

not complete because of the failure to separate the two clearly; there is an absence of intensive population-based family studies; and data on mental disorder have not yet been brought into a comprehensive theory of ethnic and class stratification. On the other hand, some yawning gaps are skated over – family theories of the aetiology of schizophrenia are discussed without reference to either the absence of control samples or the excess of perinatal damage in those who later become ill.

This is generally a very lucid and jargon-free account of the relevance of sociology to psychiatry, which is likely to be useful to trainees in any of the mental health professions, if supplemented by, for instance, *Ideas on Institutions*. The focus, though, does tend to be strongly more American, and Europeans will be surprised to read that “The role of left-fielder entails expectations about fielding fly balls”, as they are unlikely to have any such expectations at all.

HUGH FREEMAN, *Editor, British Journal of Psychiatry*

Treatment of Affective Disorders in the Elderly. Edited by CHARLES A. SHAMOIAN. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. Pp 84. \$15.00.

There are two cuckoo eggs in this slim book; a survey of the dexamethasone suppression test and platelet monoamine oxidase in cognitive impairment and depression, and a retrospective case-note admission study examining the hypothesis that age of onset of depression is associated with increased risk of delusions, unconvincingly disclaiming referral artefact: both would have been better published (or not, perhaps) elsewhere. There are five better eggs, including a brief survey of controlled trials of antidepressant medication in elderly patients, a very useful review of the cardiovascular effects of tricyclic antidepressants, and a helpful synopsis of the pharmacological treatment of depression in patients with cardiovascular disease. The other reviews – of mood disorders in post-stroke patients, and of kidney function and lithium treatment in the elderly – are less useful, in that the former preaches to the converted, while the latter is rather sketchy. There is useful material in this book for those responsible for psychopharmacological treatment of the elderly in hospital.

A. J. D. MACDONALD, *Senior Lecturer in Psychogeriatrics, Hither Green Hospital, London*

Living with Teenagers. By MARTIN HERBERT. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1987. Pp 238. £6.95.

This is a sound guide to adolescence, primarily intended for parents and teachers, by an author who is well-informed and able to discuss the subject in a balanced,

intelligible way. Herbert deals with the nature of adolescence, independence versus authority, emotional difficulties, anti-social behaviour, sexual activity, school and work, including school problems and unemployment, and ways of helping when problems arise. The author is a psychologist, and throughout the book there is a tendency towards the methods of clinical psychology – behavioural psychology, problem-solving techniques, and cognitive approaches; commendable, but rather dull and systematic, especially the various check-lists. However, social and psychodynamic aspects of adolescence are mentioned, and the book is enlivened by occasional cartoons reproduced from *Punch* and elsewhere. This is a steady, thorough and serious book and I would recommend it for a short-list of books on this theme for the general reader.

DEREK STEINBERG, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Bethlem Royal Hospital, Kent*

Epilepsy in Young People (Portsmouth Symposium, 1986). Edited by EUAN ROSS, DAVID CHADWICK and ROBERT CRAWFORD. Chichester: John Wiley. 1987. Pp 169. £21.95.

The editors present a sound and sensible guide to epilepsy in adolescents suitable for any in-coming houseman, even if the slightly patronising title suggests, rightly, that it is based on symposium proceedings. Chapters on pregnancy, when to start treatment, when to stop, and how to explain epilepsy to a child are particularly meritorious. A weakness is the lack of consideration of the management of behavioural problems associated with epilepsy, but there is a superb chapter by Gregory Stores on non-convulsive status epilepticus in childhood presenting with essentially behavioural manifestations. In the ensuing discussion, Michael Trimble includes the phenomena of psychotic patients with spike-wave discharges confined to the limbic system and scanty epileptic changes on surface electrodes. In the light of new investigative techniques discussed in the symposium, can we persuade the same team to tackle the vexed topic of prolonged states of coma, confusion, and catatonia in children?

E. M. R. CRITCHLEY, *Consultant Neurologist, Royal Preston Hospital, Lancs*

From Asthma to Thalassaemia: Medical Conditions in Childhood. Edited by SARAH CURTIS. London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering. 1986. Pp 159. £7.95.

