

## Book Reviews

Michael H. Ebert, M.D., Editor

### The Erik Erikson Reader

selected and edited by Robert Coles, M.D. W. W. Norton and Company, New York, N.Y., 2000, 526 pages, \$35.00.

This book is remarkable simply because it contains so many great papers by Erik Erikson. This grand neo-Freudian has been entombed in innumerable medical school courses on human development, in part because his concept of development is easy to understand and easy to remember. Reading his actual writings, however, brings the reader back to the fact that he was a great original and a great writer!

After an introduction, Coles divides the book into 4 sections: children, psychoanalysis and human development, leaders, and moral issues. The 4 pieces on children are all from *Childhood and Society*; those from the section on psychoanalysis and development are from *Insight and Responsibility*; those on leaders are from *Young Man Luther* and *Gandhi's Truth*, along with a couple of other sources; and those on moral issues are from *Childhood and Society*, *Insight and Responsibility*, and *The Yale Review*. The samples of Erikson's writing are well selected and expose the reader to the sweep of his thought, from his keen delight at children (and his obvious capacity to play), through significant contributions to psychoanalytic and developmental theories, and on to his psychobiographical work and his preoccupation with social responsibility and ethical actions.

For the reader who is unacquainted with Erikson, this book provides a good introduction. The section on children illustrates his keen perception about their development in a social context, which augments the then-prevalent psychoanalytic theory. In the section on psychoanalysis, the paper on the nature of clinical evidence should be read by all psychiatrists in training (and reread by all of their teachers). In the same section, Erikson's efforts to put Freud in perspective are excellent.

Erikson delights in the use of English, his second language, and the book is a great deal of fun to read stylistically as well as for content. Much of the writing is conversational: "Jean Piaget was one of the discussants and was, as usual, both sharply rigorous in the pursuit of known method, and amusing in his asides" (p. 207). And one keeps coming across pearls: "Wisdom is detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself" (p. 206).

My only negative comments about this book have to do with the selection of readings. Erikson's developmental theory itself is not presented at its best, in my view. When one considers his contributions to psychoanalysis, his seminal paper "The Dream Specimen of Psychoanalysis"<sup>1</sup> might well have been included. My opinion is that Erikson's psychobiographies have not aged as well as his other writings; they are intuitive, speculative, and sometimes on shaky historical ground. I think they take up too much space in the book. Similarly, Erikson was powerful as an ethicist in that he asked centrally important questions, but I think that too much of the book is devoted to this aspect. I would certainly have added the fine paper that discusses

Bergman's film *Wild Strawberries*, which I think is Erikson's most thoughtful discussion of old age. Erikson was very aware of feminist critiques of his developmental theory, and he addressed them; I would have included his thoughtful responses to various critiques.

Of course, it is a measure of the greatness of Erikson that every reader familiar with his work would be disappointed that some essays are not included. Coles has done a good job of selecting the papers that are most meaningful to him, and his editorial commentaries are excellent, reflecting a familiarity with Erikson's work and also Erikson, the man.

Erikson strides, larger than life, through the pages of this book. In the modern age of credentials before all else, he would not have been on the Harvard faculty and might not have been viewed as credible to publish his books. We are all in his debt. As I mentioned, this book provides an introduction to his work, and although each devotee of Erikson will wish that the book was somewhat different, it is a good book, and I strongly urge that medical students and residents in psychiatry read it. I think it will be particularly helpful to faculty, jaded or otherwise, in setting their sights once again on old and valuable goals.

#### REFERENCE

1. Erikson EH. The dream specimen of psychoanalysis. *J Am Psychoanal Assoc* 1954;2:5-56

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### Bipolar Medications: Mechanisms of Action

edited by Hussein K. Manji, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.;  
Charles L. Bowden, M.D.; and Robert H. Belmaker, M.D.  
*American Psychiatric Press, Washington, D.C., 2000, 440  
pages, \$58.50.*

Mogens Schou, when recently asked why he had spent almost his entire scientific life focused on lithium, stated that there was so much to find out about it he saw no reason to turn to other topics. Although over 50 years have elapsed since John Cade's initial observations, the mechanism of lithium's remarkably specific therapeutic effects in bipolar mood disorder has remained elusive. Recently, however, there has been a convergence of evidence that suggests that a breakthrough in understanding may be imminent. The clinical usage of novel anticonvulsant drugs such as lamotrigine, gabapentin, and topiramate, among others, has kindled a resurgent effort to identify biological actions that might link these agents to lithium, valproic acid, and carbamazepine and possibly illuminate the underlying pathophysiology of manic-depressive illness.

