

but it was important to have the process documented in detail.

The present volume is directed to another aspect of this second question. In following up the patients who were studied ten years ago, Myers and Bean ask whether the consequences of the treatment received, in the form of recovery and adjustment, are also class-related. The answer is a clear affirmative. And again, while this is hardly surprising, the consistency and pervasiveness of the findings could lead to a reconsideration of and possibly to changes in present views of the problem of mental illness and in current ways of organizing psychiatric care and treatment. As will be noted below, however, the authors are themselves the captives of a traditional medical-psychiatric point of view, and their proposals tend to trivialize the importance of their own findings.

After a thorough search of psychiatric agency records, combined with field surveys, the investigators were able to locate 99 percent of the original group of patients who were to be included in the follow-up study (patients originally in treatment with private psychiatrists were not included for reasons having largely to do with original commitments regarding confidentiality and the required approval of the physicians). Interviews, focused primarily on questions of personal and social adjustment, were completed with 88 percent of the former patients who were no longer hospitalized, and with a member of their families; a matched control group of persons who had never been treated for a mental illness was also interviewed, on similar topics.

A central finding is that, of those patients who were hospitalized at the time of the original study, the percentage still hospitalized ten years later increases steadily from 39 percent in the highest social classes (designated I-II) to 57 percent in the lowest (class V). About four-fifths of these patients in each social class had been continuously hospitalized. There are no class differences in the percentages who have died in the interim—about 30 percent of the original cohort. The percentage now living in the community declines from 31 in classes I-II to 10 in class V. This finding is not altered when statistical controls are introduced for sex, age, race, religion, marital status, previous hospitalization or its length, type of hospital, or type of psychiatric treatment. Clearly, social class is the most significant of the variables studied in determining an

individual's chances of being released from a psychiatric hospital to return to life in his community.

For those now in the community, the findings with regard to current psychological and social adjustment are more complicated. Members of the higher social classes, for example, are more likely to be receiving outpatient treatment either privately or in clinics. There is the interesting and at first apparently anomalous finding that among those who had originally been hospitalized the higher social class groups are more impaired psychologically, whereas among those formerly in clinic treatment it is class V that shows most current impairment. In their discussion of these findings the authors attribute the differentials both to the social control functions of hospital psychiatrists, who, they argue, may use more stringent criteria for the release of lower-class persons, and to unequal access to resources, psychiatric and otherwise, of the different class groups.

There is much more in the volume—other measures of adjustment, responses of family members, economic and social role performance patterns—which serves to underscore and strengthen the general trends outlined above.

Follow-up studies are still relatively rare in this field, and each new one must be welcomed. Further, this study is unique both for the time span covered and for the attention given to social class. Its findings bear directly on the planning of psychiatric facilities and on the training of psychiatrists. It is my view, however, that the force and impact of the work are limited by the authors' implicit and unquestioning acceptance of the contemporary medical-psychiatric model of mental illness and treatment. Since they accept the psychiatrist's definition of the problem, their solutions are restricted to tinkering with the system or patching it up; essentially, they exhort the psychiatrists to behave better as psychiatrists. One would never guess from reading the analyses and the proposals that more radical approaches to definitions of illness and to forms of treatment have been proposed in recent years. More searching questions might have been raised about, for example, the relation of mental illness as deviant behavior to other forms of social deviance, about the role of psychiatrists as social control agents in the very definition of some problems as "psychiatric," and perhaps about possibilities of non-psychiatric forms of intervention.

The book merits and will undoubtedly receive serious attention from administrative psychiatrists. It does not, however, challenge their basic assumptions. More radical critics of the present system of psychiatry will find much support here for their views, and the book could serve as a resource for the development of more far-reaching and more profound proposals than are offered here or were intended.

