

Declaration of Interest: None

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Letter to the Editor

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Spectrum disorders survive by creativity

Henry O'Connell is to be congratulated for putting forward such a clear exposition of evolutionary theory in psychiatry and psychology in the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* 2004; 21(1): 37.

I myself am very much an evolutionary psychiatrist and support the broad trends of evolutionary theory. Nevertheless, I see evolutionary psychiatrists' idea that the psychosis are adaptive as simply absurd. People do not produce creative work during a psychosis.

The reason that spectrum disorders have survived is that people at the edge of the spectrum are much more creative. It is not the psychosis that produced the creativity but people

on the edge of the psychosis or without the full genetic input to produce a full-blown psychosis.

O'Connell is correct when he points out that workers with a Jungian background tend to suggest that evolutionary theories 'resonate with Karl Jung's ideas of the "collective unconscious"'. This is another absurd idea.

There is no doubt that the future is evolutionary psychiatry but at the moment it contains quite a number of ideas suitable for the 'shredder'.

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Book Reviews

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Fundamentals of Psychopharmacology

Fundamentals of Psychopharmacology. Third Ed. Brian E Leonard. Wiley: Chichester, 2003. 520 pps. ISBN 0471521787.

The author of this now familiar textbook, Brian E Leonard, is Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology at the National University of Ireland, Galway and President of the Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum (CINP). He is also a visiting professor at Maastricht.

The book has been thoroughly revised and a chapter has been added on clinical trials of psychotropic drugs. The author has a self-confessed allergy to proof reading which leaves a few mildly irritating (but intriguing) misdemeanours strewn randomly about the pages, eg reserpine was not used to treat hypotension and James (not John) Parkinson

described paralysis agitans.

However, there are no major mistakes. One other, equally benign, criticism is that some of the illustrations were apparently multi-chromatic in their earlier life and their monochrome existence in the book may not do them complete justice. However, I would emphasise that these are but minor points.

This is a book well worth having. It continues to be an authoritative and readable guide to its subject. I have absolutely no difficulty in giving it a wholehearted recommendation.

Leonard's style is user-friendly and written with warmth, clarity and the right dose of scepticism. Psychiatrists of all grades should digest its contents thoroughly.

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