

## Book Reviews

### I. PSYCHIATRY

**Personality and Personal Illness.** By G. A. FOULDS. London: Tavistock Publications. Pp. 344. Price 55s.

For some years Dr. Foulds' publications have hinted at the emergence of a new system of abnormal psychology. Now he has marshalled both his ideas and his data into a unified presentation. Most psychiatrists in this country are wary of elaborate psychological models, which only too often are carried to their logical and hence absurd conclusions. In the course of such a development the system-builder becomes enmeshed in a purely aesthetic exercise, the clinical foundations of the system become totally submerged and the utility of the final superstructure is often minimal. But here, for once, we are offered a scheme in which the primary phenomena are held constantly in view, and it is one of the author's aims to emphasize their "real life" setting.

Indeed the most remarkable feature of Dr. Foulds' book is that he does not start out with the fashionable assumption that what the clinical psychiatrist has to say is only good for a condescending chuckle before the real work begins. Dr. Foulds has not only read more psychiatry than most psychiatrists (and perhaps seen more patients than some psychologists) but is unrepentant in his thoroughgoing, if critical, use of psychiatric concepts. He examines the major categories of functional disorders, and suggests that it is possible to view these groups on a continuum of disruption of interpersonal function ranging from personality disorders, through neurosis to "integrated psychosis" and finally to "non-integrated psychosis" or schizophrenia. To supplement the clinician's allocation of a patient to one of the points on this dimension, detailed information is presented on the use of a symptom-sign inventory, in the belief that the reliability of psychiatric diagnosis may be improved by making public the operations on which diagnosis depends and the logic on which the diagnostic classification is based. The subdivisions within each class are similarly treated. The author also stresses the importance of distinguishing between personality traits and psychiatric symptoms, a point often blurred in clinical practice, notoriously with hysteria, and none too clear with some psychometric instruments such as the M.P.I. Inventories are also

produced to determine the degree and patterning of hostility manifest by patients in each category, with some evidence to suggest that the differences between groups may be fundamental to the psychopathology.

The argument of the book proceeds by a series of empirical investigations, meticulously described, but, in contrast to many empirical studies, a sustained attempt is here made to discover what the test items *mean*. Towards the end the author shows that his theory and techniques are helpful in elucidating such basic, varied and long-standing problems as how to evaluate psychological change in psychotherapy, the relation of paranoia to paranoid schizophrenia, the nature of persecutory ideas in melancholia and the detailed study of the stages of cure.

Even from this inadequate summary it can be seen that this book is concerned with selected aspects of psychiatry rather than the experimental study of psychological processes. There are at least two implications of such a study from the hand of a distinguished psychologist. One is that clinical psychiatrists should be more precise in their observations, more careful in their diction, perhaps more willing to use appropriate psychometric techniques and certainly less muddled in their thinking. To these highly laudable ends Dr. Foulds has much to offer. A second implication is that, while the psychological abnormalities manifested in mental illness are certainly susceptible to scientific study, they are basically such as to elude the limited experimentalism of most modern psychologists: knowledge may be furthered by the investigator talking to his patients, not by E confronting S and verbalizing. This heresy remains as refreshing now as it ever was.

Of course, the book has its weaknesses. The opening chapters are perhaps overloaded with rather general theorizing, and it would be a great pity if the intending reader were discouraged at this point. Some of the text, where minutiae of test results are presented mercilessly, can be skimmed; elsewhere, the author's assumption that his reader is intimate with the details of MacMurray's philosophy will be unfounded. Nevertheless, the book is often elegant, sometimes witty, and almost unique as a contribution by an informed psychologist to the basic procedures of clinical psychiatry.

N. KREITMAN.