

terms "the limited certainties of the pathology paradigm with orthodoxies of a different origin". He quotes Erich Fromm, "The quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning". In the areas of both gender and deliberate self-harm this quote should be engraved on our hearts. The author has clearly kept it close to his, and has succeeded in introducing the reader to the published works in this area, and has picked his way through the gender minefield relatively unscathed.

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**Teaching Systemic Thinking.** By DAVID CAMPBELL, ROS DRAPER and CLARE HUFFINGTON. London: Karnac Books. 1991. 88 pp. £7.50.

The authors of this book make no pretensions that it is a comprehensive text on teaching systemic thinking. They do, however, pack into its 88 pages a number of very useful ideas. There is attention to the wider effects of any teaching, not only on the 'ecology of ideas' of both teachers and students, but also on the agencies from which they come. The major section is devoted to exercises that vary in content and complexity, and will enable participants to experience the systemic process in action. Participants explore systemic principles and their application in therapy by group discussion, using regular feedback and questions that challenge assumptions and generate new connections. Throughout the process they are encouraged to take responsibility for learning to suit their individual and agency needs. There are suggestions for reading and writing tasks, and homework.

This book is refreshing in its emphasis on the co-evolutionary nature of the process that makes teaching and learning fun. It also shows the enormous potential of teaching systemic thinking through exercises.

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**Suicidal Behaviour in Europe: Recent Research Findings.** Edited by P. CREPET, S. PLATT, G. FERRARI and M. BELLINI. London: J. Libby. 1992. 327 pp.

This book presents a selection of papers based on presentations made at the 3rd European symposium on Suicidal Behaviours and Risk Factors, held in Bologna in September 1990. In total there are 32 articles organised into five sections: European perspectives; risk factors and predictors; cognitive aspects of parasuicide; psychiatric illness and suicidal behaviour; and substance abuse. It is longer than the book based on the 2nd symposium held in 1988, and its greater number of papers

cover a broader range of topics. Most of these report on empirical studies, although a few present detailed reviews of the literature. Gratifyingly few of the articles contain similar material to that presented in the earlier volume.

Some of the papers present intriguing new evidence on established themes such as the impact of media reporting on subway suicide in Vienna, or the role of unemployment in suicide in Italy. Others tackle new themes such as the effect of the fear of AIDS, or the role of substance abuse in suicide among the young. Most notable is the emphasis given to prediction and prevention, on which there are 13 papers. The result is a wide-ranging coverage of current research into suicide and parasuicide in Europe, the findings of which are placed in the context of international literature. The editors are to be congratulated on their selection of papers, and the authors for the generally high quality of the material presented.

Although there are differences in presentation (some papers do not contain abstracts and occasionally the list of references is a little brief), these do not materially detract from the book. It forms essential reading for anyone with professional interest in suicide.

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**Existential/Dialectical Marital Therapy: Breaking the Secret Code of Marriage.** By ISRAEL W. CHARNY. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1992. 294 pp. US \$24.95.

The philosophical title of Dr Charny's book, with its suggestion of a search for a world-view in a landscape of uncertainty, is descriptive of his approach to marriage. On reading, I was reminded of an aside of E. M. Forster's, in *Howards End*, which observes that in a way of life without religious faith and without roots in a native place we have to depend on love to give our experience significance. "May love be equal to the task!" he apostrophises sincerely but without undue optimism, and in this attitude I believe a marital therapist best approaches the relationship in trouble which presents itself, a relationship which is at once the common structural unit of all society, and a unique and mysterious experience of two individuals.

Dr Charny's view of the task of love seems to me to owe much to the romantic movement, a precursor of existentialism, in which it was held that to travel hopefully is better than to arrive at a state of relative disillusion and reconciliation. His couple's quest is romanticised, rather than the couple itself, and the marital therapist appears as a Virgilian guide pointing out innumerable 'marital traps' along their way: 'success traps', 'incompetence traps', and 'complementarity traps', in which you may think you have just worked