resonance imaging, nuclear medicine and digital vascular imaging are equally impressive.

Faced with such an array of investigation, a logical choice can be difficult. Of course the local radiologists will help by knowing the capabilities of their own equipment. Nevertheless another informed view, to be contemplated at leisure, can do no harm and may well put a different point of view, if such guidance is available. *Imaging in Internal Medicine* can be recommended without hesitation as Robert L. Siegle of the Medical Centre of San Antonio, Texas and his team of contributors go a long way towards acting as effective guides through the present maze of diagnostic procedures. Housestaff, radiologists in training and, dare one add, physicians should find this text extremely useful. Unlike the proverbial Texan product, it is quite modest in size, very modest in price and obviously good value for money.

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Just a Word Doctor, Bernard J. Freedman. Pp. xii + 131, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987. £4.95 (paperback)

This paperback is subtitled 'A light-hearted guide to medical terms'. It consists of delightful essays first published in the *British Medical Journal* between 1977 and 1986; sometimes updated, corrected or rewritten but still just as enjoyable. The origin of medical terms is always a nightmare to anybody other than a classical scholar, and also to most medical students nowadays. Once the medical term is explained, as in this little book, then out bubble many pleasurable facets of disorders, investigations, therapeutics and other day-to-day usages. It is really a bedside pleasure book, which the reader can dip into at leisure. To make this easier there is a general index and also an index of foreign words; both are most helpful etymological sources. The author has enjoyed plunging into the depths of the Oxford English Dictionary and he also acknowledges the advice of many experts, linguists, anthropologists, anatomists, and an expert in hieroglyphs amongst them. There is a particularly felicitous acknowledgement to Digitus Medius Dexter for typing this work. This book is recommended for students of any age and every discipline.

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Manual of Cardiology, K.D. Dawkins. Pp. 318, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £11.95.

This pocket-sized manual of cardiology was written as a practical guide for students and junior medical staff, and

it has achieved its purpose admirably for the graduate but I think it is perhaps too detailed and technical in parts for the student, e.g. myocardial scintigraphy in coronary disease, technique of coronary arteriography and angioplasty, to cite two examples.

This little book is packed full of useful practical information and, although the author apologises in the foreword for his 'didactic' approach, it is a commendably balanced approach which is successful in giving a fair and up-to-date view of cardiological thinking in a number of areas where differences of opinion exist, e.g. surgical intervention in coronary artery disease, classification of cardiomyopathy, medical vs surgical treatment of pulmonary embolism. The sections on symptoms and signs in various conditions are particularly good, but the author does have a regrettable tendency to advise 'routine' haematology and biochemistry in a number of conditions where these tests are unlikely to be helpful in diagnosis or management, e.g. aortic dissection.

What about criticisms? The major criticism is in the actual format and presentation of the book. The rather small print is often dense and tightly packed in pages unrelieved by adequate headings, illustrations or tables. The tables themselves are generally poor and usually placed at the bottom of the page in even smaller print bunched up on the left side of the page. They are difficult to read and sometimes left me slightly bemused, e.g. Table 5.1 on the causes of pulmonary oedema (page 91). There are one or two other minor criticisms of content: embolism is not mentioned as a possible important complication of mitral valve prolapse, the alternative explanation for 'reciprocal' ST depression in myocardial infarction – multivessel disease – is not considered and the rarity of the 'Austin Flint' murmur not pointed out to the unsuspecting student who hears a mitral stenotic murmur in a patient with aortic incompetence.

These criticisms aside, this is an excellent practical little book on up-to-date cardiological thinking in a number of common cardiac conditions for both hospital doctors and general practitioners, as well as senior students. Not the least of its merits is its modest price, particularly when compared with the more expensive cardiological tomes on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Medicines in the Marketplace, D.G. Green. Pp. xii + 80. The IEA Health Unit, London, 1987. £5.95.

