a demand for conformity which is basically intolerant and totalitarian. Fortunately, it appears that as described here (most check-lists contain at least 30 items, and some over 80) the whole exercise of assessment and behaviour modification is so time-consuming that the dangers of 1984 are unlikely to be realised on a large scale.

JOHN WILSON

Basic Psychiatry By Myre Sim and E. G. Gordon. (Pp. 306; £3.75.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1976.

That this book is in its third edition in eight years is a sombre reflection on the presumed orientation of the readers to whom it is directed ('medical students, nurses, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists etc'), and on examination systems which perpetuate an unreflecting regurgitation of facts. It is written in the form of outmoded examination-style questions, some of which make questionable implicit assumptions ('What are the constituents (*sic*) of the unconscious?' p. 22), and dogmatic, generally uncritical, and sometimes misleading answers which give little guidance to the inexperienced reader in forming a balanced opinion on controversial topics.

Though some bias is inevitable, it should be minimal in a basic text, especially if no references are given. In this book, a bias in favour of a crudely presented, psychoanalytically-oriented psychopathology extends to dismissing Jaspers' 'Psychopathology' as 'all oversimplified' (p. 43), to the omission of Schneider's concept of first rank symptoms in the section on schizophrenia, and to the condensation of Durkheim's contribution to the literature on suicide to six words (p. 162).

Some sections are more carefully written—for example, alcoholism and some parts of the large organic and psychosomatic chapters—and the book is well produced as would be expected from this publisher. In view of the negative loading, however, and the quality of some of the competitors in the paperback field, the book cannot be recommended.

A. C. MACFIE

Biological Foundations of Psychiatry Volume 1. Edited by R. G. Grenell and S. Gabay. (Pp. xxiv+589; illustrated; \$42.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1976.

This is the first of two volumes published under the auspices of The Society of Biological Psychiatry, with the aim of providing authoritative reviews of a series of biological topics of particular importance for psychiatry. This volume deals with neurophysiological topics (including excellent accounts of hemispheric specialisation by David Galin and of evoked potentials by Charles Shagass), with drive and motivation (including an important chapter by James Olds), and with levels of consciousness. The contributions are of high quality and this volume will be a valuable acquisition to any neurological or psychiatric library.

J. L. GIBBONS

Biological Foundations of Psychiatry Volume 2. Edited by R. G. Grenell and S. Gabay. (Pp. xviii+454; illustrated; \$42.00.) Raven Press: New York. 1976.

The second volume of this two-volume set contains further detailed reviews of biological topics important for psychiatry. The authors are experienced research workers, and the reviews are, in general, extensive and scholarly. There are four main themes in this volume: Biochemical Correlates of Behaviour; Psychopharmacology; Biology of Psychosomatic Illness; Integration. There are, for example, lucid accounts of the genetics of schizophrenia and of affective psychosis, as well as of the biochemistry of these two disorders. The editors admit that they have been selective in their choice of topics, but they have chosen well. Like the first volume, the second is beautifully produced and well worth a place on a library shelf.

J. L. GIBBONS

Clinical Psychiatry By James Willis. (Pp. 472; illustrated; £10.50.) Blackwell: Oxford. 1976.

Dr. Willis is the author of the psychiatric text in the *Lecture Notes* series. His little book is popular with medical students, not only because it is relatively inexpensive. Now, with the same

publisher, Dr. Willis has written a larger and inevitably much more expensive textbook of clinical psychiatry. Although the author's preface does not tell us what readership he had in mind, the blurb says that it is 'particularly useful to doctors studying for the MRC Psych. examination'.

The book certainly gives the wide coverage of adult clinical psychiatry that Dr. Willis tells us he intended. There are clear accounts of the concept of psychiatric illness, of general psychopathology, and of the main clinical syndromes. Recent research findings are clearly described, without any personal bias being allowed to intrude. Epidemiology gets much more consideration than in most short texts. The book is generally well-written in an interesting and sometimes entertaining style that is free from both pomposity and delusions of omniscience.

Nevertheless, the book is only adequate for the MRC Psych. candidate as an introduction to psychiatry. Clinical descriptions are rather short and sometimes oversimplified and treatment is very briefly discussed. An MRC Psych. candidate would be expected to know that behaviour therapy is sometimes effective in obsessional neurosis, but he would not learn that from this book.

J. L. GIBBONS

Modern Synopsis of Psychiatry

Edited by A. M. Freedman, H. I. Kaplan, and B. J. Sadock. (Pp. xlv+1366; illustrated; price not stated.) Williams and Wilkins: Baltimore. 1976.

This large book, with more than 1300 pages, is a shortened and modified version of a much larger two-volume work with more than 2500 pages and well over 200 authors, some of them very eminent indeed. The larger work has been criticised for being too comprehensive, for containing too much irrelevant material. The synopsis suffers from the same defect, if to a lesser degree, and it is unfortunate that the editors were not more ruthless in deleting fringe material. The book has been produced with medical students in mind. Will they not be put off by its length? Should they be expected to read