

It is in the human experiments of social deprivation, often as a consequence of aggression between nations or between individuals, where we see more clearly the influence of developmental factors on mental health. Mednick and associates (1) have shown that there is an increase in psychotic disorders in those born a few months after war-induced starvation and after certain influenza epidemics. Chronic behavioral disturbances and metabolic deficits in several brain regions are consequences of the profound neglect experienced by children left in Romanian orphanages. Related are the findings of Nemeroff and colleagues (2), who showed how childhood sexual or physical abuse can result in adult depressive symptoms that are poorly responsive to current antidepressant pharmacotherapy. A neurobiological understanding of these effects of early neglect or abuse is emerging: excessive stress hormone responses can influence brain development by interfering with normal neuronal function.

This little book, part of volume 23 of the annual Review of Psychiatry, does not delve into all these issues, although it does go a long way toward providing an introduction to some interesting aspects of this developmental neurobiology. The first chapter, addressing the psychobiology of infant-mother attachment, is clearly relevant to the interaction between infant trauma and depression. The second covers a specific related process, that of facial recognition. This essay assesses face processing in normal and abnormal development (e.g., autism) and is followed by a useful review on the neurobiology of reading disability. The final two chapters take two disorders, Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome and schizophrenia, and attempt to put them in a developmental perspective. This works well with Tourette's syndrome, where the disorder is comprehensively reviewed and we are shown the substantial contribution made by modern imaging techniques. The final report on the neurobiology of schizophrenia is less comprehensive, concentrating on details of the authors' own, admittedly important, postmortem studies but missing much of the breadth of previous chapters.

Throughout the book we are rightly reminded of the importance of genetic factors and their interaction with environmental influences on developmental processes. Had previous psychiatric genetic studies been more open to the potential influence of environmentally determined developmental factors, our understanding of the multifactorial etiology of major psychiatric diseases may well have progressed farther and faster.

References

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Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds, by Jan and Bob Davidson, with Laura Vanderkam. New York, Simon & Schuster, 2004, 256 pp., \$24.00; \$13.00 (paper).

The title gets your attention, but the strength of this book goes considerably beyond the title. It is a highly readable, informative, and thoughtful presentation on one of education's important but often "invisible" topics—the education of gifted students.

The purpose of the book is to highlight the plight of gifted students, a group that is often forgotten in the politics of school priorities. Attention to gifted students has always been patchwork and usually minimal in the United States, although there have been times when the nation was concerned about its brightest academic students. For example, the years just following Sputnik demonstrated America's concern with excellence in schools, particularly in math and science.

As the Davidsons accurately point out, the current No Child Left Behind legislation focuses federal attention and educational resources on students with remedial needs. No Child Left Behind legislation makes no overtures to those students well above the academic mean, and the goal of this book is to correct that.

The authors define "genius" as extraordinary intellectual ability. They do an informative job of providing definitions of giftedness and means for identifying gifted students. They make the particularly salient point that there is a national response to IQ measures: there is very little dispute over using IQs to identify students for special needs and remedial classrooms but extensive debate and accusations over the use of IQs to identify gifted students.

The book is a strong compilation of stories of remarkable young people and their parents as well as stories of frustrations with schools. These stories give a "soul" to everything in the book, but the book is more strengthened by its attention to studies and research information.

The sections are short but packed with substance. For example, the section titled Zooming Ahead is five pages long but makes an excellent case for acceleration. The section Achieving Excellence and Equity is eight pages in length, yet it makes a most thoughtful presentation on the complex and nuanced subject of "tension" between excellence and equity. All the sections are characterized by brevity and substance.

Two acquaintances of mine who are not in the field of gifted education read the book and had almost identical comments: "I could not put it down."

Genius Denied is a book that absolutely should be read. It is readable not just in terms of style but in terms of substance. This book makes a documented and vibrant argument for the importance of meeting the academic and social needs of gifted students. It has the markings of a book that years from now will be looked to as a "marker."

What Jan and Bob Davidson have done is bring the issue of the education of gifted students to the table of America's discussion on education. They have written that rare book which is appealing to educators and scholars in the field as well as to the general public. When (not if) schools cease to waste our

brightest young minds, *Genius Denied* will be credited as a catalyst in that effort.

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Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70, by John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2003, 338 pp., \$49.95.

