asymmetry; the problems posed by left-handers and by gender differences; the development of asymmetry between birth and puberty; the relationship between cerebral lateralization and a variety of clinical disorders such as dyslexia, stuttering, psychiatric illness and neglect; and with many other topics. In almost every instance the authors (rightly!) conclude that further work is needed to replicate claims, to resolve inconsistencies, or to explain puzzles. And yet the progress made in the last decade is impressive, given the complexities of human brain organization and of human behaviour.

This book is well written and enjoyable to read. It is comprehensive in scope and each issue is treated in depth. The selection of the material is very fair. The illustrations are clear and extremely helpful (there are 51 in about 205 pages of text). There is a useful appendix on neuroanatomy and the chief neuropsychological disorders. Most impressive, however, is the authors' thoughtfulness when confronted by difficult issues; and their readiness to take a hard and critical look at insufficiently substantiated claims. This book can be recommended alike to psychiatrists, neurologists, psychologists and indeed to any reader intrigued by the paradox: left and right human brains look much alike, so why do they not function alike?

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A Guide to Social Skill Training. By ROGER ELLIS and DOROTHY WHITTINGTON. London: Croom Helm. 1981. Pp 240. £12.95.

The two major objectives of this book are to provide a practical guide to social skills training and to present a critical review of current social skills theory and practise. These objectives are well met.

In their comprehensive review, the authors examine theoretical assumptions from which the various procedures and applications of social skills training programmes have developed. Strengths and weaknesses of such programmes are discussed in the light of research studies. Shortcomings in evaluation of training programmes are rightly highlighted and the discussion provokes ideas for future development in this area.

As a practical guide, the book is of most use for those engaged or embarking upon training people for whom interpersonal communication is a prime professional activity. However, those engaged in other areas of social skills training or research are likely to find much that is useful, particularly in the chapters "Planning the Programme" and "Transfer of Training".

The text makes for slow reading in places, but this is compensated by the excellent description of chapter contents in the introduction, making it easy for the reader to extract those sections of most interest to him.

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The Mentally Ill in Contemporary Society. By AGNES MILES. Oxford: Martin Robertson. 1981. Pp 224. £4.95.

Despite its title this book is not a polemic but a useful and balanced review of recent studies on social aspects of mental illness. In her preface Dr Miles modestly disclaims comprehensiveness but her text covers the most important contributions to the sociology of mental illness from sociology and—it must in fairness be added—social and epidemiological psychiatry as well. The ground covered ranges from the highly abstract debates surrounding the existence and nature of mental illness through to the very practical consequences of mental illness for the family.

The book offers good summaries of published work and brings out and discusses salient findings. However its main weakness is its failure to touch on the difficult methodological and conceptual problems involved in doing or evaluating research in this area. Thus, for example, hysterectomy and having someone mentally ill in the family are presented as predisposing factors in mental illness without discussing the equally plausible hypotheses that the causal relationship might exist in the opposite direction. True, the book is relatively short and these sorts of problems are difficult but if Dr Miles at times had been more terse with her writing then some room might have been found for discussion of these issues.

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Three Further Clinical Faces of Childhood. Edited by E. JAMES ANTHONY and DORIS C. GILPIN. Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press. 1981, Pp 322. £14.75.

The three further faces refer to hysteria, anxiety and borderline. There are two dozen contributors to the book, fifteen of whom are from the child guidance clinic of the Washington University School of Medicine, St Louis, Missouri. The contributions come as the text of a "cross-fertilising exercise" between the clinic staff and invited consultants and a variety of city professionals. It is an exercise in self-examination as well as being an exposition on the stated topics. The book is divided into three sections, the least being on anxiety, each introduced and summed up by James Anthony. The chapters consist mainly of the dis-

cussion of individual cases in therapy and of the comments of the invited consultants.

The book reveals the sorts of things that happen in the clinic, the concepts upon which therapy is based, the type of language in which they are couched, the diversity of approaches which are tried.

