

of *Psychoanalysis*, a task which enabled him to take all the current psychoanalytical theories and systems to pieces and compelled him to construct some kind of overview embracing the ideas of Freud and the British analysts — such as Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Michael Balint and Donald Winnicott — who had been active when he himself had been a student. His growing conviction that psychoanalysis is not so much concerned with the causes of human behaviour as with its meaning, and is better seen as one of the humanities than a science, does enable him to side-step many of the objections to psychoanalysis made by those such as Gellner and, as we shall see, Eysenck. However, nowhere in the 25 essays contained in this collection does he apply his mind to the issue which clearly troubles critics, namely the extent to which psychoanalysis is a self-fulfilling explanatory theory, whether it be of meaning or causes.

Meanwhile, there are others such as Professor Erdelyi, of the Department of Psychology at Brooklyn College, who struggle to salvage as much of Freud's expansive theory as modern insights in cognitive, physiological and neurological psychology will permit. Erdelyi's book uses case histories, laboratory studies, newspaper cuttings, visual art and poetry in an imaginative if occasionally wayward examination of Freudian theory. What emerges, however, suggests that what was lasting in Freud's conceptions is their general preoccupations. The specific elements of that gigantic canvas — the separation of mental functioning into id, ego, superego, theories of dream function and the nature of repression — just do not stand up to the relentless scrutiny of the laboratory scientists or the critical clinician. A particularly good example concerns Freud's pleasure principle. Freud assumed that pleasure/positive reinforcement resulted from tension-drive reduction; that, in short, pleasure was the cessation of pain — the so-called "Nirvana principle". The physiological facts suggest

otherwise. Pleasure and unpleasure appear to be not opposite sides of the same coin but two different coins altogether. More uncomfortable for psychoanalysts is the fact that the "pleasure" arising from stimulation of the pleasure centre in the brain is general in nature and *not* sexual as a great deal of psychoanalytical writing and excavation argues.

The most fundamental criticism of psychoanalysis, however, remains the same. 30 years on from when Hans Eysenck first mounted it. It is the fact that there is no convincing evidence that patients do better under analyses than they do under some other form of psychotherapy or psychiatric treatment. Such criticism does not come only from without. Anthony Storr, himself a Jungian analyst, has concluded that "the evidence that psychoanalysis cures anyone of anything is so shaky as to be practically non-existent". And Brian Farrell, a philosopher by no means hostile to analysis, has admitted that the impact of psychoanalysis

cannot be justified on the grounds that it contains a body of reasonably secure or established knowledge . . . it [is] only too painfully evident that analysis does not contain any such body of knowledge.

Characteristically, Eysenck puts the case with more exuberance and venom. At best, he concludes his devastating polemical assault, psychoanalysis is "a premature crystallization of spurious orthodoxies; at worst a pseudo-scientific doctrine that has done untold harm to psychology and psychiatry alike". The final verdict, however, is not in and it is doubtful that it will be within the lifetimes of the authors of these books. What does seem unarguable, however, is that in the one hundred years that have passed since Freud began to build his theoretical framework the theory still lacks any substantial validity and his school remains beleaguered. □

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Scent of semi-science

Steve Blinkhorn

The Intelligence Men: Makers of the IQ Controversy. By Richard E. Fancher. W. W. Norton: 1985. Pp. 269. \$17.95, £14.95.

AT LAST, it seems, the soot and whitewash school of controversy has had its day. Here is a book about the IQ debate which is at once absorbing, informative, deftly written and, if the expression can be pardoned, a thundering good read.

The Intelligence Men is that rare inversion of the natural order of things: a first-rate book based on a second-rate notion. The notion, that one may discover why particular figures in the history of a debate took up their respective positions by examining their personal histories, is only as good as the sample of biographical material available and the accuracy with which it is interpreted; in any case, the standards of proof required of such a notion are far inferior to those proper to the debate itself. Fortunately analysis of this sort intrudes very little into Fancher's account of the lives and work of a dozen or so major contributors to the long-running dispute over IQ.

The delicious consequence of this plan has been a book reeking of the dubious scent of semi-science in the making. Where often a scientist is known to a wider public only as an author of published work, here that work is set in a personal context which illuminates and informs even when the technical level of the narrative is less than satisfactory. Pasteboard textbook characters have pasteboard theories to peddle. But the facts that Spearman registered for a PhD with Wundt (and took seven years to complete it), that Terman's introduction to psychology was a book on phrenology and that amongst Yerkes's motivations for seeking a career as a physician was the fact that it paid better than being a farmer, bring an unusual sparkle to academic history.

