it adds to the body of knowledge readily available to those working in the field of drug addiction, it enables those workers to use and understand a language common to each other and to the people they are trying to help.

Only through precise communication can come real understanding. This book will help to facilitate such understanding.

Michael Nyman

Introduction to psychotherapy by hypnosis
by A. Philip Magonet
Butterworth, 40s

There is still widespread scepticism about the use of hypnosis in medicine although there are a number of authentic accounts of its use for many centuries. Certainly it is known to have been used for major surgery as long ago as 1845 when some 300 major surgical operations were performed under hypnosis in India, as has been described by C. L. Hull (1933. 'Hypnosis and suggestability' New York, Appleton-Century). Its further development and use in surgery was made unnecessary by the discovery of anaesthetics although, at the present time, hypnosis is probably used more commonly than is realised in dental surgery and obstetrics.

Hypnosis is a state of relaxation of varying degree and apart from its use in surgical procedures it has also been used as a research tool in exploring the mind.

According to Stephen Black ('Principles of treatments of psychosomatic disorders' Eds. Philip Hopkins and Heinz Wolff, Pergamon Press, London, 1965) only 5% of all patients are likely to respond to 'a dramatic and complete cure in one session'. He also states, 'I will be able to help 35% of them and may, in many of these cases, produce a complete relief of symptoms after some months of weekly sessions. The remaining 60 per cent will form a positive transference as a result of my efforts to hypnotize them—and I shall then be forced to see them weekly for the rest of my life!'

Considerable doubts have been raised about the efficacy of hypnosis in the treatment of many psychiatric and psychosomatic illnesses since it has been suggested that removal of symptoms—by any method, including hypnosis — without first dealing with their underlying causation, might lead to the development of even more serious symptoms: examples have been recorded of suicide by patients successfully treated for conditions like asthma by hypnosis.

Nevertheless, Dr. Magonet is to be congratulated on his new book in which he manages to provide a fascinating account of the history and technique of hypnosis. In addition he discusses the effects of stress and the development of mental illness and refers also to the need for psychotherapy.

A brief account of psychosomatic medicine leads to the rest of the book which consists of a series of case histories, set out under the organ systems of the body so that the reader can see that the author has been able to apply hypnotic treatment for psychosomatic disturbances of all organ systems.

The underlying psychogenic factors which require understanding and management are outlined although it is not always clear how the patient has been able to gain the necessary insight that might be thought necessary for recovery to take place.

In a short chapter on the future of hypnosis Dr. Magonet writes: 'Because of the great increase in mental illness the time has come when it is essential to add hypnosis to our therapeutic armamentarium. There is an urgent need in medicine for an abbreviated form of treatment for patients who are unable to avail themselves of prolonged treatment. A brief period of psychotherapeutic treatment, in which the patient receives understanding and help from the therapist, may establish the beginnings of more profound mental change. There are many patients who, on the basis of a hypnotic interview, get sufficient strength to carry on their daily routines and attain an understanding of their illness. Treatment by hypnosis is the key to this urgent need'.

If other doctors can confirm this statement by studying this book and following the excellent example set by Dr. Magonet, its publication will have been well worthwhile.

Philip Hopkins

Treatment for children
The work of a child guidance clinic
by David Maclay
Allen and Unwin, 60s (45s pb)

The discipline of child psychiatry is in its adolescence and, like all adolescents, it is searching for an identity. Having pioneered the multi-disciplinary approach to the understanding of emotional disorder the psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and child psychotherapists who go to make up the teams in child guidance clinics are awaiting the decision of their elders as to where they belong—with the social services (as the Seebohm Report suggests), in the Health Service or with local education authorities. So it is a good time to be looking at the work of the child guidance clinics. This book, subtitled 'The work of a child guidance clinic', was eagerly received and I hoped to find in it an attempt to describe, evaluate and conceptualize that work.

