

REVIEWS

Independent comment on audio-visual and print materials

COUNSELLING CHILDREN; A PRACTICAL

INTRODUCTION. Kathryn Geldard and David Geldard. London, Sage, 1997. Paper, 223pp. \$32.95. ISBN 0 7619 5552 6.

Kathryn Geldard, occupational therapist and child psychotherapist, and David Geldard, psychologist and child and family therapist, work in private practice and in Health Department clinics in Queensland. Their book is intended as an introductory guide to counselling children for professionals of any background. It assumes little knowledge, and the writing style is clear and readable.

The reader will need to assume that child counselling is the appropriate approach. After a brief review of historically important theorists, the book examines the child's internal processes of therapeutic change. Key skills in child counselling are observing, active listening, dealing with resistance, transference, and self-destructive beliefs, and termination.

The larger part of the book (85-221) is given over to techniques. The play therapy room is furnished and appropriate media are selected: miniature animals, sand-tray, clay, drawing, construction, books and stories, puppets and soft toys, imaginative pretend play and games. These sections are a balanced and eclectic overview. A more exact citation for the origin of particular techniques would have been valuable. The bibliography has sixty references. More original is the use of printed worksheets in which children write responses to be utilised at different stages of the therapy process. Thirty-six pages of this book are occupied by worksheets. They aim to prompt airing of issues such as self-esteem, choices, inside feelings, wishes, anger management, fear facing and saying no.

The emphasis on making this a practical guide means that some very important issues have been minimised: selection criteria, outcome evaluation and the ethics of an exclusive child-counsellor relationship. To consider each in turn: For what reasons should children receive counselling? The authors suggest very general fundamental goals: '... deal with emotional issues ... achieve congruence with regard to thoughts, emotions and behaviours ... feel good about herself ... change behaviours that have negative consequences ... function adaptively within external environment' (3). However, there is not much consideration of what might be particular indications for child counselling, such as parental loss, recovery from severe trauma, or obsessive-compulsive disorder. There is even less consideration of which particular wider context would justify a recommendation for child counselling, such as economic hardship, strain in the parents' relationship, or blended families.

In this era of evidence based service justification, a fuller view of the small number of outcome studies on

child therapy should have found a place in this book. (There is one reference (Sloves, 1994: 34) to evaluating twelve session time limited play therapy.) Clinicians have to explain to budget decision makers why child counselling or family therapy, parent groups, community family support work, peer group programs or special educational programs will best deliver change for this type of child and family problem.

This book clearly argues for an exclusive 'unique relationship with the counsellor, which is not compromised by the unwanted intrusion of others, such as parents or siblings' (7). Assessing the family and seeing siblings appears to come only after the child counselling is completed. The steps in the process of child therapy are listed as: receiving referral information, contracting with parent/s, selecting appropriate media, joining with the child, inviting the child's story, enabling the child's story, resolution of issues, empowerment of the child, involvement of parents or family if appropriate (36).

I am afraid I found myself recalling the tragic exclusion of the parents in Virginia Axline's *Dibs*. Even the traditional child guidance pattern of another counsellor undertaking parallel work with the parents is not canvassed. In summary, this book is a useful introduction to the historical tradition of child therapy with some useful innovations in using worksheets. However, it neglects evaluation, the wider context and how to choose child counselling over other legitimate approaches.

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CARE FOR CARING PARENTS, LEADER'S MANUAL AND PARENT'S PROGRAM

BOOKLET FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN

WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. Cynthia L. Schultz and

Noel Schultz. Melbourne, ACER, 1997. (Two books; leader's manual 115pp, \$75.00, ISBN 0-86431-219-9; parents' booklet 65pp, \$16.95, ISBN 0-86431-220-2).

There are two books of the same name in this review. The leader's manual, which is for professionals, provides a detailed agenda for a nine session psychosocial-educational support group for parents of children with a disability. There is an accompanying book for parents.

The program used in the two books is based on 'affective-cognitive-behavioural theory within a family systems orientation' and focuses on working with 'needs, pressures, successes, fears, hopes, joys, anxieties, strengths and coping resources of the parents' (2), using education and group dynamics to strengthen parents' personal coping resources and expand their per-

sonal and community networks. Admirable objectives. The authors simultaneously recognise the ongoing grief, pressures and lifelong care issues associated with caring for a disabled child. Their books have emerged out of their own ongoing research in the area. *Care for Caring Parents* gives detailed notes and teaching aids for nine group sessions, defining also the qualities and expectations of a leader. The parents' manual repeats many of the issues raised in the group sessions and would be useful for a participating parent.

