Essentials of Clinical Anatomy, Ralph Ger and Peter Abrahams. Pp. vii + 530, illustrated. Pitman, London, 1986. £24.95.

I have always been drawn with interest to books on this subject, but nearly always find that the yeast of clinical and functional information is never quite enough to sustain the dough of sheer anatomical description. I think this is an inherent and almost insuperable problem in writing a text of this sort. I sometimes wonder if it would not be better to present these aspects on their own, leaving the pure anatomy to the anatomical text books, but possibly the result would be too slim a volume to succeed. Given this limitation the authors have produced an attractive and readable text, with extremely clear diagrams and illustrations, and I found it to be one of the best in this genre. The account of anatomical language, its origins and meanings, is very welcome as also is the chapter on 'People in Anatomy'. I think the review questions are very helpful, and go part of the way to providing my ideal, that is a consideration of the clinical aspects separated from the descriptive anatomy; and at a very reasonable price for the quality of the production. I can thoroughly recommend it to any one who is trying to acquire or keep up his knowledge of practical anatomy.

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Food Additives, Erik Millstone. Pp. 163, illustrated. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1986. £2.95, \$8.95 (Australia), \$9.95 (New Zealand), \$6.95 (Canada).

How can this work best be described? It is a plausible and well written polemic, openly committed to activating consumers and changing a regulatory system, which incidentally takes major swipes at the food industry, toxicology, government, and by implication, many aspects of medicine.

Dr Millstone's theses are that we eat far too many food additives, often without knowing of their presence in our diet, that they are used solely to benefit the food industry, which skilfully persuades us to take ever more unnecessary and unhealthy processed foodstuffs; the toxicity testing of additives meant to protect us is scientifically incapable of doing so; and that the official UK regulatory system intended to preserve the public health has been politically subverted instead to further industry, whilst being so concealed by the Official Secrets Act that the consumer cannot find out why decisions have been made or make his own judgements. Further, the UK requirements for labelling foods do not give nearly enough information and the EEC agricultural policy is wrong.

To buttress the claims, we are given some figures and some suggestions about additive supply, more helpful information about the general types and uses of additives, chapters about the principles of regulation, of toxicity testing and types of food 'intolerance' (mainly childhood hyperactivity and allergy, but with other concerns ranging from cancer to neurological damage) and proposals for improvement.

Some of the facts are well and even entertainingly presen-

ted, often with references to national and international publications, and to consumerist broadsheets. But, not all the information is even summarized, nor are arguments against the author's beliefs given a fair exposure. This is most striking in the shallow versions of the scientific debates over saccharin, aspartame and antioxidants, the serious misunderstanding of toxicity testing, which the author appears disingenuously to believe consists of mechanical procedures given simple results not requiring interpretation, and the very partial citation of the painfully honest RCP/BNF report on Food Intolerance and Aversion.

Whether the regulatory system really has been subverted by industry can be assessed by honestly examining the decisions made and by questioning those involved. Dr Millstone's beliefs run far ahead of the facts.

The book is fun to read although its biases do become irritating when it traipses over science. It has some medical force in stating that our diet is by no means well balanced, that we accept junk food too readily and that we are exposed to a surprising variety of substances in food – of natural and industrial origin – of which too little is known. There will be support for the calls to tell the public more about the work of the regulatory system and for better food labelling.

Overall, this is really a pamphlet to enjoy in its vigour, but take it to stimulate the mind and not to mould your opinions.

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Key Facts in Histology, Ray C. Henrikson and Gordon I. Kaye. Pp. xi + 463. Churchill Livingstone, New York, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, 1986. £29.00.

In this book the authors' views of the key facts in histology are presented concisely and without the aid of illustrations. The telegraphic style is remarkably lucid but difficult to read for more than a few minutes at a time. There is proper emphasis on the correlation between structure and function though scant attention is given to the increasingly important information provided by immunocytochemical and nucleic acid hybridization techniques. There is, for example, no mention of antigen-receptors, major histocompatibility and other differentiation molecules now widely studied in human lymphoreticular cells and their malignant counterparts. The book is intended and suitable for students who wish to review and update their knowledge of histology but is unlikely to be prescribed reading in the medical and dental schools of British Universities.

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