

hand, the chapters on statistical modelling demand a level of sophistication which might confine their appeal to the professional researcher.

The coherent presentation of this material, otherwise scattered through a wide variety of journals and books, together with an index, makes for a good textbook. The coverage is thorough and, besides the inclusion of the problems of study design, data collection, and the subsequent analyses, there is an extensive review of the nature of the variables to be collected. These range from fundamental items, such as aggressiveness or inattentiveness, to more complex patterns of behaviour, such as personality type, to the process of interaction between the individual and his context, as well as his response to a brief intervention. The interaction between these different levels of variable is complex, and their disentanglement requires complex statistics. Two themes are recurrent. Firstly, it is difficult to develop, let alone prove, a causal model sufficiently well-founded to withstand the tide of later research. Secondly, the utility of statistics lies as much in the exploration of possibilities as in the proof of an hypothesis. The relevance of techniques such as path analysis and of specific packages such as LISREL is that they enable computer-aided lateral thinking.

Original research is presented, bringing the subject to life, holding authors to reality, and allowing the reader to stand at their shoulders in the struggle to make the best of limited data.

Even should the researcher resist the temptation to follow up his earlier cases, longitudinal issues eventually creep into most psychiatric studies. This book is a thought-provoking aid to anyone willing to reconsider his methodology.

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Agoraphobia: Current Perspectives on Theory and Treatment. Edited by KEVIN GOURNAY. London: Routledge. 1989. 243 pp. £30.00.

In this volume Gournay sets out to summarise the current state of knowledge about agoraphobia and its treatment. He has a number of reasons for doing this. Firstly, although effective behavioural treatments of agoraphobia are available, the author's "overwhelming impression" is that GPs, community psychiatric nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers are not using these methods. This has resulted in the treatment of agoraphobia in the UK becoming "woefully inadequate across the whole spectrum of clinical practice". Secondly, although the treatment of agoraphobia has advanced considerably over the last few decades, mainly due to the introduction of *in vivo*

exposure treatments, there are a not insignificant number of patients who refuse or drop out of treatment. Even among those who benefit from treatment, many still experience symptoms and impairments to their functioning. There are therefore many issues in the treatment of agoraphobia which still need to be addressed.

Of the ten chapters, Gournay contributes six; besides the introduction and conclusion these cover a treatment review, treatment failures, cognitive factors, and sex roles. The other four chapters are contributed by members of the "major mental health professions". The chapter by Hudson on social factors and the role of the social worker is excellent, and that by Coghlan on medication a useful and informative summary. Deakin writes about treatment by nurse therapists; at 52 pages this is excessively long, but would be a useful practical guide for those unused to constructing behavioural programmes. The chapter by Winter, written from the perspective of personal construct theory, fits in somewhat uncomfortably with the strong behavioural theme of the rest of the book.

In summary, this will be a useful addition to the libraries of training departments for professionals who do not have a strong behavioural training, but it is not really suitable for the advanced researcher or practitioner.

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The Circle of Acquaintance, Perception, Consciousness, and Empathy. By DAVID WOODRUFF SMITH. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1989. 252 pp. £39.00.

Phenomenological explorations of perception and experience are still not very popular in England. The English are hesitant to engage themselves in philosophical approaches originating in Central Europe, and tend to think of them as unpragmatic and metaphysical.

I fear this book is unlikely to make them change their minds. For psychiatrists and psychotherapists, phenomenology can open up neglected aspects of their concepts and methods. This book, however, in spite of passing references to Freud and psychoanalysis, has little to offer them: it is very abstract and technical – a book written by a philosopher for philosophers.

As a lucid introduction to phenomenology, with special reference to its place in the therapeutic landscape, I recommend Ernesto Spinelli's recent *The Interpreted World. An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology* (London: Sage).

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