The books do not offer anything startlingly new. The manual is very directive, rather than relying on the skills of the leader to encourage issues to emerge from the group process. The model used to guide the process, reminiscent of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is referred to as a 'Model for Caregiving (Living)'. It appears commonsense, a little simplistic and not very original. This model assumes that we are all equal, and does not attend to differences which may be influenced by people's education, socioeconomic class or gender. There is also a spiritual component, with which some leaders may be uncomfortable.

These two books may be useful for certain groups of parents who benefit from structured groups and who do not desire insight oriented processes, but do want specific strategies, action and control over their lives. The program could be used by a beginning group leader running a group from a community health centre with parents who are articulate and focused on the task.

JANET SPINK

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ON PLAYING A POOR HAND WELL: INSIGHTS FROM THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HAVE OVERCOME CHILDHOOD RISKS AND ADVERSITIES. Mark Katz NY, Norton, 1997, Hard Cover, 187 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-393-70232-4.

You have been working hard with a family with multiple stresses, progress is slow and you know they are not convinced that family therapy is useful. The adversity this family has experienced is considerable. Not only economic deprivation, but persistent violence in the marriage, has contributed to their low reserves of hope and trust. The two children in the family are a worry. One has a diagnosis but you are not convinced the other child is as trouble free as they want you to believe. The only available parent has constantly asked for something to read on these problems. You suspect that the parent (who finds introspection difficult) thinks that talking things through either with the children or with yourself is not working. What can you recommend? How can you stay connected with the family and also respond to the cue that reading something about other children is, for the moment, the parent's only interest and therefore should be harnessed?

Katz's book is the kind of text I would readily give a family who wanted to learn more about the potential outcomes for children who have grown up in adverse conditions. It is full of brief descriptions of research, anecdotes, and outlines of the kinds of programs available in the United States for these young people. The book is written without jargon, is simple to read and leaves the reader encouraged. Katz quotes one study, which asked parents what help they needed with their troubled families, who were in contact with a whole system of services. The answer turned out to be the question itself: one thing needed is asking parents what help they need. They also specified instilling a sense of hope into the endeavour (123), a good reminder that maintaining a sense of optimism is in itself therapeutic. The above parent told her therapist what she needed. How often do we ask?

The lessons from this book are not new: children who have suffered trauma, neglect, deprivation, madness, poverty, brutality can and do survive and many live successful lives. The essential difference between them and the ones who go on to struggle desperately as adults seems to be due to a small number of variables. First, a significant relationship with an important adult seems to mitigate the impact of the adversity. Such a relationship may come from a healthy parent, a teacher, a friend's parent or, in adulthood, a marital partner. Second is the opportunity for the child to talk with someone about their experience. This then offers the chance for expression and acceptance of the trauma. It is also an important way to give it meaning. It is noticeable that the author hardly mentions the therapist or caseworker relationship; his frame of reference is much more the healing capacities of schools, communities, and youth programs.

Family therapists do get a mention. If you follow the works of White and Epston then you may feel your approach is well explained. If you don't, then Katz's description of family therapy is limited. For practitioners, there is not enough detail and analysis here of how to work with severely traumatised children. The book offers the reader some idea about working with wider systems (120) and concepts like reframing (89) and about the importance of the ameliorating potential in people and systems outside families. But Katz's stories have a tendency to gloss over the hell some children are powerless to change so that no matter how hard they try as adults, their past haunts them. His concluding chapter on turning points or 'second chance opportunities' is devoted to the kind of children therapists often see, but less often re-encounter as grown adults, with the possibility of discovering how they have turned out. His comments about chance encounters offering opportunities which can change people's lives left me thinking what the turning points in my life were and whether I could create them for others.

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FREUD'S MODELS OF THE MIND; AN INTRODUCTION. Joseph Sandler, Christopher Dare, Anna Ursula Dreher. London, Karnac Books, 1997. Paperback, 203pp. £16.95. ISBN 1 85575 167 4.

Readers of this journal may well recognise Christopher Dare, family therapist and psychoanalyst. *Freud's Models of the Mind*, based on a series of well known lectures for students of psychoanalysis, is an attempt to look systematically at the development of Freud's theories of the mind. It does not stray from looking at the twists and turns and major revisions in Freud's work. Frustratingly, Freud said different things at different times. However, the authors emphasise that this behaviour was part of an enormous appetite for new understandings and new ideas.

