

intervention or management. However, there are also weaknesses: there is some repetition between chapters especially where covering related topics; there is, perhaps for English readers, too much of a bias towards assessment instruments used in North America, such as the MMPI, the Rorschach and DSM-III-R. Perhaps more of a problem for the prospective buyer is the very breadth of content matter itself. Would the behaviour analyst be interested in the Rorschach? Would the child neuropsychologist be interested in adult personality testing? Someone with particular interests within psychological assessment would probably do better consulting specialist texts. Even the broadcast courses on assessment follow certain theoretical lines and ignore others, which would make books of narrower coverage than this one more useful. This I think is a real problem for this book, the topic of assessment is becoming so immense that a single volume covering everything is somewhat anachronistic. There is much of value in this book, but readers of this journal will probably find that much of the content is superfluous to their needs and they would be better off going for a more specialist text that can provide a deeper coverage than is possible in such a handbook.

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**Psychiatry: A World Perspective. Volume 3. Pharmacotherapies, Psychotherapies, Other Therapies.** Edited by C. N. STEFANIS, A. D. RABAVILLAS and C. R. SOLDATOS. Amsterdam: Excerpta Medica. 1990. 1001 pp.

Apparently, the earth viewed from space is disappointing in one important respect. Space travellers strain their eyes to see evidence of man's activities, but apart from tree lines in the plantations of Canada and some open-cast gold mines in Australia, nothing can be detected. This 'world perspective' suffers the same disappointment. Despite a panoramic view of the major classes of psychotropic drugs and other biological treatments, psychoanalysis and related dynamic therapy, cognitive and behaviour therapies, family therapy and therapeutic communities, and crisis intervention, it is difficult to be certain what is going on.

The editors insist that the papers (part of the proceedings of the 8th World Congress of Psychiatry) "all tie

together in a comprehensive, well integrated fashion" so that this volume, and the other three in the series, can be used "both as an updated reference textbook and as a fresh-from-the-print scientific journal". I cannot comment on the other volumes but if the editors' statement is true this must be the odd one out. Just to take one example chosen at random, there are 228 pages devoted to neuroleptic drugs. An introductory article gives two pages of review before launching into the description of a study involving family management and drug treatment, which is followed by another on treatment strategies to prevent relapse. We then have eight articles on the value of blood concentrations of psychotropic drugs, five articles on clozapine, nine on even newer drugs (e.g. remoxipride, risperidone, sultopride) in disorders ranging from schizophrenia to dysthymia and alcoholism, three papers on a neologism called neuroleptanxiolysis, one on their use as antidepressants, and we finish with seven papers on the neuroleptic malignant syndrome.

Where is the world perspective here? Most neuroleptics are used in the maintenance treatment of schizophrenia, often in depot forms, and given by non-medical staff who are getting increasingly proficient at detecting akathisia, dystonia and early Parkinsonian symptoms. Is this not relevant, or has it not been researched? All we get is a few misleading scars on the landscape which lack connections with the rest and omit large areas of relevant concern. This does not mean that the papers are redundant, although many are for different reasons; they duplicate other publications less well than the originals and at times the camera copies exhaust the eyes. The blurb just needs to be more honest. The following would be more accurate and might serve as a crude model for the proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Psychiatry.

"This is a compilation of the papers presented at the Congress. Most of these were organised in symposia concerned with special topics and were not edited before publication. Some were very good, some were mediocre and some were terrible; the reader has to decide which is which as no other guidance is given. If you have a special interest in the subjects covered by the symposia you may find part of this book valuable, otherwise you must expect to be disappointed."

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