

stigmatisation. Clearly, the classical psychoanalytic approach is seen as antitherapeutic.

Two papers seem somewhat out of place. The first is a fascinating case study of a paedophilic murderer, and the second is a paper aiming to show that borderline personality disorder is a social dilemma resulting from the changing social norms of the 20th century. I am not really convinced by the arguments, nor by the excellent case history of a homosexual man which is used to substantiate it. One is, however, left wondering whether it does not undermine the central tenet of the book.

ROBERT HALE, *Consultant Psychotherapist, Tavistock Clinic, London*

Research, Comparisons and Medical Applications of Ericksonian Techniques. (Ericksonian Monographs. No. 4). Edited by STEPHEN R. LANKTON and JEFFREY K. ZEIG. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1988. 130 pp. \$34.00.

Here is yet more from the followers of the late Milton Erickson. The first four chapters of this slim volume report the results of research studies. Topics include the relative effectiveness of direct and indirect suggestions, the value of 'hypnotic-relaxation' cassettes in a gynaecologic-obstetric ward, and whether the capacity to undergo hypnosis is innate or learned.

The next two papers are theoretical discussions comparing Erickson's techniques with, respectively, cognitive therapies and redecision therapy. They argue that Erickson's methods had more in common with the other therapies than might appear at first sight.

The final three articles – on medical applications – are a mixed bag. That on the "application of Ericksonian principles to the use of medication" I found superficial and unsatisfactory. In one case, the prescription of alprazolam was continued for strategic therapeutic reasons related to the family dynamics. The dangers of prolonged administration of benzodiazepines were apparently not considered. Juliet Auer gives us some anecdotal, although quite interesting, accounts of how she uses techniques derived from Erickson's work in the renal unit of a hospital. Perhaps the best paper in this section is that by Bob Britchford, on the use of the 'ten-minute-trance' in general practice.

While there is material of interest here, it is difficult to see why it needed to be published in this rather expensive form. Most of the articles would probably have been accepted by one of the regular journals in the field, and the others did not need publishing at all. I expect that the libraries of hospitals and clinics in which hypnotherapists work, and some 'hardcore' Ericksonians, will want to buy the book. For others there is better value elsewhere in the Ericksonian literature.

PHILIP BARKER, *Professor of Psychiatry and Paediatrics, University of Calgary*

Going Somewhere: People with Mental Handicaps and their Pastoral Care. By SHEILA HOLLINS and MARGARET GRIMER. London: SPCK. 1988. 121 pp. £4.95.

Radical changes in patterns of care during the past two decades have both increased the overall numbers of mentally handicapped people in the community and also considerably raised their profile. This has left many people, both lay and professional, exposed to their own personal inadequacies of training and understanding in this area. Many who want to help will find a lack of suitable literature on the subject. This book, which was stimulated by a one day conference on pastoral care, helps to fill the gap. It provides answers in plain English to the common questions likely to arise in the minds of those who come new to the subject, setting out the basic facts clearly and sensitively, and advising on the everyday situations likely to be encountered, such as sexuality, personal relationships, bereavement, and dealing with parents. With its sensible straightforward approach it can confidently be recommended to a wide range of workers. Although specifically aimed at those outwith the mentally handicap services, many within will benefit from the perspective offered. My only criticism of this otherwise excellent little book is the rather uncritical embrace of the concept of community care which pervades the text. One wishes that the authors had found the space to point out and discuss some of its attendant problems.

KENNETH DAY, *Consultant Psychiatrist, Northgate Hospital, Morpeth, Northumberland*

Receptors and Ligands in Psychiatry. Edited by A. K. SEN and T. LEE. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1988. 604 pp. £75.00.

The theme of this series on intercellular and intercellular communication is the analogy between cellular communication and language. The mechanism by which neurones communicate with one another is largely through chemical signals. This resembles a language, whose vocabulary is the interaction of individual neurotransmitters or neuromodulators (the 'ligands') with neuronal membrane structures (the 'receptors'). Psychiatric disease can be analysed in terms of abnormalities in the vocabulary, leading to inappropriate messages and inappropriate responses.

The central neurotransmitters about which most is known are dopamine, noradrenaline, acetylcholine, and serotonin. The main pathways for neurones using these transmitters are now fairly well defined. Much more complicated is the variety of receptors for each of these transmitters, but this is gradually becoming elucidated. The development of new drugs that bind specifically to separate classes of each receptor (for instance DA1 and