

seeing fresh approaches to helping children find the path to healthy development. The section on thinking, re-assessing and decision-making challenges us to rework some of our own theoretical frameworks. For those who find didactic textbooks a bore, this book provides a pleasurable, enriching way of thinking about children.

The play psychotherapy section unfortunately lacks some of the emotional and theoretical richness of the rest of the book. One of the greatest gifts a therapist can give to a child is a depth of feeling and space in one's mind for thinking about the child's feelings. Weinberger's suggestion that the therapist use various concrete expressions of his or her goodness such as marshmallows and gifts seem to diminish rather than enhance the significance of the therapist's presence. For this reason I do not find myself in agreement with his notions of gifts. Likewise, the recommended short notice for ending therapy does not do justice to the importance of having and losing the relationship with the therapist. For greater understanding of child psychotherapy the reader might find it more useful to examine the British psychotherapeutic methods described in *The Child Psychotherapist* (edited by Dilys Daws and Mary Boston, Wildwood, London, 1977).

I would recommend this as a basic text for all courses discussing communicating with children in a school, clinic, or hospital setting. Students will find the book interesting when thinking about such questions as why children demand to have so many toys and in particular just the toy with which another child is playing, and why a child is unable to symbolise, play and defend himself from aggression. I would also recommend Weininger's book to clinicians, who will be enriched through thinking about the detailed, vivid descriptions of crises and ways of helping the children in the natural settings of home and school.

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Adultery – An Analysis of Love and Betrayal. By ANNETTE LAWSON. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1988. 440 pp. £13.95.

Adultery is an adventure and a myth. It attracts people constantly with the promise of dangerous passion. Lawson intends to look at the phenomenon as the underside, the breach of marriage and an undercover institution with its own walls. Adultery is seen as being firmly tied to marital breakdown, and it can be a sordid, mudane, meaningless, or empty affair.

The whole subject of adultery poses interesting moral, social, and religious dilemmas. The myth of love equaling marriage and the expectations of a one-to-one relationship contribute to the phenomenon of adultery.

With ever-increasing divorce rates, Lawson asserts that there will come a time when marriages will not last long enough for the partners to have adulterous relationships. She incorporates the myths of 'romantic marriage' and 'me' into her understanding of adultery. The sample was collected from newspaper and magazine readers. Some of the conclusions drawn from the study are obvious; for example, that the 1960s and 1970s were the most liberal times, when most respondents had their first liaisons; that the later the duration of onset, the lesser the number of affairs; that a significant minority met through work and a majority found happiness in it; and that more women were likely to feel guilty than men.

The author poses some interesting questions but her attempt at answering these is lost in the mists of descriptive details of histories of respondents. It would have been helpful to have included the methodology of the study in the main text of the book, rather than relegating it to the appendix, since the results from the study crop up from time to time in the main text.

Adultery remains an interesting social phenomenon (or is it to be seen as social deviance?), and this book may provide some flashes of insight into it, but not a total insight.

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Childhood Epilepsies: Neuropsychological, Psychosocial and Intervention Aspects. Edited by BRUCE P. HERMANN and MICHAEL SEIDENBERG. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons. 1989. 264 pp. £26.95.

This is a book of which the series editor, Professor Michael Rutter, can be justly proud. It is a valuable addition to the many recent publications on epilepsy and concentrates on areas in which others have been limited, namely the neuropsychological and psychosocial aspects. Here there are also sections on such clinical matters as classification and information processing in petit mal epilepsy. It is not an easy read, but it repays careful study.

The majority of the chapters consist of excellent literature reviews on, for example, cognitive function and academic achievement; then the authors present original research to fill in the notable gaps in current knowledge. There are problems matching patients with epilepsy to normal controls, as in the section on anticonvulsant effects. This is not least because epileptic discharge *per se*, during intelligence testing, may produce a low estimate of IQ and then the patient is matched with a less able normal control. The chapters often unexpectedly present numerical data on such matters as the effect of epilepsy on the family as well as on behaviour and social competence. Perhaps the importance of the poor self-esteem of many patients could be more emphasised,

along with the useful place of sport in helping to overcome some of the problems. There is, however, an excellent section on vocational and psychosocial intervention for youths, presenting the American experience.