*Bipolar Medications: Mechanisms of Action* is a definitive review of this work, summarizing the hypotheses and findings of over 50 investigators in the field and critically pitting their sometimes conflicting views against one another. In juxtaposition to clinical chapters summarizing data on the efficacy of valproate, lamotrigine, calcium channel blockers, and atypical antipsychotic agents in mania, as well as the issue of lithium withdrawal rebound, the editors have included additional basic reviews on the possible therapeutic role of inositol monophosphatase and protein kinase C inhibitors and the potential clinical importance of drug effects on G proteins, glutamate, and immediate-early genes. This is all done in an exceedingly attractive format, with excellent illustrations, uniform editorial style, and comprehensive (as well as recent) referencing. The attention to scholarship is evident throughout and clearly represents a level of achievement that is rarely found in multi-authored texts.

This volume is most suited for clinical and basic researchers in the field but would be of interest to clinicians hoping to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of current research and of possible pharmacologic advances in the near future. The only hesitation that might be put forward derives from the pace of current investigation and the strong likelihood that a revised edition will be necessary sooner than is usually the case. At present, however, there is no better summary of current attempts to answer one of the most compelling scientific questions in the field.

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### **The American Psychiatric Press Textbook of Geriatric Neuropsychiatry, 2nd ed.**

*edited by C. Edward Coffey, M.D., and Jeffrey L. Cummings, M.D. American Psychiatric Press, Washington, D.C., 2000, 1088 pages, \$157.00.*

The reborn field of neuropsychiatry is entering its adolescence. The annual meeting for this field is growing in stature, and several textbooks, including this one, are now coming out in second editions. The Coffey and Cummings textbook remains an excellent overview of the field of neuropsychiatry, particularly as it is relevant to the care of elderly patients. Although there are times that the relevance of neuropsychiatry to geriatrics is unclear, most of the authors have made a concerted effort to review the relevant literature on aging related to the condition under discussion.

The first several chapters provide an accessible introduction to the epidemiology and neurobiology of aging. The remainder of the book focuses on the wide variety of neurologic, psychiatric, and medical disorders seen in older individuals, and most chapters nicely integrate information ranging from clinical presentation to proposed or demonstrated mechanisms at the cellular and molecular level.

The quality of this textbook is so high that most chapters contain information that experts would find new, and the chapters have been written and edited in a fashion that makes them accessible to medical students or residents who have only an introductory knowledge of the disorders being discussed.

This is a book that should be made widely available to trainees, practitioners, and researchers. It supports the reintroduction of "neuropsychiatry" as a valid approach to understanding brain

and behavior and demonstrates that many of the distinctions between neurology and psychiatry are artificial. This artificial distinction between the disciplines is well illustrated by the last several chapters that focus on rehabilitation, ethical issues, the assessment of competency, and broad issues relevant to the care of persons with neuropsychiatric disorder. Each of these chapters is relevant to all practitioners who care for individuals with neuropsychiatric illness. This textbook sets a high standard. The care with which the editors and authors have integrated knowledge of neuropsychiatric disorders with the care needs of people suffering from them will provide a benchmark against which other texts are compared.

