

bookshelf

Modern trends in drug dependence and alcoholism

Ed. by Richard Phillipson

Butterworths, 86s.

This is a collection of original articles, the majority of which deal with the problems as they concern the United Kingdom—those dealing with the administrative aspects of drug dependence being inevitably out of date. It is perhaps chauvinistic to single out the British contributions, but these are of considerable relevance to those working in the clinical field and to postgraduate students in psychiatry and social work who wish to review the field quickly and grasp the concepts.

Mention of particular contributions is a matter of personal preference and interest, but I for one am delighted that, at a time when there are so many self-appointed and often vocal specialists in this field, these papers carry the stamp of knowledge and authority.

I particularly value the papers on alcoholism by Dr. Myrddin Evans and Dr. Griffith Edwards. The work of the Cardiff unit, and the original effort to integrate a service for alcoholism, should encourage us to focus our attention on the community. Dr. Evans places emphasis on the cardinal importance of work with the family, stressing 'profound family involvement'.

Dr. Edwards produces a typically erudite paper on the status of alcoholism as a disease. He reviews many concepts, particularly considers evidence on the genetics of alcoholism but finds it not proven, and indicates the need for a multifactorial approach in view of cultural

and social pressures that influence drinking behaviour.

There is an excellent chapter on drug dependence by Wilson and Lister, but it seems unfortunate that so much of it is devoted to cannabis, and, in my opinion, tends to over-emphasise the problem. I do not believe, for example, that cannabis psychosis is an established discreet entity in the United Kingdom. The difficulty of diagnosis seems to be twofold: 1) the absence of biochemical evidence of cannabis abuse in the individual, and 2) the elimination of other agents taken by the individual which may of themselves, or in combination, produce toxic confusional illness. I am also surprised to read the 'old hoary' about escalation from cannabis to other drugs. The problem in the young is one of poly-drug taking. It is regrettable that medically we are not objective when discussing the question of cannabis.

A brief terse review devalues the learning and experienced teaching of the contributors—to them my apologies.

John Owens

'In the Service of Old Age' The welfare of psychogeriatric patients

by Anthony Whitehead

Pelican Original, 5s.

Of the 6½ million old people living in this country, only 3 per cent are living in institutions. Dr. Whitehead, describing the psychogeriatric unit at Severalls Hospital, is one of those who seek to make this figure still smaller. The unit was opened

in 1961 and was among the first to extend the new approach to geriatrics into a psychiatric hospital. A wide variety of new ideas have been tried out, among the most striking being a boarding-out scheme for rehabilitated elderly long-stay patients; and an emergency service for those who suddenly come to grief at home, in which a team, chosen from volunteer doctors, nurses and social workers, visits patients' homes with equipment ranging from injectable drugs to firelighters and fuse wire.

The rationale behind the 'new approach' to geriatric care is that old people suffer when they are taken out of their familiar surroundings, and many die or develop new diseases as a result. Dr. Whitehead's account of the measures used to reduce the geriatric in-patient population is interesting, and the principles cannot be restated too often. His enthusiasm is obvious; and he makes no bones about the difficulties, especially those caused by staff and administrative doubts.

However, there will always be a group of people who will need permanent in-patient care, and the particular interest of this book is in the description of how these long-stay patients can be helped and their skills extended by better facilities. In the long run, the improvement in these patients must amply repay an initial outlay of effort.

Sarah Acland

The intimate enemy How to fight fair in love and marriage

by George R. Bach and Peter Wyden

Souvenir Press, 35s.

The significance of psychoanalysis is not only due to its specific theoretical contributions to the structure of the personality. An important side effect is the increasing attention given to every-day intimacies which fifty years ago received a limited, restricted, social, non-psychological interpretation except perhaps in literature.

The United States, more than any other country, has responded to psychoanalysis and the result is an increasing stream of serious and

popular expositions of psychoanalytic insights regarding close interpersonal relationships.

A less acclimatized British public receives these contributions with a mixture of surprise, incredulity, indifference, cautious welcome by a few and welcomed addition by a smaller group. Furthermore, in psychiatric circles which are hostile to psychoanalysis this style of thinking and writing is frequently dismissed as unscientific.

It would be a great pity if this book were treated thus despite its shortcomings. The writing is copious, repetitive, at times prosaic. There are no statistics, no figures, no controls. These drawbacks (the book could have been reduced to half its size without loss) however should not detract from its merits.

The theme is marital conflict and the message throughout the four hundred-odd pages is crystal clear. Spouses must learn how to fight at the right time and place, about the issues that matter, effectively, resulting in an enrichment of emotional, sexual and social life. There is little doubt that this is true.

But a word of warning is needed lest anyone should interpret this book as suggesting that marital happiness is achieved principally through resolution of marital conflict.

Married couples, professional writers and marriage counsellors, who are unlikely to make such an elementary mistake, will find something new and instructive in this book provided they can overcome the handicap of its style and sheer volume.

J. Dominian

The dynamics of personality by Lewis R. Wolberg and John P. Kildahl

Grune and Stratton, \$9.75

The authors of this book are both psychotherapists, the former a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Dr. Kildahl, a clinical psychologist trained in psychoanalysis.

Their book is divided into two sections. The first fifteen chapters

deal with the formation of personality, and the individual's usual way of dealing with personal problems, which may or may not be healthy. In the second part of the book the authors deal with contemporary problems that impinge upon personality, acting-out, dropping-out, sitting-in and the sexual revolution. The book is concluded by chapters on 'exercises in maturity' and 'guidelines for parents'.

Most of the chapters are fairly short and each has a summary. The shortness of the chapters is one of the problems—everything is so condensed that it becomes almost glib. The authors follow a strictly developmental line in their examination of the dynamics of personality formation. In their first chapter they present, without actually saying so, a behaviour-genetic analysis of the components of personality types. Unfortunately, from that point onwards, they forget about the genetic background to personality and concentrate too much on what may be considered to be the additive environmental influences in the moulding of personality.

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