

This volume is intended for a more general audience and will be suitable not only for students in the early part of their medical training but for students of neuropsychology, sociology, and related disciplines. Indeed, there is much in the book which can be read with profit by experienced psychiatrists and other clinicians. Dr Nathan's wide ranging interests in the normal and abnormal nervous system are clearly shown in the examples taken from his own clinical experience, used in the book to bring home points of particular importance. The scope is ambitious, embracing the whole range of normal and abnormal function of the nervous system of man, and the attempt is a great success. The book begins with an account of sensory receptors and of the neural basis of the brain's capacity to examine the external world, including a succinct and simple account of nerves and nerve conduction, of neuro-transmitters and hormones. Concepts of the control of voluntary movement are discussed in a separate chapter and there are excellent discussions of pain, learning and memory, speech, and personality. The book concludes with a glossary which will be useful to students approaching this subject for the first time. The text is particularly clearly argued when difficult subjects, such as the ionic basis of nerve conduction, or new ideas on pain, are tackled. This book provides a wonderfully fresh and original account of the nervous system and its function in health and disease.

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Abnormal Psychology: An Experimental Clinical Approach. Third Edition. By GERALD C. DAVISON and JOHN M. NEALE. Chichester: John Wiley. 1982. Pp 823. £15.95.

Case Studies in Abnormal Psychology. By JOHN M. NEALE, THOMAS F. OLTMANN and GERALD C. DAVISON. Chichester: John Wiley. 1982. Pp 316. £7.35.

Of the illustrated text books which attempt an informed, accurate summary of the field of abnormal psychology Davison and Neale's has, for some years, been one of the best available. Extensive updating and rewriting of many sections brings their new edition in line with recent developments. The authors have continued their comparison of psychoanalytic and behaviour therapies but widen their discussion to give more space to humanistic, existential and cognitive approaches. Although there is emphasis on the new American *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM III), the authors are not uncritical of this system of diagnostic classification.

One particularly important change is that chapters on specific disorders now describe treatment

approaches. Another major addition is a large new section on developmental disorders. The last part of this section deals extensively and comprehensively with the rarely described clinical problems of aging.

Case Studies in Abnormal Psychology presents a detailed analysis of eighteen patients. The volume is designed for all students of abnormal psychology and for practical courses teaching the best ways of conceptualizing and treating psychological problems. Apart from supplementing the standard text book it provides a genuine sense of what it is like to work as a therapist with psychiatric patients. Each case study concludes with a summary of the different theoretical models used to interpret the abnormal behaviour.

The descriptions of treatment emphasise the importance of a team approach which can draw appropriately on various means of intervention.

For anyone studying or working in the field of abnormal psychology both volumes are highly recommended.

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Drinking and Crime. Edited by JAMES J. COLLINS JR. London: Tavistock. 1981. Pp 356. £20.00.

This book should be a salutary experience to those who feel the relationship between alcohol and crime is a simple positive one. This reader certainly had any such naive thoughts shattered within the first few pages.

The all-American contributors are from various disciplines including criminology, sociology and psychology and all are painstaking and thorough in their attempt to clarify the difficult and important issues. The variety of contributions affords a good balance to the book as a whole, and to the information presented, and assure the book a wide readership.

The evidence of a relationship between alcohol and violent crime is substantial, statistical studies from various countries indicating that 50–60 per cent of homicides and 35–72 per cent of rapes are committed under the influence of alcohol. In property crimes, on the other hand, alcohol is only a factor in 30 to 40 per cent.

Various aspects of these statistics are explored. Is the crime committed because of the alcohol, or does it merely provide the courage to execute it? Is the individual perpetually under the influence of drink and the crime then committed incidentally, or could drink be an acceptable excuse for antisocial behaviour? The inevitable problem with most of the studies is that they deal with the population apprehended for crimes, and are perhaps, not representative of the whole criminal population.

Various contributors deal with the physiological,

psychological, pharmacological, and sociological aspects in a comprehensive and enlightening manner. Physiological factors involve genetics; the effects of different dosage and different beverages on the individual.

