

of it. It is an excellent and constructive summary, testimony to the presence, for the most part, of distinguished contributors to the subject. Relatively few came along for the ride, and those who know about these things were able to make their knowledge tell. The tone is mature, informed and realistic.

To make such a glowing opinion credible, it is necessary, all the same, to find something to criticize. Thus, given that it could be so valuable to so many, it is a pity that, as is customary with WHO publications, the format of the document is unattractive (although it does contain a few graphs—about alcohol consumption and its correlates); and the references to the literature are, also as usual, largely incestuous—less than a third are to papers not published by UN or WHO itself.

Perhaps these organizations should take the advice of the Committee, who write on page 36: 'Co-operation would be facilitated if, in each country, there were a single national agency, independent of producers and distributors, to collaborate with the international organs concerned.' Should the latter not themselves have built a single house before expecting single countries to do likewise? However, not all the possible tenants, including some of those invited to Geneva, need necessarily be invited into the commune. Almost any child knows that it takes longer to grow up if your parents or other models of behaviour are at odds with each other, struggling against each other for authority, or even pathetically pretending that they have anything at all to say.

C. R. B. JOYCE.

OLD AGE

Intellectual Functioning in the Aged. By R. D. SAVAGE, P. G. BRITTON, N. BOLTON and E. H. HALL. London: Methuen. 1973. Pp. vii+190. Index 8 pp. Price £4.85.

This volume summarizes the psychometric findings of a decade of research in Newcastle-on-Tyne, investigating the structure of cognitive abilities in the elderly. Subjects included elderly people living in the community and those in hospital suffering from affective, schizophrenic and dementing conditions. Survivors of the original populations were retested on three further occasions over a period of 6½ years. The intellectual tasks were ones that are in common use, such as the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, the Inglis Paired Associates Learning Test and the Modified New Word Learning Test. Levels and patterns of functioning on such tasks were looked at and related to variables such as age level, diagnosis and capacity for survival.

Much of this work has already appeared in separate reports, but parts are new and discussion of both

testing techniques and outcome has been widened considerably. Particularly valuable is a section dealing with the practical problems encountered in testing the elderly. This book must be considered important reading for anyone who attempts to assess cognitive functioning in the elderly.

ANTONIA WHITEHEAD.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Grammar of Living: An Examination of Political Acts. By DAVID COOPER. London: Allen Lane. 1974. Pp. 151. No index. Price £1.95.

The title of this book is explained by the author, but remains a puzzle. I understand the book to be thoughts about a strategy of life, in particular the life of those who would like to defy the established order. Despite the sub-title, it seems to be more concerned with intrapsychic, dyadic and small group feelings rather than with party politics. Since I am not sure what the author is saying, this is an inference rather than an observation.

There is a chapter on how to take LSD. There is a section on free love which not only condemns the marriage institution but also commends sexual acts with patients. There are pontifications on the orgasm. Even those new readers not familiar with Cooper's background may not be surprised by now to hear that there is a chapter on anti-psychiatry. He goes to town on orthodox psychiatry, 'A scientific tradition that moves through experience, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment becomes a micro-political operation of labelling and then systematically destroying by the psychiatric Cure' (p. 55). Analysts get a beating too. If by now you feel appropriately guilty, you may be relieved to hear that 'There are some psychiatrists, however, working inside the system who are secretly anti-psychiatrists. They will know that my remarks do not apply to them' (footnote, p. 56).

So much for the content. The style is rarely lucid except where it is cleared by the heat of emotion. The passages quoted above are among the more understandable. Elsewhere the prose varies from misty to opaque. The author appears preoccupied with definitions of words and at one stage struggles to display them in a quasi-mathematical form (Diagram of the Zero Self, p. 28). It seems that labelling patients is out, but labelling everything else is in. When he runs out of defined terms he sprinkles the text with undefined neologisms.

One should know that this book exists, but my guess is that even Cooper's *aficionados* will be disappointed in it—not because of the dust cover warning that many will find it 'deeply offensive and obscene'—but because it is obscure.

R. G. PRIEST.