Reviews

Group Psychotherapy. By FLORENCE POWDERMAKER, M.D., and JEROME D. FRANK, M.D. Harvard University Press, 1953.

The dynamics of group interaction and the potential possibilities of treating patients collectively, instead of individually, are only just beginning to be explored. Group therapy, like individual therapy, will probably always remain more of an art than a science, for to apply to a therapeutic group the experimental limitations necessary for accurate scientific observation is impossible. As an art its success depends primarily on the values expressed, in words or deeds, by the therapist, and only secondarily on the use of techniques based on scientific knowledge. Nevertheless all those interested in this subject will welcome the report of the group Psychotherapy research project of the U.S. Veterans Administration. The team engaged in the research is a large one comprising 24 medical doctors (of whom 10 were psychiatrists and the rest psychiatric residents), 5 clinical psychologists and 2 psychiatric social workers. Not only were group methods used for neurotics, but they were also tried for chronic schizophrenics who had not responded to other forms of treatment. By using a clinical psychologist or social worker as an observer at the groups an attempt was made to observe and evaluate the therapist's behaviour as well as that of the patients. The aim of all those taking part in this project was to limit themselves to one method of therapy best described as analytic in orientation. Detailed accounts are given of many group situations and the different ways of dealing with them adopted by the various therapists, and the general conclusions which were drawn by the team as to the efficacy of these different methods. It is obvious that a great deal of work has been done, and if as yet no very definite facts and conclusions have been drawn this is due to the great complexity of the problem, and to the difficulty of noting and recording the innumerable factors involved in group interactions, and determining which of them are significantly related.

E. L. HUTTON.

Rorschach's Test. 1. Basic Processes. By SAMUEL J. BECK. George Allen & Unwin, 1950.

The value of projective techniques lies in the fact that the test material evokes a unique pattern of response from each experimental subject, thereby revealing those unique qualities which are the distinguishing marks of personality. This same fact however also provides the greatest difficulty in the use of these tests for it provides no fixed standard by which to judge each person's performance. The only way in which this difficulty can be overcome is by the comparison of a large number of records, and the compilation of statistical data, and this valuable service has been carried out by Beck during the years since Rorschach published his original figures in 1921. The results of his work are published in the present edition, which differs from the earlier one published in 1944, in that it "rests on a much more solid foundation of quantitatively derived norms". For all those using the Rorschach test this is an extremely valuable reference book. For those unfamiliar with the test its value is somewhat lessened by the fact that Beck uses a system of scoring symbols which differs considerably from that used by the majority of workers in this country, based on the scoring system of Klopfer and Kelly. Not only does he use different letters for the same category, but certain categories are omitted altogether. Thus where Klopfer and Kelly use FK., K.F. and k for shading responses Beck uses FV. and Y. and where the former uses c for texture Beck uses T. This seems particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that the importance of these categories was realized and scoring symbols devised by Binder and Klopfer and Kelly before Beck introduced his own. Beck also entirely rejects the two categories of animal and inanimate movement, FM. and m. thus

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following closely the practice of Rorschach and Oberholzer. Everyone who uses the Rorschach test must decide for himself which scoring system he is going to adopt, but the limitation of movement response to anthropomorphic movements does seem to lead to considerable difficulties, and Beck himself says that in scoring certain abstract or inanimate movements as M. he does so "frankly as an act of faith in Rorschach and Oberholzer rather than from conviction based on validated findings".

This book will have to be judged on conjunction with the second volume in which Beck proposes to treat his methods of interpreting the data based on the statistical norms.

E. L. HUTTON.

The Psychoses of Passion (Les Psychoses Passionnelles). By J. BOREL. L'Expansion Scientifique Francaise, Paris (no date).

Pathological passion is not a nosological entity, but a symptom occurring in a variety of psychotic conditions, most frequently, according to the author, in manic-depressive and paranoid psychoses. It has, however, its own pathogenesis: irregularities of cerebral organization due to heredity and constitution are responsible for "dystonia" of temperament and "dystrophia" of character which represent the fundamental psychopathological features. Types distinguished are the querulatory and the vindictive type, hypochondriasis, passion of jealousy and erotomania. The querulatory and vindictive types arise from a clash between their "*tendances excessives*" and their social environment and are characterized by momentary exaltation of affect. Hypochondriasis is the anxiety of the paranoiac; if the hypochondriac believes his physical complaints are caused by somebody else, he is annoyed, protests and asks for vengeance and becomes thus a querulant. There is always both a paranoic and a cyclothymic element present in hypochondriasis, one or the other may prevail. The passion of jealousy may present itself as reactive, but its fundament is always a character anomaly; as a character trait it carries conviction; but if it is based on anxiety arising from fear of infidelity and hyperemotion it is easily turned into doubt. The character abnormality is also fundamental in erotomania: "Everybody gives his proper character in love."

Passion is considered a morbid "neoformation" which severs the ideo-affective relations between patient and his social environment; it creates an entirely subjective psychology and the rapport with the objective world becomes an illusion. The passionate maintains the continuity between past and future by his impulsive tendencies. Superficially the patients may appear imaginative, but in fact there is a poverty of thought. In their conduct the passionates are rigid, hyperemotional, categoric and untruthful.

This is an interesting and original attempt to abstract pathological passion from the various psychotic settings in which it occurs and to establish a common psychopathology and pathogenesis. The analysis of the problem is carried out in the consequent and persuasive manner so characteristic for French writers. There are a number of interesting case records and the literature on the subject is widely discussed. One can criticize the use of certain rather ill-defined terms which has its particular difficulties for the English reader. The author concludes his study with a plea for better knowledge of those emotional states which one only can signify by the name of "*états passionels*".

R. KLEIN.

Psychotic and Neurotic Illnesses in Twins. By ELIOT SLATER, with the assistance of JAMES SHIELDS; statistical appendix by JOAN MAY. Medical Research Council, Special Report Series, No. 278. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1953. Pp. 385. 21*s*.

The book is an account of 295 pairs of twins one of whom had, for some reason, shown mental or neurological abnormality. It is largely factual in content, providing the data on which any scientific knowledge of the aetiology of mental illness must be based.

It can unhestitatingly be recommended, and will undoubtedly be an authoritative source for many years to come.

W. ROSS ASHBY.

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