

as the assessors are distinguished members of our profession, no case can be made for the danger of lowering standards unless the Editors were to fail in their function to a fantastically improbable extent.

Sutherland suggests that each section of the Association be given space. It is quite evident that this would, in principle, only make explicit a state of affairs that already exists. I refer not only to the grouping of papers in the Table of Contents but also to the fact that the assessors—over 70 in number—adequately represent many, but not all, groups of psychiatric interest. It is because of this that space will be given to their interests.

Sutherland's proposal, building on this situation, admirably seeks to break a vicious circle with a long history behind it. I can see nothing against it unless it be assumed that any paper submitted by a dynamic psychiatrist is automatically assumed to be of low standard. It is hardly credible that this should be the view of Peter Sainsbury and with him the Executive Committee of the Research and Clinical Section.

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DEAR SIR,

There is a profound reason for the schism in psychiatry to which your correspondents have referred. We have to face the fact that the psyche is not a suitable object for a scientific enquiry. Karl Jaspers, following Kant, has pointed out that the psyche is an *idea*, i.e. a metaphysical concept under which we subsume subjective experiences. (*Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (1922), second edition. Berlin: Springer, pp. 473-475). Although I require the idea of the psyche as a locus of my personal identity, "I never attain to a systematic unity of all appearances of inner sense" (*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, English translation by N. Kemp Smith (1929). London: Macmillan & Co., p. 557), a systematization which is objectively valid and based on determinism of scientific theories. Thus I am left to choose between innumerable, often contradictory personality theories, the theory accepted by Dr. J. D. Sutherland being one of them, and I am confronted with the chaos revealed by the paper, published in the *Journal*, under the title, "Opinions on Psychotherapy: an Enquiry" (*Journal*, April, 1966, p. 351).

Psychiatrists like Dr. J. C. N. Tibbits who are convinced of the importance of the subjective approach and who try to help their patients to gain a better and healthier form of existence, using intuition and not scientific explanation as their medium, do

not have to rely on non-systematic anecdotal constructs. They can base their treatment on a non-scientific form of systematization, combining Husserl's phenomenological approach, which makes the data of experience fundamental, with the existential approach which makes human freedom fundamental. The metaphysical dogmatism of existential philosophy as evident in Heidegger and accepted by M. Boss can be avoided (Ledermann (1965) *Existential Psychotherapy and the Principles of Scientific Medicine*, Sixth International Congress of Psychotherapy, London, Selected Lectures, pp. 68-74, S. Karger, Basel/New York).

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DEAR SIR,

An American perhaps should not intrude himself into a discussion about policy matters concerning *The British Journal of Psychiatry*. But recent letters to the Editor criticizing the *Journal's* supposed policy of essentially presenting only papers containing data stimulate me to the following comment. For some years now, British physicians have been understandably disturbed by the medical "brain drain", a good deal of which has been to the United States. It would be tragic if, in return, British psychiatry were to import the worst features of American psychiatry, namely, an exaggerated sense of the validity of psychiatric intuition leading to uncontrolled observations and untestable theories.

*The British Journal of Psychiatry* occupies a position of pre-eminence; please do not do anything to alter this position.

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#### SIR AUBREY LEWIS'S COLLECTED WORKS

DEAR SIR,

Correspondents in your March, 1968, issue (pp. 355-356) find Professor Stengel's review of Sir Aubrey Lewis's Collected Papers "less than generous", and seem to take particular exception to the implication that they could discourage the young psychiatrist. The review seemed to me critical but just, carefully conceived, witty and extremely well written. This goes to confirm what we