

interpreted as 'retardation', regression or reversion to a more infantile behaviour pattern, as is frequently done. He warns against its many pitfalls, particularly in the hands of the inexperienced, and he does not advise its routine use.

The style in which the booklet is written, as well as the innumerable references included in the text, do not make for easy reading. To those interested in the Rorschach test, however, it should have value as an authoritative treatise.

**The Diagnosis and Treatment of Speech and Reading Problems.** By CARL H. DELACATO. (Pp. x + 188; 26 figures. \$6.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

This book deals with the diagnosis and treatment of speech and reading problems in an extremely limited way. It is written by an American educationist to expound an ambitious theory that attributes speech and reading problems to disturbances in nervous system development. The author states that children develop in a pattern that reproduces the evolution of the nervous system from lower forms to man, and considers the highest level of functioning to be cerebral dominance, the establishment of which he believes to be essential for language skills.

Delacato's system involves the investigation of children with speech and reading troubles to discover their deficiencies in such functions as crawling, sleep postures, eye movements and walking. He is particularly interested in the predominant use of one half of the body and the sequence of motor patterns he believes to be necessary in the attainment of what he calls laterality. These inadequacies are then corrected by a course of esoteric exercises.

It is highly probable that a functional neurological disturbance underlies many language disorders, and no doubt in the future the appropriate relation will be established: in particular, it is to be hoped that the role of cerebral dominance will be clarified. In addition the relative importance of psychosocial and maturational factors in these conditions is in need of further study.

Unfortunately we are not helped in the solution of these issues by Delacato's book. For one thing his theory is too general. By relating an ill-defined set of neurological variables on the one hand to a mixed assortment of speech and reading problems on the other, he does little more than state the problem. His attempt to explain delayed onset of speech, aphasia and stuttering all at the same time seems to the reviewer to be mistaken. It is reminiscent of meyerian psychobiology in the field of psychiatry, which purports to relate most mental illness to a set of similar environmental stresses.

Another disappointing feature is that in assessing the improvement of speech and reading disorders in children treated by his methods the information provided does not help us to decide how much was due to his specific techniques and how much to maturational or psychosocial factors.

On the positive side, his vigorous attempt to apply new ideas to old and difficult problems is to be recommended, particularly when, like Kephart and Cruickshank, he is widening the field of study.

The book is well produced and nicely illustrated, but the text is unclear, repetitive and full of jargon.

**Growth Failure in Maternal Deprivation.** By ROBERT GRAY PATTON and LYTT I. GARDNER. (Pp. xviii + 94; 18 figures. \$5.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1963.

The term 'maternal deprivation' has now become one of the clichés of modern paediatrics, sociology and popular journalism. It is applied equally to children whose mothers go to work and to children who spend months or years in poorly-run institutions. By stretching the definition it can even be applied to children living in their own homes whose mothers somehow fail to live up to the standards expected of them by their betters.

Ever since Bowlby's monograph, published by W.H.O. in 1951, a number of workers have been at pains to clarify and to criticize the author's rather sweeping conclusions and theories. Indeed the World Health Organization itself has recently published a further report (1962) in which a number of authors enumerate theoretical and experimental objections to Bowlby's original concepts and the Bowlby thesis itself is somewhat modified. The book by Patton and Gardner at once therefore merits the criticism that it continues to use the term 'maternal deprivation' in a vague and undefined way and ascribes to it a large number of physical and emotional changes in a group of six children. These six children were all admitted to hospital for investigation because of 'failure to thrive'. All of them came from grossly disturbed home backgrounds. In all, the children were very small and growth failure was evidenced not only by marked underweight but also by severe delay in bone age development. But it is clear from the description of the home backgrounds that a number of different factors may have been operating; physical neglect, including insufficient food; possibly deliberate cruelty; almost certainly recurrent infections and, in addition, emotional rejection including, in one case, positive disgust towards the child. The book lists these and other postulated factors that might account for the delay in growth but comes to no conclusion about which might be the most important. Were the children offered enough to eat? Did they eat enough yet fail to grow? Or was their appetite poor? And if so, was it poor because of their emotional rejection or neglect or because of recurrent illness? No answer is forthcoming from the study of these children.

Surely it is time to drop the word 'maternal' in the whole context of this type of problem with its emotive overtones of mystical and eternal 'mother-love' (why not 'father-love'?) and to qualify the use of the word 'deprivation' by exact and careful descriptions of the actual situations in which children are cared for. The gross disturbances in these children's lives do not lend