

'trauma' to be repetitious without acknowledging the fact that many patients look forward to surgery as an end to pain, discomfort, or the invasion of malignancy.

The book includes many short case histories which make the text vivid, although the emphasis on individual psychotherapy tends to be a little dismissive of the value of the diagnostic psychiatric interview and physical treatments. The last chapter redresses the balance somewhat by underlining the need for rapid goal-directed psychotherapeutic intervention. The book should contain more emphasis on the strategies used to improve the ward milieu, communication between staff and patients, and the morale of staff. Equally, perhaps, the importance of understanding the premorbid personality traits should be stressed, because these so often predict the patient's attitude to the operation and contribute to his post-operative satisfaction.

These are minor strictures on an otherwise very readable and useful book.

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Studies in Neuropsychology: Selected Papers of Arthur Benton. Edited by L. COSTA and O. SPREEN. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1986. 351 pp. £36.00.

Professor Benton has not published a general comprehensive work on neuropsychology; his vast contribution to the field remains scattered throughout neurological and neuropsychological journals. This welcome volume contains seminal contributions that Benton and his collaborators have made to neuropsychological investigation. It represents, however, only a fragment of his output.

The book has been divided into nine sections, each dealing with a specific neuropsychological problem. Aphasia is the topic of the first section; the two papers in this section present a historical review touching on early descriptions of aphasia and the contribution of Freud to the interpretation of aphasic disorders. Sections II and III contain articles dealing with cerebral localisation and the appraisal of the method of double stimulation in which the problem of sensory extinction is discussed. Constructional apraxia and spatial abilities is the focus of section IV, and section V is devoted to the topic of reaction time and brain disease. The so-called 'Gerstman syndrome' is the subject of three articles in section VI, and the problems of hemispheric dominance and vision are discussed in section VII. The last two sections have a more direct relevance to the psychiatrist. One deals with the topic of developmental neuropsychology, which includes Benton's seminal paper 'The concept of pseudofeblemindedness' (1956) in which a then-popular term is carefully analysed and criticised. The final section contains two papers

useful in the psychiatric clinic: "Problems of conceptual issues in neuropsychological research in ageing and dementia" (1984), and "Normal observations on neuropsychological test performance in old age" (1981).

The collection shows many facets of neuropsychology, and offers useful guidance in testing and test design. The historical emphasis of most of Benton's articles provides a useful perspective of the history of neuropsychology.

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The Clinical Roots of the Schizophrenia Concept: Translations of Seminal European Contributions to Schizophrenia. Edited by J. CUTTING and M. SHEPHERD. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1987. 238 pp. £27.50.

Whoever writes the first history of psychiatric anthologies in English will have to observe that, since the earlier centos by White, Goshen, Hunter & McAlpine and Hirsch & Shephard, the compass of these useful (albeit non-historical) publications has gone from the general to the particular. The same historian will also have to say that this change has made things harder for would-be anthologists.

The old anthologies assumed little historical knowledge; to produce a good one it was sufficient to rummage one's library and choose the right morsels. 'Committed' anthologies, on other hand, demand such knowledge, as inclusion criteria entail a historical hypothesis. Old anthologies were difficult to review (omissions could always result from whims or quaint preferences); the new ones can be judged historically.

The book under review offers an *aperçu* of the history of schizophrenia. The material is heavily edited, but it is possible to gain an idea of the views involved. The translations are competent and clear. Because of its guiding historical hypothesis, work by Kraepelin, Bleuler, and their clientele is mostly considered. The inclusion of Kleist is more imaginative, but Wernicke is not mentioned nor indeed Meynert, particularly his work on amnesia. One can understand why Kahlbaum's *Catatonia* has been left out (it is available in English translation), but not why his superb 1890 paper on 'Heboidophrenie' has been omitted, nor why Daraszkievicz's classic monograph on 'Hebephrenie' and Jung's work do not get a mention.

The most glaring omission concerns French works. It feels often as if inclusion has been guided more by availability than by historical intelligence. For an analysis of the earlier vicissitudes of dementia praecox in France (which, incidentally, the Germans followed with worried amusement) would have shown that during the first decade of the current century the protagonists were Marandon de Montyel, Mongeri, Parant, Monod, Deny, and Roy, and during the second Mairat and

Margarot, whose superb monograph on 'démence précoce' appeared in 1920.