Dr. Maclay, a consultant child psychiatrist at clinics in the Midlands, however sets out with more restricted aims. He hopes to provide a . . . handbook of treatment for the . . . trainee therapist . . . and it is addressed to . . . those child psychiatrists who are not analysts, to psychologists, social workers in child guidance clinics, to paediatricians, school medical officers and general practitioners, who desire to undertake a measure of child therapy or who are forced to cope somehow with a case load of emotionally disturbed children.'

He does not achieve his aim; in a curiously old fashioned book, filled with tediously verbose case descriptions, no clear guide lines for the practice of child psychotherapy emerge. Certainly some of his patients recover, but the reader tries in vain to discover the reason why, or even what the author thinks are the processes leading to recovery. It all sounds very much like the magic that the layman—and even our colleagues—sometimes accuse us of practising.

Meaning is often totally obscure. What are we to make of this (P. 48): 'The adolescent wants to defy authority. Because this defiance is due to a fear of sex he may . . . deny all love for his parents'. Or this (P. 168): 'Although a certain amount of interpretive comment was
made during our sessions together, interpretation was mainly one-sided in that it consisted in the therapist's understanding the meaning of Percy's more often than not negative, contribution to therapy, and what he gave to Percy was much more the quality of his own comprehending behaviour than the transmission of any insights. While transference in the Freudian sense certainly existed there was importance also in the here and now relationship.‘

There is a lack of awareness of recent work on such subjects as bereavement and infantile autism, and of treatment techniques such as family group therapy. Conversion hysteria is classified with psychosomatic disease; the dosage of ephedrine is given in grains, venereal disease is stated to be on the slight increase. and so on.

No, alas, it won't do. If child psychiatry is to come of age and be accepted into the adult world we will have to do better than this. There is no doubt we need a book on the treatment of children; we need another about the work of a child guidance clinic. These books have still to be written.

Dora Black

Psychological experiments with autistic children
by B. Hermelin and N. O’Connor
Pergamon Press, 60s

A new book on the subject of autism, a disorder much discussed and little understood, is very welcome, particularly from writers on this side of the Atlantic. When the subject is dealt with by experimental psychologists of the reputation of Hermelin and O’Connor the touch of ‘authority’ is added to the book.

The main aim of the book is to show that certain clinical impressions stand up to rigorous tests while others do not. In this the book does a fine job having restricted itself to three aspects—perception and perceptual deficits; language, coding, seriation and recall; and responsiveness.

The review of the clinical and experimental studies in the first chapter is of immense value to both experimental and clinical workers in this field. Differences between autism and subnormality are explained while the authors justifiably stress that there is a very extensive association between the two.

In all, the book does justice to both the subject and the experimental workers in the field as well as to the clinical psychologists. How much the clinical and social psychiatrists would be helped by the book is questionable.

Use of terminology—mentally subnormal, mental defective, mental retardation are intermingled—could have been made more uniform. The authors are still using such terms as: idiot level, imbecile, mongol, Mental Deficiency Institutions, etc. Footnotes could have been of help to explain words and abbreviations like orectic, optokinetic, SD, etc.

In the diagnosis of autism, Creak’s criteria have been used and the authors have stressed that when four of the criteria are present patients are labelled ‘autistic’ but have not explained which four. Many would question the use of these criteria let alone diagnosis on the strength of them.

The fact that hospital-based autistic patients were selected for only a very small number of experiments needs explaining—was it the shortage of patients? why were they selected at all? I would also question why Wechsler’s Adult Scale was used in one study when patients (autistic and subnormal children) were between 9 and 16 years old. Most patients in the studies are over 6 years old and, again, it would be helpful to know why.

The clarity of presentation in the first chapter has not been continued throughout and, to a clinical psychiatrist, the gap between the experimental work and how to put it into practice still remains. Perhaps it is up to the clinical psychologist to fill this particular gap.

Though the primary intention of the authors was to concentrate on psychological experiments, they have given a fair account of clinical aspects in the beginning of the book. They could have finished the book with some delineation of the therapy.

L. Wing (1969) ‘Handicaps of autistic children—a comparative study’ (Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry) could have been included in the reference list and, all things considered, the book is expensive.

G. C. Kanjilal