

used in a very broad sense in this book. Those unfamiliar with the differing therapies will not get any idea from the book of the differences in therapist skills required to get a 'reminiscence group' together from those required to conduct psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

In spite of its limitations, this book will do nothing to discourage those interested in working psychologically with the elderly depressed, and hopefully it will lead them to explore the literature further.

**BRIAN MARTINDALE**, *Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Paddington Centre for Psychotherapy, London*

**Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and Truth on the Psychoanalytic Stage.** By JOYCE MCDUGALL. London: Free Association Books. 1986. Pp 301. £25.00 (hb), £9.95 (pb).

Joyce McDougall is one of the most important and creative of contemporary psychoanalytic theoreticians. Being based in France, she is able to draw on some of the French psychoanalytic thinking and render this in a form which is intelligible to her British and American colleagues. She develops here the metaphor of drama and of analysis as a stage in which characters and scenarios from the patient's mind can be enacted. Although dealing with various fundamental kinds of disturbances, it is in the areas of perversion and psychosomatic states where she makes her most original and stimulating contributions.

She refers to perversions as "neosexualities"; her idea is that the person who creates a perversion has re-invented human sexuality, creating a new "primal scene" – one in which all the rules and roles are specified exactly, leaving nothing to chance, and which has the function of keeping intolerable anxiety at bay. The basic anxiety concerns various metaphorical levels of 'castration', involving restriction, humiliation, or even fantasied threats to life itself. In the perverse scenario many kinds of substitutive acts of castration are carried out in a playful way, thus mastering the anxiety through illusion. For example, a perverse man needed to see traces of his partner's faecal matter to bring him to the heights of sexual excitement; as a child his mother had given him frequent enemas and also regularly humiliated him by sending him out in the park with his soiled underpants tied round his head. According to McDougall, these complex sexual creations have an immense hold over the perverse person's life because they function to maintain mental equilibrium and are attempts to deal with profound insults to the sense of self and personal agency and autonomy.

In McDougall's view, psychosomatic patients are also attempting to ward off overwhelming anxiety of a primitive and psychotic nature. She describes how these patients are astonishingly out of touch with feelings and desires. For example, a patient was puzzled by how he could know whether he desired a particular woman or

not, although he had "noticed" that he gained an erection in her presence; the erection was as meaningless to him as any other physiological process. McDougall suggests that in their infancy and childhood these patients were not helped to recognise, acknowledge, and understand emotions, which therefore became frightening. These emotions, which were never given access to language, were not recognised as belonging to the self, and nor, at one level, was the body. Threatening emotions were therefore not allowed entry to the conscious mind, but instead were given expression in the body.

Like McDougall's previous book, *Plea for a Measure of Abnormality*, this is rich, evocative, and clinically useful.

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**Neighbours: The Work of Philip Abrams.** Edited by MARTIN BULMER. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. Pp 282. £9.95 (pb).

It is common to view neighbours or neighbourhoods as persons or places living or located nearby. However, they also are part of a process able to enhance the health and well-being of those who live within them. In times when economic changes worsen conditions for many persons, or when austerity policies reduce funds for needed services, neighbours take on particular importance.

*Neighbours* collects the unpublished work of the late Philip Abrams, the distinguished social scientist who directed pioneering research on neighbours who join families and friends in informal interactions that serve social functions; on neighbouring as a process of everyday relations which sometimes (but not always) appear altruistic and reciprocal in nature; and on neighbourhood care as an organised way to mobilise resources for indigenous social support and mutual responsibility.

This book, edited and integrated with excellent commentaries by Martin Bulmer, includes theoretical and structural perspectives on neighbouring, case studies of streets in various English locations, general propositions, and policy statements from empirically-based research. The overall conclusion is that neighbours can help reduce isolation, promote interaction, and serve psychosocial functions with epidemiological effects in improving health and well-being. The suggestion is that neighbours can have curative and preventive therapeutic possibilities for the elderly, infirm, and other members of society.

The book makes a major contribution to knowledge of neighbours in relation to social dimensions of mental health. It includes an impressive theoretical review which breaks new ground in psychosocial studies, empirical research on neighbouring in different locations, and provocative discussion of policy issues of

informal and formal neighbourhood services. It combines qualitative and quantitative methodology, employs microscale social studies and multiunit aggregate analyses, and reports research on the scope and quality of practice.

