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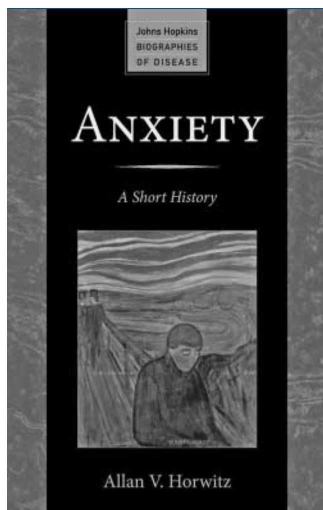
Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyebode and Rosalind Ramsay



Anxiety: A Short History

By Allan V. Horwitz.
Johns Hopkins University Press. 2013.
£24.95 (pb). 208 pp.
ISBN: 9781421410807

This interesting book charts the development of the concept of anxiety from Classical Greece to the era of DSM-5. Throughout history, one observes a perpetual oscillation between physical and psychological explanations for anxiety. An example of the former is George Beard's neurasthenia which perfectly captured the zeitgeist of the 19th century and the various stresses associated with progress and civilisation. He situated it clearly in the realm of physical conditions, 'employing drugs, injections, electricity and the like and did not use psychological therapies [which] helps account for the immense popularity the diagnosis enjoyed: it removed a stigma from people who suffered from what they and their physicians could believe was a genuine physical disease' (p. 67).

Brain and mind continue to shift in and out of fashion. Citing a historical perspective, Horwitz resists the recent swing back towards biological explanations and maintains that '[c]urrent views of anxiety and its disorders . . . are infused with cultural templates, social influences, and material interests' (pp. 3–4). His concerns remind me of the preface to Hunter & Macalpine's *Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1535–1860* (Oxford University Press, 1963), encouraging the re-integration of psychiatry with medicine, 'so long as it does not mean putting the clock back and once again summarily equating mind disease with brain disease and so denying the heterogeneous group of illnesses and conditions which make up psychiatry their distinctive features and the special skills and methods they demand – the hard learned lesson of the past' (p. ix).

The normality or abnormality of anxiety is a complex issue and perhaps this book raises more questions than anything else, not least, exactly what it is the author is criticising – is it DSM, brain-based explanations, or current delineations of 'normal' *v.* 'pathological' anxiety? In any case, these questions are central to the practice of psychiatry and I suspect we would all benefit from this reminder of the complexity of people and the problems which occasionally lead them into contact with a psychiatrist.

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Components of Emotional Meaning: A Sourcebook

Edited by Johnny J. R. Fontaine, Klaus R. Scherer & Cristina Soriano.
Oxford University Press. 2013.
£60.00 (hb). 672 pp.
ISBN: 9780199592746

Emotions have gradually replaced instincts in human evolution, allowing flexible and varied responses in a more complex environment. However we understand the exact nature of an emotion (and there is relatively little common agreement on this), it is apparent that we can examine the local meaning of an emotion term in different languages and contexts. The large international project reported on here is driven by psychology but informed also by philosophy, anthropology and linguistics. Forty-five papers (none from Britain) evaluate the development and findings of a Swiss-driven cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary project which presumes that emotion is an episode during which different subsystems (components of an emotion) are coordinated to adapt to environmental contingencies, and that emotion labels vary cross-culturally depending on what subsystem they emphasise. Some, for instance, emphasise the factors that give rise to an emotion (e.g. being jostled leading to anger), whereas others emphasise physiological aspects or interpersonal consequences (e.g. blushing when shamed leading to avoidance of others).

There are interesting general discussions here on the role emotion terms have in 'anchoring' a particular emotion, and on the translation of emotion terms from one language into another, but the book concentrates on the development of an instrument (the GRID) intended to empirically assess the meaning of emotion words in different languages through 142 emotion features. These features are grouped as the appraisal of the situation causing the emotion, the bodily symptoms, facial and bodily expression, resultant actions, subjective feelings and the degree of experienced control. Twenty-four emotion terms in English, along with their usual translations in 24 languages (largely Indo-European) are sampled in 27 countries.

Multiple cross-correlations help to answer certain basic questions as to the relative weight of linguistic and cultural influences. Thus *despair* (in English) and *etsipera* (Basque) have more in common with each other than either do with *desesperación* (Spanish), the former being instances of a more general sadness category. Is *toska* (Russian) closer to English *sadness* than to *anxiety* or *fear*? Yes. Pride in Northern Italy (*orgoglia*) seems more personal and ego-related than in the South. In general, guilt cognates appear more concerned with other people than the traditional guilt/shame dichotomy of American anthropology would argue. And happiness in the USA seems more associated with personal achievement than in Japan, where it goes along with the fulfilment of others' expectations. So, some predictions verified, some not.

