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A review of a book entitled Handbook of abnormal psychology [by H.J. Eysenck (Pitman, 1960)].

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BOOKS Reviewed

Publishers are invited to send books of wide educational interest for possible review in these columns. They should be addressed to The Editor, Symposium, P.O. Box 1013, Johannesburg, who will be glad to receive books throughout the year.

We are grateful to those publishers who supported us during the past year. We feel that our work and theirs has and should have much in common. Omissions of particular Houses do not originate from us, and we should, for our part, be happy to see a still wider survey of educational publications in these columns.



A review of a book entitled **HANDBOOK OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY** (Pitman Medical Publishing Co. Ltd.) may seem incongruous in a Journal devoted to education. The policy of this Journal has always been anti-exclusive; for we feel that educators cannot afford to ignore other disciplines and that an awareness of the thought and investigation in nearly related arts and sciences is not only desirable but essential. The reviewer here intends to offer little comment on the psychiatric value of this excellent publication but to consider whether it contains anything of immediate utility for those who are engaged in teaching.

Now although the highly specialised study of psychiatry certainly lies beyond the classroom, both teacher and psychiatrist handle human material and manipulate human relationships. There is, in fact, a healthy tendency towards co-operation between schools and neuropsychiatric hospitals, often linked by the child guidance clinic which is staffed by members of the hospital and which in turn services the schools. In Johannesburg certain psychiatrists and clinical psychologists have for several years joined groups of teachers in study groups to discuss the value of group dynamics in the betterment of interpersonal relationships at the educational level, and many thoughtful teachers realise that an increased professional awareness of the possibilities of preventing maladjustment in schools would reduce the growing demand on limited psychiatric services by later adults.

This new Handbook is the result of the quite extraordinary editorial capacity of Professor H. J. Eysenck of the University of London. His yearly output of writing is prodigious. He is, of course, assisted by some twenty specialists who between them represent some of the most active minds in this field. Entirely from the point of view of format, there was about the AMERICAN HANDBOOK OF PSYCHIATRY a greater sense of organisation. Both works are essentially reference works, and in the organisation and arrangement of his material Professor Silvano Arieti has stolen a march on his British colleague.

When one says that there is material in this work of Dr. Eysenck for teachers one is at once aware of the gulf between humanist and scientist that C. P. Snow recently handled so interestingly in "Encounter," and which one recalls Sir Basil Blackwell complaining about. Sir Basil said that after listening to three scientific colleagues in an Oxford commonroom for about half an hour the only sense he made of what they said was the last sentence: "Of course, there's always a risk that we shall blow ourselves up." The rest, couched in the nice jargon of a specialised discipline, simply failed to communicate to a man reared in the humanities. All one can say here is that a chapter entitled INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES AND PROBLEM - SOLVING BEHAVIOUR should be read because the writers have valuable and interesting things to say for teachers interested in intelligence. In achieving or attempting to achieve exactitude the scientist, like other professional people, chooses careful wording and has to invent terms. No lively-minded senior teacher will allow this to daunt him. Dr. Furneaux, the writer of this particular article is concerned with the examination of concepts such as "speed, power and difficulty," which in spite of the important role they must inevitably play in any theory of intelligence, have been developed in a fashion so haphazard that even their definition is a matter of controversy. This, of course, carries us near to a standing educational debate as to whether speed of reaction should or should not influence our estimation of intelligence. Is a slow but correct worker less able than a quick but unreliable one? Is this a personality factor? Is it connected with intelligence at all? Many teachers watching the administration of intelligence tests performed on time with a stop watch, have expressed their doubts about the interpretation involved here. Mr. Furneaux, in a most detailed examination of test material that he has been working on for some years, says of the Level Tests that "they have been deliberately designed in such a way as to provide the subject with the maximum possible reward for persistent effort." He agrees that the interpretation of scores is not altogether free from ambiguity found in conventional-type intelligence tests, but he feels that these tests do indicate an intellectual ceiling, without "providing any clue as to the relative size of the contributions to his effectiveness which are provided by the more fundamental attributes of speed, accuracy and continuance." "Speed, accuracy, continuance (perseverance)" are basic concepts in Dr. Furneaux's work. He points out that though these are recognised "it does not appear that any measurements have been made of the mode of development of these separate qualities." He hazards that as the child increases in all three attributes, "the result would be to reduce the contribution made by the effects of continuance and accuracy, so that eventually the most important determinant becomes speed alone."

An extremely interesting article by N. O'Connor and C. Franks discusses CHILDHOOD UPBRINGING AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS. It is a current view among most educational and clinical psychologists that the early mother-child-relationship provides a major source of influence on personality formation and hence on the behaviour of the later adult. This has led to considerable stress on the concept of "right relationships" between children and adults, and on the whole the results educationally have been enlightened and fruitful. The writers begin

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by confessing that whereas progress can be recorded in the fields of learning, motivation and knowledge of social behaviour, "a review does not support the idea that the psychology of the abnormality of children has made notable progress." They add that "studies which were popular twenty years ago concerning breast feeding and oral character still appear, but have not become an accepted part of general psychological theory and thus the foundation for more advanced research." Not all American psychiatrists will accept this, of course. They point out that the pattern has shifted to "different aspects of the mother-child relationship, such as maternal deprivation and emotional dependency." But they conclude that "although it has been shown that relationships between different types of discipline and types of behaviour in children are sometimes significant, the finds are not easily replicable." It will please some readers and alarm others to find that: "Even the simple statement that for their later mental health children need the care and affection of one mother, an 'obviously true' statement, has turned out to be hard to prove."