The authors look at three distinct chronological phases: the trauma effect model (sometimes known as the seduction theory); then the topographical model (Conscious, Preconscious and Unconscious); and lastly the structural model (Superego, Ego, Id). Freud's primary preoccupation was understanding the place of the unconscious in mental life. However, paradoxically, he continued to stress that the unconscious was unknowable, except through surface manifestations, e.g. slips of the tongue, dreams, etc. I found it useful to revisit this detailed look at unconscious thought processes. Those interested in Masson's critique of Freud's so-called 'suppression of the seduction theory' may well be interested in the theoretical underpinnings of the shift between the first and second stage. Freud did not deny the impact of external trauma, however the authors acknowledge that following his discovery of the unconscious, there was a period during which the external world was given reduced emphasis (20). In the last phase, with the development of the concept of the ego, there was a return to looking at the position of the Self and Other—a precursor to Object Relations Family Therapy in its emphasis on the interface between internal and external worlds.

Freud's Models of the Mind reads very much like a clearly organised text book. It requires careful reading to hold on to the complexities of the theory. It is not bedtime reading. At times more case examples would have eased the struggle for the reader. In reviewing this book for the *Journal*, I am reminded of the ambivalent relationship between psychoanalysis and family therapy, that is, that family therapy developed both in reaction to and away from psychoanalysis. Freud is often criticised, but not often read. Freud, love him or hate him, lies at the root of psychological thinking this century. As family therapists, it is vital to understand our roots so that we can continue to grow. I recommend this book and the challenge it provides.

References

Masson, J. M., 1984. *The Assault on the Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, NY, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

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EMOTIONAL MILESTONES: FROM BIRTH TO ADULTHOOD: A PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH. Ruth Schmidt Neven. Melbourne, ACER, 1996. Paper, 260 pp, \$26.95. ISBN 0-86431-169-9.

The book's title captures and arouses one's interest and curiosity, as 'milestones' are traditionally thought of as observable increments in development. The cover is particularly striking, depicting a child's colourful painting, and it certainly sets the scene for what is to come.

In the beginning, Neven invites her readers to ponder on what is needed for emotional growth and thriving. The book is not intended as a manual for childrearing, but attempts to offer a perspective on the emotional milestones of development for parents and families. In Part One, the author provides an excellent, concise summary of the psychodynamic approach, including a brief review of the most significant theorists and clinicians who have contributed to the psychodynamic heritage.

Beginning from the fundamental premise that all behaviour has meaning, Neven presents a thought-provoking and controversial view of what she calls 'the erosion of meaning and its effects on childhood'. She claims that our capacity to attribute meaning to children's behaviour (and therefore to understand children) has become increasingly eroded. An insistence on rationality, and therapists' wish to protect themselves from painful information, have relegated a whole class of people who have experienced deprivation and unhappiness to a state of not being listened to or understood. This in turn doubly deprives children.

The acknowledgment of, and respect for, the child's inner world as a means of understanding what occurs between children and parents, is a dominating theme throughout this book. As a practising clinician, I am often struck by the need to understand the child prior to being able to understand the family. Neven's focus on this issue made a great deal of sense to me. This book poses a challenge to systemic therapists contemplating a more child-inclusive therapy.

Part Two of the book is basically a text on development, from the beginning of life and before, right through to adolescence. The many brief clinical vignettes provide interesting reading and serve to demonstrate the theoretical stance. More often than not, there was a good fit between the two; however, in some cases, the scenarios seemed somewhat simplistic, and I was left with a desire to know more about particular outcomes.

Part Three deals with the challenges of bringing up children in a changing world. The focus is on the impact that divorce and separation have on children. Once again, the author remains child focused by highlighting the importance of containing the child's pain. In addition, she legitimises the considerable period of time children and adolescents need to process their parents' separation and divorce. The information contained in this chapter would be most useful as reading material

for parents going through relationship breakup. It would serve assist them to remain focused on the child's experience and struggle. Often this task presents a major challenge for parents who are themselves experiencing loss and distress.

Emotional Milestones would be particularly useful as a resource guide for clinicians who practise psychodynamically informed systemic therapy.

JUDY GILL

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THE GLORY OF HERA: GREEK MYTHOLOGY AND THE GREEK FAMILY. Philip E. Slater.

Mythos: The Princeton/Bollingen Series in World Mythology, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1992. Originally published by Beacon Press, 1968. Paperback, 514 pp. No local price available. ISBN: 0-691-00222-3.

I first heard of Philip Slater's brilliant and controversial book in the late seventies, ten years after its original publication. It was billed then as an exciting 'feminist' contribution to the study of Greek myth. I have never been able to buy a copy until now. Republished in 1992, *The Glory of Hera* is out of print again, but I obtained this remaindered copy at Gleebooks in Sydney. Slater's basic thesis is that the dynamics of ancient Greek society produced, and were produced by, a family structure characterised by an overinvolved mother-son bond, a structure that in turn favoured the development of male narcissism. While Slater's analysis is feminist to the extent that it clearly indemnifies absent fathers, patriarchal denigration of women, and societal glorification of the male body, it can as easily be read as foregrounding the immediate responsibility of mothers for the emotional warping of their sons. Slater's views on homosexuality and schizophrenia are unacceptable by today's standards. No wonder nobody since has quite known how to deal with *The Glory of Hera* ...