The GRID instrument seems well adapted for work in different Indo-European languages. In practice, it appears less successful for comparing others, presumably because a common

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ultimate language origin directs us to the more evidently comparable terms. That, together with the GRID being a fairly lengthy and sophisticated procedure, would appear to limit its practical use. Nevertheless, its initial conclusions promise fascinating data for the future. What, I wonder, of societies where moral imperatives take the place of an affective psychology, such as the Chewong who famously have a lexicon of only seven 'emotions'? How concise, how anchored, are these seven? We now have a tool for looking at these questions from a more systematised point of view.

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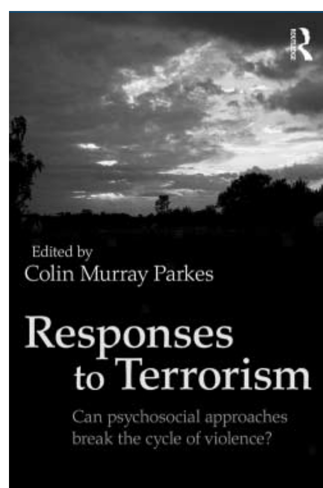

Responses to Terrorism: Can Psychosocial Approaches Break the Cycle of Violence?

Edited by Colin Murray Parkes.
Routledge. 2014.
£29.99 (pb). 280 pp.
ISBN: 9780415706247

Terrorism remains a scourge that haunts us all, all the more so in modern, otherwise less violent times with the advent of easy travel and globalisation – a spectre that can reach across the globe and indiscriminately strike from any quarter at any time. Understanding the mind and motivation of the terrorist is particularly prescient, especially if this can enable policy and strategies to forestall the descent into violence or shape interventions that help rehabilitate the offender. This book, using Bowlby's attachment theory as its framework, highlights the commonalities between individual attachment behaviour within families and those of the terrorist towards an ideology (often religious) and a terrorist organisation. In three sections, the book describes a psychology of terrorism and group identity, how responses to terror can feed a cycle of violence, and finally, how the principles of therapy employing attachment theory as its paradigm can be used to break the cycle of violence in schools, universities and in the media. Using the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Rwandan genocide as exemplars, the book covers a broad canvas embracing history, psychology and sociology to support its analysis. Its validity is enhanced enormously by the contribution of politician and psychotherapist Lord John Alderdice, whose intimate involvement in the Northern Ireland peace process gave him a grandstand view of the dynamics at work, both in perpetuating the Troubles and those that ultimately led to a peaceful resolution.

Any explanatory paradigm is useful in making sense of disparate variables. Unfortunately, this is a field rich in opinion but low in empirical science. Moreover, a 'one size fits all' explanation would be naive given a subject matter and individuals of such diversity. Few terrorists volunteer themselves as experimental subjects and second-guessing their motives is likely to mislead. Definitions too can be problematic: one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter; witness the millions of people who support suicide bombers. What little we know suggests that terrorism is best viewed in terms of political and group dynamics and processes rather than individual ones, and that fundamental psychological principles – such as our subconscious fear of death and our desire for meaning and personal significance – are important.

Terrorism is not going to go away, indeed with increasing economic instability and inequality across the world and a rapidly growing and more mobile world population it will probably get worse. Understanding the levers that turn ideas into lethal action has never been more important, and if this book triggers more empirical research and helps to integrate thinking across disciplines, it will have made a significant contribution.

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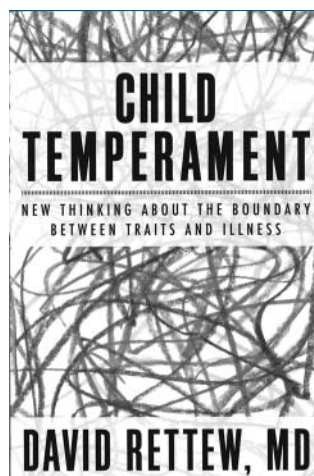

Child Temperament: New Thinking About the Boundary between Traits and Illness

By David Rettew.
WW Norton. 2013.
£25.00 (hb). 288 pp.
ISBN: 9780393707304

A book on child temperament is appealing to me as a child psychiatrist, as I often have to consider whether children referred to me are displaying behaviours that are to do with their temperament (personality in older youth and young adults) or whether their constellation of behaviours reaches a threshold for a psychiatric illness/disorder. Frequently, clinicians may feel more confident in treating those that cross this oft-arbitrary division of temperament to psychiatric diagnosis as we then can apply the evidence-based treatment so beloved in our current empiricist, yet increasingly resource-constrained health service. In reading this book I have become more convinced that an approach of dichotomised temperament and psychiatric illness is overly simplistic. Considering child behaviours in a more holistic dimension including their temperament offers an opportunity for understanding the child better and affords the advantage of more individualised treatment approaches that take account of their temperament types.

Written by a child psychiatrist and associate professor of paediatrics and psychiatry, this book carefully considers the often neglected arena of child temperament and its relations to child psychopathology. It is clear and readable, with a good balance of scientific research, clinical case examples, anecdotes and practical applications. It is composed of two parts.

Part I discusses temperament and what is known about its links with psychiatric Illness. First, there is a whistle-stop tour

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