This short book, designed for social workers and those involved in the adoption of children with medical conditions, has its main value in the list of references at the end of each chapter. Most of the introductions are too

sketchy to be helpful. Exceptions to this are those on cardiac conditions and cerebral palsy, which could have been models for the other chapters. Conditions such as Huntingdon's chorea and schizophrenia sit rather uneasily alongside muscular dystrophy and malignant diseases. The general chapters were too general to make real connections with the more specialist chapters on particular diseases, and some of the advice and information seems to be distinctly old-fashioned. I cannot, therefore, recommend the book as a whole to social workers and others who seek an easy guide to medical conditions in children placed for adoption. Perhaps such a book could be used for those who are likely to adopt children with medical needs, rather than for professionals; it might be a good source book for running groups of potential adopters. It suffers from breadth of coverage, and I think that most people who adopt children with particular needs would seek much more detailed information on a practical level about a particular condition from which the child they are adopting suffers. It is a constant complaint of parents with children with all kinds of medical and psychological disturbances that they are not well enough informed by the professionals. I think this book is only a very small step towards informing professionals about particular problems, and sadly I think therefore it is not the best source of information for the conditions covered.

LES SCARTH, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh*

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Children. Edited by SPENCER ETH and ROBERT S. PYNOOS. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. Pp 186. £15.00.

The contributions in this book are based on 'first-generation' descriptive research relevant for the new DSM-III category of post-traumatic stress disorder as it applies to children. They outline children's responses to a variety of stresses which include witnessing of acts of violence (homicide, rape, suicidal acts), traumatic bereavements, childhood cancer, physical and sexual abuse, war and migration, group kidnaps, and natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions.

Some interesting observations are made which provide useful clinical insights. However, the diversity of situations addressed and the individuality of the approaches used to study them result in an unsatisfactory lack of cohesion, and the inclusion of children's responses to such varied traumas under the single category appears contrived. If a clear message emerges from this book, it is the need for further discriminating, clarifying work into the post-traumatic reactions of children.

ELENA GARRALDA, *Senior Lecturer in Child Psychiatry, University of Manchester*

The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. Vol 41. Edited by ALBERT J. SOLNIT and PETER B. NEUBAUER. London: Yale University Press. 1987. Pp 667. £50.00.

This series has now reached its first volume in as many years, which would be testimony to its worth even if the list of distinguished contributors over the years (Anna Freud, Bowlby, Margaret Mahler and others) did not include many of the best-known names in the field of psychoanalysis and developmental psychology.

There are no names as familiar as these in volume 41, which continues the tradition of including a large number of contributions (28 chapters) by an even larger number of authors. The contributions are divided into five sections under the headings Psychoanalytic Theory, Trauma, Child Development (subdivided into childhood and adolescence), Clinical Contributions, and Applied Psychoanalysis. There is also a chapter on 'The executive functions of the ego', which is a wide-ranging discussion of psychodynamic approaches to the conceptual problems of free will and autonomy. Despite its title, much of the book is concerned with adult psychoanalysis, or with issues relevant to adult psychology.

A book such as this is one to be dipped into rather than read from cover to cover. However, the contents pages do not seem to offer much of immediate interest to the general reader, and indeed the language of the titles would deter many. Nathanson on 'The empathic wall and the ecology of affect' and a multi-authored chapter on 'Special solutions to phallic-aggressive conflicts in male twins' are cases in point. On further investigation the contributions range from thought-provoking (Edelson on 'Causal explanation in science and psychoanalysis') through workmanlike, but unexciting (Anthony's chapter on 'The contributions of child psychoanalysis to psychoanalysis', for example) to provocative (Abrams' chapter entitled 'Disposition and environment' rather mischievously shows how different psychoanalytic theories can explain the carefully researched observation that twins separated at birth turn out to be temperamentally very similar even when the nurturing families are very different).

What then might be the value of this collection to the general psychiatrist? Psychoanalysis both as a theoretical and practical discipline has contributed more to the day-to-day practice of psychiatry than is generally acknowledged, particularly to the general belief that any formulation of a psychiatric problem is incomplete without understanding of the patient's history, development and early relationships. This book is in the main concerned with the exploration and clarification of patterns as normal and abnormal development. There is also a great deal of interest to those with little interest in the practice of psychotherapy but who maintain an intelligent concern for art, philosophy, or science. It is a tribute to the editors that in the main the contributors to this volume follow the suggestion of one of the authors