The originality of Slater's methodology is also its most problematic feature. His data-base is the literature of classical (and to some degree pre-classical) Greece: he surveys Homer, Hesiod, the great dramatists (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes) and an assortment of lesser authors, supplemented by more selective references to surviving material evidence, such as vase paintings and sculptures. An attempt to interpret family functioning in ancient Greek society on the sole basis of literary and artistic records is ambitious and, some would argue, wrong-headed. But this is no 'armchair' survey by a literary scholar with a vague interest in psychoanalysis. As far as Slater is concerned, his work is serious social science and his aim is to illuminate, not mythology or literature but family dynamics. Scenes of marital and family interaction in his corpus of texts are broken into categories (mother-son; father-daughter, both parents-son, etc.) and then coded and rated for

'hostility', 'madness', 'high', 'medium' and 'low' degrees of narcissism, and so on. The great dramas like *Oedipus Rex* are thus treated almost as we would treat video-recordings of family therapy sessions.

In the final section, Slater extends his coverage beyond Greece, offering summary 'narcissism ratings' for a wide range of cultures for which anthropological data were then available, and concluding that cultures like that of ancient Athens (in which wives and husbands routinely ate separately, and slept apart during the infancy of children) conduce to narcissism, because mothers then overinvest emotionally in their sons, who in their adulthood identify with their (largely absent) fathers in order to gain distance from mothers whom they perceive as intrusive or hostile.

Slater himself recognises many of the potential objections to his methods. Ultimately, his book may be seen as more accurately reflecting the American family of his own time than the ancient Greeks who were its ostensible subject. How might Slater have rethought his data had he been aware of the early publications of Bowen, Ackerman, Satir and Minuchin, which predate his own book by a few years? (Bateson's now discredited 'double bind' theory of schizophrenogenesis is the only systemic contribution he recognises.) What would he have made of US television's current incarnation of Herakles (better known to us by his Latin name, Hercules) as a SNAG? (Slater devotes a long chapter to an analysis of Herakles' ambiguous relationship with his mother, Hera, from which the hero does not exactly emerge covered with glory.) We will never know, for Slater died before Kevin Sorbo strode the uplands of New Zealand. *The Glory of Hera*, however, remains a landmark in psychodynamic studies of the relationship between family process, culture and ethnic identity.

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Armidale

JUVENILE CRIME JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS.

A. Borowski, J. O'Connor (Eds) Sydney, Addison Wesley Longman, 1997. Paperback, 500 pages, \$39.95. ISBN 0 582 80365 9.

At a recent presentation on juvenile crime research in Sydney, one of the speakers claimed that juvenile justice policy in New South Wales was more strongly influenced by the opinion of a few radio announcers than by sound research findings and data analysis. Outcomes of research and analysis have not been easily translated into practice and it is no surprise that politicians choose to go with these populist views rather than take a constructive and equitable path.

Allan Borowski and Ian O'Connor have edited an impressive volume, which looks at important aspects of juvenile justice theory and policy, and links these to ideas about future directions and reform. Both of the

editors have been longstanding writers and commentators in the areas of juvenile justice and its reform.

Twenty nine contributors, all prominent academics and researchers, have examined the current state of the field in Australia. The aim of the book is '... to critically reflect on the adequacy and appropriateness of current legislation, policy and correctional practice'. Two core issues which are addressed are '... how should juvenile crime be understood and how as a society we can most equitably and effectively respond to it' (x). Australian juvenile justice data has been analysed in relation to international research and developments.

The book is divided into five parts: Part 1 examines the data in the area, looks at the theories of delinquency and crime, and explores the relationships between unemployment and crime, and the interaction of schools, youth culture and delinquency. Part 2 examines various sub-groups of the young offender population, and shows that they are not a homogeneous group. It clearly follows then, that programs should respond to this heterogeneity. Part 3 looks at the laws, statutes and processes which determine how young offenders are dealt with. Part 4 begins with a section on programs which seek to prevent young people engaging in juvenile crime, and then examines efforts to prevent recidivism. Part 5 looks at three areas which are considered important for the future of juvenile justice. They are: greater knowledge about delinquency in its many aspects, greater attentiveness to the rights of children involved in the juvenile justice system, and the challenge presented by the growing numbers of marginalised Australian youth.