Psychological studies look at alcohol in relation to stress, dependency and power, and consider whether alcohol and crime may be caused by the same factors; for example early affectional deprivation. Pharmacological causes may be lack of REM sleep, nutritional factors such as hypoglycaemia, and the well known disinhibiting effects of the drug on the brain, with cognitive dysfunction, and a tendency to more concrete thought processes.

Sociological studies are most interesting dealing with the positive, negative or ambivalent, but always strong, attitudes of society to drink, the effects of drinking norms, cultural factors and expectations of individual societies giving the propensity for each population to commit crimes whilst under the influence.

This should prove a useful book for researchers of many disciplines and may be an enlightening experience for anyone involved in work with criminals and alcoholics. It is probably the most comprehensive on this fascinating subject to date, although a similar British equivalent might be of even more interest in this country.

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Perspectives in Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Similarities and Differences. Edited by JOEL SOLOMON and KIM A. KEELEY. Bristol: John Wright. 1982. Pp 259. £13.25.

The rigid compartmentalization relating to drug and alcohol abuse in the United Kingdom can be noted at meetings of psychiatrists. Often, those responsible for alcohol and drug abuse treatment appear different not only in philosophy but in appearance. The Dependence Addiction Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, is an attempt to reduce this within the College.

The above volume, from an American viewpoint, examines similarities and differences in the fields of alcohol and drug abuse from a variety of aspects. These include history of usage, the influence of socio/cultural factors, biochemical similarities and differences, and possibly languages, (e.g. the amino-isoquinoline hypothesis), examination of personality structure in users, frequency of cross usage, drug/alcohol interaction, problems and benefits of combined treatments, prevention strategies, research options including (developmental background, personality and genetic aetiological factors) and

United State's law relating to alcohol and drug use, emphasising the treatment/punishment dichotomy. It is readable and of an even standard, and important, in that, it makes us examine the situation in the United Kingdom. Whilst the American experience (and it seems written primarily for an American audience) cannot be automatically transferred here (e.g. the age gap between alcohol and drug abusers, though shrinking here, is still considerable), it is time we at least looked at these similarities and differences in alcohol and drug abuse in the United Kingdom.

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Dangerousness: Psychiatric Assessment and Management. Edited by JOHN R. HAMILTON and HUGH FREEMAN. Gaskell (The Royal College of Psychiatrists). Ashford, Kent: Headley Brothers. 1982. Pp 121. £4.75 (plus 50p packing and postage).

Few psychiatrists feel they can accurately predict dangerous or violent behaviour in their patients. Indeed, much greater accuracy would be achieved by predicting all patients as non-violent. Some, however, are dangerous and how best to treat and manage those is a question fraught with uncertainty. The temptation is to err on the side of safety and detain many inoffensive individuals. The question of dangerousness and its management therefore is rife with discussion and debate relevant not only to psychiatrists but to penologists, sociologists and legislators.

This book—a collection of papers presented at a symposium organized by Dr J. R. Hamilton for Broadmoor Hospital in 1979—makes a substantial contribution to this debate. The authors include experienced forensic psychiatrists, social workers, members of the legal profession and Home Office personnel. Unlike ancient Gaul the book is divided into four parts, the first is concerned with semantic, ethical and political aspects of dangerousness, the second with the clinical aspects, the third deals with experience of staff at Broadmoor and the final part addresses problems of management and administration. There are a total of twenty papers most have a reference list and some are followed by comment and discussion. Papers of particular reference to the psychiatrist are those on assessing dangerousness in psychopaths, the mentally subnormal, psychotic patients, sex offenders and arsonists. Individual papers by McGrath, Jillett, Cox and Black on how they attempt to assess dangerousness in clinical settings describe experiences most psychiatrists have endured. For the psychiatrist who is finding his problem patient too anxiety provoking to handle there is a helpful paper by McCulloch on how to seek the help of a special hospital. At £4.75 this is a 'best buy' not only