

the context of other disorders, and is given no space of its own. The same can be said of psychotherapy and historical aspects of psychiatry.

Standard reference texts tend to follow a similar structure, with early chapters on mental state examination, classification and phenomenology, followed by chapters discussing the main diagnoses and treatment issues, and concluded by an overview of the subspecialties of psychiatry. While this format is probably most comfortable for those starting to read around the subject, the novel structure adopted in this book allows concepts to be viewed from a rather different angle. Careful editing has ensured that information is not duplicated in different chapters or units.

In summary, this textbook has been an absorbing one for me to read, which is not a comment I would often make. It broadened my own perspective of a number of topics and while I don't think that it ought to be studied in isolation by those with limited experience in psychiatry, it would in my opinion be an excellent reference textbook for any medical or psychiatric library. It is a book which I intend to use often.

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Hypnosis in the Relief of Pain. By ERNEST R. HILGARD and JOSEPHINE R. HILGARD. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1994. 312 pp. US \$28.95 (pb).

One of the success stories of modern hypnosis is its application in pain control. That such is the case is due firstly to the establishment of plausible theoretical foundations, secondly to the accumulation of evidence from good quality clinical and non-clinical research, and thirdly to the development of effective procedures both for the management and amelioration of chronic organic pain and for the control of pain and discomfort resulting from certain medical and surgical interventions, childbirth and dentistry.

All of these areas of theory, research and practice are described in this book which first appeared in 1975; a second edition came out in 1983 with a forward by Patrick Wall and a supplementary chapter on developments since the first publication, the original text being unrevised. The only change in the 1994 edition is an additional forward by Joseph Barber. Those who are already familiar with this book may therefore have expectations which are not fulfilled. Indeed, even the addresses of organisations listed in the appendix on "The availability of hypnotic services" have not been updated.

One of the strengths of the book is that clinical practice is informed by sound theoretical concepts and extensive research literature. Two important theoretical underpinnings are Melzack & Wall's 'gate control' theory of pain and the influential neo-dissociation

model of hypnosis due to Ernest Hilgard himself. The best known empirical work on the latter is Hilgard's demonstration of the 'hidden observer', where the volunteer subject, under conditions of hypnoanalgesia, is able to give an out-of-consciousness rating of the normal pain experience. Both the 'hidden observer' concept and the neo-dissociation theory itself have their detractors, but in my experience even the most radical debunkers of 'hypnosis' are able to recommend 'hypnotic' procedures as effective for pain relief.

All those claiming to be specialists in hypnotherapy for pain control ought to have read this book and be regularly consulting it. I have no doubt that they are, for it is a worthy classic in its field.

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Reconstruction in Psychoanalysis: Childhood Revisited and Recreated. By HAROLD BLUM. Madison, CT: International Universities Press. 1994. £21.00 (hb).

The subject of this book is of particular interest to interpretive psychotherapists, particularly psychoanalysts. It is a subject on which Freud wrote at some length throughout his career, and is of practical as well as theoretical concern. How much does the therapist depend for his method upon imaging in detail the early lives and situations of his patients, and upon sharing his imaginative constructions with them? How well can he know his patients' childhood and how can he assess the reliability of the information which he gathers? How important is it to his patients that their therapist gives time and attention to their versions of their childhoods? Blum has interesting and important things to say upon all these problems and related topics.

Clinical practice and theory have swung from one extreme to the other, from relying nearly entirely upon 'reconstruction' of patients' pasts, to dismissing reconstruction as unreliable and as avoidance of the important issue – namely, the quality of current relationships, in particular with their therapist. Interpretation has swung from sharing examination of the reported past to pronouncements about the patients' clinical transference. Blum's book is the fruit of chairing a research group of experienced psychoanalysts, all concerned to assess the importance of 'reconstruction' in their work. His own stance is to see reconstruction and interpretation of transference not as opposed alternatives in clinical work, but as requiring and reinforcing one another.

The research group seems to have worked by discussing cases on which the members were engaged either as therapists or as supervisors. Only three cases are presented in the book, two of them current or recent and one recalled after some years. These are the core of the book and they are interesting. One is of a