One area I was eager to read about was the new model based on the restorative justice which was first developed in New Zealand and has been rapidly taken up in various forms in Australia. Known variously as 'conferencing', 'family conferencing', 'youth justice conferencing', or simply 'family meetings', this method attempts to divert young people from the courts. It also aims to restore the losses of the victim, to reconcile the victim and the offender, and to reintegrate the young person into their community. The authors who look at this model are suggesting caution about how it is implemented. It should not be seen as a panacea and we should be mindful of the many criticisms levelled against it. Sections of the book starkly show how the present juvenile 'justice' system is biased and discriminatory against our Indigenous young people, and demonstrate the need for fundamental shifts in policy. Many of us were hoping that properly implemented 'youth justice conferencing' might begin to address some of the inequalities for these young people.

This collection is well-written and clear. Do not, however, expect a recipe book, but rather a diversity of facts and opinions. There are no magic solutions in juvenile justice, and the content reflects this. Students of many disciplines will find a wealth of ideas and information contained here. It is vital reading for all of those professionals—police, social workers, lawyers, psychol-

ogists, administrators and policy makers—who work in juvenile justice.

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**CHILD VICTIMS, CHILD WITNESSES:
UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING**

TESTIMONY. Ed. by Gail S. Goodman and Bette L. Bottoms, NY, Guilford, 1993. Hardcover, pp. 296. \$33.95. ISBN 0 89862 789 3.

In May 1992, I attended a ten-day NATO sponsored 'think tank' in Lucca, Italy, of 80 people selected from around the world to examine issues associated with children as witnesses in criminal proceedings. Sadly, a set of papers did not eventuate from that intense and highly focused gathering. However, its purpose may well have been achieved by first of all bringing those people together from a variety of disciplines so selectively around a single topic, and the individual publication efforts which came soon afterwards. *Child Victims, Child Witnesses* is one such, and certainly vindicates the organisational effort.

Anyone charged with promoting and protecting children and helping them through the rigours of court will be able to mine this book for practical suggestions drawn directly from well substantiated and critiqued research findings. It not only acknowledges, but is firmly grounded in, the dual worlds of children's needs and abilities, and the requirements of court procedures. Therefore discussing 'memory enhancement techniques' without recognising the implicit and likely charges of 'contamination of evidence' would be an empty enterprise if workers were not fully informed and carrying a brief for both areas of responsibility. Those interested in real change to our appalling system have to be hard headed in their respect both for children's rights and abilities and for the due process of law (which, defensibly so, is primarily about defendants, not witnesses).

Although I have difficulty with regarding children as a separate and homogeneous sub-species, they do still represent an identifiably vulnerable group who are required to participate in a system of criminal justice which itself is so often abusive. The preponderance of psychologists in the area does little to reduce this propensity to 'thingise' and subsequently generalise, as happens in such expressions as 'children's credibility', 'child suggestibility'. I wonder how we identify such a group other than through their disgraceful lack of rights. I wonder in which part of the brain such properties reside! The use of such phrases alerts us to the fact of culturally entrenched mistreatment, and in its own way perpetuates myths about the state of 'childhood' as separate from other human states.

However, this criticism aside, if adversity rather than conflict resolution is our general cultural bent, then

all combatants deserve to have the best tools available to themselves, and the opportunity to use them. This book is a good toolbox which goes well beyond the testimonial rhetoric of child protection. Practitioners (police investigators, family counsellors, child protection workers) and students (of psychology, law, education, welfare) alike will be able to mine this book. It will guide them in ways to help children recall events more clearly (good for witnesses, good for court processes) prepare children for court (confident witnesses serve their own needs more efficiently as well as those of the court) improve children's testimony (a well-delivered story serves the process of truth finding) deal with different juror perceptions of eyewitness testimony (combating prejudice and misinformed perceptions is constantly necessary), use props such as dolls and cue cards when interviewing (we all need narrative structures and characters in order to express any coherent story) and more.

The book does not try to justify itself by examining abuse, its culturally widespread occurrence, or its problematic nature. Rather, it accepts the appalling state of our children in courts and helps them to gird their loins, whilst not threatening the rights of others. Witness preparation in this country is a sadly neglected activity for children in our courts (adults are never criticised for preparing themselves) and this book provides both the tools and rationale for it.

Along with tools, *Child Victims, Child Witnesses* offers professional credibility; no mean currency in the thrust and parry of court battle. A brief review of the bibliographies of each chapter is testimony enough to the range and extent of the insights and recommendations which have been drawn together in this book. And I am pleased to note that language issues are now firmly established as a factor in discussions of the ways children are poorly treated in our courts.

References

Brennan, M., 1995. The Discourse of Denial: Cross-examining Child Victim Witnesses, *Journal of Pragmatics*, 23: 71-91. (Offprints available from author \$5.00 each, postage and packing included.)

MARK BRENNAN

Mark Brennan has been researching and writing in the field of discourse rights and language in the criminal justice system for the past two decades. He recently retired from his lecturing position at Charles Sturt University to Raymond Island in the Gippsland Lakes.

