

quite rightly scathing in her condemnation of the virulent, unpleasant epidemic of sanctimonious moralising which has accompanied the AIDS epidemic. In these chapters and in the chapter on the 'Quality of dying', the author discusses the psychosocial problems which patients and their carers encounter. This is an area in which there is a major role for the liaison psychiatrist in improving communication, being honest with the patient and the relatives rather than colluding, and developing and providing an appropriate means of support and care for relatives and patients. This would seem to me to be a far more valuable way of using the time of a liaison service instead of assessing parasuicides, the majority of which could be assessed by junior physicians.

The chapter entitled "The quality of dying" begins with the following quotation from Colin Murray Parkes: "Medicine should not confine itself to the prevention of death, any more than family planning should confine itself to the prevention of birth". Many doctors are unable to cope with this inevitable aspect of illness.

The next chapter looks at the quality of life from the health economist's viewpoint. The book concludes with a plea that the immeasurable aspects of life should not be ignored in the new world of statistical analyses and cost comparisons.

This is an excellent book which is of equal value to the professional and lay reader. It should be read by all practising doctors. Perhaps more importantly, the philosophy within should be taught in medical school and given at least as much prominence in the curriculum as the more heroic side of medicine.

OSCAR DALY, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Downshire Hospital, Downpatrick, Co. Down, Northern Ireland*

**Strangers at Home: Vietnam Veterans Since the War.** Edited by CHARLES R. FIGLEY and SEYMOUR LEVENTMAN. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1990. 416 pp. \$26.95.

Twenty authors from various backgrounds contribute to this collection of writings on the experiences of Vietnam veterans since the war. The unique nature of the Vietnam conflict is described well, and the reader gains great insight into the increasingly ambivalent and negative attitude of the US nation towards the war as it progressed, resulting in the returning veterans being stigmatised and feeling alienated. Reference to veterans of other wars highlights the universality of many of the post-war experiences.

The book is divided into three sections, the first of which considers the war itself and those who fought in it. The chapter by Smith on "Oral history" is particularly gripping, especially the verbatim account of a Marine interrogator describing both the difficulties he faced in Vietnam and the let-down he felt on his return. The second section deals with the returning veterans

readjusting to US society, including accounts of research carried out into their estrangement, psychosocial readjustment, and employment experiences. My favourite passage in this part of the book is Wilson's account of the war's effects on the personality development of the many adolescent soldiers. The final section looks at the actions of the government and other agencies. Stanton's chapter on drug use and Bitzer's account of the mistreatment of many veterans suffering mentally as a result of the conflict make good reading. The appendix to Bitzer's chapter is the memorandum advising use of the term 'post-traumatic disorder' in place of 'post Vietnam syndrome' emphasising that this is not restricted to Vietnam veterans.

In conclusion, this book might be of interest to those dealing with war veterans and indeed others involved in major traumatic events. Overall it is well written and easy to read. The multidisciplinary authorship ensures varied perspectives, including economic, psychological and sociological viewpoints. It gives a broad, detailed and comprehensive picture of the Vietnam veteran since the war. Its only drawbacks are a tendency to repetition at times and the occasional American word or phrase which is difficult to understand.

JONATHAN BISSON, *Registrar in Psychiatry, Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Stadium Road, London*

**Substance Abuse and Dependence.** By HAMID GHODSE and DOUGLAS MAXELL. London: Macmillan Press. 1990. 262 pp. £37.50 (hb), £14.95 (pb).

The need for 'caring professions' to have knowledge and occupation-specific skills in dealing with substance misuse problems is not in question, but latching onto the right educational message is not so easy. Within a training programme, a mix of specialist and generic input can go side by side, complementing each other, but in a book this is more difficult to achieve. This book is billed as a practical guide for a wide range of professionals, students and other workers within the field and should therefore be judged against its relevance to those groups and the effort given to addressing their needs.