Kamin's brush with McCarthy's subcommittee on unAmerican activities; Jensen's origins as the son of a lumber and building-supplies dealer, and habit of conducting recorded symphonies at home with a chopstick for a baton; Binet as a child being forced by his father to touch a cadaver; Burt labouring to devise raw data to fit published statistics — none of this is relevant to the logic of scientific discovery. But, as Fancher suggests, the psychology of the scientist is at least as potent a force in determining the direction of theory. This, of course, is a view that can be taken to extremes. There was once a claim that Spearman, being British and therefore a monarchist, was driven to expect a single factor of intelligence, whereas Thurstone, being American and more democratically inclined, preferred a federalist view with several distinct abili-

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ties ranking equally. Nothing so crude enters Fancher's book; rather, there is an elusive subtlety to the drift of the narrative that no review can hope to capture.

It is all the more unfortunate, then, that the last chapter reads like a hurried afterthought. In attempting to come to a balanced view of the current state of the debate, the author steps outside his role of historian and immediately becomes unconvincing. This is a pity, but a small blemish. As the origins of intelligence testing recede beyond living memory, this book does a real service by reminding us that present academic fisticuffs have their origins in an honest but often naive and blinkered struggle to make sense of human variability. No doubt future historians will judge present efforts to have been equally blinkered: but in what proportions are we now naive and honest?

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Go for Valhalla

Michael Spencer

The Joy of Science: Excellence and its Rewards. By Carl Sindermann. *Plenum: 1985. Pp.259. \$16.95, £16.15.*

SAMUEL Smiles, the Victorian author of such uplifting texts as *Self-Help* and *Men of Invention and Industry*, has been enjoying a revival of esteem on the New Right. Britain's Prime Minister has told unemployed teenagers to go out and start their own businesses, while one of her ministers has coined the immortal phrase "Get on yer Bike". We are urged to model ourselves on those who pursue success with relentless enterprise and determination.

Carl J. Sindermann is the Samuel Smiles of science, and has followed his earlier book *Winning the Games Scientists Play* with a further guide on *How to Get On*. His technique is modelled on that of Smiles: to examine in detail the upward climb of those who have achieved success. By "success" he means not the winning of Nobel prizes (a chimera that motivates more scientists than would ever admit it), but a job-satisfaction extending to administration and the manipulation of grant-giving bodies.

He cheerfully admits in his preface that the prospect of such a book did not endear him to his colleagues, who may have suspected that their own careers (thinly disguised under fictitious names) would be dissected for all to see. Undaunted, at late evening cocktail parties and professional meetings he pursued his chosen paragons long after their normal bedtimes, so as to analyse what made them tick.

The chapter on "The Ascendant Female Scientist" was, says the author, written against the strongly stated advice of all his female acquaintances, who were still smarting from a section entitled "Sex in the Laboratory" in his previous book. None of them, he says, would admit to the classification of "friend" after it was published.

Why, then he do it? The answer appears to be that Dr Sindermann is an old-fashioned scientific optimist who believes that all science is exciting and wonderful, and that anyone who succeeds in it is to be applauded and emulated. (In this he may have something in common with the august figure who once opined in print that it would be a pity for the world to blow itself up with nuclear weapons because that would halt the onward march of science.) Hardly anywhere in the book — whether discussing choice of research topic, career transitions or interactions with the outside world — does he discuss the problem of deciding whether a project is socially desirable. The word "ethics" does not appear in the index.

Dr Sindermann has little time for the also-rans, except as examples of where one can go wrong. He would certainly not agree with a friend of mine, who emerged limply from a two-hour session with a visiting celebrity to remark that the failures were much more interesting to talk to. He has harsh words to say about the Burnout, the Fade-out and the Guaranteed Loser. The latter category includes the Unwary Activist, who may (he says) damage his or her scientific credibility by espousing causes for social reform. The author classes such misguided people along with the Dilettante, the Hobbyist and the Chronic Underachiever.

Since most of us (by definition of that uncompromising word "excellence") are not going to reach Dr Sindermann's Valhalla of success, why should anyone read his book? The upwardly mobile graduate student with a taste for ruthless self-advancement will have his own ideas on how to make it. For those who have reached what the author calls the "midlife crisis" it is probably too late. The ageing scientist (to whom a chapter is devoted) is not going to believe a word of it.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the book is what is missing from it. There is the same moral vacuum in the Royal Society's message to scientists, that they should learn how to manage the media in support of their chosen way of life. It is possible — just possible — that the current public mood of suspicion and alarm about the outcome of some scientific research is due not to inadequate public relations, but to a failure among scientists to think about the repercussions on ordinary people. Politicians have made the same mistake. □

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