

introductory text *Family Therapy: The Treatment of Natural Systems* (1976) and edited a compilation of papers *Family and Marital Psychotherapy: A Critical Approach* (1979). The present book is divided into three parts with a total of nineteen chapters. In the first two parts each chapter is a previously published paper and includes contributions from John Bowlby, A. C. R. Skynner and R. D. Laing. They provide a historical prospective to the evolution of the different conceptual models and their application in a variety of treatment settings. The third part "Differential Approaches" contains five original papers, which explore the contributions from various theoretical positions including the psychodynamic, structural family therapy, the experiential approach, construct theory and the extended family school. I found Dr C. Dare's contribution "Psycho-analysis and Family Therapy" particularly stimulating. He compares the application of psycho-analytic concepts to the individual and to the whole family, and highlights the modifications and transformations required in the shift from the individual to the family.

Both these books are a valuable contribution to the literature of family therapy and should be in every postgraduate library. The individual chapters could easily be used as the basis for seminar teaching of topics related to family work. In addition *Psychotherapy with Families: An Analytic Approach* provides a lucid and clear exposition of the object relations model in general terms as well as those specifically related to family work.

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Home and Hospital Psychiatric Treatment. By F. R. FENTON, L. TESSIER, E. L. E. L. STRUENING, F. A. SMITH and C. BENOIT. London: Croom Helm. 1981. Pp 197. £12.95.

Caring: Home Treatment for the Emotionally Disturbed. By FREDERIC NEUMAN. Wellingborough, Northants: Turnstone Press. 1982. Pp 245. £3.95.

Home and Hospital Psychiatric Treatment describes the first year of a Montreal based study designed to compare treatment in these settings. An introductory chapters places the study within an historical and research perspective. The results are similar to those of other studies and show that home treatment can be as effective as hospital treatment, yet does not seem to increase the burden on the patients' families. There is a detailed discussion on the implications of this finding for service provision and further research. Parts of the book are set in irritatingly small type-script. However, the comprehensive bibliography, together with the descriptions of similar studies,

should provide a useful information base for research workers.

Caring: Home Treatment for the Emotionally Disturbed shows paraprofessionals and families how they may support the emotionally ill. Eclectic introductory chapters discuss the nature, origin and treatment of mental illness and specific syndromes are then described in detail. In addition, there is a sensitively written chapter on the needs of the dying. The author makes good use of 'typical' case histories and the emphasis throughout is on promoting help for the patient through understanding and support. The book does much to demystify mental illness and also provides an informed view on the uses and limitations of psychiatry. This modestly priced book should be of great assistance to those who support the mentally ill at home. New trainees in the psychiatric disciplines will find the book well worth reading.

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Prolonged Psychosocial Effects of Disaster: A Study of Buffalo Creek. By GOLDINE C. GLESER, BONNIE L. GREEN and CAROLYN WINGET. London: Academic Press. 1981. Pp 176. £12.60, \$19.00.

The scientific validity of evidence collected to support a compensation claim must be dubious. Not only are litigants very far from being a random sample of any population, but their responses to questions, whose purpose is to obtain money from the coal company who were held responsible for the inundation of Buffalo Creek in 1972, are likely to be biased.

The inclusion of a small comparison group of 33 non-litigants is no answer to the problem since they too are self-selected and their responses are likely to be coloured by the fact that they knew that legislation was possible.

So this book adds little to the dramatic reportage of Tom Nugent in *Death and Buffalo Creek* (1973) and Kai Erikson's sociological account *In the Wake of the Flood* (1976). Here I must declare an interest since I wrote a preface and postscript to the latter in order to attempt a comparison between the impact of the Buffalo Creek disaster and that of Aberfan.

Such comparisons are inevitable and they lead us to the conclusion that it is difficult to generalize about the psychological effects of "disasters". As Gleser *et al* point out "... differences in sampling of victims, as well as in methods of gathering, quantifying and analyzing data, make statistical comparisons impossible". Nevertheless it does appear that some disasters are more devastating in their psycho-social consequences than others and that Buffalo Creek must be counted as nasty.