But it would be unreasonable to demand that this modest work, edited by clinicians, should meet high historical standards. As it is, it offers enough pabulum for younger colleagues to feed on for many a winter night. It should therefore be included in all psychiatric libraries.

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MCQ Examinations in Psychiatry. By JOHN M. EAGLES and DAVID A. ALEXANDER. Aberdeen: The Aberdeen University Press. 1986. 263 pp. £10.95.

Few trainees approaching the MRCPsych examinations will be able to resist this book, which contains 300 multiple choice questions. The authors have compiled five MCQ papers based on the format of the membership examination (pre-1987) and supplied answers, referenced to support their accuracy. Apart from having a good factual knowledge, knowing when to guess is the most crucial component of good MCQ technique. Rather than offer advice on this issue, the authors invite readers to make answers with various levels of confidence (certain, doubtful or guess), and from the results to draw up their own individualised codes of guessing practice.

MCQ examinations test the breadth of the candidates' knowledge; this book aims to stimulate 'revision' as well as sharpen technique. It should continue to serve this purpose despite the recent changes in the format of the membership examination.

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The Biochemical Basis of Neuropharmacology (5th ed.). By JACK R. COOPER, FLOYD E. BLOOM and ROBERT H. ROTH. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1986. 400 pp. £25.00 (hb), £12.50 (pb).

This is the fifth and much revised edition of the most popular introductory text on the biochemical basis of neuropharmacology, by three eminent neuroscientists. It distils the enormous literature on the biochemistry and physiology of the central nervous system with emphasis on neurotransmitters in relation to the drugs which specifically affect these functions. Current research trends in the neurosciences, such as the use of molecular genetics, are well synthesised with a critical appraisal of patterns of research design and the procedures used to obtain data. Two chapters on molecular neuropharmacology and on the modulation of synaptic transmission have been added to the classical chapters on cellular foundations of neuropharmacology, metabolism in the central nervous system, and receptors and

the major chapters on specific neurotransmitters including acetylcholine, catecholamines, and neuroactive peptides. The chapter on modulation of synaptic transmission exposes the simplistic conception of point-to-point transmission between pre-synaptic and post-synaptic neurones, and offers a framework for understanding the complexity of neurotransmitter/neuromodulator/neurohormone interactions and the flexibility necessary for intergrating neurochemical with behavioural mechanisms. The authors have adhered to their original aim of presenting authoritative overviews with a few selective references rather than large bibliographies. They have also maintained the lively and entertaining style in which previous editions had been written: an earlier edition engaged the writer in what appeared to be the hitch-hikers guide to the galaxy of neurotransmitters. It is an essential reading to students of neurosciences, and it should provide a working knowledge of the subject for psychiatrists in training.

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Understanding Mental Retardation. By EDWARD ZIGLER and ROBERT M. HODAPP. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. 292 pp. Price £27.50 (hb), £9.95 (pb).

This book unashamedly sets out to provide a summary of the work of the Yale School of the psychology of mental retardation. For those who have valued the frequent critical reviews of Zigler and his colleagues it provides an immensely readable summary which will be valued for its scientific rigour and breadth of interest. Although nearly a third of the references are to the authors' own work, it remains an authoritative text which may be used with value by postgraduate students of all disciplines.

At a time when the concepts of social adaptation and IQ in the identification of people with mental retardation are coming under critical scrutiny, the opening chapters provide a useful account of the issues involved in the debate and argue strongly for the Yale group's insistence on a developmental perspective and aetiological approach to classification. It is persuasively concluded that overzealous avoidance of labelling may be counter-productive in depriving the person with mental handicap of the help he or she needs. For the psychiatrist, the limited discussion of personality and motivational development in a single chapter, while of theoretical interest, will seem too detached from the problems of severe maladaptive behaviour and the difficult issues of their everyday management.

Of more interest are the reviews of specific interventions, particularly in young infants, and the critical account of the search for 'miracle cures' which will prove of particular value in helping to answer the questions of concerned parents.