

## Book Reviews

easy read. This one is no exception though it is unusual in that although intended primarily as a contribution to philosophy its author is a young-ish American psychiatrist with academic qualifications in other disciplines but, on the evidence of the book's extensive bibliography, no previous publication other than a paper on ethical problem solving in medicine.

Dr Hundert's aim is nothing less than to examine separately three approaches to the mind and then to advance a unifying theory of his own which he calls "synthetic analysis". Following J. L. Mackie's distinction between conceptual, epistemological, and factual analyses he employs a tripartite framework devoted respectively to traditional philosophy, to psychiatry and to neuroscience. Each section contains a detailed summary of earlier work regarded as most relevant to the argument and the choice is revealingly idiosyncratic. Thus while Descartes, Kant, and Hegel understandably dominate the philosophical section, the differences between psychiatry and psychology are deemed "irrelevant" and Piaget and Freud become pre-eminent in the second section. In the third section the neuro-scientific approach is represented principally by the work of Fodor, Hubel, and Wiesel, but there is very little on the neuropsychology of memory or of neuro-linguistics.

The "synthetic analysis" itself turns out to be an Hegelian attempt to go beyond the phenomenology of experience by means of "a dialectical synthesis of rationalism and empiricism". Drawn freely from the material presented in the body of the text, it represents an exercise in epistemology advanced as a mode of explaining the possibility of the realization of valid knowledge. The author describes it as follows: "By embedding its dialectic, not merely in self-conscious individual experience but in biologically grounded cognitive mechanisms which by definition apply equally to all members of the species sharing our everywhere-and-unavoidable world, the Synthetic Analysis establishes the possibility of intersubjective knowledge as an internal solution to the foundational problem of epistemology". If they can understand it some readers may find the theory persuasive. Others may see it as little more than verbose otiosity, especially as the author's expressed preference for the Kantian tradition overshadows the insights of Ludwig Wittgenstein. For them the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* will contain the most appropriate comment: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent".

Michael Shepherd, Institute of Psychiatry, London

PAUL WILLIAMS, GREG WILKINSON, and KENNETH RAWNSLEY (eds.), *The scope of epidemiological psychiatry: essays in honour of Michael Shepherd*, London and New York, Routledge, 1989, 8vo, pp. xiv, 536, £33.00.

The *Festschrift* has become an honourable tradition of twentieth-century science, wherein contemporaries of a leading academic produce original articles around the themes that have dominated his (usually) working life. Often such collections are workaday stuff, interleaved with the occasional piece of interesting and new work. For who would hide a *Nature*-bound article in the relative obscurity of a large volume? And such collections do tend to gather more dust than readers. Whether this present volume, in honour of Michael Shepherd, Professor of Epidemiological Psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry and The Maudsley, will go the way of such *Festschriften* is unpredictable, but I suspect its sheer detail will keep it afloat. There are humdrum pieces here, but many are excellent summaries of the Present State of Epidemiology—a "P.S.E." of scientific detail that aptly reflects Michael Shepherd's work—and references and index are extensive and useful.

Professor Shepherd himself was long renowned amongst trainee psychiatrists at The Maudsley as a consultant to be feared. His habit of reading the medical notes while you presented the case was disconcerting to those expecting obvious signs of attention; the absence of those same notes, as a guiding source to the well-rounded psychiatric history that was expected, led to many unsubstantiated assertions and ironic Shepherdesque smiles. This whole procedural theatre was part of the Aubrey Lewis tradition, of searching cross-examination and public exposure of loose thinking, that Shepherd very much represents. Some decry it, as too

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red-making for tender trainees. But psychiatry without scientific toughness lapses quickly into jargon and belief. Compared to the Lewis-Shepherd system of clean and logical questioning, the harangues of anti-psychiatrists (whether dressed up as politicians, sociologists, historians or special interest groups) are messily bewildering and often trample tender buds.

Certainly this volume is aimed at representing a harder school of psychiatry, concentrating on the nomothetic rather than the idiographic approach. Freud is mentioned hardly at all, and then as an historical figure. History itself is well served by Jean Starobinski, William Bynum, and Michael MacDonald, although Klerman and Weissman's review of anxiety disorders insists on asserting the Foucaultian notion of mental illness as "an 'invention' of the Enlightenment". The social sciences are well represented, in particular by Annette Lawson's piece, wherein she calls for the "epidemiologist who can incorporate the best of sociological theorizing" and "the sociologist or social anthropologist who maintains always a critical and sceptical eye". A section on 'The evaluation of psychiatric intervention' is nicely divided into 'Specific treatment approaches' and 'Service organization', with David Watt's sensible outline of institutional psychiatry showing that evaluation in this area has been dilatory and that community care is equally lacking in coherent direction.

Perhaps the clearest message of this collection is that, despite its broad scope and detailed investigations, the epidemiological approach is a tortuous and demanding path. Interviews, schedules, trials, data, and statistics throng the pages, and yet so little is known for certain. By contrast much that is thought to be "known" has been discounted, and such solid unglamorous work remains the backbone of contemporary psychiatric research. The "English sceptical" line of succession, deriving from Henry Maudsley, and transmitted via Mott, Lewis, and Shepherd, is well served in this book.

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PETER J. MORRIS and COLIN A. RUSSELL, *Archives of the British chemical industry 1750–1914: a handlist*, contr. ed. John Graham Smith, BSHS Monograph 6, Faringdon, British Society for the History of Science, 1988, 8vo, pp. xi, 273, £14.50/\$31.00 (BSHS members £9.00/\$19.00), (paperback). Available from the Executive Secretary, BSHS, 31 High St., Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, Oxon. SN7 8LH.

This is the sixth in a series of monographs produced by the British Society for the History of Science. The work is not merely a useful "tool of the trade" (its stated aim) but well presented, and reasonably priced: moreover it offers enticing descriptions of primary sources awaiting study. The handlist covers records held by over 120 record offices, libraries and industrial firms, and includes the production of pure and inorganic chemicals ranging from pharmaceuticals to plastics and the manufacturing of acids, alkalis and dyestuffs. Whilst numerous pharmacists have been omitted, there is still much to interest the medical historian with entries ranging from descriptions of Lever Brothers' oldest invoice for soap, to the records of the Wellcome Foundation's research laboratories. Potential beneficiaries of the survey are the chemical industry itself; historians of technology and science; social, economic and business historians; and industrial archaeologists and archivists.

The preface gives a sobering description of the reasons why only a tiny amount of early material survives and of the dangers facing records that are extant. The lack of concern that fosters neglect of records is still evident: many firms, when approached, "cheerfully denied having any archives at all". Research was conducted by post and in person, and, as explained, there are inevitable inconsistencies in the detail of information given. It would be interesting to know which were the few firms that failed to respond, and which denied having any records. Persistence by the authors probably explains the fact that many county record offices are included, in spite of the prefatory note that many reported having no relevant records whatsoever.

The 180 entries, arranged by firms, cover products, location and history, indicate historical sources, and list the archives. In addition they are spiced with pertinent comments on content,