

**Elementi di Psicosomatica****Ferruccio Antonelli***Milano, Rizzoli, 1970, 375 pp, 2600 lire*

This volume is written for the student or practitioner who wants to widen his knowledge of psychosomatic diseases, their origins, symptoms and treatment.

First, there is an extensive historic overview, beginning with King Solomon, continuing through the teachings of Hippocrates, the observations of Freud, and ending with the current concepts in the field. Various theories and models explaining the phenomena which produce psychosomatic illness are treated in detail in the second part of the book. Here, aspects of multicausality, organ specificity, syndrome displacement, secondary gain, psychoneurotic defenses, psychodynamic symptom formation and symbolism are explained, and the differences between German and American psychosomatic thinking are expressed. The German school follows an anthropologic viewpoint, agreeing with the emotional etiology of psychosomatic disease. The specific choice of organ systems for symptomatic expression, however, is not believed to be psychologically predetermined.

The third section of the book contains a systematically organized and comprehensive description of psychosomatic illnesses by various organ systems.

Treatment and pharmacology are presented in the last part. Short-term psychotherapy is described in detail and is considered to be the treatment of choice, in conjunction with chemotherapeutic agents.

The book is arranged in text-book form and is easily readable; the style of certain sections actually presents the material in an overly simplistic manner. The language is clear and concise. There is an ample bibliography and an index of about 400 authors quoted throughout the text. This volume could also serve as an excellent review of the existing international literature on the subject.

The author is a specialist in physiology and neuropsychiatry and is a professor of psychiatry. He has published 10 monographs and numerous scientific articles and publications, and is holder of leading offices of Italian and international scientific organizations. He is president of the Italian Society for Psychosomatic Medicine.

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