message to many different areas of the mind – like a politician or a scientist gaining access to the media. This notion of 'publicity' is the flip-side of Freud's censorship metaphor, which describes how disturbing information is confined to isolated parts of the mind and kept incommunicado. Only one message can appear on the consciousness screen at once – hence, while publication is adaptive in gaining the attention of broad areas of the mind, conscious processes are serial, slow, and inefficient compared with unconscious processes.

The mixing of clinicians and academic theorists in this book is not always smooth. Baars, for example, spoils his otherwise convincing paper with his bizarre suggestion that as a research strategy a therapist might deliberately "overload the patient's immediate memory by asking him/her to say three sentences about the three most important things on his mind." Nevertheless, the authors persuasively argue the case for a psychodynamic cognitive science. There are some interesting general suggestions as to possible lines of enquiry and theory. Overall, however, this clinician is left very much with the impression that there is more promise than substance so far in this endeavour.

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Countertransference Triumphs and Catastrophes. By PETER L. GIOVACCHINI. London: Jason Aronson. 1989. 335 pp. £23.50.

Countertransference can be defined, in its broadest sense, as the therapist's feeling response to the patient. Giovacchini's book has much to offer any clinician who practises psychotherapy or analysis. Although what he writes is not new, at least in British schools of depth analysis, he writes well on the subject, and engages interest in the pitfalls awaiting the therapist who is not monitoring his or her countertransference. Some of the many examples are extreme – one is of a patient who shot his therapist dead. However, the exploration is always interesting.

Giovacchini is a Chicago-trained psychoanalyst, and thus from a traditional American Freudian analytic background. However, he has absorbed and pays tribute to the British objects relations school, and quotes Klein and Winnicott frequently. At times he misinterprets Winnicott, as when he describes children being treated by their parents as transitional objects. By this he means children who are used in various ways to enhance parental narcissism. This is a misuse of Winnicott's term "transitional object".

Following an opening chapter, "The therapist's contributions to the course of therapy", the book is divided into three parts. The first is called "Countertransference and disruption". Giovacchini describes the ubiquity of countertransference, and points out that an apparent absence of it is an indication of a problem. In writing of disruption of the process he treats of ways in which patients may provoke countertransference responses which, acted out in subtle ways, destroy the treatment.

The second, and by far the largest, section of the book is entitled "Countertransference in specific psychopathological constellations". Although his thesis in general seems to be that the more primitive the psychic organisation of the patient, the more intense the countertransference, the author also argues for the difficulties in countertransference with depressed patients. He suggests, as a result, that depressive disorders will cause us to revise current attitudes to psychopathology and treatment.

The short final section is on "Technical treatment problems". Giovacchini seems quite often to favour a direct use of the countertransference, i.e. the therapist describing his feelings to the patient so that they can look together at what has gone on. He is fairly scathing about the idealisation involved in the use of the term 'classical psychoanalysis'. By mentioning this I do not mean to imply that his work with patients, as he describes it, is unanalytic. What I do feel, however, is that his theoretical framework does not come through clearly.

The strengths of this book lie in the full examples – it is a very clinical book – and in Giovaccini's commitment to exploration of the ever-present phenomenon of countertransference. As he points out at the end, "The recognition of its effects and its role in the treatment interaction has broadened the scope of psychoanalytic treatment and has made the analytic interaction a human and mutually enriching experience".

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Problems and Solutions in Marital and Family Therapy. By JOHN CARPENTER and ANDY TREACHER. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1989. 271 pp. £9.95 (pb), £29.50 (hb).

This is a useful book, which should be recommended to beginning therapists. It contains much good common sense, and many practical tips. The first three chapters set out the basic model, which is principally borrowed (with due acknowledgment) from the 'Brief Therapy Project' at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. The emphasis is on focusing on solutions, not problems, and on developing a therapeutic alliance. Chapter four is on the engagement of young children in therapy, and chapters five and six are on dealing with the specific problems of secrets in therapy, and of violence in the family. Chapters seven and eight are on the authors' approach to the management of what they call 'stuckness' in the therapeutic and supervisory systems. The final chapter is about managing endings in therapy.

