This book takes an unusual approach to neuroectodermal tumours in that it is devoted almost entirely to their macroscopic features and their microscopical appearances in silver carbonate preparations. It is, therefore, of some academic interest, but unfortunately no attempt has been made to relate the patterns described to those based on more conventional and much more widely used histological techniques. It is only the classification adopted that can account for as much space being devoted to astroblastoma as to glioblastoma. The authors have clearly made a most detailed study of silver carbonate preparations from neuroectodermal tumours but, although it is stated repeatedly that this technique allows a much more accurate identification of cell types than the conventional techniques used by most neuropathologists, it is difficult to accept the many dogmatic statements unsupported by tangible evidence or logical argument.

The book is prolifically illustrated (this may partly compensate for the brevity of the gross descriptions of the tumours), but many are repetitive. As the standard of illustrations in general is high, it is surprising that the book contains a few of unusually poor quality.

It is interesting to note the application of phase contrast techniques to silver carbonate preparations, and the chapter on techniques may be of value to a few, but this book is not likely to be of much practical use to clinicians or pathologists.

J. HUME ADAMS

PATTERNS OF ACUTE HEAD INJURY By Reginald Hooper. (Pp vi + 167; 24 figures; 45s.) Edward Arnold: London. 1969.

This is a most useful little book, ideal for students, nurses, and the increasing number of other staff, medical and ancillary, who are now concerned with the problems of head injury care. The chapters are well sprinkled with original line drawings (albeit some of them miniatures), and by crisp notes on actual patients forming vivid clinical vignettes. In spite of the simplification a lot of information is conveyed, including a smattering of history, and some chapters end with selected references. The author is an Australian neurosurgeon with an international reputation, but whose contact with the outback has kept his feet firmly on the ground. His book is, therefore, ideal for the surgeon in Britain or any other country where the majority of head injuries must be treated in what might be termed the neurosurgical outback.

W. BRYAN JENNETT

MEDICINE IN METAMORPHOSIS Speech, presence, and integration. Edited by R. D. Laing. (Pp. vii + 164; 38s.) Tavistock Publications: London. 1969.

It seems impossible to review this book without falling into those very pitfalls in assessment which the author criticizes in diagnostic procedures themselves. The book makes the analogy of the sick organ as the burning glass of the whole 'constellation' of disease factors in the man, and the sick or defective man as that of his environment. It does so with the use of case histories of children suffering from defects in speech and hearing, and,

because of this very fact, while one accepts the necessity for communication for the development of the healthy adult, it does deal with problems of social, family, and patient adaptation and slow re-conditioning of the personality. It leaves out vast areas of acute or degenerative disease where such techniques, though not irrelevant, are hardly practical for the doctor aiming at rapid diagnosis. From a philosophical standpoint the book is a valuable one and serves to remind the diagnostician of the vast areas in the individual and his environment which exist even if his limited resources do not allow him to explore them to the full.

I found it a stimulating and enjoyable work.

R. N. ANTEBI

THE PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION By Ian Stevenson (Pp. 234; 60s.) Churchill: London. 1969.

This book is the first for many years written in English on this topic. Professor Stevenson in his preface states, quite properly, that although our diagnostic categories still have much value 'diagnosis is no longer such an important goal as it once was' and 'the psychiatric examination pays as much attention to the thought content and the motivations of the patient as it does to his abnormal behaviour and mental processes'.

This attitude underlies the author's approach to his task. Although the mental examination which he describes follows the orthodox pattern, he does indicate how to import into the examination a search for the dynamic factors which determine symptoms. This is most clearly indicated in the chapter on the recognition of common psychiatric syndromes in which he gives examples from his experience of the connection between somatic symptoms and emotional events which he discovered during psychiatric examination and history taking. Some more run-of-the-mill examples of the value of a dynamic approach would have been useful. Perhaps the author will consider expanding this topic in a later edition. The chapter on the techniques of examination gives good advice on a number of points and, in particular, how to avoid humiliating the patient and thus to preserve a good psychotherapeutic relationship. Apart from this he presents a comprehensive summary of the tests which can be used by the doctor or by the psychologist to complete the examination. The book is to be welcomed for the instruction it gives on the psychiatric examination which constitutes, and will remain, the essential skill of the psychiatrist.

A TEXTBOOK OF PSYCHOSEXUAL DISORDERS By Clifford Allen. 2nd edition. (Pp. viii + 478; 70s.) Oxford University Press: London. 1969.

The second edition of Dr. Clifford Allen's authoritative textbook brings his material into line with recent developments in the clinical and medico-legal aspects of psychosexual disorders. In a comparatively obscure area of clinical psychiatry, the author writes from an acceptably eclectic standpoint, with clarity and at times almost colloquially. All the well-known psychosexual deviations, and many of the more exotic variety, are discussed in a systematic manner, and the treatment possibilities highlighted. Classification of these disorders is basically