

such access to Stoller's thoughts and experience.

JOHN BANCROFT.

A SHAPELESS AGGREGATE

The Pharmacological and Epidemiological Aspects of Adolescent Drug Dependence.

Edited by C. W. M. WILSON. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 1968. Pp. 515. Price £8.

This is a report of the Proceedings of the first symposium of the Society for the Study of Addiction, held in September, 1966, in London.

Like many such reports of symposia, all too frequent these days, it includes the work of its forty-eight contributors, not as a well ordered coherent whole, but in the form of a rather shapeless aggregate, which suffers in addition from multiple and superfluous iterations.

The enticing title is deceptive, in that the information on adolescent drug dependence could have been contained without effort in less than fifty pages. Most of the book deals with drug dependence in general, and some of the contributions are of considerable interest. Those that particularly attracted the attention of the reviewer were: from the U.S.A., the statistical contribution of R. W. Rasor, which was drawn from the extensive material from Lexington, Kentucky; Dean F. Markham soberly reports on the paucity of data about adolescent drug dependence, and M. Helpern demonstrates the pathological post-mortem findings in young addicts dying after intravenous injection of heroin, and indicates that it is not yet clear whether death is due to overdose, allergic sensitivity reaction, or poisoning by adulterants added to the drug. These sudden deaths are now beginning to be reported in England. From Sweden there is the description by Nils Bejerot of the epidemic of stimulant drugs, particularly of phenmetrazine, and in England, T. H. Bewley presents very fully the statistics of drug dependence.

Professor Paton, in pointing out the areas where research is needed, highlights the large and fundamental questions that are still unanswered. Most of our information about incidence is based on the fallible testimony of the addicts themselves, and there is not as yet a set of simple biochemical tests that could be used for the objective detection of drug takers. There is no knowledge of the cellular mechanisms involved in the phenomena of euphoria, tolerance and physical dependence. Little is known of the human pharmacology of the drugs of addiction, and there are no controlled experiments to show their behavioural effects in man. The epidemiology of 'escalation' remains to be done, and psycho-

pathology of drug dependence is still contradictory and anecdotal.

The publicity given to drug taking has made it a fashionable medical topic. Rather than large tomes, costly in time and money, the need is for brief factual reports about progress, published without undue delay. Patterns of drug dependence can change very fast, as the Brain Commission discovered in England, and reports can be obsolete by the time they see the light of day.

F. J. J. LETEMENDIA.

'DOWN-TO-EARTH' TALK

Psychotherapy from the Center: A Humanistic View of Change and of Growth. By RAHE B. CORLIS and PETER RABE. London: International Textbook Company, 1969. Pp. 131. Price 58s.

In their introduction the authors state that they do not make theories, and aim to distinguish sharply between 'event' and 'concept'. But is this really possible in any type of psychotherapy, which inevitably must be a dialectical interpenetration of theory and practice? And, indeed, there is both theorizing and conceptualization in this book, and events as described would have been other sorts of events if not influenced by existential theories. However, the non-philosophical psychotherapist must not allow himself to be put off by references to the theories of Husserl, Sartre, Buber or the Zen school of Buddhism, for, as Professor Carl A. Whitaker points out in the Foreword, this book is 'not an existential treatise, or a psychoanalytic dissection, it's just good down-to-earth talk from therapist to therapist', and as such it can be heartily recommended. The text is liberally sprinkled with practical observations, to which psychotherapists of all schools will take no exception. Here are several examples, which should whet the appetite of the trainee:

'It is one of the tasks of the therapist to help dissolve the conditioned fixity of the patient's character, so that the individual can find the satisfactions available in the present instead of living on the starvation diet of fictions that try to recreate what no longer exists' (p. 10).

'There is no therapy when the therapist decides for the patient what he ought to do' (p. 16).

'The therapist can make mistakes' (p. 47).

'Every therapist has his limitations. No therapist can work with every patient' (p. 125).

A welcome feature is the frequent presentation of an illustrative case, sometimes the tape recording of patient-therapist exchanges, in order to drive home a

principle or rule of thumb in technique. The authors, make good use of ideas from the schools of Freud, Adler and Autogenic Training. To such eclecticism the reviewer does not take exception, but he doubts

whether the attempt to foist yet another terminology on us (center, periphery, contact, impersonal empathy, etc.) will prove successful.

I. ATKIN,