

asymmetry; the problems posed by left-handers and by gender differences; the development of asymmetry between birth and puberty; the relationship between cerebral lateralization and a variety of clinical disorders such as dyslexia, stuttering, psychiatric illness and neglect; and with many other topics. In almost every instance the authors (rightly!) conclude that further work is needed to replicate claims, to resolve inconsistencies, or to explain puzzles. And yet the progress made in the last decade is impressive, given the complexities of human brain organization and of human behaviour.

This book is well written and enjoyable to read. It is comprehensive in scope and each issue is treated in depth. The selection of the material is very fair. The illustrations are clear and extremely helpful (there are 51 in about 205 pages of text). There is a useful appendix on neuroanatomy and the chief neuropsychological disorders. Most impressive, however, is the authors' thoughtfulness when confronted by difficult issues; and their readiness to take a hard and critical look at insufficiently substantiated claims. This book can be recommended alike to psychiatrists, neurologists, psychologists and indeed to any reader intrigued by the paradox: left and right human brains look much alike, so why do they not function alike?

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**A Guide to Social Skill Training.** By ROGER ELLIS and DOROTHY WHITTINGTON. London: Croom Helm. 1981. Pp 240. £12.95.

The two major objectives of this book are to provide a practical guide to social skills training and to present a critical review of current social skills theory and practise. These objectives are well met.

In their comprehensive review, the authors examine theoretical assumptions from which the various procedures and applications of social skills training programmes have developed. Strengths and weaknesses of such programmes are discussed in the light of research studies. Shortcomings in evaluation of training programmes are rightly highlighted and the discussion provokes ideas for future development in this area.

As a practical guide, the book is of most use for those engaged or embarking upon training people for whom interpersonal communication is a prime professional activity. However, those engaged in other areas of social skills training or research are likely to find much that is useful, particularly in the chapters "Planning the Programme" and "Transfer of Training".

The text makes for slow reading in places, but this is compensated by the excellent description of

chapter contents in the introduction, making it easy for the reader to extract those sections of most interest to him.

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**The Mentally Ill in Contemporary Society.** By AGNES MILES. Oxford: Martin Robertson. 1981. Pp 224. £4.95.

Despite its title this book is not a polemic but a useful and balanced review of recent studies on social aspects of mental illness. In her preface Dr Miles modestly disclaims comprehensiveness but her text covers the most important contributions to the sociology of mental illness from sociology and—it must in fairness be added—social and epidemiological psychiatry as well. The ground covered ranges from the highly abstract debates surrounding the existence and nature of mental illness through to the very practical consequences of mental illness for the family.

The book offers good summaries of published work and brings out and discusses salient findings. However its main weakness is its failure to touch on the difficult methodological and conceptual problems involved in doing or evaluating research in this area. Thus, for example, hysterectomy and having someone mentally ill in the family are presented as predisposing factors in mental illness without discussing the equally plausible hypotheses that the causal relationship might exist in the opposite direction. True, the book is relatively short and these sorts of problems are difficult but if Dr Miles at times had been more terse with her writing then some room might have been found for discussion of these issues.

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**Three Further Clinical Faces of Childhood.** Edited by E. JAMES ANTHONY and DORIS C. GILPIN. Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press. 1981, Pp 322. £14.75.

The three further faces refer to hysteria, anxiety and borderline. There are two dozen contributors to the book, fifteen of whom are from the child guidance clinic of the Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis, Missouri. The contributions come as the text of a "cross-fertilising exercise" between the clinic staff and invited consultants and a variety of city professionals. It is an exercise in self-examination as well as being an exposition on the stated topics. The book is divided into three sections, the least being on anxiety, each introduced and summed up by James Anthony. The chapters consist mainly of the dis-