that psychosomatic medicine is no novelty, and views the terms as chiefly as useful in providing a unifying concept of psychiatry.

Concerning the matter of terminology, it is unfortunate that while decrying the term in the text, the authors have perpetuated the term "Shock Treatment" on the cover. As a formulation of mode of action of the methods described, it has less to recommend it than many other speculations given—in a detail they do not deserve—in the final chapter.

Discussing historical development, it is shown how the attempted application of current treatment in general medicine to psychiatry has declined. The trend is now towards the psychological and metabolic, perhaps some would add the traumatic in a temporary sense, rather than the pharmacological method. Fever, hypoglycemia, convulsions and surgery gain the attention of many psychiatrists. As the authors point out, clinical observation rather than laboratory experimental work has been the foundation of these physical methods. Such is the nature of the problem that no one trend is ever likely to dominate the rest, and it is more probable that with methods yet to be discovered, their interdependence will increase.

In the description of Insulin treatment the advice on the use of restraint is rather surprising, since with the occasional use of sodium amylal, and an adequate staff there should be little need for any mechanical method. In case selection, no preference is expressed for any particular schizophrenic type, though most insulin therapists have generally found treatment more effective in the paranoid and catatonic cases as opposed to the simple and hebephrenic patients amongst whom are often to be found the early dementing types that did much to popularize the now discarded term of *Dementia Præcox*. The authors state that if there is no improvement after 60 comas, the treatment should be discontinued. It would be instructive to know how many patients improve after 20 to 25 comas, who have shown no evidence of gain before attaining this number. Personal experience suggest that the number is small. A further point concerns Insulin sensitivity, the onset of which as the authors stress, requires reduction of dosage, often drastically in the earlier comas. Unfortunately they do not emphasize that failure to do so is a potent cause of prolonged or irreversible coma, and is in fact a form of over-dosage of insulin.

One of the main points of an otherwise instructive book is that the important points are often submerged by the over elaboration of details of little significance. To the inexperienced, it would not be immediately clear that in its primary indication for psychotic depression, convulsive therapy can get patients well, even if the illness has lasted 2-3 years, with an efficiency as yet unapproached by any of the other treatments in their own special fields. Only in cases of less than six months duration, and in the most expert hands can insulin produce anything like similar figures for schizophrenia. Conversely the role of convulsion therapy in schizophrenia is overstressed. Undoubtedly individual patients do well, but in large numbers of figures the later results are not impressive even with the considerable number of fits advocated, though it is possible that further modifications in technique may improve the position. In a relatively drastic treatment such as convulsive therapy, which has been tested against numerous psychiatric disorders, some indication of its limitations would be advisable, as in the dementing form of schizophrenia or in the psychopathic schizophrenic patient. The need for renewing search for

reactive stress in first attack depressions who relapse after apparently adequate treatment by convulsions, is worth mention.

Treatment by prolonged sleep is still used frequently enough to warrant a more detailed description of technique, and control of complications. It is sometimes useful for abreaction in its lighter phases. Similarly, the section on pre-frontal leucotomy is inadequate, more especially from the practical aspects, such as the care of the leucotomized patient. With reference to the operation, the authors say that "unlike shock therapy, the basic disease is not touched". Remembering our uncertain knowledge of the pathology of schizophrenia and manic-depressive states, and also that leucotomy has been often successful where all other methods have failed, one feels rather dubious about such an assertion.

There is much valuable material in this book for the student of physical methods of treatment, but much could be omitted to advantage in the insulin and convulsive therapy chapters. With all their experience the authors could well give more lead in emphasizing important aspects of treatment. The other somatic procedures merit far more attention than has been given them in order to achieve a proper perspective for a work of this type. D. E. S.

Psychiatric Interviews with Children. By Helen Leland Witmer. Commonwealth Fund, New York. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege. 15s. 6d.

This book will be welcomed by all those working in the child guidance field who are not wedded to the strictly psycho-analytic approach.

Dr. Witmer contributes three valuable chapters on the nature, the development and the dynamic of therapy as these are understood and practised in the United States today. Then follow detailed accounts of ten cases from eight psychotherapists which were chosen to show, by illustration, some of the ways in which direct psychotherapy is being carried out.

The cases are most excellently presented and give the therapist's assessment of each, the aim of the treatment and the patient-therapist relationship together with the careful technique employed in bringing treatment to an end.

There is a measure of agreement in the treatment of all the cases quoted, but, in each case, something of the personality of the therapist stands out and we see the conscious manner in which this was used in the treatment relationship. To quote Dr. Witmer:—

"The following case records thus impose heavy requirements on the reader—for flexibility and for open-mindedness as well as for familiarity with some of the basic concepts of the various schools of dynamic psychiatry. If these records are approached with theories other than those of their writers they may not 'make sense', and the reader may not be able to see what the therapist was trying to do. We recommend, therefore, that, regardless of final judgements the reader try to put himself, in his first review of a case, in the therapist's frame of reference and try to see the case as in part a logical application of the set of theoretical considerations the therapist had in mind."

We feel that the reader who makes this effort will be amply rewarded.

A full bibliography helps to make the book an outstanding contribution to child guidance literature. D.H.H.