

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