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### **The Psychopharmacology of Schizophrenia**

*edited by Michael A. Reveley, M.D., Ph.D., F.R.C.Psych., and J. F. William Deakin, Ph.D., F.R.C.Psych. Arnold Press, London, England, copublished by Oxford Press, New York, N.Y., 2000, 269 pages, \$55.00.*

We are at an interesting stage in the evolution of our field of psychiatry. We are approaching the time when the basic mechanisms underlying many psychiatric disorders will be elucidated and treatments will be developed based on these mechanisms. This is already happening with regard to treatment under development for Alzheimer's disease. Although we are not yet at this stage of knowledge regarding schizophrenia, many of the basic tools that will be useful in reaching this level of understanding are becoming available. In *The Psychopharmacology of Schizophrenia*, Reveley and Deakin pull together a group of authors whose chapters allow the reader to gain an appreciation of the advances and limitations that are the current state of knowledge regarding schizophrenia. The editors state: "We hope the reader will find that this book clarifies further the relationship between the brain, schizophrenia, and psychopharmacology" (p. x). They achieve this goal.

This book consists of 13 chapters averaging about 20 pages each. Topics are diverse and range from discussions of dopamine, glutamate,  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid, excitotoxicity, developmental issues, molecular genetics, structural and functional imaging, and neuropsychology to more clinical topics involving conventional and new-generation antipsychotics. The important roles of community treatments and combined psychosocial/pharmacologic treatments are also discussed.

The quality of the chapters ranges from good to superior. In many chapters, the large number of important and relevant studies is comprehensively reviewed. Some studies contradict other studies, and these contradictions are discussed. The better chapters summarize and integrate the material.

This book would be particularly useful for the reader who is looking to understand the state of the art of this field. References are included through the late 1990s. This book demonstrates nicely that the state of the art is full of clues and contradictions. We will eventually have a much more comprehensive understanding of this devastating illness. This book serves as an important milepost in that journey.

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### **A Cursing Brain? The Histories of Tourette Syndrome**

by Howard I. Kushner, Ph.D. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1999, 320 pages, \$16.95 (paper).

Those who are unfamiliar with Tourette's syndrome might consider some of its associated behaviors odd or unusual. These acts include involuntary motor movements, vocal tics, and compulsive behaviors. Perhaps what draws the most attention and curiosity from laypersons are the involuntary shouting and cursing that can occur in persons suffering from Tourette's syndrome. At present, there is an appreciation for the neurologic underpinnings that contribute to the symptoms of this disorder. This, however, was not always the case. *A Cursing Brain?* considers the histories of Tourette's syndrome and places particular emphasis on how external influences have affected the ways in which Tourette's syndrome has been conceptualized over time.

After an introductory section, the book begins with a review of the case of the Marquise de Dampierre. This member of the French nobility who lived in the 18th century was notorious for publicly shouting out obscenities. The prominent French physician Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard initially reported her case in 1825, and it became a cornerstone in how the spectrum of tic disorders was defined throughout the 19th century. The case of the Marquise de Dampierre was employed as a model case for this syndrome by other physicians despite the fact that many of those who referred to her case history in their descriptions of the condition never actually treated her. There is then a review of how George Gilles de la Tourette eventually described the symptoms and the course of a clinical syndrome associated with motor tics, vocal tics, and involuntary cursing.

The neurobiological underpinnings of Tourette's syndrome were not initially considered an integral part of the pathophysiology of this condition. Initially, patients were thought to be suffering from a weakness in will. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, patients were often times believed to suffer from a degenerative psychological disorder. With the ascendancy of psychoanalysis later in the 20th century, Tourette's syndrome was subsequently conceptualized within a psychoanalytic framework. With the advent of effective somatic therapies, the view of Tourette's disorder changed. What makes this book most interesting is that it describes how influential individuals, scientific data, and philosophical viewpoints all affected the ways in which patients with tic disorders were understood and treated.

As *A Cursing Brain?* is a history book and not a textbook on Tourette's syndrome, those interested in the most up-to-date information regarding this condition should not purchase this work. Nevertheless, the book cogently describes how patients with Tourette's syndrome have been viewed over time and provides an interesting and heuristic example of how the art and science of medicine do not occur in a sterile data-informed vacuum. The book highlights that medical practice can be transformed by both philosophical and societal influences as well as professional biases. In short, *A Cursing Brain?* is a very interesting history-of-medicine book that considers how Tourette's syndrome has been understood and viewed over the past 2 centuries.

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