

BOOK REVIEWS AND NEWS

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GENETIC FACTORS IN "SCHIZOPHRENIA"

Edited by A.R. Kaplan (Cleveland, Ohio, USA). Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Springfield 1972. Hard cover with jacket, 18 × 26 cm, 698 pp. Price US \$ 55.00.

To give primary relevance to genetic factors does not necessarily imply that a disorder is incurable or less amenable to any particular therapy than it would be if the principal etiological variables for the same disorder were all environmental. To consider schizophrenia into the limits of "natural" diseases should not compromise every therapeutic attempt at the psychodynamic and sociocultural level. The narrow-minded organicism prejudicially closes the way to new therapeutic patterns and strongly limits the range and interpretation of new findings: this is the case of all dogmatic theories, which develop theories based on theories.

Findings are more valid the more interdisciplinary they are. And this is a fundamental merit of the volume, where more than thirty different contributions are gathered, involving psychiatrists, sociologists, cultural anthropologists, clinical psychologists, statisticians, and biologists, such as, among others, T. Abelin, V.E. Anderson, L. Bender, P. Dalén, H.J. Eysenck, E. Inouye, J.H. Karlsson, L.S. Kubie, E. Mayr, H. Mitsuda, Ö. Ödegård, K. Planansky, W. Pollin, S.C. Reed, E. Slater, H. Stierlin, M.E. Vartanian. This multidisciplinary approach helps us to provide a logical organization for the known facts and avoids circular elaborations of mere doctrinal hypotheses; therefore, it represents a valid way to develop a scientific theory and helps to dissipate the morass of existing misconceptions.

The book is divided into six sections. The

first sections provide an attempt to define schizophrenia and to examine problems relevant to the clinical, sociological, biological, and philosophical aspects of the definitions and their applications. Another section describes the different concepts regarding the transmission of genetic differences associated with different predispositions to schizophrenic disorders, and the research and theoretical bases for each of the different concepts. The fourth section provides a multidisciplinary approach, relating biological, chemical, psychiatric, psychological, sociological, and anthropological factors. The fifth section consists of critical discussions of the different genetic concepts in their multidisciplinary context. This is followed by A.R. Kaplan's concluding remarks, where sharp general considerations and a complete and very valuable review of the various problems may be found. The volume is completed by an extensive glossary of clinical, biological, and other technical terms, which will be especially useful to the nonspecialist.

The book appears to have perfectly met its purposes, particularly as regards the critical and comparative examination of the different genetic theories.

As Dr. Kaplan puts it, in his conclusive remarks, and as most specialists will probably agree, the complete examination of current findings reveals our present defective situation, in which the effects of interactions structured by the disorders may be confused with etiologic variables. Therefore, not only research should be continued and increased, but the duty should be felt of putting into effect more critical examinations and interpretations of the available facts.

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Acta Genet. Med. Gemellol. (1975), 24: 177