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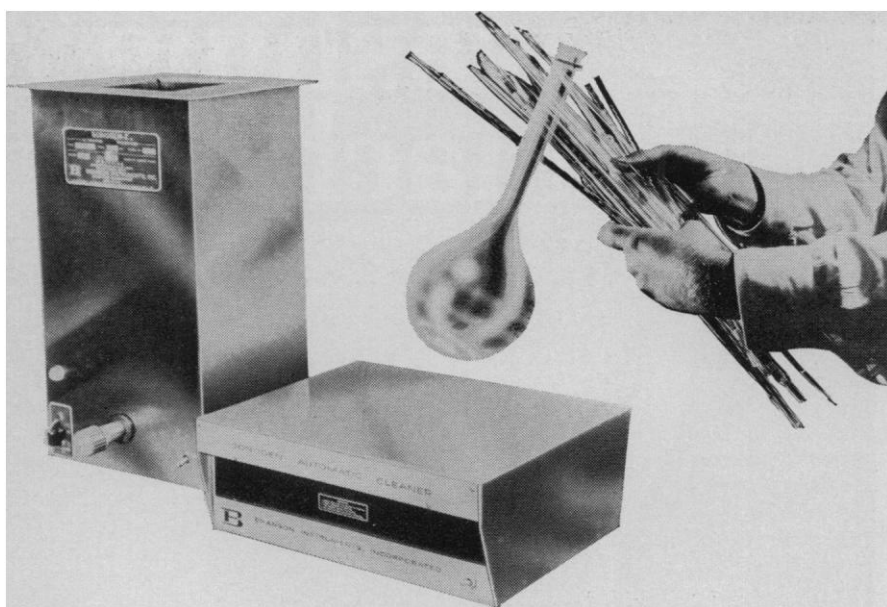
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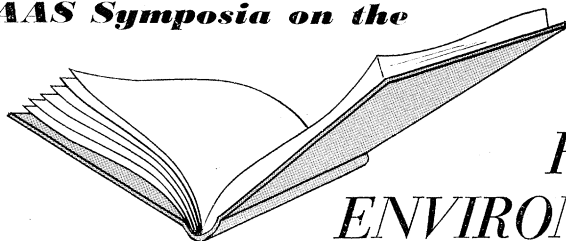


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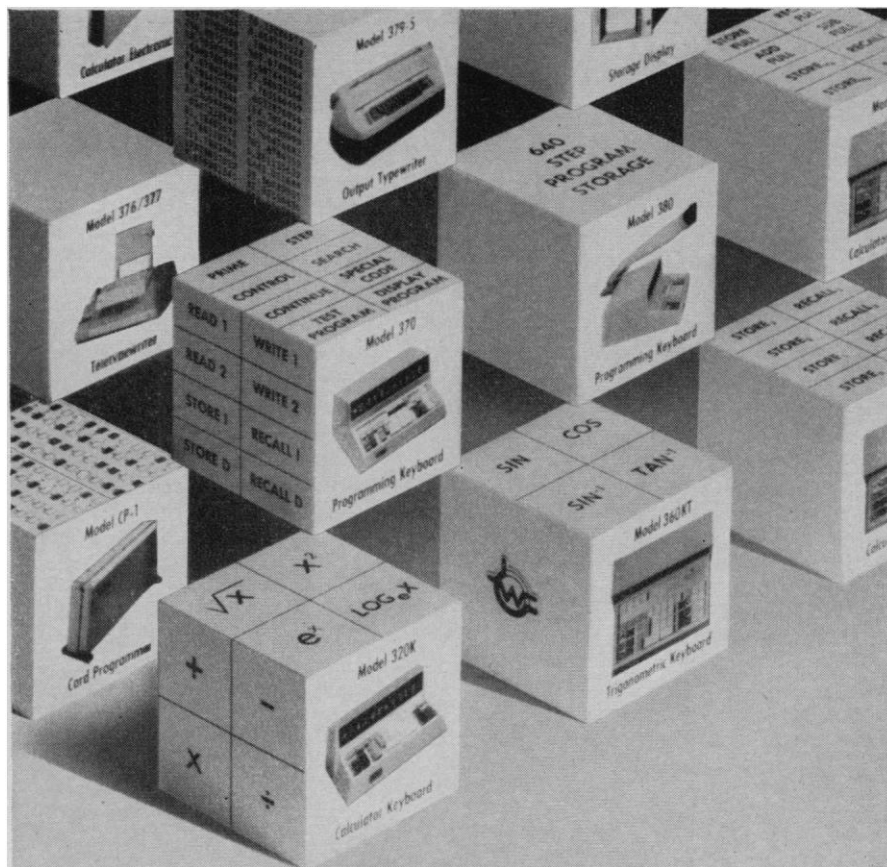
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