

with diethylpropion, the clinician should be aware that an occasional patient may develop psychotic side-effects in association with its use.

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#### Self-Inflicted Eye Injuries

SIR: With reference to the report by Thomas *et al* on eye injuries (*Journal*, November 1987, **151**, 691–693), I would like to present two cases, both male and 22 years of age and both admitted to hospital with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. In one case the patient showed on admission bilateral corneal abrasions that he had inflicted himself with his fingernails because his eyes were “unable to tell between left and right”. The other patient had succeeded in enucleating his right eye with his fingers, although he did not give any explanation for his action. About one year later he was readmitted to hospital; on this occasion he bit off and swallowed one-third of his tongue. At that time he would say that the devil was inside his body.

There are many reports in the literature about self-inflicted injuries in schizophrenic patients and they tend to be particularly bloody and cold acts, suggesting perhaps a change in their way of perceiving pain and in the way they relate to their own bodies.

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#### Psychosomatic Medicine and Contemporary Psychoanalysis

SIR: We hope that the lukewarm review by Teresa Black of Graeme J. Taylor's book *Psychosomatic*

*Medicine and Contemporary Psychoanalysis (Journal*, April 1988, **152**, 590–591) will not deter people from reading it. In our view it is an important book, which encompasses various fields of work, and repays careful reading by those seriously interested in integrating concepts and research within overlapping disciplines.

Far from being a disadvantage, as indicated by the reviewer, the breadth of Taylor's view is his strength, and he has attempted something which is, indeed, important: collating ideas, hypotheses, and facts drawn from research in different fields of study, and with considerable scholarship. Those who are interested in integrating research across boundaries will be glad to see a book of such exceptional calibre, with its well authenticated information, written with clarity.

It is perhaps difficult for any reviewer to have had experience of such a range of complex fields; the book covers neurophysiology, psychobiological animal studies, psychosomatic disorders, and recent psychoanalytical theory, while relating work of such diverse authors as the infant animal work of Hofer and Ader, the child studies of Winnicott, Mahler and Bowlby, and the psychoanalytical observations of Kohut and Kernberg. An example is the clarifying and linking of object relations theory with Hofer's work on psychobiological internal regulators which, when defective, are basic to the understanding of inadequate coping mechanisms of adult life, and are, therefore, particularly relevant in psychosomatic disorders.

This is a well-written seminal book by an original thinker and is of importance.

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#### Vitamin B12 in Psychotic Depression

SIR: Vitamin B12 and folate are essential in several important metabolic processes in man. Low folate levels have been associated with mood disturbance, whereas low B12 has been more often associated with organic disorders and psychosis (Evans *et al*, 1983). Most early studies of B12 in psychiatric disturbances used heterogeneous groups of medicated patients, older and less accurate measures of B12, and broad diagnostic categories (Shulman, 1967). In addition, the relationship between B12 and folate levels and