The first chapter challenges the concept of resistance in therapy. The authors make some valid points, but although it is true that a few schools do, or did, use the concept of resistance to describe an almost adversarial therapy, in the current climate of opinion I suspect they may be tilting at windmills. The description of 'contract building' is quite useful, but would gain weight if they referred to some of the considerable body of work which has been done on this subject. Many therapists would strongly support their accent on the relationship between therapist and family. This chapter could be misinterpreted, however, as implying that there is a simple schema which can allow the therapist or the family to avoid very painful choices.

Chapter two provides common sense on convening a session. It describes the obstacles to be overcome in the various settings (clinical and statutory) in which therapeutic work (not just 'therapy') has to be done. This and the previous chapter do a good job of demystifying the therapeutic process, but above all the attention to the wider social, political, and racial/cultural issues as they affect both the family and therapist is excellent.

The chapter on the inclusion of young children is disappointing. It gives good reasons for including young children and some pointers about how to use their presence, but fails to tackle the question most newer therapists want help with: how do I find a language in which to talk to children without being patronising, and still be respectful to adults?

The chapters on secrets and violence are sensible and contain much good advice, as do chapters seven and eight.

The authors are quick to find models to criticise, but do not really say what the therapist needs to learn in order to become a good therapist. Their sensible and systematic approach sometimes fails to inform the reader that therapy (and life) includes confronting what may appear to be irrational, or alternatively broadening our perspectives of the rational. The reader might need to be reminded that he or she may have to make jumps in perception in order to help the family detoxify the irrational. This is a book which should be used by trainers.

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Man and Dog: The Psychology of a Relationship. By REINHOLD BERGLER. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific. 1988. 224 pp. £12.95.

To a certain extent our quality and enjoyment of life depend on the level of importance we attach to other people and other things. Relationships between human beings and animals form an extensive part of this world of meanings and values. In this text Bergler endeavours to examine the nature and significance of the relationship between man and dog and the effect it can have on people's lives. He presents scientific evidence to support the importance of dogs in improving the life of man and indicate how dogs could come to play an even more effective role in the future.

The book covers in detail the role of dogs in art and culture, the personality of dog-owners, and the role of dogs in medicine – for example, in the treatment and prevention of cardiovascular disorders. Bergler also examines to what extent animals have proved to be beneficial in the field of psychotherapy. We read about amazing results gained with autistic children, the old, the mentally ill, and the disabled.

This is a thoroughly fascinating book which should appeal to a wide readership – ranging from social workers, psychiatrists, and psychologists, to vets and, last but by no means least, the army of interested dog owners out there! At £12.95, this book should find itself on a variety of different bookshelves.

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Masculinity/Femininity: Basic Perspectives. Edited by JUNE MACHOVER REINISCH, LEONARD A. ROSENBLUM and STEPHANIE A. SANDERS. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1987. 364 pp. £28.00.

This excellent book provides some coverage of every area of study relevant to this highly contentious subject. It includes psychobiological, neuroscience, evolutionary, behavioural genetics, developmental, psychosocial, and cultural perspectives. Almost every chapter is followed by another commenting on the previous one, so that doubts, difficulties, or disagreements raised in one's mind are often immediately dealt with in the same volume. The emphasis is on exploring concepts and methodology and examining the problems and pitfalls of research.

There are at least three definitions of masculinity/femininity: behaviour typical of males or females; role expectations of males and females; and the qualities of one sex that attract the other. It is certainly not unidimensional; for example, 'feminine' little girls, who like pretty dresses and hair bows, can score highly on a 'masculinity' scale which emphasises the need for control, power, and dominance. The various definitions and concepts are kept carefully apart, and anyone who has simplistic ideas about the differences between males and females should suffer a rude awakening on reading this book.

Those who know this field may find it a useful revision, but will probably be familiar with its contents, at least in their own speciality, since the chapters are all based on papers from a conference held in 1984. The papers have, however, been revised and updated and there are a few more recent references.