

## BOOK REVIEWS

Family Constellation. Walter Toman. Springer Publ. Co. Inc., New York: 1961. Pp. 248 \$4.50.

The author considers the correlation between family constellation and personality development such an important one that he finds it surprising that no book has as yet been written on the subject. Needless to say that the concept of family constellation is a basic Adlerian tenet which has been dealt with extensively in the Adlerian literature.

The subtitle of this book is "Theory and practice of a Psychological Game" and it is intended to present not only a time killer for bored laypeople but also a helpful tool for professionals in evaluating the personalities of their clients. The author states that "all psychological tests, including the projective tests, are games of that nature, i.e., supposedly samples of how the person in question is playing in real life. But not too many tests have lived up to their promises or have done so only in a rather clumsy and, above all, quite limited way." Although birth order and sex constitute psychologically important factors, the author realizes that they represent only a partial aspect of the total situation and that they have to be taken with a critical approach because of the many possible exceptions and circumstantial factors involved.

The basic theoretical consideration, characteristic features, and psychodynamic factors involved in the major types of sibling positions are discussed in some detail and demonstrated by their application in some case histories. The game itself is conducted in quasi-mathematical formulas using the letters "b" and "g" for boy and girl (the siblings being put between parentheses), for instance, "b (b,g)" denotes a boy who has a younger brother and a still younger sister; or "(b) g (b)" denotes a girl who has a younger and an older brother. Once the sibling formula has been established one can learn about its psychological aspects in the chapters discussing the major sibling configurations.

An interesting application of the game is the application of this principle to marriage. Neglecting all the other factors an optimal marriage would be one of both partners whose marriage configuration reduplicates his and her sibling configuration eliminating sex and rank conflicts between the partners. (Thus, for instance, a boy who has a younger sister should ideally marry a girl who has an older brother.)

This reviewer found it easier to construct, to read, to decode and to refer to the members of the sibling formula by using M and F (i.e., Male and Female) for the main subjects of the game while their brothers and sisters are represented by indexed b and s. Thus, the formula,  $Mb_1b_2s/s_1bs_2F$ , would represent a marriage where the husband has two younger brothers and a still younger sister and the wife has an older sister and brother and a still older sister.

Of course, the game may be arbitrarily extended by looking for "inherited" sex and rank conflicts by bringing into the game the sibling constellations of the parents, etc., etc. The sibling formulas of children may also be brought into the game in order to bring further information concerning the parents' understanding of the sex and rank conflicts of their children.

Being aware of the many oversimplifications and overmechanizations of complicated and unsolved psychodynamic processes, one may conclude that this presentation may be considered an intelligent, interesting, and at times possible useful "game" which could advantageously replace other games "intelligent" people play nowadays. Although professionals will not take the "game" at its face value, they still can benefit from it by being reminded of the possible significance of the sibling constellation of their clients. Moreover, they can find some stimulus for research to be done in a wide open field.

References and a general index are conspicuously missing.

- I. Neufeld

Psychoanalysis in Groups. A. Wolf and E. Schwartz. Grune & Stratton, New York: 1962. Pp. 360. \$8.00.

Practitioners of group psychotherapy will welcome this publication. To the best of this reviewer's knowledge, it is the first and only book on group psychotherapy that treats every topic of interest in a systematic fashion. The style is clear and easy to read, sometimes deceptively so. One is easily tempted to perceive it as a good cookbook from which one selects the favorite recipes. However, a reading from cover to cover reveals the authors' serious attempts to present their views and theories--and they are not to be taken lightly!

Twelve topics ranging from basic design to therapist-patient values are logically presented. One cannot quarrel with the presentation, if we agree with the authors' premises, one thought follows to the inevitable conclusion. As stated in the Preface, the authors are psychoanalysts who are concerned to present their views on what they consider good therapy. Though presented as "objective findings," the book is really a synthesis of the authors' personal experiences. These are perfectly bona fide intentions. However, when it is stated that "...according to the best of our knowledge, it (our group therapy) is the only reliable way (emphasis mine) of achieving enduring reconstructive results," the book transcends its purpose. Are we to believe that Spotnitz', Locke's, and Mullan's form of therapy are less reliable? It is unfortunate that much of this attitude underlies many of the chapters and may influence a non-objective reader to disregard many of the valuable observations cited.

The book focuses chiefly on the interaction between patient and the intervening therapeutic force. The relationship is discussed in detail and in historical perspective. We welcome the authors' enthusiasm that the therapist must move out of his isolation (classical

analyst position) if he is to set an example and encourage others to move out of theirs. In group therapy, Wolf and Schwartz see the gradual weaning away from the classical analytic method toward a new form United Methods of therapy. Here the new analyst moves his concentration from his personal mystery and activity on to the major task of greeting each patient with warmth, friendliness and "wishing to make and maintain contact, in order to discover and bring into light the central core of that particular patient's problems and potentialities." Thus, group therapy is seen here as another mode of analysis which, combined with still others, will make up the United Methods of Psychoanalysis. As Adlerians, we welcome the belated understanding that isolation can only disappear when social interest in the world takes its place. It seems to us, though, that any form of therapy that can accomplish this goal is good therapy. We must keep in mind that United Methods must encompass philosophies, such as Adler's, and not only those who follow one particular model.

In summary, this book is highly recommended to students and practitioners in group psychotherapy. Many valuable suggestions and observations may be found in the various chapters which enhance one's understanding of particular patients. As to the underlying philosophy and structural aspects proposed, only time will tell whether they are more applicable than others.

- Gerd H. Fenchel

Group Psychotherapy. H. Mullan and M. Rosenbaum. The Free Press of Glencoe: 1962. Pp. 360. \$5.95.

One cannot help comparing this volume with the recently published book by Wolf and Schwartz. The style, the design and the views differ. No doubt, it is a less academic and warmer book. The reader experiences the text emotionally; he does not feel the heavy emphasis on structure and rigor as in the Schwartz and Wolf passages. Thus, the mood is already set for a warm reception of what the authors have to say.

From the very start, the authors see group psychotherapy as a human experience arising from the paradoxes of the human situation. Questions of group psychotherapy versus group psychoanalysis are dismissed as rhetorical. Therapies are divided into those that are regressive and reconstructive and those that are repressive and constructive; both are valid but the goals and methods are different. In a regressive, reconstructive group therapy model--the goal becomes a reassessment of character and responsibility to oneself, others and society. A social love is developed--which is similar to Adlerian Social Feeling--and, particularly, a confidence that allows the reconstructed person to take risks in involving himself and following a purposive course of action. Unlike Wolf and Schwartz, the authors feel that a group experience is applicable to everyone, no matter what the diagnosis or the background. Of course, this follows from their position that illness must be defined as an inability to cope with existential paradoxes of human existence.

Group Psychotherapy is not an easy book to assess. It does not offer solutions, nor does it provide a quick survey of what kind of method is applicable to a specific problem. In this respect, it differs widely from Psychoanalysis in Groups. This reviewer would suggest to every beginning student and practitioner that he acquaint himself with the Wolf and Schwartz book as a basic reader. However, to the advanced practitioner, the students of psychoanalytic institutes, and those who have become somewhat weary of the classical Freudian approach--the book becomes a thought-provoking experience. It may well be compared to the topping of a cake--for some it is too rich, others delight in its taste.

- Gerd H. Fenchel