

behaviour to the victim in the presence of other family members. Inevitably, one is tempted to view the abusing father's apology in a rather cynical light since experience of sexual offenders suggest that they can con themselves and others about virtually anything, including a formal apology to the victim, particularly if this ensures continued non-custodial therapy. What is lacking from the chapter, and indeed from the book, is an adequate explanation of the rationale for treatment of sexual offenders in the community, and a full explanation of the treatment programme in which the treatment session is, presumably, one small component.

Other chapters look at the role of medical assessment (not particularly helpfully) and the court (much more helpfully). "A therapist's primer for court testimony" contains a number of helpful hints about attitude and behaviour within the court context, which will help the therapist to convey his or her opinion clearly, credibly and objectively.

The last chapter in the book by Conte, "Sexual abuse in the family: a critical analysis", grasps the nettle of the limits within the family systems perspectives, and indicates that there is much more to learn about the psychopathology of the abuser and the role of this issue in family dysfunction, before any final statement can be made about incest. Conte remarks that "systems theory is a general theory describing the functioning of systems; it is not a cause or theory . . ." and later goes on to say that certain applications of systems thinking can result in the notion that the problem is not what it appears but rather something else, which, for incest, could mean that sexual abuse is not really sexual at all, but perhaps an expression of the abuse of power. Conte points out that both sexual and non-sexual dimensions are present in all forms of sexuality, presumably including incest, and that to date this has not been acknowledged in the family therapy literature. The issue of mother-blaming in relation to distorted-systems thinking is not covered in this chapter, and Conte ends by noting the need for research which will differentiate between primary processes responsible for the development of sexual abuse and secondary ones which only support or maintain sexual abuse.

EILEEN VIZARD, *Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Newham Child and Family Consultation Service, London*

The Empathic Imagination. By ALFRED MARGULAS. London: W. W. Norton & Co. 1989. 181 pp. £17.50.

Psychoanalytic psychotherapies are often construed as lacking in empathy. The classic analytic session with the client on the couch and the analyst out of view is a picture which many find incongruent with being empathic. This book helps to fill the empathic gap in psychoanalytic writings. Margulies provides us with an

eloquent and scholarly insight into the nature of empathy in the therapeutic relationship. Having previously attempted to publish his work in journals, he abandoned this in favour of a book as this is really a journey, and you have to travel the whole distance to appreciate this work.

He does not write about being empathic but about empathic exploration and the demands on and capacities of the explorers. He draws upon art, poetry and literature on the one hand, and on the other, the dreams, fantasies and imagination of his clients' inner-world. Parallels are drawn between the various conceptualisations of the self in psychotherapy, from psychoanalytic to interpersonal and existential viewpoints. Therefore this book is a must for all those engaged in psychotherapy. Margulies deepens our understanding of the complexities of the individuals' inner-world. The book has an American flavour and British readers may be irritated by the absence of references to Klein and the British independent tradition. Personal Construct Psychology does not get a look in either. Despite this, the book is rich in insight and I would recommend it to all therapists.

NIGEL BEAIL, *Principal Clinical Psychologist, The Keresforth Centre, Barnsley*

Adolescent Group Psychotherapy. Edited by FERN J. CRAMER AZIMA and LEWIS H. RICHMOND. Madison: International Universities Press. 1989. 260 pp. \$30.00.

In this monograph, one of a series from the American Group Psychotherapy Association, Azima & Richmond bring together 13 authors experienced in group therapy with adolescents to give theoretical, clinical and research perspectives on the topic.

There are three chapters on theoretical issues, three chapters on general clinical applications, then four chapters on working with special clinical populations (in secondary schools, the learning disabled, delinquents, substance abusers) and a review of relevant clinical research.

I found this a somewhat uneven book. There is plenty of good advice in it and the contributions are generally well written and easy to read. However, the very first sentence of chapter one, "There is little doubt that group psychotherapy is considered by most clinicians to be the treatment of choice for adolescents", oversells the product, although the author of this statement does redeem herself later in a very thoughtful critique of the research literature concerning adolescent group therapy. Also, the editors have been too benign in exercising editorial control. As a result I was left with an impression of questions unanswered and areas of overlap. In this respect, the theoretical section is particularly weak.

Nevertheless, there are undoubted strengths to the book. Well-chosen case vignettes from several of the