

the general reader, and would be excellent resources for Neurology residents. The Canadian contributions of Drs. Gauthier and Kertesz were of their expected high caliber, mixing good reviews with the latest research findings. Even in these sections, however, the personal research interests of the writers overshadowed appropriate information. In the one chapter on imaging of Lewy Body Disease, for instance, author Armin von Gunten focuses on his own interest, MRI imaging, rather than the far more clinically useful and important possibility (only available as yet in Europe) of using SPECT with dopamine transporter ligands such as Iodine-beta CIT to specifically delineate LBD.

So who can be recommended as the intended readership for this book? Students and Neurology residents may be unwilling to spend the \$240 list price for a 184 page book. Clinicians and related health professionals? Will they benefit from a book that will still leave them in need of clear guidelines for diagnosis and therapy of dementia at the end of their reading? Perhaps this is a volume for the few highly motivated family physicians who crave the latest news on research frontiers in neuroimaging. And of course the cognitive neurologists who want to keep abreast of the thinking of European colleagues.

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STROKE ESSENTIALS FOR PRIMARY CARE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE. 2009. Edited by David Alway, John Walden Cole. Published by Humana Press. 202 pages. Price C\$90 approx.

This hard covered ~200 page volume is a pleasure to read. The book is multi-authored and includes chapters by Harold Adams, David Alway, one of the editors, Steven Kittner, John Cole and Anand Vaishnav among others.

The book includes 12 chapters, which cover a spectrum of stroke-related topics of interest to clinicians and will prove useful not only to primary care physicians but as well to emergency room physicians, internists, residents and house staff, and also will provide a valuable review to physicians who manage stroke on a day to day basis.

As is explicit in the title the book provides practical and essential information required in the management of stroke of various types, including ischemic stroke, parenchymal and subarachnoid hemorrhage. Initial chapters discuss diagnosis of stroke subtypes, hyperacute and acute and preventative management of ischemic stroke and intracranial hemorrhage and ruptured and unruptured intracranial aneurysm. The second half of the book includes chapters on specific topics including headache and stroke, hypercoagulable states, carotid artery stenosis and cerebral venous thrombosis.

A credit to the editors is the ease of readability and minimal overlap of information between chapters. The chapters are well laid out. References are not overly extensive and easy to utilize. Several chapters provide key information in tabulated format or in a summary form at the chapter ends. A somewhat more liberal use of figures related to imaging, particular vascular imaging would

have been welcome. As well information for patient resource access would have been helpful particularly for primary care physicians.

Overall I recommend this book as a valuable and practical resource. I enjoyed reviewing it and will direct our residents, who pass through our stroke clinic to read this as an excellent foundation for developing expertise in stroke management.

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SPLENDOURS AND MISERIES OF THE BRAIN. LOVE, CREATIVITY AND THE QUEST FOR HUMAN HAPPINESS. 2009. By Semir Zeki. Published by Wiley-Blackwell. 234 pages. Price C\$33 approx.

From the dawn of recorded history humans have struggled with eternal questions concerning love, the origins of creativity and how one finds the elusive entity called human happiness. Dr. Semir Zeki has approached these difficult questions initially focusing on his long history of scientific research involving the visual system and then branching out into the realm of art, music and literature to help define the problem and search for answers.

In the *Phaedo*, Plato comments:

“The brain may be the originating power of the perceptions of hearing and sight and smell, and memory and opinion may come from them and science may be based on memory and opinion”¹ Mentation in Plato’s conceptualization proceeds by an orderly sequence involving: 1) reception of external sensations 2) based on this acquired sensory input; reasoning can take place, which 3) takes into account memory and previous experience. The problem of where love, creativity and happiness fit into this conceptual framework continues to be unexplained.