A NATURAL HISTORY OF PARENTING (FROM EMPEROR PENGUINS TO RELUCTANT EWES, A NATURALIST LOOKS AT HOW PARENTING DIFFERS IN THE ANIMAL WORLD AND OURS). Susan Allport. Milsons Point, NSW, Random House, 1997. Paperback, 300pp. ISBN 0 09 183648 4. \$17.95.

This book, in its detail and in its very readable style, takes the reader on a journey into the intimate, busy,

risky and devoted lives of parents of many species. Well-researched and authoritative, it is written with respect and appreciation of how species so diverse have survived millennia, due largely to the prowess and consistency of their parenting. Parenting, from pairing to preparing, to birthing to caring, to breaking the ties, with all its drudgery, pressure, humour and delights is the subject matter of this book. I was left with a sense of warmth and wonder at the richness and brilliance of life.

Constantly, the book exposes similarities and differences between our human world and those of the winged, finned and four-footed varieties. The similarities are sometimes striking, the differences revealing of why we are the way we are. The author's detailed observation and description weaves meaning into the myriad behaviours of different species, including our own.

This is an important book and in a particular way important for family therapists. It invites a spreading of the panorama that we can so easily restrict by the narrowness of our models and methods. The book links us back into the world. I was reminded to seek the knowledge and inspiration of naturalists, anthropologists, philosophers, sociologists et al. and not be tricked into privatising the world of psychology and therapy as the only basis for my work.

The book raises huge questions. Particular species have survived because they have the right way for them. It works! As I read, images of how much there is in modern living that is not right for children's survival kept flashing through my mind. The clock won't turn back, but what can be redirected? What happens over a mere 2000 years or so when parental care changes from 24 hours a day to a few hours, if we are lucky, of hectic keeping things going? Are human-created environmental changes so far outstripping our ability to evolve that the very nature and art of parenting is being lost? The consequences of human impact, endangering a whole host of other species' parenting efforts, would indicate this. How come we, more than any other species, create dangers for our young at the same time as we so cleverly counter others? No eagle doses up on fermented fruit, then flies with eaglet clinging to its wings at artificial speeds, risking a head-on with a rocky outcrop. Nor does the chimpanzee, junior holding to its underbelly, career unnaturally through the upper canopy, risking a missed vine and a fatal dive to the ground. And abuse—and abuse? And gender? The web for correctness, for fairness—was nature ever fair? And how do we make it more so? Does the naturalist think differently from the psychologist, and therefore do it differently?

My only disappointment was towards the end of the book when any emphasis on the human paternal role faded. Is this simply how it is? Not to be accepted, surely? The crunch is that with most species mothers have a more direct role in parenting, though often there is a lot of sharing of the effort. Male emperor penguins stand for months in the freezer keeping the eggs warm, while mothers fatten up out to sea. Male sea horses become pregnant. Sometimes fathers are not fathers at all, and sometimes neither parent has to bother. Instead

they lay and fertilise thousands of eggs, realising there are too many to feed and numbers are on the side of survival anyway. Take your chance! But humans have their young for eighteen years or more. How are you going, Dad?

The book is a lovely read. I feel connected again to the world's breadth.

DES CASEY

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**COUPLE COMMUNICATION:
UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER.** [Video], and
**FAIR FIGHTING: GETTING CLOSER NOT
BREAKING UP** [Video], written by Aldo Gurgone,
narrated by Geraldine Mallet. Perth, William Street
Family Therapy Centre, 1997. **Running time**
(*Couple Communication*) 28 minutes; (*Fair Fighting*)
36 minutes. \$44.95 each. **Available for purchase**
from Aldo Gurgone, Relationship and Growth Centre
544 William Street, Mount Lawley WA 6050. Fax +61
8 9227 8038; ph +61 8 9227 8938; email
gurgone@opera.iinet.net.au. **Technical data:** VHS
videotape. (Audio cassettes also available).
Condition: excellent.

Helping couples and families to address their communication problems is often a large part of the family therapist's work. Being able to engender and maintain changes to more positive methods of communication will have substantial short and long term effects for the family or couple. These highly professional videos present information about communication in a mix of voice-over and scenarios played out by Aldo, and explore various possibilities in the interview format, while suggesting different ways the scenarios could have been influenced by therapeutic intervention.

Couple Communication starts by showing a relationship as a dynamic thing and how this can produce conflict which can be either destructive or enriching for the relationship. The development of a relationship from the stage of strong attraction to the stage of respect and encouragement is shown as needing commitment and conscious effort. The need to develop both as individuals and as a couple is shown as very important. Aldo then moves on to show the common difficulties that occur, and how they can best be addressed. The video allows these areas to be explored in a manner which attempts to reduce the threat potential for viewers. This non-threatening approach could be very helpful in bringing about change or simply opening issues up for discussion.

