

I would like to see Dyer develop his ideas further. They are important not only to the practice of medicine, but to any enterprise where the autonomy of individuals is of central ethical importance. In Western democracies there can be no more important such enterprise than voting at general elections. The insights of psychotherapy might tell us much about the concept of freedom in a society where the packaging of political ideas is given more importance than their content.

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### *New editions*

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**Companion to Psychiatric Studies (4th edn).** Edited by R. E. KENDALL and A. K. ZEALLY. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1988. 840 pp. £42.50.

Previous editions of the *Companion to Psychiatric Studies* have already made an impact among trainees in psychiatry. The 4th edition of this extremely well-presented and comprehensive volume had 41 chapters on a wide range of salient topics. The subject matter is relevant for both the postgraduate trainee in psychiatry and the practicing consultant psychiatrist. The latter will find it extremely difficult to discover any important area of psychiatry left uncovered in this text. As before, the editors have sought contributors who are mostly, like themselves, based in Edinburgh, but they also have distinguished contributors from other centres, and it is hard to single out chapters for special mention, since the book has such a generally high standard.

The book competes in the larger textbook field with such stalwarts as Kaplan & Saddock's *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*. The 3-volume 'Kaplan' has 3500 pages and addresses the American postgraduate, while its Synopsis (for undergraduates) has over 1000 pages! Perhaps it would be not unreasonable to expect our undergraduates on this side of the Atlantic to also read textbooks as weighty as the *Companion to Psychiatric Studies*.

The chapters cover a range of topics from historical and aetiological areas, to chapters by diagnostic category, chapters by age group, and chapters on the range of treatments in psychiatry. The orientation of the book is broadly eclectic and its general balance is a tribute to the skills of the editors, who represent both the academic and clinical sides of psychiatry. Feedback from trainees on previous editions has been excellent. My random

tests of its usefulness as a reference also proved first class (e.g. one of mine was on lead encephalopathy which is nicely covered in the extensive chapter by Dewar on 'Aspects of neurochemistry and neurotoxicology').

It is possible that the book would be viewed by trainees as difficult to read from cover to cover, because both of its size and the detail with which topics are covered. Nevertheless, the 4th edition constitutes an excellent 'data bank' of knowledge in psychiatry.

Perhaps it would be unfair to criticise one aspect of this book which applies equally to most other texts. Psychiatrists write almost as observers of the passing scene, suggesting short-term remedies for illnesses or problems, but seem afraid to use their skill and knowledge assertively in planning changes in delivery of treatments or services. As an example in the *Companion*, tricyclic antidepressant toxicity and overdose is emphasised but the tactic of using safer alternatives is not endorsed. Equally, while there are chapters on epidemiology, and psychiatry in general practice, there is no suggested operational strategy for developing a real community psychiatry service. It would seem to me that such passivity invites psychiatric retrenchment and development of alternative care-giving services.

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**Drug Treatment in Psychiatry (4th edn).** By TREVOR SILVERSTONE and PAUL TURNER. London and New York: Routledge. 1988. 282 pp. £12.95.

As my previous copy had been borrowed and not returned, it was with great pleasure that I renewed my acquaintance through this new edition. Although there have been changes, the current edition retains all that was good in the past, and I am sure will come to be a valued textbook.

The first part outlines general principles of drug therapy, including a useful review of central nervous system transmission which outlines most of the modern theories regarding the role of neurotransmitters. The second and larger part of the book outlines specific therapies for various psychiatric illnesses, including most of the more recently introduced drugs.

While the book is about drug therapy, the limitations of pharmacological interventions are discussed. The book is easy to read, and at the price is affordable to any doctor wishing to increase their knowledge of psychopharmacology. This book is likely to become essential reading for all trainees, and one that even the most experienced psychiatrist will wish to use on occasions when deciding about the use of drugs in the management of their patients.

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