It might be felt that the volume is too slanted towards the USA, with 18 of the 21 contributors from that side of the Atlantic, but clearly their services, at least in some areas of the country, are much better organised than in the UK. The book therefore presents views which if studied carefully could improve overall management. It might seem trite, but the emphasis on seizure control itself is one of the single most important aspects for the production of a satisfactory psychological and social functioning, hence rightly the question of compliance receives considerable attention. Some more recent work on adults, with microprocessor counters in the caps of bottles, has shown just how poor compliance is, especially when drug regimes are complex, with multiple daily dosings, and the same appears to be the case in children.

The book is well produced, so the reviewer need not have been alarmed by the misprint in the second paragraph of the preface! The various chapters add up to a very informative volume that demands the attention of all those who care for the individual patient. It also clearly indicates the direction for future research.

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Sexual Trauma in Children and Adolescents: Dynamics and Treatment. By DIANA SULLIVAN EVERSTEIN and LOUIS EVERSTEIN. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1989. 224 pp. \$25.

The authors of this book are psychologists working in the emergency treatment centre, Palo Alto, California, and this volume is a sequel to their earlier book, *People in Crisis* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1983).

The book is well organised; there is an introductory chapter on the problem of molestation, further chapters on assessment of trauma and treatment, and a final chapter on legal and ethical considerations.

The glossary of terms is useful, but the authors' definition of sexual abuse, sexual assault, molestation, etc. are idiosyncratic, sexual assault being defined as any degree of penetration, which does not take into account the assaultative quality of non-penetrator abuse.

The book itself is a bit of a curate's egg, with sections which are coherent and sensible alternating with statements which seem to be based on opinion rather than fact. For instance, the authors make clear statements about Freud's avoidance of the reality of child sexual abuse, and the subsequent avoidance of the subject by clinicians, leading on to a discussion of the role of the adult abuser in seducing the child. However, at the same time, sweeping statements are made about normal sexual

orientation in adults, for example, "Although incestuous thoughts, fantasies and impulses are part of the normal developmental process of every person, society bans even discussion of the subject" (p. 89). Interesting though this statement may be, it is not substantiated by research, nor is the dogmatic statement that "The incest taboo . . . draws its strength from sound biological, sociological and psychological reasons" – there is in fact a lack of consensus between anthropologists about the basis for the so-called incest taboo.

The book is weakest in relation to assessment issues, and far more convincing in relation to treatment. This may relate to the structural model of understanding incest proposed by the authors, which seems simplistic and is based on the concept of separate disturbed individuals in the family acting out pre-existing 'scripts' on the basis of past experience. The family itself is not viewed as a systemic entity, although incestuous family systems are mentioned. Since the authors do not have a concept of a sick family, but rather of sick individuals, they are able to recommend that "It is not always necessary or wise to recommend removal of a child from the home, or to advocate breaking up of the family system" (p. 113), which, while true for a substantial number of child sexual abuse cases, does not take account of sick family systems, which pose a risk to children even when the alleged perpetrator has been removed.

The assumption here is that if a disturbed adult can be helped, then all will be well: there is no understanding of pre-existing dysfunction within the family, and the need to address this specifically.

Similarly, the chapter on assessing children and talking to victims about abuse is sympathetically written, and contains much which is helpful to clinicians, but also contains contentious elements. The recent American experience, in certain states, of banning the use of anatomically correct dolls in interviews with abuse victims is reflected in the chapter, with the authors stating that using the dolls at all "enhances the likelihood that a child will be asked 'leading' questions by the examiner" (p. 24). No evidence is put forward to support this statement, and, although clinicians would be advised to use anatomically correct dolls with caution, and only after specific training, it is possible to interview children in this way, using an unstructured free play session, with few, if any, leading questions, towards the end of the interview.

The issue of leading questions itself is dealt with under the heading "Approaching the subject of incest" (p. 112) where a suggested approach is as follows: "As you know, relationships between fathers and daughters can become very close. Some of the things that you told me gave me the feeling – and you may stop me if I am wrong, because I am not always right – that something might have happened between you and your dad that hurt you or frightened you or confused you." Elsewhere, the authors, in common with others in this field, strongly warn against the use of leading questions. By legal