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Empirical research into the endogenous psychoses in recent decades has considerably been impeded by the unanimity in their clinical classification. Although some progress has been made by accepted classification systems as the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, revised form (DSM-III-R), the question of distinct nosological entities with identical etiopathogenesis, clinical symptomatology, course and outcome, response to various treatment regimens and genetic influences, is completely unsettled. Thus, there was a controversy among largely two main nosological concepts, namely the school of Wernicke, Kleist und Leonhard with their highly differentiated subdivisions of the endogenous psychoses on the one hand and the hypothesis of the so-called ‘unitary psychosis’ (Einheitspsychose) as supported by psychiatrists as Wilhelm Griesinger, Heinrich Neumann and others. Emil Kraepelin sought for a compromise between the Unitarian and the differentiated concepts by creating his prevailing dichotomy of dementia praecox (poor prognosis) and manic-depressive illness (favorable prognosis). E. Beuler naming dementia praecox as schizo-

Karl Leonhard, March 21, 1904 – April 23, 1’

phrenia disregarded the prognosis-oriented concept and broadened the notion of schizophrenia – which he always himself believed to consist of several illnesses – to a prevailingly diffuse and unproductive nosologic en-

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tity without clear symptomatology, clinical outcome and response to therapy. Empirical research into the etiopathogenesis of the ‘endogenous psychoses’, however, needs a highly differentiated nosology based on lifelong personal investigations of individual patients, their families and their environment. This meticulous, purely empirically based description is beyond the psychiatric rating scales which are usually applied by too young and inexperienced investigators.
One approach for modern research could be provided by Karl Leonhard’s classification of endogenous psychoses, based on the tradition of Wernicke and Kleist. The articles of this volume are based on presentations of the First Symposium of the Wernicke-Kleist-Leonhard Society held in Würzburg, April 27–29, 1989.

This International Society was founded in honor of Karl Leonhard who died on April 23, 1988, aged 84 years, after a lifelong passionate research into the etiology, symptomatology and outcome of the endogenous psychoses. This first volume contains studies on the cycloid psychoses. The second volume deals with issues of history, diagnosis and therapy in the realm of the Wernicke-Kleist-Leonhard psychiatric tradition.

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