Book Reviews

Walter Vandereycken, Elly Kog, Johan Vanderlinden (eds)
The Family Approach to Eating Disorders
Assessment and Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia

The main editor of this book, Dr. Walter Vandereycken, MD PhD, is psychiatrist and head of the Department of Behavior Therapy (including the Eating Disorders Unit), University Psychiatric Center (UPC), Kortenberg, and Associate Professor of Psychopathology, University of Leuven. Coeditors are Vandereycken’s close coworkers, namely Drs. Elly Kog and Johan Vanderlinden. This very pregnant book particularly includes both highly personally formulated family approaches (in the sense of the Minuchin model) vis-à-vis patients suffering from eating disorders as well as their subsequent application in daily practice. The clinicopsycho-so-matic research context, in which these family approaches were practised, as well as the deduced consequences particularly with regard to family-oriented psychotherapeutic considerations are imposing concerning their original features. Because of the greatly condensed contents of the Kortenberg group book, this review must be confined to some well-selected key words.

Subsequent to an overview of the references and the earlier dealing of family doctors with eating disorder patients (chapters 2 and 3), Vandereycken et al. discuss the multiple problems with which the investigator is faced in family research (chapters 4 and 5) including the presentation of the ‘Leuven Family Questionnaire’ (chapter 6). Further chapters (7–10) concern special dynamic process findings with regard to those families in which a patient with eating disorders is included. The chapters 11–18 address the treatment of eating disorders insofar as they concern the various ways of dealing with family issues.

In agreement with the characteristic systemically oriented movements (particularly the Milano group and the ‘New Heidelberg School’), this interesting book makes also markedly clear the universally great relevance of family therapy within the far-reaching psychotherapeutic spectrum in patients suffering from eating disorders. On the basis of the scientific trend of Vandereycken et al., it is very welcome that they are partially concerned to connect their clinicopsycho-so-matic strategies with empirical research, for in the majority of family therapists, supplementarily applied procedures, which are empirically founded, rate low. But if we make a comparison between the family therapy approach of the Vandereycken group on one hand as well as the Milano and the Heidelberg group on the other hand, then considerable differences with regard to the respective psychotherapeutic technique are evident. Therefore, the necessity becomes clear to systematically examine the decisively important psychotherapeutic effectivity factors of every systemic method. Starting from such a ‘filtering’ of the finally important psychotherapeutic effectivity factors, a very optimal systemic method may be developed especially in eating disorders, too. Starting from this clinically greatly important
concern, the very solid research work of the members of the Kortenberg-UPC eating disorders unit may not be overlooked.

H. Freyberger, Hannover

Paul Roazen

Freuds Liebling Helene Deutsch
Das Leben einer Psychoanalytikerin

The author of this book, Paul Roazen, Professor of Sociology and Political Science, York University, Toronto, Canada, is engaged in both the work and the person of Sigmund Freud as well as the history of the psychoanalytic movement. The title of the original English edition is: ‘A Psychoanalyst’s Life’, whereas the title of the German edition reads: ‘Freud’s favorite Helene Deutsch; A psychoanalyst’s life’. Indeed, Helene Deutsch, who was born in Przemysl, Poland, lived from 1884 to 1982, was coworker, confidant and favored disciple of Sigmund Freud as well as the first directress of the newly established training institute of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Association from 1925 to 1935. Following her first two great stages in Poland (1884–1907) and Vienna (1907–1935), in 1938, Helene Deutsch was obliged to emigrate to the US, namely to Cambridge, Mass., because of her Jewish descent. Here she was able to dominantly influence the psychoanalytic movement in the US starting from her functions as professor at the University of Boston, Mass., and clinical supervisor at the Department of Psychiatry, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard University, Boston, Mass., as well as leading member of the well-known Psychoanalytic Institute, Boston, Mass., USA. In 1978, when she was 93 years old, Helene Deutsch authorized Roazen to write her biography and she made available to him all existing letters and documents as well as having several hundred hours of discussions with Roazen concerning her biography. According to the view of Roazen, Helene Deutsch was an unusual personality who realized both a brilliant career and the style of a nonconventional emancipated life. Beside her status in the sense of a leading figure within the international psychoanalytic movement over a period of 60 years, Helene Deutsch was the first author who wrote a book about the female sexuality, namely ‘The Psychology of Female Sexual Function’ (1925)” and ‘The Psychology of Woman’ (1945).

Roazen’s book on Helene Deutsch is both enormously thrillingly written and an inexhaustible rich source concerning the history of psychoanalysis.

