

modality (e.g. "individual; out-patient"); problem duration; treatment length; result; follow-up; the techniques used; and the source of the report. The book concludes with a glossary of techniques, and subject, source and technique indexes.

We thus have available a ready reference to how Erickson tackled many clinical problems. The subtleties and complexities of what he did, and especially his perceptiveness when faced with a clinical problem cannot emerge in these vignettes but the 'source' items tell us where we may read the original reports.

This is a reference source for those who have read some of the Ericksonian literature and want to discover whether Erickson treated a particular type of case and, if so, how he approached it. The beginner would do better to start with Haley's *Uncommon Therapy* or Rosen's *My Voice Will Go With You* (both also published by Norton). The more experienced therapist may find this a useful reference book. Most who dip into it will view with awe the range of Erickson's work and his innovative approaches.

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**Adolescence and Culture.** By A. H. ESMAN. New York: Columbia University Press. 1991. 118 pp. \$29.00.

This is an erudite and challenging book, by a psychoanalyst who has given much time and thought to his subject. The book is a short one, and almost falls into the category of an extended essay. In this work, the author explores the theme of adolescence and culture in its broadest context. Dr Esman provides not only an historical overview of attitudes towards youth, from the military training of the young Spartans in Ancient Greece to the recent revolutionary activity of the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, but also an examination of many popular theories of adolescence.

He traces the psychological changes that have resulted from industrialisation, the sexual revolution, the 1960s' political activism, AIDS, and popular culture, and challenges the notion that there can be any one "single youth culture".

I have two major concerns about the book. The first is to do with the use of case histories. As an experienced clinician, the author has the stories of many troubled young people to draw upon, and he does so in a somewhat misleading manner. The lives of one or two disturbed adolescents should not be utilised as evidence in support of general propositions concerning adolescent development.

My second concern has to do with the relationship between adolescence and culture. Dr Esman believes that young people are both the shapers of cultural change and the barometers of it. I find this a one-sided view. Surely adolescents are far more likely to be

affected by cultural change than to be the ones who bring it about? This two-way process is not fully explored.

In summary, this is an interesting book, but more of an armchair read than a student text-book.

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**Adolescent Suicide: Assessment and Intervention.** By ALAN L. BERMAN and DAVID A. JOBES. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. 1991. 277 pp. \$35.00 (hb), \$17.50 (pb).

This book aims to bring the reader up to date with theory and practice of assessment, intervention, prevention (and if all this fails) 'postvention' of adolescent suicidal behaviour. The authors stated aim is to review, summarise, and integrate research-based findings and translate these into usable clinical tools. As a review and summary of the literature on adolescent suicide the book is indeed comprehensive and successful. However, the integration and clinical translation is less successful. According to the authors there is no agreed-upon standardised assessment or intervention strategy, therefore a variety of promising approaches are described from which the clinician can choose and apply those which best suit their individual style, theoretical orientation, and proclivity. That is, unlike many other books on the subject, this book does not provide the reader with a clinical assessment or intervention protocol in sufficient detail to be immediately useful.

For a specialist book on the adolescent phase of development the section on theories of 'normal' adolescent development are not adequately covered, making the book more suited to clinicians already experienced in working with adolescents. On the positive side, the book is rich in clinical examples and provides a good guide for further reading. Overall the book would be recommended for readers looking for a thorough introduction to the issues of adolescent suicide.

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**Advances in Personal Relationships (Volume 2).** Edited by WARREN H. JONES and DANIEL PERLMAN. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 1991. 272 pp. £30.00.

This is the second volume in a series of four reporting recent psychological research on personal relationships. The editors introduce it by arguing that close personal

relationships are not only the "cornerstone of interpersonal behaviour and social contact" but are "necessary for survival".

The series has been mainly compiled for researchers and advanced students with the aim of providing them with an up-to-date overview of the literature. The papers are complex and demanding to read. Volume 2 contains eight papers arranged into three sections.

Part I is concerned with the development of relationships. The first paper by Parks & Eggert shows how family and friends exert a big influence on a person's close relationships. In the second paper, Borden & Levinger examine how two separate individuals come to function as a pair. The three ways in which people adapt they unhappily call "situation-orientated motivational transformations", "relationship-orientated motivational transformations" and "relationship-transcendent dispositional transformations". Holmes' paper examines the development of trust, showing that it influences how a partner is perceived and responded to.

Part II examines what is meant by social support. Winstead & Derlega show that friends are more supportive in stressful situations than strangers. Riggio & Zimmerman demonstrate that the social skill of both the support provider and receiver affects the quality of their interchange.

Part III explores the Attributional and Strategic Aspects of Relationships. Fincham & Bradbury start by reviewing their research programme to conclude that there is a causal link between attributions and marital satisfaction. Bar-Tal *et al* show how cognitive and motivational processes are involved in planning and performing interpersonal interaction. Finally, Miller & Read describe interpersonalism which they say stresses "the importance and complexity of unique persons who create dynamic, unique relationships".

Indeed this quote, which is the last sentence of the book, encapsulates what the eight papers are trying to say. The book requires painstaking study. Its language is difficult to someone unfamiliar with American social psychology terminology. However, there is a sense, perhaps a hope, that a person in relation to others is trying to emerge from between the lines. If so, it is something that we have always known, and something that we always need reminding about.

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**Getting Through To You: A Self-Help Course in Communication Skills.** By ALEX HOWARD. Bath: Gateway Books. 1991. 230 pp. £6.95.

Any volume on social skills which opens with a Roger McGough poem on the difficulties of personal com-

munication and the ease with which misconceptions occur, could hardly fail to get off to a good start. Unfortunately, my initial enthusiasm about the book gradually waned. Despite its high standard of writing, liberal and helpful use of examples, a broad coverage of communication difficulties (including adaptive and non-adaptive communication styles), and important warnings about how easily assertiveness can become manipulation, I had a number of misgivings about the way the book developed. To begin with, I personally found that, although well thought out, the questions and exercises concluding each chapter were difficult to consider, and I suspect this would be the response of his typical reader. In relation to this, I wonder just who the typical reader would be or for what audience the book is aimed. Although sub-titled "a self-help course in communication skills", which would attract people seeking practical guidance, there are many long sections that read like an introductory text in sociology. In a similar vein, the final chapters on human ecology, although a very laudable attempt to go beyond the standard text on communication skills and to raise consciousness about our general relationship to the world, would have little relevance for someone seeking help with basic communication skills. Perhaps this highlights the book's main flaw. The author tries to do too much and to reach too wide an audience.

Although the above make this a rather difficult book to recommend, it is redeemed by a number of features. In particular, chapter 3 is very good in conveying the distortions which inattentiveness and preconceptions create in communication, chapter 4 provides an excellent summary of the mechanisms of defence and, though not stated overtly, the entire book highlights the limits of more simplistic, behavioural models of social skills training. In conclusion, it is probably as part of a social skills group that therapists will find this book of most value and in which setting he or she can make use of the exercises, questions and other material it contains.

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**Symbol Story and Ceremony. Using Metaphor in Individual and Family Therapy.** By G. COMBS and J. FREEDMAN. London: W. W. Norton. 1990. 279 pp. £18.95.

There has been a recent upsurge in publications around this subject. Perhaps this reflects in part the coming of age of family work into a time where tensions between various schools can be amalgamated and developed. Perhaps too, we live in times where family life is dis-integrating and individual lives are so privatised that they become stripped of meaning.

The ideas of using metaphor in psychotherapy are developed from the work of Milton Erickson, whereby