It is not a resource book for all libraries, but students and practitioners may care to read it if they want to understand the resources, the time spent in individual therapy, the sorts of things that are actually said and the things which happen during the sessions in a distinguished American child guidance clinic. Some of the concepts, "True Fluid Borderline", for example, may be foreign to British clinic staff, but there is usually enough clinical information to be gleaned to give the reader an idea of the sort of way in which the child was responding to its predicament.

DAVID C. TAYLOR, *Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, University of Manchester*

Splitting and Projective Identification. By JAMES GROTSTEIN. New York: Jason Aronson. 1981. Pp 236. $25.00.

Freud thought of psycho-analysis as a 'meta-psychology'—a system striving to probe beyond the phenomenological level where 'unconscious experience' was not a contradiction in terms, but a meaningful expression. It is, therefore, not surprising that its concepts often appear difficult to pin down and none has proved more elusive than 'projective identification'. Rather than asking, "What does this mean?", it is probably better to approach psychoanalytical concepts with the question, "What could this mean?".

For those who are interested in exploring the meaning of *splitting* and *projective identification*, Dr Grotstein's book will come as a welcome contribution. He briefly traces the history of these mental mechanisms in Freud's work and their subsequent development in Klein, Bion and others. He concludes that "projection and projective identification are identical and interchangeable terms". There can be no splitting without projection and no projection without projective identification, i.e. location of the split-off part of the personality in some object.

These arid, technical statements are nicely given human form in short case histories and shared clinical experiences. The reader who perseveres will also be rewarded with some illuminating and thought-provoking epigrams. Examples are "Psycho-analytic psychotherapy is imagination in reverse" and ". . . affects and symptoms are but highly disguised, friendly warnings of lost selves seeking to rejoin us".

STEPHEN WILSON, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Littlemore Hospital, Oxford*

Guide to Psychiatry. Fourth Edition. By MYRE SIM. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone. 1981. Pp 765. £15.00.

A fourth edition of Professor Sim's single-handed opus in the space of eighteen years is indicative of its popularity and of the energy of the author.

The style holds the attention by being easy and readable but enlivened by polemics. The approach is coherent but is idiosyncratic and is rooted firmly in a sub-soil of psychoanalysis. Other possible approaches are not ignored but they are subjected to critical attack.

Much of the text has a nostalgic feel. One meets half forgotten terms like 'psychopathia sexualis' and 'lady almoner'. This nostalgia is reinforced by the refusal to use SI units.

The book attempts to cover a huge range of topics with very variable success. The coverage of psychology is so condensed that it could well have been eliminated whereas the chapter on social psychiatry is a gem.

In my opinion this guide is too idiosyncratic and is insufficiently detailed to be recommended as a main text for psychiatric trainees. On the other hand, it is too large for undergraduates or others wanting a quick revision of their psychiatric knowledge. However, I did enjoy reading this book. It would be ideal for the trainee leading up to his M.R.C.Psych. final who had developed reactive inhibition to his usual text. Here he would meet alternative points of view which would enliven his revision and make him think afresh.

CLIVE TONKS, *Consultant Psychiatrist, St Mary's Hospital, London*

Psychotherapy: Practice, Research, Policy. Edited by GARY R. VANDENBOS. London: Sage Publications. 1980. Pp 288. £15.50, £6.50 (paperback).

Psychotherapists should be able to demonstrate to the understandably hard-headed people who provide funds for medical treatments—government agencies, medical insurance companies—that what is done is effective and benefits the individual and society.

Effective change with psychotherapy might be demonstrated not only through the client's improved psychological functioning but also in alternative terms such as earning more money, utilizing medical services less, being arrested less often, spending less time in hospital etc. This book describes the methods of demonstrating effectiveness and benefit and the information at present available. So far these analyses have scarcely touched psychotherapy practice in Great Britain, but they will and we should be prepared.

For most of us greater interest attaches perhaps to the comprehensive review by Vandenbos and Pino of