Bulmer reports that Abrams admired American studies of neighbourhoods, but it is difficult to find more important work on the topic than the research reported here. This book should win an appreciative audience among readers in several social sciences, academic disciplines, and professional fields in addition to those in mental health.

**BARRY CHECKOWAY**, *Associate Professor of Social Work, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA*

**Marriage and Family Enrichment.** Edited by WALLACE DENTON. New York: The Haworth Press. 1986. Pp 125. \$29.95.

*Marriage and Family Enrichment* has grown out of the marriage guidance movements. Beginning in Europe and the USA early in the 1960s, a number of counsellors and therapists (including David and Vera Mace in London) sought to develop methods to help couples actively attend to the untapped, underdeveloped strengths in their marital relationships. The aim was to reach people *before* severe problems arise and threaten a breakdown or motivate an approach to a doctor, social worker, or counsellor with a 'sick' marriage.

A gradual accumulation of experience in this preventative, 'well marriage' based approach to relationships has made it possible for Denton and his co-contributors to put together a practical little book. Those who are not familiar with the notion of enrichment will find the book a good introduction to the history, philosophy and practice of this group-based approach. Of particular note are the chapters which systematically explore how leaders can be trained, couples or families selected to participate in the enrichment groups, and timetables ('ground plans') made for the group meetings. The limitations to this approach are also discussed. The chapters are clearly set out, with illustrative case examples.

This book would be of direct interest to those working in community psychiatry, or where professional resources are turned toward prevention and self-help. The enrichment approach could be viewed as a contribution to the growing interest in a holistic/healing approach to couples and families.

**PETER FULLERTON**, *Institute of Marital Studies, London*

**Clinical and Pharmacological Studies in Psychiatric Disorders.** Edited by GRAHAM D. BURROWS, TREVOR R. NORMAN and LORRAINE DENNERSTEIN. London: John Libbey. 1986. Pp 394. £26.00.

This book represents selected papers from the 14th CINP Congress, held in Florence in 1984. It is divided

into eight sections, covering affective disorders (both pharmacological aspects and clinical studies); anxiety, panic disorders and stress; psycho-neuroendocrinology; schizophrenia; basic neuropharmacology; and Alzheimer's disease and psychogeriatrics. The emphasis is on new developments in biological psychiatry. There are papers on desipramine and central adrenoceptor function, circadian rhythms, biochemical correlates of L-deprenyl, antidepressants, and brain levels of thyroid-releasing hormone. There are a number of other basic neurochemical studies of central and peripheral biogenic amine receptors and theoretical discussions of classification, genetics, and diagnosis. The major emphasis, however, is on new pharmacological therapies. There are reports of new clinical trials of established medications, as well as new drugs, such as alprazolam, fluvoxamine, toloxatane, verapamil, sulpiride, and fenotatine.

Almost all the papers are concise and highly technical, reporting a large amount of data. This will appeal to those readers who want to make up their own minds about whether conclusions are warranted from the data presented. Despite their complexity, the papers are well edited and readable. Some of them have extensive introductions reviewing the background for these studies, which readers new to the field will find useful.

Overall this is a well written, well edited and well presented book covering many of the most exciting areas of biological psychiatry. At £26.00 it represents very good value.

**MICHAEL A. REVELEY**, *Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Psychiatry, London Hospital Medical College, London*

**Medical Mimics of Psychiatric Disorders.** Edited by I. EXTEIN and M. S. GOLD. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press. 1986. Pp 198. \$15.95.

This little book is part of a *Progress in psychiatry* series, each volume of which contains texts based on the papers of a selected American Psychiatric Association conference symposium. Its first two chapters, on "the psychiatrist as physician" and on neurological screening, promote careful physical examination supplemented by the comprehensive battery of investigations more fashionable in the US than here. Physical disorders are seen as diagnostic alternatives to psychiatric disease, and the psychosomatic dimension virtually ignored.

The section on seizure disorders, which takes up almost a third of the book, explores in detail the kindling model as an explanation for the behavioural manifestations of epilepsy and for the efficacy of ECT and anticonvulsants in affective disorder. Briefer chapters on hypothyroidism and on the HPA axis describe clearly, if unexcitingly, the abnormalities of neuroendocrine function found in depression, but with scant discussion of why these associations should occur.

Perhaps most interesting is the editors' contribution exploring the neurotransmitter receptor changes under-