Couple Communication could be used by a couple seeking to improve their relationship, or by a counsellor not specialising in couples work to help a couple overcome problems. It is clearly stated that the video is not a substitute for therapy, but it could obviously be a useful tool for the family therapist. The video comes with booklets for the couple and the professional; the latter

offer the couple simple activities and explanations of concepts to help develop their relationship.

Fair Fighting starts with the statement that 'conflict is not necessarily destructive, rather, it is how the conflict is handled that will decide its effect'. All relationships must change over time as the individuals and their environment change. These changes are neither positive nor negative in themselves. Aldo suggests that conflict provides an opportunity either to enrich or degrade a relationship, and a number of techniques are offered to facilitate enrichment.

Ownership of, and respect for, feelings, is shown as critical for both partners in the relationship. The basic techniques of reflective listening are explored and demonstrated. 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' are supplied and a process for running a 'fair fight' is demonstrated. A feature of the video that I found most illuminating was an acted scenario where the participants say one thing, but think another, and we as audience are allowed to 'hear' their real thoughts and feelings. This provides a very strong demonstration of the need for honesty and openness.

Apart from the accompanying booklets, training seminars are also being offered to support both videos.

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**THERAPY OR COERCION: DOES
PSYCHOANALYSIS DIFFER FROM**

BRAINWASHING? R.D. Hinshelwood, London,
Karnac Books, 1997. Soft cover, £19.95 xii, 250pp,
ISBN 1 85575 143 7.

A book about the ethics of change might well appeal to a family therapy readership once resistant to Freud and Klein. And that the publisher should present this book for review for the *ANZJFT* is noteworthy and further evidence of the looking toward psychoanalytic ideas within the field of family therapy. Also, it is indicative of the marked interest in ethics within the field over the last ten or so years.

The writer is a Kleinian analyst, psychiatrist and group therapist who is the author of many papers and books, the most significant, perhaps, being *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*. And here is a hint to his view of practice and of theory: a successful professional dictionary opens up jargon to scrutiny and understanding amongst a wider audience, whilst satisfying adherents and students. Hinshelwood's preface provides a further hint about his preference for open and accessible information about specialisms as a means to protect non-specialists. A group analysts' conference had considered as one of its topics the question of the manipulation of the group to achieve therapeutic outcomes. That others considered manipulation as justifiable had disconcerted Hinshelwood and led him to reflect on a career that had started with the administration of ECT. Not much is said about family therapy in the whole book; indeed, not that much either about group therapy; but the use of various

forms of manipulation within certain models of family therapy is noted and the author questions whether it constitutes an 'advance'.

The reader is offered a dilemma. Psychoanalysis is ostensibly about liberation of the person from the tyranny of past experience and from the tendency to repeat, unknowingly. Yet, to become an analyst one must undergo training with those who are already analysts, undergo one's own analysis, analyse others under supervision by analysts, in order to be able to join the association of analysts. Cloning and brainwashing, under such a regime, are deemed to be real threats to liberation.

Part of the problem, much like a double bind, is that the message of freedom is offered and, perhaps, received at the personal level, whilst at the same time, the institution is steadily defining the behaviour of the would be analyst. You are free to act as you desire, including choosing to join, but to join you must abide by the rules! The natural antidote to such institutional determinism is self-reflection; and it is upon this basis that Hinshelwood gives his verdict that the practice is analysis is fundamentally non-coercive, although very much open to subversion.

Sydney resident, but Tavistock originated, analyst Neville Symington, a contemporary of Hinshelwood's, wrote of the analyst's act of freedom—that is, to be free of institutional direction and theoretical dictate—and of how lonely and liberating this can be. This is the point about analytic practice that escapes many observer from the domain of family therapy, that all forms of dependency must be open to personal reflection if dependencies are not to be repeated. Dependency on theory, or particular practices, may assist, but must eventually define the limits to the liberation from dependencies.

Any health or welfare professional will benefit from Hinshelwood's scrutiny of professions and professional practices. This is the third section of the book, which includes Hinshelwood's verdict on psychoanalysis. The first two sections concern the unity of the person and the problems of autonomy which are in contradistinction to the usual criticisms of psychoanalysis. The final section considers the place of persons in society and social health.

Hinshelwood's *Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* is engaging. His presentations in Melbourne with the launch of *Therapy or Coercion* in late 1997 demonstrated his patient quietness and reflects the style of the book. This is not the usual read of a Family Therapist; but it is not the usual read of the psychoanalytic therapist either. It deserves attention from those in the business of change.

