

crisis intervention, and the like there is a general tendency towards an organic approach. Thus schizophrenia is covered in 27 pages whereas over 100 are devoted to organic syndromes. Indeed there is considerable detail on the more physical aspects of psychiatry and one might mention at random the useful sections on glue-sniffing and dementia pugilistica. There are full accounts of all major disorders yet the editors have managed to include details of such rarities as Wigtigo (in which the affected individual, usually an American Indian, believes that he is a cannibalistic monster). The book seems generally up to date, especially on the biological aspects of aetiology in general, and on prostaglandins in particular, though again one might take exception to "dysmenorrhoea and migraine are caused by excessive synthesis of prostaglandins".

Unfortunately the section on Psychiatry and the Law is concerned only with the American system, and similar problems arise with mental health services and the trade names of drugs.

Perhaps this is not a suitable book for the complete beginner in psychiatry but I strongly recommend it for Membership preparation and it should be available for reference in every library.

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Paradoxical Psychotherapy: Theory and Practise with Individuals, Couples, and Families. GERALD R. WEEKS and LUCIANO L'ABATE. New York: Brunner Mazel. 1982. Pp 268. \$20.00.

This book is designed to help all clinicians who are interested in learning more about the paradoxical approach to therapy and aims at giving an overall approach in individual, marital and family therapy settings. It traces the history of paradoxical psychotherapy in the Western World with special mention of Aldred Adler and Viktor Frankl. The broad concept of paradoxical intent, as Frankl calls it, has been known and practised by many, although as the authors point out, it has been a practice calling for a theory. Here the authors place the practice into an understandable theoretical framework.

I was struck by the omission of Fritz Pearls and many of the Gestalt techniques where the practice has been very much in use for many years. The emphasis on its use in the behavioural schools implies perhaps unjustly that they have made the most use of this approach. While the quotations from Frankl and others do mention the place of humour in working with the paradox, I felt that not sufficient emphasis was placed on this, to me, key factor. I am inclined to the fantasy that we take therapy and ourselves so seriously that the importance of humour as therapeutic

tool still finds too few adherents.

This is a refreshing book once you get through the historical background and one which presents an important contribution to therapeutic theory, especially in the field of marital and family therapy. The authors introduce us not only to the theory but also some novel methods of practice.

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Women Under Stress. By DONALD ROY MORSE and LAWRENCE M. FURST. Wokingham, Berkshire: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1981. Pp 473. £17.00.

This is a fluent, racy, well-annotated and didactic American popular textbook which reviews stressors particularly affecting women.

Its authors, doctors respectively of dentistry and psychology, are committed to health education, psychosomatic theory and relaxation therapy. Their occasionally ungrammatical, often idiosyncratic but always readable book discourses on stress in relation to female anatomy, physiology, developmental psychology, sexuality, sociology, physical and mental illness and good and bad coping strategies. There is an excellent summary of defence mechanisms. The illustrative material ranges from line drawings and colourful anecdotal case-histories to extensive, though unobtrusive, references to learned journals.

The intended readership is hard to define. Much of the text, from the opening fictionalized account of a woman in whose life everything goes wrong to the closing questionnaire on personal vulnerability, seems to be addressed to laypersons seeking self-knowledge. However, the pages of bibliography are clearly directed at health professionals. Probably the book will be most useful as a multidisciplinary route-map along the middle ground traversed by social workers, nurses, lay therapists, careers advisers, marriage counsellors and teachers. But any doctor who reads it will learn things from it (particularly about dentistry, which makes frequent unexpected but pertinent appearances) and any general reader will be encouraged to explore further.

The authors' strong psychosomatic bias leads them to list among stress-induced diseases not only such established examples as hypertension and peptic ulcer but also others—dental caries, thrombophlebitis, breast cancer—whose inclusion is speculative to say the least. Medical readers will make the necessary reservations; others may suffer inappropriate guilt. Nevertheless *Women Under Stress* is a stimulating book, well-produced and not overpriced, which probably deserves a place in libraries.

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