This is an interesting contribution to the current debate on changes which should be made to our health system. It proposes two major changes in the present compulsory system of licensing of medicines, and financing their use. Firstly, legislative restraints and control on the introduction of medicines should be replaced by a voluntary system, the responsibility for their use devolving to a much greater extent on patients who would, or would not, give their informed consent to treatment after full explanation of the risk-benefit issues involved from better

educated doctors. Secondly, patients who can afford to pay full market prices for their prescribed medicines should do so, while those who cannot would be exempted, or subsidised through pre-payment certificates.

Its author, David Green, has obviously undergone a series of political and economic metamorphoses since his days as a Labour Party activist, and his discussion has the refreshing naivety of a recent convert. Those with longer experience in evaluating medicines and administering drug budgets know that there are no simplistic answers to the problem of drug costs, therapeutic innovation, and the complex relationships between government, pharmaceutical industry, prescribing doctor and patient. Nevertheless, progress depends upon wide discussion of radical proposals by interested parties, and this short readable paperback from the Institute of Economic Affairs Health Unit will be read with interest and profit by all who are involved in developing or implementing health care policies.

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Soviet Medical Reviews. Section B Physicochemical Aspects of Medicine Reviews – volume 1, edited by Y.M. Lopukhin and N.I. Pirogov. Pp. viii+426, illustrated. SMR Harwood Academic Publishers, Switzerland, England, France, USA, Australia, 1987. £225.00.

This is the first volume of one section of a series of Soviet Medical Reviews devoted to subjects within the general area of physicochemical aspects of medicine. The preface states that the purpose of the series as a whole is 'to make accounts of recent medical advances in the USSR more readily and rapidly accessible to the scientist who does not read Russian'. Other sections of the series are intended to review Soviet advances in the fields of cardiology, haematology, immunology, virology and oncology.

This volume demonstrates the extent of research which is taking place in universities in the USSR into various aspects of physicochemistry and its interfaces with medical science. It covers subjects as diverse as mathematical modelling for immunology, a bone-marrow derived mediator which stimulates antibody production, the physicochemical mechanisms by which biomembrane barrier function may be impaired in disease, the crucial role of lipids in the function of hepatic microsomal systems, a trophoblast-specific beta-glycoprotein, changes in chromatin with age, and the biological role of DNA endonucleases.

This attempt to lift the language curtain which hinders our access to the results of medical research in the Soviet Union is welcome, and other volumes are awaited with interest.

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Therapeutic Factors in Group Psychotherapy, edited by S. Bloch and E. Crouch. Pp. xii+342. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987. £8.95 (paperback).

This paperback edition stems from a review of the subject published in 1981, and constitutes an expansion of the author's ideas. At the outset they identify 10 specific psychotherapeutic factors, a distillate of intensive study covering all areas of group activity. In subsequent chapters they assess these factors in the context of theory and research; concurrently they indicate landmarks, from the pioneering psychoanalytic work of Foulkes and Slavson (among others) in the mid-40s, to the systematic classification proposed by Corsini and Rosenberg in the mid-50s and developed by Yalom in his publication of 1970. His model of learning from interpersonal action has much influenced the authors in their own classificatory work, and is closely examined. The final chapters concern contemporary models, i.e. groups of factors.

The overall impression gained is that the component elements have been meticulously examined, but in so doing the overall psychotherapeutic *process* has been lost, and evades examination. In this connection the full implication of transference is given insufficient weight; true, it is a psychoanalytic concept but it refers to a phenomenon that affects all human relationships and cannot be replaced satisfactorily by alternative concepts. Similarly, regression and repetition-compulsion, phenomena which arise in any therapy situation, group or individual, are not mentioned at all.

The author's pessimism about therapeutic achievement is based on a publication 10 years old, and would not reflect the attitude of present day group analysts.

This publication is unsuitable for novices, but should interest the experienced clinician and especially the researcher, not least for the comprehensive research data contained in the appendix.

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