in northern Thailand in 1936–37. The document is fuller than a casual traveller's description, but falls well short of the standards of post-war ethnography. In this voluminous but poorly produced format, it is not a book for the general reader; but the specialist seeking information about peoples who are likely to have undergone considerable change in the intervening 35 years will not know how much reliance to place upon these notes, compiled with the help of interpreters, and often impressionistic rather than authoritative. It is illustrated by numerous photographs and line drawings made by the author. For a psychiatrist the most interesting sections are those on child-rearing, family life, sexual behaviour, attitudes to sickness and death, and funerary customs. Essentially, however, this is documentary source material of historical rather than contemporary interest.

G. M. CARSTAIRS.

## CHILDHOOD

**The First Five Years of Life. A Guide to the Study of The Pre-School Child.** Edited and partly written by Arnold Gesell. Republished as a University Paperback. Methuen: London. 1971. Pp. xiii + 393. Price £2.

Gesell's clear and detailed observations of children's behaviour are as relevant today to the student of child behaviour as they were when first published in 1950. His account of the development of motor, adaptive, language and personal-social behaviour from birth to 5 years formed the basis of the developmental tests now in use, and his approach to development and to its assessment has rightly had a wide influence on psychology and paediatrics. The passage of time has made his account of the early development of perception and pre-linguistic skills seem rather weak and occasionally inaccurate, and his description of language appears rather dated. There is little mention of emotional development, and environmental influences are given scant attention. Nevertheless, his very practical and lucid description of how to conduct a developmental examination at each age, of how to approach children in the test situation, of how to pace and order the examination and how to cope with the handicapped child still has much to teach us. Gesell's concern with human individuality is at last receiving its deserved attention in the psychological literature, and his painstaking and meticulous studies of child behaviour certainly warrant this republication in paperback form.

MICHAEL RUTTER.

**Mental Imagery in the Child.** By JEAN PIAGET and BÄRBEL INHELDER. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1971. Pp. 396. Price £3.50.

This book, written by Piaget and Inhelder in collaboration with their Geneva colleagues, seems much more in the mainstream of general experimental psychology than many of their previous ones. The reason might be twofold. Firstly, there has been some accommodation on the authors' part to the frequent criticism regarding Piaget's reporting of methods and results. Secondly, current psychological thinking has gone through an assimilation process, so that much of what is concluded here in regard to images has also been stated recently, for instances by Neisser, in regard to perception and memory.

The method used throughout in these studies is to present children with a visual stimulus and ask them to draw, as well as to select from prepared drawings what they have seen or what they would expect to see under certain changed conditions. A distinction is made between reproductive and anticipatory images, such as predicting subsequent points of location of a plane moving along a circular path, the future position of a square appearing from behind a second superimposed one, or the lines on a piece of paper, folded several times, when straightened out.

Piaget and Inhelder conclude that the image, though also a copy of an object or event, is fundamentally a symbol, and is closely bound up with the process of conceptualization. Reproductive images are formed at the pre-operational stage, while anticipatory images do not develop until the level of concrete operations is reached. The images of the first period remain essentially static and thus unable to represent the results of movements and transformations. In those of the latter, the child has begun to reconstruct kinetic and transformational processes and to foresee a series of sequential events. However, familiar a movement, such as a rod falling, the hands of a clock moving or a car overtaking another, there is no simple relationship between familiarity of content and the stage of development at which adequate corresponding images appear. This is because images are a function of the intellectual level of complexity of the relationships in question, and not of the degree to which the child is perceptually familiar with them.

There is some parallel between the nature and function which the authors ascribe to images and that which Piaget has previously assigned to words. Neither the presence of images nor words is held to be sufficient for giving rise to knowledge. However, both are regarded as symbols which can be effectively used in cognitive operations.

One could ask why the authors have confined their discussion to visual imagery. Though the term is admittedly most frequently used in this context, the role of tactual, kinaesthetic and auditory imagery, as well as that of taste and smell, may also be worth investigating. One question might be whether the notion of a conceptual rather than a perceptual basis for imagery can be extended to other than the visual modality.

BEATE HERMELIN.

**The Adopted Child.** By JOSEPH G. ANSFIELD. Charles C. Thomas. Springfield. Illinois. 1971. Pp. 56. Price $5.75.

This is a book of five chapters covering most aspects of adoption from the points of view of the would-be adoptive parents, the natural parents, and the adopted child both as young and as an adolescent. The author is a practising psychiatrist in Chicago, who writes that he was prompted to produce this book because of the laments made to him, in the course of his work, by parents of adopted children. 'If we had it to do all over again, we would never have told our child that he was adopted.'

This book is an expression of opinion. In his identification with the adoptive parents, Dr. Ansfield states his strong belief that adopted children should not be told of their adoption. He gives no bibliography, and indeed states that to his knowledge no meaningful study has been done on the subject. Nor does he give any hint that he is to study a control group; he does not even compare his cases of private adoption with those done through an agency. Further, Dr. Ansfield does not make any suggestion that there could be adverse psychological factors working in the adoptive parents, which made for the difficulties, attributed uncritically, to the fact that the child knew of his adoption.

It is difficult for a British psychiatrist to appreciate the attitude and the intensity of feeling which Dr. Ansfield displays.

STEPHANIE M. LEESE.

**Basic Child Psychiatry.** By PHILIP BARKER. Staples Press. London. 1971. Pp. 223. Price £1.50.

Until recently, books in English on child psychiatry have tended to come from across the Atlantic, but recently, valuable contributions in this area have been appearing from the pens of English writers. A noteable addition to this list is Philip Barker's *Basic Child Psychiatry*, the title giving a succinct impression of the contents. It fills a gap of which those involved in teaching undergraduates in medicine, social work and psychology and student nurses have been keenly aware. The overall approach is eclectic and the case histories included are relevant and commendably few. The first chapter presents a brief review of the child's psychological development; perhaps in a future edition this section could be extended with benefit as the medical undergraduate is more likely to search out references on a rare pathological syndrome than on normality. Likewise, of the references provided at the end of each chapter, those commended for further reading on psychological development are limited. Is it a sign of the times that emotional deprivation is relegated to two pages in a chapter entitled 'Other Syndromes' where it is considered together with mixed neurotic and conduct disorders, elective mutism, anorexia nervosa, problems of migrants, tics and clumsy children? It is likely that in the recent past this topic would have merited an entire chapter.

Rutter's (1) valuable contribution 'Classification and Categorization in Child Psychiatry' is used as a basis of the classification in this book, and is probably more appropriate for the needs of the readers envisaged than the triaxial classification which in any case would only just have been available when the book was going to press.

Essentially, a text of this kind has to be oversimplified, and more sophisticated readers may quibble over the finer points: for example the place of insulin in the modern treatment of anorexia nervosa; the failure to suggest that anaemia should be considered when investigating the child with pica; possibly more attention should be paid to assessment of the suicidal adolescent; but the overall presentation of the subject is sound and can be recommended to those seeking an elementary knowledge of child psychiatry.

A few printer's errors could be rectified in a further edition, for example the spelling of amitriptyline on page 101, of tuberose sclerosis on page 67 and the inversion of Hale Shirley's name in the selected list of books and journals.

EDNA M. IRWIN.

REFERENCE

1. RUTTER, M. (1965). *Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, **6**, 71–83.

**Voyage Through Childhood into the Adult World.** A Description of Child Development. By EVA A. FROMMER. Oxford: Pergamon Press. Pp. 108. Price £1.75 hard cover; £1.25 paperback.