

*Psychology in the Wry* is a collection of essays, broadly humorous, in which psychologists show concern at the dullness and triviality which they fear sometimes pervades their subject. A mock letter from I. Pavlov seeks advice from an editor because the manuscripts reporting his conditioned reflex experiments have been rejected on grounds of lack of sophistication, too few subjects and failure to utilize analysis of variance. *Research in Psychopathology* is a collection of reprints from the clinical psychology literature. Readers will need a wide knowledge of statistical methods but not a broad view of psychopathology. This book is designed for American psychology students and will have less appeal for British psychiatrists.

IAN OSWALD.

#### 5. SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY

**The Psychodynamics of Family Life. Diagnosis and Treatment of Family Relationships.** By NATHAN W. ACKERMAN, M.D. New York: Basic Books Inc. 1958. Pp. 379. Price 45s.

There are a great many reasons why psychiatrists should be interested in the family. One does not have to adhere to any particular psychodynamic school to recognize that any mental illness which affects behaviour and mood must influence those close to the patient, and one cannot deal professionally with neurotic children or adults without being forced to realize how the sickness of the individual is always both reflected in, and a reflection of, his past and present relationships. There is also no doubt that the family, as an area of study and as a focus of treatment, has been inadequately explored.

The difficulties in the way of family studies are in part derived from the medical frame of reference, which habitually imposes upon the doctor a response and a responsibility to the individual sick person. Stemming from this lie the considerable difficulties of developing concepts to deal with group processes, difficulties which are only beginning to be overcome by co-operation with other social scientists. As a result of these difficulties, family research and family therapy are often areas which seem to have too many free floating ideas attached to too few facts.

Professor Ackerman is one of the leading protagonists of a family-centred approach in psychiatry. One would have hoped to find in this volume, described as "ground-breaking" on its dust cover, both new facts and some development of new concepts. The author sets himself three goals: (page 11): "First I hope to develop a theoretical framework

# Psychiatry for Students

DAVID  
STAFFORD-CLARK

This is a textbook which aims to interest, and therefore inform, the student, whether medical, dental, sociological, psychological, or philosophical; undergraduate or post graduate; or perhaps simply interested. It will prove helpful both in final qualifying examinations, and in examinations for the Diploma of Psychological Medicine; candidates for the M.R.C.P. will not have wasted the time they spend on it.

The author is one of our most widely-known psychiatrists. His command of a developing branch of medical science is informed by a philosophy: namely that clinical study of the subject must include a realization of how it feels to be the patient. Any textbook must be absolutely clear in exposition; Dr. Stafford-Clark has in addition the unusual ability to depict patients as human beings. 28s.

**ALLEN & UNWIN**  
40 MUSEUM STREET, WC.1

for the evaluation of the psycho-social functioning of family groups. Second, I hope to find means for the systematic correlation of the emotional functioning and mental health of the individual with the emotional functioning and mental health of the family group. Third, I hope to develop a method for the observation and differential description of families according to their mental health and, correspondingly, a method for systematic comparison of contrasting types of families". Unfortunately, not very much progress towards these goals is achieved in the pages that follow. A "detailed exploration of 50 families, each one of which had two or more members in psychotherapy" is said to have been used to "develop and clarify many of the concepts outlined in this book" (p. 329); but no systematic account of these families is offered. The basic method of presentation is assertive and tends to be circular: a construct or generalization is presented, a case history illustrating the construct is provided, and the value of the construct is then taken as demonstrated.

The first section, on theoretical aspects, is largely devoted to demonstrating the author's roots in, and departures from, psychoanalytical theory; the chapter on social role cannot be said to give serious consideration to sociological and anthropological work. The second section, on "clinical aspects", and the third, on "therapeutic aspects", present a fair amount of case material, much of it of considerable interest. This is interspersed with more general statements, many of which seemed to this reviewer at any rate to be a compound of the obvious and the dubious. As a sample, one may quote from the chapter on disturbances of parental pairs (p. 182): "In our times we encounter many men who make a grand pretence of fulfilling the ideal of fatherhood. They put on a large show of fatherly concern because of their intense need to exhibit themselves favourably, to win approval in other people's eyes . . . They are motivated less by the positive pleasure of being a father and more by the ulterior motive of winning family prestige in the eyes of the community. They are not primarily interested in the paternal relation with the child, but seek rather to bolster themselves through an aggrandized social position. In so doing they are climbing on their children's backs; they exploit their children for their own vicarious gains. It is therefore important to distinguish between pseudo or noisy fathering and genuine fathering."

The final classification of family types into seven categories is stated to represent "theoretically pure types, although in actuality there is considerable overlapping". Each category is described in general terms referring variously to behaviour of the individual, to the internal structure of the family, and

to the family's relationship with the outside world; like family type 7, this classification seems to suffer "from inappropriate and unclear goals".

The value of this book lies in the descriptions provided of psychiatric disturbance in the family setting, and in the accounts given of therapy involving intervention into the total family situation. In these descriptions Professor Ackerman writes from considerable experience and in terms which will be familiar to the psychodynamically-inclined psychiatrist. These terms, however, do not provide an adequate conceptual framework for the analysis of family functioning which is attempted in the book. In his endeavour to provide such an analysis the author has buried his clinical contribution in a frustrating and opaque mass of generalizations and repetitions.

ANTHONY RYLE.

**The Family and Human Adaptation.** By THEODORE LIDZ. New York: International Universities Press, London: The Hogarth Press. 1963. Pp. 120. Price 25s.

After a short introduction, three lectures delivered by the author in 1961 at Tulane University, New Orleans, are here presented. They were originally given to an audience of psychiatrists, anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists, who were reminded of recent marked changes in family structure in the train of urbanization and industrialization. In many areas of the Western World the extended kinship family group is gradually replaced by isolated nuclear family structures. These depend primarily on the personalities of the two spouses, and tend to be more unstable units than the extended family. However, in a rapidly changing world the nuclear family is thought to provide better training in adaptability than the more rigid and tradition-ridden extended family group. In the relatively isolated nuclear families, mental interactions of the parents tend to influence powerfully the personality development of their children.

Failure of adequate ego integration in a group of youngschizophrenics has been related by Professor Lidz and his collaborators (in numerous previous publications) to faulty family environments. Parents failed to form a coalition as members of the older generation, and to maintain their masculine or feminine roles. These failures were important factors in promoting schizophrenic psychopathology, especially chaotic sexuality. Failure of families to pass on instrumentally useful ways of adaptation to the society in which the family exists is particularly evident in faulty transmission of language and