H. Freyberger, Hannover

Gerd Overbeck, Klaus Möhlen, Elmar Brähler Psychosomatik der Ulcuskrankheit
Psychodiagnostik, soziales Arrangement und Prognose beim Ulcus duodeni

This book entitled ‘Psychosomatics of the Duodenal Ulcer Disease; Psychodiagnostics, Social Arrangement and Prognosis’ was written by three authors. Dr. Gerd Overbeck is Professor and Chairman of Psychosomatics and Psychotherapy at the Department of Psychosomatics, Center of Psychiatry, University of Frankfurt, FRG. Dr. Klaus Möhlen acts as psychoanalyst in Giessen, FRG. Dr. Elmar Brähler, Professor of Medical Psychology, is working at the Department of Medical Psychology, Center of Psychosomatic Medicine, University of Giessen, FRG. This book is based on an interdisciplinarily oriented cooperation of clinical psychoanalytically oriented psychosomaticists together with general surgeons over a period of 15 years.
Starting from this comprehensive basis, both relevant psychodiagnostic criteria as well as the family and couple perspective were included. Furthermore, the authors examined the patients’ specific social situation concerning beginning and course of the duodenal ulcer disease. Finally, somatic predictions and questions with regard to the surgical operation’s success were considered. Therefore, the authors have the power to make fundamental statements concerning the total prognosis of the duodenal ulcer disease. In detail, Overbeck et al. make a distinction between the so-called ‘normopathic’ and the ‘psychosomatic’ duodenal ulcer patient. With regard to the latter patient group, the problems concerning the aggressive behavior which is so important concerning the disease beginning and/or relapse were precisely described. Relevant psychosomatic disposition factors concerning the duodenal ulcer development were gained on the basis of the dealing with the two topics ‘place of work situation’ and ‘family’. Starting from the special chapter ‘Treatment and prognosis’, the authors express a rather pessimistic view concerning the application of psycho-therapeutic procedures. However, in spite of the fundamental importance of the authors’ examinations, their results have lost some significance in some objective scientific valence in the meantime because of the introduction of the H2-receptor antagonists. Following this unforeseen successful possibility with regard to a very specific medication, the healing processes were abruptly improved in duodenal ulcer patients; furthermore, the indication concerning surgical interventions in duodenal ulcer patients, therefore, were highly reduced, and finally, the psychotherapy motivation which was low anyway was additionally substantially confined. Starting from this ‘new epoch’ with regard to the conservative duodenal ulcer therapy on the basis of the \( \frac{3}{4} \)-receptor antagonists, new psychosomatic research steps may be formulated vis-à-vis duodenal ulcer patients, namely particularly the question concerning the possibility of an occurrence of psychic side effects or/and symptom shifts following the long-term medication. Furthermore, the psychosomatically oriented identification of those patients who show no therapeutic results due to the medication as the consequence of their noncompliance appears necessary.

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Reinhard Liedike

Familiäre Sozialisation und psychosomatische Krankheit


Dr. Reinhard Liedtke’s book is concerned with the parents’ style of educating children with ‘psychosomatic disorders’. According to the theoretical background of the investigation, a ‘restrictive’ educational style of the parents leads to a development of children lacking in aggressiveness, separation from the educative persons and aiming at fulfilling expectations of others. The aim of the investigation was the assessment of this specific educational style of children with psychosomatic diseases by comparing them with neurotic controls. Results are presented regarding differences between psychosomatic and neurotic children as whole groups, differences between children with different psychosomatic symptoms and the comparison with their matched controls. The results describe parents of psychosomatically ill children to be more empathetic, positively reinforcing and caring as well as having more contact with their children, being less punishing (concerning physical punishment as well as withdrawal of affection) but being more achievement-oriented, respecting religious and social norms and avoiding
conflict. Only greater introjectivity discriminated patients from controls with regard to personality traits. Most of these differences consist in self-ratings of the parents with regard to their attitudes and goals, there is only one differently rated educational ‘behavior’ by the children: they rated their parents as reinforcing by caring to a higher degree as their neurotic controls.

T. The difficulty comes with interpreting these results and accordingly the author reserves much space for this part of his work. He is faced with a very fundamental problem connecting scientific observable data of one theory with a different theory lacking scientific rules for observation. What does ‘being more empathetic’ mean with regard to ‘restrictive education’? Does it mean to be overprotective as the author assumes or is it adequate but the theory is not? Does the small tendency of those parents to adopt punishing behavior really emerge from a basic disorder which leads to only little ability to detach themselves from their children? This could be the case of course but we do not know. There is no theoretical path from the truthfulness of the assessment instruments to the theoretical construct of ‘restriction’. About what data would have falsified this model the theory allows each way. So the author discusses his results more on the background of previous research and not with regard to the model he pointed out in the theoretical introduction. This is a wise decision and the discussion is a very good review of scientific results on the subject worth reading.