

The final section discusses recommendations for treatment, focusing on cognitive/behavioural, physical, educational and self-help methods. There was no reference to any psychodynamic perspective on trauma and child sexual abuse, and little exploration of the difficulties in the treatment of incest survivors.

This project represents an important attempt to understand the meaning of incest and child abuse, and describes some of the complexity of its sequelae. However, the methodology is limited and lacks completeness.

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The Course of Life. Vol. V: Early Adulthood. Edited by GEORGE H. POLLOCK and STANLEY I. GREENSPAN. Madison, Connecticut: International Universities Press. 1993. 420 pp. US\$50.00 (hb).

It has always seemed necessary to me to indicate the level of maturity of a person when making a formulation of their psychiatric problem. Now that lifespan developmental psychopathology is recognised, a scientific basis for developmental description throughout adult life is emerging. We now recognise that psychological development does not stop at 18. So where is psychoanalysis in all this? For ages it has been the pre-eminent developmental metaphor, even if not strictly scientific. Does it help inform an axis of development which can be applied to psychiatric cases whatever their age?

Pollock and Greenspan originally edited a series of developmental papers by psychoanalysts, mostly American, in the early 1980s. These books have now been revised and enlarged and this is the fifth volume. It is dedicated to the neglected area of early adult life, although not exclusively. I was delighted to find a chapter (by Elliot Jaques) on the midlife crisis, which made me revise my notions of what early adulthood might include. The title of the book is misleading, as several contributors refer to established adulthood or even the elderly. Even here it seems difficult to maintain a clear focus on older teenagers and young adults.

This is a book to relish. There are eleven essays on the application of modern American psychoanalytic thinking to adult development and psychopathology. Person on femininity and Kernberg on borderline personality write particularly helpfully, and the final chapter on an approach to assessment by Greenspan & Polk proposes a system which is clinically useful. These are chapters which should find their way into reading lists for higher trainees. Psychoanalysis continues to provoke thinking.

There are good reference lists, but I cannot see why it is necessary to list 32 references to Freud in one chapter, especially as some of them are almost 100

years old. However, most of the book looks forward, integrating scientific studies of development with carefully explained psychoanalytic concepts. I don't think everyone should read all of it, but a library for thoughtful clinicians should include it.

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Precursors and Causes in Development and Psychopathology. Edited by DALE F. HAY and ADRIAN ANGOLD. Chichester: Wiley. 1993. 320 pp. £34.95.

This volume aims to bridge the gap between child development and clinical psychiatry. The editors invited a number of scholars from Britain and the US to reflect on ways in which the concepts of 'precursors' and 'cause' have been applied to normal and abnormal development. The book contains contributions from developmental psychology, child psychiatry, genetics, neuroscience, statistical theory, and the philosophy of science. The result is a thoughtful and interesting review of the underlying concepts and implications for the interpretation of research findings, leading to the editors' recommendation to abandon conventional causal analysis in favour of formalising the descriptive task of developmental research in probabilistic terms (i.e. rather than searching for a cause, researchers should describe the probabilistic relationship of interactions at any level of analysis).

Each chapter provides an excellent overview of contemporary knowledge and applied research strategies in: brain abnormalities and psychological development; developmental behaviour genetics; infant precursors of childhood intellectual and verbal abilities; children's theory of mind; development of prosocial behaviour; attachment in infancy and later adjustment; development of criminal offending; and childhood depression.

However, the chapters vary in their readability. At times the integration of philosophical ideas and statistical concepts makes it difficult to appreciate the accumulated knowledge and innovative ideas for future research.

The authors differ from maintaining the terms 'precursors' and 'cause' to the suggestion to reject the nouns of everyday speech or common-sense concepts because of their implicit limitations. However, all stress the importance to move on from unidirectional and reductionistic interpretations of causation, to the analysis of multiple pathways and outcomes of development with contemporary statistical approaches (i.e. parameter estimation, likelihood modelling and graphical techniques).

The editors choose to remain agnostic as to whether true causes exist, but their recommendation to strive for more precise descriptions and the other authors'