At the beginning of the 20th century Einstein startled the world by suggesting that time was the fourth dimension. A century later the social sciences are still only beginning to appreciate the importance of this dimension. Adult development continues to surprise us. Psychiatry keeps having to re-discover that traumatic events occurring at one point in time do not necessarily change the individual forever. Over decades, the effects of the bad mother, the high-crime neighborhood, and the abusive father may disappear through later, more positive developmental forces.

In this groundbreaking 60-year study of the lives of juvenile delinquents, Laub and Sampson have moved the whole field of adult development forward. By focusing on the 500 seemingly doomed young reform school graduates of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's classic book, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (1), they demonstrate that different factors are associated with climbing out of holes than failing into them.

The authors note the unique historical moment in which their protagonists found themselves. True, the paths of the Gluecks' adolescents into delinquency had been amplified by the disorganizing social effects of the Great Depression. True, their paths away from delinquency were facilitated by the G.I. Bill, the strong economy of the 1950s, and the evolution of Irish and Italians from despised minority status into the white rulers of Boston. But the effects of social forces do not explain individual differences. Some adolescents persisted in a life of crime and some did not—why? The childhood crowding, broken families, inconsistent and harsh discipline, low IQs, and difficult temperaments that were associated with becoming chronically delinquent by age 15 were not associated with persistence in crime. The absence of such negative childhood factors was not associated with recovery. Why?

Through their ingenious graphing of criminal behavior over time, Laub and Sampson put the theory of dichotomous criminal careers to rest. There are not two kinds of criminals: one merely badly behaved adolescents who mature out of crime in their 20s and the other inveterate criminals who begin offending in grammar school and malignantly continue in crime until old age. Instead, the offending careers of both groups formed neat, overlapping bell curves. Statistically, early offenders are more likely to persist longer in crime, but after age 50, desistance is the rule, not the exception, for both groups. Thus, chronological age is one factor in desistance, but only one variable among many.

Although Laub and Sampson test their conclusions with cutting-edge statistical techniques, they demonstrate that individual life history narratives are particularly valuable in uncovering the causes of desistance. Thus, the stories and quotes in the book are both fascinating and informative. The explanation for desistance comes not from the premorbid variables that led to crime but from the encounters in adult life of supportive employment—often the military—and supportive

marriages. Laub and Sampson point out that these informal social controls and interpersonal bonds that linked the once-alienated youth back to the community are what make the difference—and these turning points could occur in youth at the highest initial risk for delinquency. Both the narrative and the multivariate data analysis support “the investment-quality of good marriages.” Such an investment takes time to appear, grows slowly, but inhibits crime, usually forever.

The authors' case histories vividly identify an important—but still unanswered—question. What are the variables that determine the capacity of adults to absorb or reject fresh healing environments? For some delinquents the stability and the relative predictability of reform school, the Army, and a “ball and chain” were highly appreciated, but for other men these potentially healing experiences were just one more form of abuse.

Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives is a profound, complex, and sometimes difficult book. Nevertheless, it is enormously rewarding. The book, destined to become a classic, will sharpen readers' awareness of adult development forever. The lessons of this book can be applied not only to criminality but also to the natural history of drug abuse, chronic unemployment, marital turmoil, and personality disorders.

Reference

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Treating Personality Disorders in Children and Adolescents: A Relational Approach, by Efrain Bleiberg, M.D. New York, Guilford Publications, 2001, 348 pp., \$40.00; \$25.00 (paper published 2004).

Dr. Ludwik Fleck (1), a physician and microbiologist, proposed in 1935 that knowledge and scientific “facts” are relative rather than absolute and depend on the interpretive “thought styles” of the individuals in the particular “thought collective” of a field of research:

If we define “thought collective” as a community of persons mutually exchanging ideas or maintaining intellectual interaction we will find by implication that it also provides the special “carrier” for the historical development of any field of thought....This we have designated “thought style.” (p. 39)

This by no means implies that the individual must be ruled out....His sensory physiology and psychology are certainly very important. But a firm foundation...cannot be established without investigation of the thought community....If the individual may be compared to a soccer player and the thought collective to the soccer team trained for cooperation, then cognition would be the progress of the game. Can an adequate report of this progress be made by examining the individual kicks one by one? The whole game would lose its meaning completely. (pp. 45, 46)

Contemporaneous psychiatric research about the theory of mind provides a striking illustration for the functioning of