The book is divided into four parts. Part 1, "Identifying the problem", gets off to a shaky start with a chapter defining the nature of dependence: I am certainly prejudiced in that this is not my idea of dependence, but while the specialist might follow this text with interest I suspect the target readership will be confused. Another chapter on "Substance misuse careers", is particularly well written and instructive, however. Part 2, "Treatment and management", is perhaps the most balanced section, all three chapters are very readable and informative. The chapter on "Psychosocial interventions" is particularly attentive to the consumer. Part 3, "Complications of substance abuse", has an excellent summary of medical complications which is well pitched for

practitioners dealing with addiction problems. In contrast, the chapter on "Psychiatric problems" lacks depth and useful framework. Part 4, "Preventive issues", is rather patchy on prevention but finishes with a chapter, "Drugs and the law", which admirably, and almost single handedly, takes on the stated brief of offering a practical guide.

In summary, this is a competent text rather more for the professional within the field than the non-specialist. It is disappointing in that the combined experience and talent of the authors is capable of producing something much better. As often happens with multiple authorship there is irritating overlap and a failure to excite the reader with a clear direction and approach. I think it is also disappointing that the target readership are unlikely to find this the practical guide that was promised.

DUNCAN RAISTRICK, *Leeds Addiction Unit, Clarendon Road, Leeds*

**The Workplace Within: Psychodynamics of Organisational Life.** By LARRY HIRSCHHORN. Massachusetts: MIT Press. 1988. 265 pp. £8.95.

In this book the author develops a psychodynamic concept of work life by linking his consulting experience in organisations to a theory of work in post-industrial society. He argues that in a post-industrial setting it is increasingly difficult to maintain group cohesion while remaining open to influence and information from outside the group. Social defences, which may involve processes such as splitting, projection and introjection, are acknowledged as a means of containing such anxiety.

Routines and structures are developed by organisations to handle uncertainty. Hirschhorn suggests that because classical organisation theorists have not linked the experience of uncertainty in the organisation to the individual's feelings of anxiety, they have posed the issue of an organisation's uncertainty too narrowly and have then proposed solutions that rely on such rational methods as mathematical calculation and organisational design. When anxiety intrudes, rational processes are distorted by irrational processes.

As the anxiety at work grows, people need to project their sense of persecution onto others. By using Klein's theory of reparation in the workplace, the production of valued goods and services for others provides a framework for repairing relationships. Industrial society makes reparation difficult by conflating the good or the ideal with the symbol of a punishing authority, by substituting guilt for shame and by confusing limitation with sin. This constellation leads to emphasising triumphs over others. Hirschhorn argues that society has reached cultural, technical and ecological limits in its capacity to sustain the psychodynamics of triumph.

To acknowledge the new, integrated complexity of a post-industrial world, people may need to understand

how society as a whole values the goods and services it produces.

This thought-provoking book is ambitious in that it addresses work both at a personal level and in the wider context of society. It is clearly written for a wide audience with respect for the reader who is invited to take up the interpretive method where the author's explanations seem incorrect or incomplete. It is an interesting book which deserves to be widely read.

LORNA ARBLASTER, *Research Fellow, Department of Public Health Medicine, University of Leeds*

**Why Children Reject School: Views from Seven Countries.** Edited by COLETTE CHILAND and J. GERALD YOUNG. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1990. 229 pp. £25.00.

This is the 10th volume in the series "The Child in His Family, The Yearbook of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions". It was produced for the 12th International Congress of the International Association, held in Japan in 1990.

The emphasis is on absence from school. There is an excellent review of school refusal by Lionel Hersov, and a good review of school attendance problems more generally by Richard Landsdown, although he gets the Leeds Truancy Project wrong: it was children taken to court there not parents. The final chapter by J. Gerald Young and others is well worth looking at; I was particularly pleased to be reminded that haloperidol can sometimes induce symptoms of school refusal, or work refusal in adults, and that there is evidence for depressive symptoms occurring secondary to a variety of childhood disorders, not just school refusal.

The five chapters from Japan provide an interesting, although somewhat peripheral, introduction to the particular problems children there experience in response to their competitive educational system; school refusal in Japan is less characterised by difficulties separating from the family than it is in Western countries. The book also gives one a fascinating glimpse of German, Danish and Brazilian approaches. The three chapters written by eminent child psychiatrists in France were more concerned to restate psychoanalytic views than to provide information on absence from school in that country, although Colette Chiland's detailed description of the French education system is of interest.

I do not know how many good chapters are needed to make a book of this sort worth buying, either for yourself or for a library. Although there are some very interesting contributions, I suspect this book will mainly be for reference.

IAN BERG, *Consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, The General Infirmary at Leeds, Leeds*