

whose members share. Child development, gender issues, male and female roles in society are similarly explored, and working hypotheses for psychopathology are described and derived from observation of the malfunctioning of these systems in the modern world.

The second part of the book is devoted to more clinical descriptions showing, for example, how lack of 'dominance' (equivalent to 'self-esteem' and differentiated from 'domineering') results in reactive problems of aggression. The authors work in a broadly cognitive-behavioural framework and concepts of which behaviours were adaptive in hunter-gatherer bands are used to guide and advise clients about the required behavioural and attitudinal changes that are needed for a happier life nowadays. Although it is clear from the case histories that there is regard for the importance of empathy and the therapeutic relationship, the importance of these aspects are not satisfactorily accounted for, and the question of dependency and problems of weaning from the therapist needs some elaboration. The clinical examples are vivid and focus as might be expected on vignettes which illustrate the theory in practice. The fact that much has passed between therapist and client before this is only referred to briefly, leaving this to the imagination in what are essential areas of work. In a short volume, designed to argue a particular point, this is probably not unreasonable, although I hope the authors will write further on this in future, in particular how they manage the defences and countertransference problems in the months or years before the client begins to make use of the framework they offer.

I found this an enjoyable book to read. The authors demonstrate that they are willing to work patiently with difficult clients over many years, and I found that the book added to my understanding of human functioning in social groups. For both of these reasons I would recommend this book to a wide audience.

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Conversations with Pre-school Children. Uncovering Developmental Patterns. By PAUL V. TRAD. New Haven/London: Yale University Press. 1989. 227 pp. £14.95.

The intention of this book is to acquaint health care professionals with the developmental process in pre-school children, in order that they may distinguish normal from abnormal behaviour. The author's basic tenet is that behaviour suggestive of psychopathology may actually be normal adaptive responses of young children encountering traumatic events. He contrasts the medical model, which he considers limited, with the new field of developmental psychopathology, which draws on knowledge from various scientific disciplines.

The book consists of a brief examination of the case histories of six pre-school children whose behaviour has caused concern. The clinical descriptions are accompanied by limited reports of conversations between the author and the child, mainly in question and answer form. Following each vignette is a lengthy discussion of theories of normal development pertinent to each case. A wide range of models and theories are used – primarily attachment theory, theories of temperament and also of cognitive development. Research on children's behaviour, especially recent research, is quoted extensively, and the chapter on play behaviour is particularly comprehensive and erudite. However, it is surprising that the pioneers of play therapy and psychoanalysis with children, Melanie Klein and Anne Freud, are not mentioned.

The children's behaviour is examined under various headings – cognition, locus of control, play behaviour, pro-social behaviour and aggression. It can be deduced from these titles that this is a very American book, which focuses on a very American preoccupation – that every child showing any disturbance of behaviour will automatically receive a diagnostic label under DSM-III-R. Even a description of normal sibling rivalry is discussed as possibly classifiable as the disorder 'phase of life problem'.

For my taste Trad focuses too much on the theory and insufficiently on the personal details of each case, with scant exploration of the environment of each child. This lends a mechanistic impersonal feel to the book, with too rigid a consideration of psychopathology and a disappointing reluctance to give meaning to the children's behaviour. Finally, I feel the book falls short of its aim to provide a practical guide for professionals in this field.

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Suicide in Children and Adolescents. Edited by GEORGE MACLEAN, with contributions from S. DAVIDSON, R. T. JOFFE, D. R. OFFORD and C. R. PFEFFER. Ottawa, Ontario: Hogrefe & Huber. 1990. 144 pp. Canadian \$26.00.

This slim Canadian volume covers a topic which is of interest to both child and adolescent psychiatrists and adult psychiatrists. Its five chapters cover subjects ranging from epidemiology and clinical assessment to the role of depressive disorders and risk factors in management of suicidal children and adolescents. An increase in completed suicide in adolescents and young adults has caused concern both in North America and in the United Kingdom. The reasons for this are uncertain. Throughout this volume it is clear that research on suicidal attempts and completed suicide meets a gap in