References

Hinshelwood, R.D., 1968. *A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*, London, Karnac Books.

THE TROUBLESOME YEARS: PARENTING ADOLESCENTS. Judith Paphazy, illustrations by WEG. Burwood, Flactem, 1993. ISBN: 0 646 1587 0. Paperback, 90 pages.

As a psychologist working with a range of families, I was delighted to receive a book to review on the subject of parenting adolescents. I hoped for a snappy guide that would be a great resource to the many parents I have contact with in relation to their current family struggles. After reading *The Troublesome Years*, I had mixed reactions to the value of this book for my practice.

In the opening paragraph of the book, Dr Paphazy describes her experience with adolescents, stating that they 'Uniformly indicate their desire to have parents who can set guidelines, can discuss things with them in unambiguous terms and can provide them with the necessary security and love which makes an adolescent feel safe' (2). I guess her client group must be a little different to mine, who are certainly not so articulate, nor so insightful! The elements Dr Paphazy describes are those that many of us believe adolescents require and parents should provide. The task is often encouraging the parents to provide these things in a balanced manner, while allowing the young person enough individuality to gain some independence without risk to their safety.

Dr Paphazy outlines many of the types of behaviours adolescents may present to challenge their parents, including aggressive, anxious, insecure and out of control modes. She provides a strong message that parents are 'parents' not 'friends'. Their job is to provide guidelines for expected behaviour and they should follow through with the theory that behavioural choices carry consequences. She discusses cases to provide active examples of how to put theory to practice.

Each chapter has dot point summaries for those who just want a quick read. Some of the strong areas include discussions of experimenting behaviours, such as sex, alcohol and drugs and eating disorders. The section on drugs is particularly helpful, with brief descriptions of the effects of most common legal and illegal drugs, and guidelines on how to approach this area if parents suspect drug use.

A little on the downside: I found the title of the book a negative encapsulation of a stage in everyone's life cycle. Adolescence is often tumultuous, not always necessarily troublesome. *The Troublesome Years* was also a little disappointing in relation to information on basic communication skills and conflict resolution processes. My experience tells me that many families have limited skills and knowledge on how to listen actively or resolve conflict with win/win results. Unfortunately, Dr Paphazy tends to skim the surface when we consider the emotional intensity found in many adolescent-parent interactions. I am sure you have all observed the process when a young person has pushed all the available personal buttons of the parents. Then one or both

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of them capitulate to an almost irresistible desire to behave in an equally childlike manner, or at the opposite extreme, to act like the Gestapo. *The Troublesome Years* may be of most use after communication basics have been covered in another book, or through counselling. I would imagine for most families without sound communication skills, some of Dr Paphazy's good ideas would be very difficult to put into practice.

Overall, I think *The Troublesome Years* would be useful for those parents who already have a high level of personal resources, including adequate insight, and communication skills. This short book is a quick reference guide to assist parents travel through the 'challenging' years that their young family members may offer them.

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PARENTING ONE DAY AT A TIME: USING THE TOOLS OF RECOVERY TO BECOME BETTER PARENTS AND RAISE BETTER KIDS. Alex J Packer, NY, Dell, 1996; paperback, 290 pages, ISBN 0-440-50520-8.

Families where one or both parents have problems with alcohol or other drugs often end up in unhappy situations. Family conflict, separation, divorce and child behaviour problems (including youth drug abuse) are all more common in such families. Australian national and state policies emphasise harm reduction when intervening with drug problems. Such policies can be contrasted with the policies in the United States of America where

abstinence remains the main goal. In the US, proportionally larger numbers have participated in Twelve Step based self-help treatment programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous) for treatment and recovery from alcohol and drug problems.

In this book Alex Packer has applied to the task of parenting the phrases and concepts of the Twelve Step movement. His book is designed for parents recovering from addiction problems who have accepted Twelve Step concepts and traditions. The title of Packer's book, *Parenting One Day at a Time*, refers to the Twelve Steps' coaching of recovering addicts to avoid dwelling in the past or getting hung-up on the future. As applied to parenting, the phrase 'one day at a time' translates into a focus on today's positive relationship opportunities, in an effort to avoid recriminations over past misdeeds or anxieties over the future.

In an increasingly materialistic age the recovery movement represents somewhat of a beacon in emphasising the importance of spiritual values in the personal growth process. With this in mind I found it refreshing that Packer encourages children to consider prayer, meditation and spirituality. The recovery movement plays an important role in emphasising the integrative power of spirituality while avoiding the divisiveness of religion.

My impression is this book could be an important resource for the locally narrow target market of parents who have found benefit for their own problems through the Twelve Step movement. As the terminology and concepts used in the book are very specific to the recovery movement I don't believe the book will be easily understood by parents not versed in the recovery movement.

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