Blacker has estimated that from one to two per cent of all children need psychiatric attention each year. In Britain there is a tendency to separate backwardness and Mental Deficiency from behavioural problems, neurosis and delinquency. Official estimates of children in need of special education in the United Kingdom vary from ten per cent to as much as 16 per cent. Other figures reduce to an approximate one per cent backwardness and 0.1 per cent maladjustment. In an excellent survey of the literature concerning the relationship of home discipline to later personality development, the authors canvass the main research findings in this field. It begins with G. Watson's work in 1934, which showed that children from strict homes tended to become parent hostile and present more social and emotional problems in early adulthood and to have more anxiety. As Watson himself suggested later, he had not taken into consideration factors other than strictness, such as rejection and brutal punishment. Myers in 1935 found that pupil adjustment was quite unrelated to strictness of home discipline. A year later another study found that indulged children tended to shrink from responsibility. Symonds, in a most interesting study of permissive and authoritarian homes found that while children from the authoritarian were polite, orderly and obedient, they became as adults timid and withdrawn, and whilst the permissive were less obedient and more aggressive, they were self-confident and independent. Radke's work in 1946 showed that there was less aggression in children from autocratic homes — a somewhat unexpected finding, perhaps. But at a later stage, when children come before courts, an analysis of homes showed that the parents of problem children tend to avoid strict discipline. One cannot help feeling that the implication that they therefore promote a kindly discipline which fails, is wrong. They descend into that sort of leaderless anarchy which Lewis described so admirably earlier on. The choice before teachers and parents is not between a Spartan authoritarianism and chaos, but between these two on the one hand and that sort of intelligent creative discipline that both contains the child socially in an expanding framework of consenting co-operation and also allows him to discover himself as an individual valuable as a final reality. Educationists must never allow themselves to be faced with the unreality of Dictatorship or Chaos — it is a silly trick whether promoted by psychologists or teachers. G. Watson in 1957 found that children from permissive homes tend to have more desirable personality characteristics. Summing up, the authors feel that "the evidence, though by no means conclusive, suggests that strict parents and training produce an obedient and conforming but passive and possibly inadequate child, whereas a more permissive environment results in greater aggression but more independence and possibly better social adjustment." No one has yet sorted out the hereditary from the environmental factors involved here.

For the specialist reader this important work will have much that will be of interest. Its frank recognition of the inadequacies of present knowledge will convince many non-specialists of the integrity of the writers, whilst investigations into areas of research inadequacy will be most useful to younger educationists and psychologists who are trying to define interesting research areas. — B.W.R.

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A BOOK OF SCIENCE VERSE



by W. Eastwood (Macmillan).

Mr. Eastwood's collection of Science verse and his appendix of prose passages on The Relations of Science and Poetry makes a new and in some ways startling selection. For instance, of 243 pages of verse, 164 are nineteenth century or earlier, leaving approximately 80 pages to the twentieth century. Perhaps this is the balance that the compiler wanted, for he may have wished to demonstrate the continuing interest of poets with scientific matters, starting from such comments as

> Yet I forgat I to maken rehersaille
> Of watres corosif and limaille
> And of bodyes mollificacioun . . . (which is, obviously enough, Geoffrey Chaucer). Samuel Butler is never far from scientific speculation, either:
> Some hold, the heavens, like a top,
> Are kept by circulation up,
> And were't not for their wheeling round
> They'd instantly fall to the ground . . .

James Thomson, in the 18th Century demands:

> What grandeur can ye boast
> While Newton lifts his column to the skies
> Beyond the waste of time?

And William Cowper, the excellent Divine, reacted to the growing challenge of science by:

> God never meant that man should scale the Heav'ns
> By strides of human wisdom, in His works,
> Though wondrous: He commands us in His word
> To seek Him rather, where His mercy shines . . .

One can say unhesitantly that the first two-thirds of this book, which cover the period up to the end of the 19th Century, are full of surprises and make very stimulating reading. The final third is, one felt, surprisingly thin. The last quarter of a century—which surely must have touched the poetic imagination hugely, is represented by a bare twenty pages, clustering round the C. Day Lewis-W. H. Auden kernel. A compiler of an anthology of this sort owes it to his readers to present a balanced view of modern trends, and in this Mr. Eastwood has been, to say the least, unsatisfying. Three of the "younger poets," namely Patric Dickinson, Robert Conquest and John Wain, are represented. One would have thought that Louis Untermeyer, for instance—though no longer startling