuable work covering an aspect of psychiatric research which has had little attention in English literature. Dr. Faergeman examines the validity of the concept of psychogenic psychoses by ascertaining the fate of patients fifteen to twenty years after admission to hospital: the follow-up studies confirm in an interesting manner the validity of this concept.

**BUTTERWORTHS**

4 & 5 Bell Yard, London, W.C.2