infarction of the spinal cord and effect of halothane on intracranial pressure in cerebral tumours, etc., may be of some value to the dilettante, but is only likely to irritate those seeking a less selected, more reasoned and thorough assessment of any one scene.

In conclusion this book is of some value for those psychiatrists with half an hour for browsing, for those with a neurological rather than biological bent, and those who do not have access to *Excerpta Medica Psychiatrica* and the appropriate monthly digest from the Institute of Living.

A. H. CRISP.

## PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY

**Psychopharmacology: Dimensions and Perspectives.** Edited by C. R. B. JOYCE. London: Tavistock Publications. 1968. Pp. 430. Price 63*s*.

This book is seventeenth in the *Mind and Medicine Monographs* (edited by Michael Balint) and is as difficult to review as it must have been to edit. It is a pot-pourri or slum gullion and no collective noun (not even psychopharmacology) can exactly convey its contents. One salutary outcome is to compel a reviewer to read the text.

Perhaps the most economical exposition of the ingredients will be to list its twelve chapter headings: basic pharmacological principles, basic psychological principles, principles of animal experimentation, historical considerations, antidepressive drug therapy, hallucinogens, psychological factors in controlled evaluation, social and epidemological aspects, ethology, basic neuroanatomical methods, undernutrition and the developing brain, what is pain?

As if to forestall criticism of his selection, Dr. Joyce astutely notes that 'almost any science would have something to contribute, so it is scarcely necessary to justify the actual selection'. The implicit intention is to cross-pollinate different ideologies by asking contributors from several countries to explain their various disciplines to 'the man in the next laboratory'. Does the intention bear fruit?

Some contributors manage to avoid any reference to drugs. For instance, Professor Foss on basic psychological principles is quite overshadowed by Dr. Maxwell's self-sufficient chapter on animal experimentation, full of explicit examples relevant to psychopharmacology. The fact that one author works in an academic and the other in an industrial setting may explain their different approach. But even when it appears irrelevant, this book is often educative and readable; a paradox most apparent in Dr. Dobbing's intriguing account of malnutrition and its effects on the developing pig's brain. At other times, this obliquity becomes irritating; the chapter on the nature of pain is a protracted semantic quibble delivered in a diluted form of Socratic dialogue. Any further edition might profitably replace semantics with statistics (which the author is well qualified to do).

The diversity within this book is among its several compensations; one may learn the amount of LSD required to incapacitate an elephant or the contemporary implications of discovering a cure for scurvy. On a less trivial level, there are excellent contributions of clinical and biological interest. Two essays offer refreshingly novel insights into clinical problems; the editor's own chapter is predictably thought-provoking about the meanings of control and pitfalls in planning trials, while Dr. Adams makes a plausible effort to interpret the clinical process in plain language. (Even though his final case history might have been blighted in the cold air of an old time Maudsley Monday morning.) On the biological side, Dr. Weatherall's chapter on basic pharmacological principles is clear, concise and full of worthwhile key references.

Psychopharmacology has so recently developed from an art to a science that few yardsticks are available with which to compare a new textbook. But strangely, this book appeared almost simultaneously with Shepherd, Lader and Rodnight's *Clinical Psychopharmacology*. The two volumes are as different, but as complementary, as their origins from the Maudsley and (indirectly) the Tavistock would suggest. The one is objective, unimaginative, complete and precise; the other involved, provocative, selective and discursive. Some of these differences are made more explicit by the reiterated plea in the present volume for more single patient studies of patient–drug interaction to supplement large scale clinical trials. Those who have indulged this whim soon learn that the intriguing insights into basic individual mechanisms seldom permit generalizations or predictions to other individuals or groups. Psychopharmacology still awaits its Freud. One chapter in this book suggests that the new ethology has pretension to satisfy this need when the author proudly describes it as 'observation without scientific interference'. Isn't this where the clinical trial came in, and isn't that what psychopharmacology is mostly about? This book is recommended for anyone with an open mind and an interest in psychopharmacology—in that order.

B. BLACKWELL.

## SUICIDE

**Prevention of Suicide.** Public Health Papers No. 35. Geneva: World Health Organization. 1968. Pp. 84. Price 8*s*.

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