Dr. Zeki has attempted to update this concept by exploiting experimental and human fMRI investigations into the visual system, which have demonstrated the essential importance of specific areas of the occipital cortex intimately concerned with colour and appreciating movements. He suggests that the brain is a knowledge acquiring machine, which uses sensory information to activate “inherited” conceptual systems, which are further developed using “acquired concepts”. These conceptual pre-programmed hereditary systems, if not activated during early life by the appropriate sensory input, fail to develop thus, in a sense erasing these conceptual programs. If adequate sensory input occurs, these programs are activated and can be continually modified during one’s lifetime by numerous inputs from multiple brain areas. Human fMRI data suggests that specific brain areas are activated by specific sensory inputs such as the pictures and voices of loved ones, beauty and nature. Since the underlying cortical regions associated with more complex human behaviours have not been well defined, Dr. Zeki then uses multiple examples in art, (Michelangelo, Cezanne and others) literature, (Dante, Thomas Mann) music, (Wagner) and psychiatry (Freud) to flesh out his ideas concerning the brain’s conceptual framework for the human creative experiences.

The paradigm shift from direct experimental approaches on brain function using the visual system in the initial chapters of the book to the more difficult areas of human behaviours involved in love, innovation and happiness can at times be difficult to follow. Although fMRI studies can suggest some sites of activation during the experiences of beauty and love the multiple other subtle inputs coming from memory engrams, environmental clues and expectations are very difficult to quantitate. The experience of artists, authors and musicians can open doors to the mysteries of human behaviours but they only give us a shadow of the neural networks that the brain can tap to decipher the macrocosm we inhabit.

I enjoyed reading this book and appreciated the attempt of the author to bridge the expansive chasm between experimental result on visual sensory input and the intimate human experiences for which we all strive.

The study of brain function and, in essence, the study of man has and will always have an element of mystery. This volume is an attempt to shed further light on the quest to uncover the fabric of this mystery and succeeds in opening the door a little bit further.

REFERENCES

1. Plato: The dialogues of Plato. 3rd ed. Jowett B, editor. London: University Press, 1924, p. 242.

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Ruminations: Memoirs of a Psychiatrist from India. 2008. By Jagdish “Jack” Dang. Published by Trafford Publishing. 359 pages. Price C\$37 approx.

Jagdish Dang was born in 1940 or 1941 (he’s not sure which) in a part of India that’s now in Pakistan. He’s presently a geriatric psychiatrist in the United States. *Ruminations* is his engaging story. I approached this book with scepticism. What could be so interesting about the memoirs of a New Jersey psychiatrist? However, I was pleasantly surprised and was won over from the start by Dang’s candor and entertaining style.

After a childhood and medical education where most decisions were made for him by his large family, Dang struck out for America almost by accident and ended up staying for the rest of his career. The early part of the book describes growing up as a shy youngster in India. It’s always interesting to read about cultures and customs different from one’s own. When he was about seven, his home town became part of Pakistan and Dang describes his family’s flight to India during a time of tribulation. His dual Indian/American background allows him to draw parallels between that time of violence and the events of September 11, 2001 near his adopted American home town.

After medical school Dang took the American certification exam, thinking only that he’d at least get a day off and a couple of nice pencils out of writing it. After work in a tuberculosis hospital in Delhi, he moved to the US for his internship, well-warned about the evils of alcohol and licentious American women. Dang knew

very little about the country before he arrived and tells entertaining stories about his culture shock. Unfamiliar with most American food, he spent his early days living on orange juice and strawberry ice cream.

Dang went on to specialize in psychiatry and, despite his original intention to return to India, he ended up staying in the United States. He did make a trip back to India, allowing himself a couple of weeks to find a wife, a quest in which he was successful. It’s hard for a Scottish-Canadian reader like me to imagine marrying a person I’d barely met or spoken to but, by Dang’s account, his marriage has been a successful one.

He describes the challenges of bringing up children in a new country, trying to adapt traditions he’d been taught to a new environment. Dang went on to become active in medical societies and appears to have had a fulfilling career. Late in the book, he offers his thoughts on Indian and American medicine and culture. He’s able to be relatively objective about the two traditions, pointing out the good and the bad in each.

Overall, this is a quick and entertaining read most physicians will enjoy, particularly those who’ve survived culture shock themselves.

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