

when reading about the legal system and the homeless and an account of the politics of homelessness, the Atlantic seemed about a mile wide!

The problems faced in America a few years ago are with us in the UK today, and this book should make salutary reading for all those concerned with programmes to close our large mental hospitals and set up community-based facilities in their place. The task force does not disagree with the concept of deinstitutionalisation but shows that where inadequately prepared patients are discharged into a poorly resourced community, the consequences for individuals and society as a whole are disastrous.

This book suffers from the common problem of multi-author texts, namely repetition. Some firmer editorial control would have made the text more readable but despite this defect and the fact that this book is now five years old, it remains one of the few comprehensive accounts of this subject. It is probably a book for psychiatric libraries rather than the individual purchaser, but nevertheless one that should be read. Despite the fact that most of the authors are doctors, the book is generally social rather than medical in orientation and provides an easily understood account of this subject for professionals and, I hope, planners from all disciplines.

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The Facilitating Environment: Clinical Applications of Winnicott's Theory. Edited by M. GERARD FROMM and BRUCE L. SMITH. Madison, Connecticut: International University Press. 1989. 637 pp. \$65.00.

"The paradox of frontiers is that they are never more present than when they are broken by an invasion", is a quotation from a French contribution written by Françoise Davoine to this excellent book. In fact, Winnicott was very fond of paradox as much as he was of play and playing. As formulated by one of the editors, the subtitle of the book could be considered a paradox itself, for Winnicott's theory cannot really be applied. However, what Winnicott represents is most helpful in arriving at a deep sense of recognition from within.

The book is organised into four sections. The first contains a series of theoretical contributions that can be of help in placing Winnicott's ideas in the context of other 'schools'. The other three sections each correspond to an important concept: "Transitional Phenomena", "False Self Organisation" and "The Psychotherapeutic Holding Environment". All writing is of the highest standard. The patients described range from those with anorexia nervosa to those with schizophrenia. In the reviewer's opinion, the most interesting chapters are 'Normotic illness', which is about the psychological problems of a person who is "abnormally normal", and "Photography as transitional

functioning". Of course, Lacan's presence in the French contribution is inevitable. Chapter 10, on "Potential space", by Thomas Ogden, is supreme.

Rather surprisingly, the final chapter is a paper by Winnicott himself, previously unpublished, entitled "Interpretation in psychoanalysis". In this characteristically lucid and succinct manner, Winnicott sets out why in therapy interpretation of nearly everything, including non-verbal behaviour, is not always useful. He feels that in some dreams the proper work has already been done. In such cases the analyst should do no more than reflect back the material presented instead of giving "clever interpretation". Winnicott advised to accept dreams as creative art in their own right. Moreover, in Winnicott's view the *timing* of interpretation is an important as the interpretation itself.

Winnicott wrote that he had a passionate wish "not to be found". I enjoyed the book very much, particularly his vivid presence in it. This outstanding piece of work can be recommended.

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Black Families in Crisis – The Middle Class. Edited by ALICE F. CONER-EDWARDS and JEANNE SPURLOCK. New York: Raven Press. 1989. 305 pp. \$41.00.

Transcultural psychiatry is increasingly being recognised as making a positive contribution to mental health services in Britain. As contributory factors to both the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, the role of cultural factors and racism are becoming better understood. *Black Families in Crisis – The Middle Class* is a recent addition to the mainly US-based work which has been carried out in this field.

This book relates to the American situation. Black refers mainly to people who share some genetic relationship to ancestors in Africa. The lifestyle and experiences of a significant number of such families in the USA have shifted towards middle-class status over the last 15 years, and a series of economic upheavals and structural factors in the economy exacerbated by an epidemic of hard drugs has undermined the social infrastructure of some black families. This book focuses on some of their characteristic experiences, dynamics, accomplishments and problems. A clear identity with British black middle class does not exist, although there are a growing number of people from these communities who are making progress in their professional life and acquiring a measure of affluence.

This book may be particularly relevant to those working with Afro-Caribbean clients. However, since all minority ethnic groups share a common experience of racism and migration, some parallels can be drawn within Britain's entire multiracial population.