

the neurological basis of behaviour and the physical therapies. There is a warm personal style throughout the book, particularly in the many case histories, that convey a strong and pleasant sense of Professor Kolb's presence as instructor.

The historical perspective is well marked throughout the volume. The first edition appeared in 1934 and successive editions have spanned enormous developments in psychiatry particularly the change of emphasis from seeing the sick patient in isolation to seeing him in his cultural and social context. These latter developments to which Professor Kolb himself has contributed are well covered in this volume. On clinical topics the book is highly informative on the psychoses, neuroses and their treatment. The writer is very conscious of the significant contributions made to psychiatry from outside the U.S.A. and is also writing for his considerable readership also resident outside the U.S.A. His psychosomatics still have a very strong Alexanderian flavour inescapable in a book first written in the heyday of Alexander's great contribution. Very little weight is given to the concepts derived from learning theory among the sciences that underpin our understanding of disturbed behaviour.

Overall this is an authoritative comprehensive and up to date account of clinical psychiatry, well printed on good paper at a very reasonable price.

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Alcoholism. By JIM ORFORD and GRIFFITH EDWARDS. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977. Pp 120. £7.50.

This is an important book because it challenges us to re-examine the current approach to alcoholism. It is subtitled—'A comparison of treatment and advice, with a study of the influence of marriage', which is an accurate reflection of its content. The argument is based on careful study and follow-up of 100 married male alcoholics. After a comprehensive assessment of each couple in an out-patient clinic they were randomly assigned between treatment and advice groups. The former were offered a wide range of therapies while the latter were advised about means of attaining abstinence but left to their own devices thereafter. The progress of both groups was monitored over a two-year period and no appreciable difference in outcome could be detected.

The authors discuss the characteristics and responses of their sample in detail. They are conscious of the limitations of the study; for instance it is concerned only with male alcoholics who still have an intact marriage, which in itself is an indication of a

degree of social stability. Despite their commendable caution the message is clear: it is high time to look again for the essence of treatment and perhaps discard what is merely fashionable.

The research also illuminates the quality of the alcoholic marriage and the ways in which marital interaction influences progress. It is clear that a marriage which has become mutually unrewarding is of obvious prognostic significance.

The book should be read by all who are concerned with the treatment of alcoholism—and that must surely include most psychiatrists.

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Dementia. Edited by CHARLES E. WELLS. Philadelphia: F. A. Davis. 1977. Pp 284. \$22.

This is the second edition of a sort of recent advances in aspects of deterioration of mental function due to organic disease. The volume is a part of Contemporary Neurology Series and it has both a neurological and an American flavour. The contributions have been brought up to date since the first edition in 1971. Two new chapters are devoted to Viruses and Dementia (by Raymond P. Roos and Richard T. Johnson) and to Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus (by Robert Katzman); it will be intriguing to see what will become of both these subjects in the next edition. Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease is covered in three separate chapters which is repetitive; the pathology at least could well have been left to the neuropathologist. Some contributors have changed so that the subject is presented anew. For example, Bernard Tomlinson has replaced Richard M. Torack on pathology of dementia. He is the sole British author. The Editor has joined Denton C. Buchanan in the chapter on the clinical use of psychological testing in evaluation of dementia. He also developed his earlier contributions: the introductory chapter on Dementia; Definition and Description, which is particularly enjoyable, and the last chapter on Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment. References to dictionaries at the beginning perhaps reflect the vague terminologies around dementia. It is disappointing still to encounter such terms, albeit time-honoured, as global dementia.

The book contains practical advice about what to do when this or that condition is suspected; it is therefore a kind of Aids to Diagnosis and Management for the general medical reader not familiar with the subject. The psychiatrist, however, in this country will find little that is relevant to the management of most of his 'organic' patients.

Thanks in particular to the introductory chapter by the Editor, the neurologist may broaden his outlook on the organic mental disease.

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Lithium in Medical Practice. Edited by F. N. JOHNSON and S. JOHNSON. Lancaster: MTP Press. 1977. Pp 459. No price stated.

The strategy of using proven or partly proven therapies to try to gain information on the aetiology of various conditions has found increasing use in psychiatry in recent years, despite the fact that in theory this approach has distinct disadvantages and may be of doubtful applicability in some circumstances. One problem is that it is impossible to say in advance whether a treatment is acting directly on a pathological process or is exerting its influence on some opposing or complementary system unaffected by the disorder. An example here is Parkinson's disease, where anticholinergic drugs are acting on normal cholinergic neurones, not the malfunctioning dopaminergic pathways.

Alternatively, the treatment chosen for study may be acting on the abnormal system but at so many steps removed from the abnormality that tracing the links between therapeutic action and pathological process may not be easy. Finally, we have the phenothiazines to remind us that where there is a wide spectrum of effects on biochemical and physiological mechanisms, it may be not so much a case of finding the needle in the haystack as identifying one out of a whole haystack of needles.

Despite these objections, there are some signs that this approach may be bearing fruit. Certainly, heuristically useful patterns of information may be emerging from studies of electroconvulsive therapy, the phenothiazines, tricyclic and other antidepressant drugs and, more recently, the benzodiazepines.

It may be too early to say whether we can look with similar expectation to studies of lithium, which seem to be at a stage at which there is an increasing body of knowledge with no unequivocal pointers as yet as to which are the more significant findings. At such a stage of development of the subject, the Drs. Johnson organized the first British Lithium Congress in the University of Lancaster in July 1977, and invited contributors from many countries to summarize the main areas of enquiry on the clinical use and pharmacological actions of this drug. It proved to be a conference of outstanding breadth and

interest and the proceedings have now been published with admirable promptitude in this volume. The result is an extensive coverage of the main areas of research and as such should prove to be a useful summary and reference work on lithium for some years to come.

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Psychotherapy: A Personal Approach. By D. J. SMAIL. London: Dent, 1978. Pp 150. £5.95.

To Have or to Be. By ERICH FROMM. London: Cape. 1978. Pp 215. £4.95.

Both these books advocate a humanistic approach to the problems facing contemporary society: Fromm calls for basic changes in the way we conduct our lives while Smail contends that psychotherapy must be stripped of its mystique and undue emphasis on technique and be recognized as a 'fundamentally personal relationship'.

According to Fromm's thesis, man has a choice between two modes of existence—the having mode characterized by acquisitiveness, material possessions and selfishness, and the being mode which is based on altruism, love and the 'productive use of our human powers'. He cites evidence from a variety of sources—linguistic, philosophical, religious, historic and anthropological—to support his contention that the having mode has brought the world close to catastrophe and that only by adopting the being mode can Man save himself. A description of the New Man is provided as well as the means whereby his transformation can be accomplished.

For more than three decades Fromm has played an impressive role in writing, with a characteristic blend of wisdom and compassion, on the psychology of human nature. This most recent contribution, while full of interesting insights and a challenge to the reader, is somewhat disappointing—there is too much of a preaching quality in his central thesis and too little elaboration of the arguments behind it.

Smail's book comes as breath of fresh air to the laboured, turgid dispute that has prevailed in British psychotherapy circles since Eysenck's blistering attack in 1952. Psychotherapists have tended to close ranks and consolidate their defences. Unfortunately the chief victim has been psychotherapy itself, entrenched in inflexible, doctrinaire positions. Smail courageously asserts that we should be honest with ourselves by examining psychotherapy critically and