



Stalking: Psychiatric Perspectives and Practical Approaches, edited by Debra A. Pinals, M.D. New York, Oxford University Press, 2007, 384 pp., \$45.00.

Stalking is a form of domestic terrorism in our age. Accordingly, mental health professionals must be prepared to deal with both stalkers and their victims. The media is mostly focused on the criminal and his or her exposure and prosecution. Victim advocacy organizations and publications are more concerned with the specifics of the traumatic experience. Thus, despite the interest in this hot topic, a multidimensional approach to stalking that includes a psychiatric perspective is missing. Dr. Pinals and contributing authors, from the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry's Committee on Psychiatry and the Law, provide a comprehensive analysis of the psychological, social, developmental, and legal dimensions of stalking. Case vignettes and public records of stalking incidents make the book highly illustrative and understandable.

The term "stalking" in psychiatric literature and works of fiction is historically associated with erotomania, nymphomania, obsessive attachment, obscurities, threats, paranoia, and irrationality. Although various definitions of stalking exist, it is generally defined as repeated acts or behavior that is experienced as unpleasantly intrusive by the victim and that creates feelings of apprehension. A victim of stalking may be subject to unwanted phone calls, letters, cards, faxes, e-mails, and gifts or even surveillance, threats, or actual harm. The reported prevalence of victimization for women (8% to 33%) is remarkably high. College students, mental health professionals, and women are at a somewhat greater risk of being stalked.

The clinical aspects of stalking, including its classification and typology, are summarized and explained through case examples. The authors propose that understanding the typological psychology of stalkers improves the ability to ascertain and mitigate the risks posed by stalking behavior. Factors such as substance use, criminal history, relationship history, and suicidality and suicidality-related violence (including acts of homicide) are discussed. The authors suggest clinical, legal, and practical methods for the management of stalking behavior. However, most of the methods suggested seem to be legal and forensic interventions, which disappointed my expectations for a more psychotherapeutic approach. One interesting case example describes a mental health worker as a victim of stalking. The authors advocate that mental health professionals set a firm therapeutic boundary in order to reduce stalking behavior by patients. The authors also recog-

nize the complexity of the psychopathology of stalking and the necessity of tailor-made approaches to its management.

The victimology and psychological consequences of stalking resemble forms of posttraumatic stress disorder. Management strategies for victims of stalking are also described through interesting case examples. The book continues with a discussion of stalking and the law, including recent trends in anti-stalking legislation, competency, and criminal responsibility.

The final section includes an intriguing account of cyber stalking. The authors point out that cyber stalking is still not completely understood. Despite some differences between cyber stalkers and stalkers in general, cyber stalkers may also assault their victims. Although the uncertain prevalence and typology of this new behavior requires further research, there are some suggested management strategies from the authors. Another special topic is juvenile stalking. Unfortunately, help for juvenile victims, who often cannot defend themselves as well as adults, is not described. Although the authors point out that celebrities do not reflect the majority of cases and that most stalking occurs between people who know each other, there is a full chapter describing the stalking of celebrity targets such as Madonna and Steven Spielberg.

Despite the foreword, in which the authors warn against offering diagnostic labels without analysis of the root causes of the problematic behavior, the authors' approach to the subject of stalking seems to be more descriptive forensic psychiatry than psychodynamic insight. The origins of stalking behavior and its relationship to violence, destructiveness, malignant aggression, and personality disorders are mentioned only briefly. Nevertheless, the book presents a very informative approach that summarizes recent research findings and provides vignettes of management strategies that can be a useful guide for professionals working in forensic psychiatry and law enforcement.

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Freedom and Neurobiology: Reflections on Free Will, Language, and Political Power, by John R. Searle. New York, Columbia University Press, 2007, 128 pp., \$24.50.

John R. Searle, a preeminent philosopher of the mind, has produced a volume of particular significance for psychia-

trists. For those familiar with Searle's work, these essays incorporate recent developments in neuroscience into his most comprehensive engagement with the problem of free will to date. For those unfamiliar with Searle, this book is an important gateway to his thoughts.

In addition to the two main essays, "Free Will as a Problem in Neurobiology" and "Social Ontology and Political Power," Searle has added a highly accessible introduction which helps to situate these two lectures within the context of his larger project—namely, how to reconcile the appearance of a completely determined and material universe with an enduring conception of ourselves that contradicts this scientific view. As Searle succinctly puts it, "How can we square this self-conception of ourselves as mindful, meaning-creating, free, rational...agents with a universe that consists entirely of mindless, meaningless, unfree, nonrational, brute physical particles?" (p. 5).

The introductory essay, "Philosophy and the Basic Facts," is an excellent review of the current state of philosophy of the mind, stressing how recent developments in science have transformed the task of philosophy. In essence, increased knowledge about the external world has driven philosophy itself to become more empirical. Philosophers now know a series of basic facts about the world from which to reason and question. As Searle points out, "It is hard to send men to the moon and bring them back and then take seriously the problem, for example, of whether the external world really exists" (p. 28).

Searle applies this approach to a central problem for psychiatrists: free will. A dilemma is created by the possibility of too much or too little freedom. What if our patients were radically free (i.e., free of any genetic, developmental, or environmental influence)? Psychiatry in general does not take the possibility of radical freedom seriously, since too many basic facts argue against it. On the other hand, if our patients' thoughts and behaviors are completely predetermined, then how do we conceptualize the subjective experience of freedom? And in what meaningful sense can treatment be said to bring about change if one has no freedom? Despite these challenges, the possibility that our patients' actions are completely predetermined remains an unsavory yet viable hypothesis that may grow in popularity with additional neurological discovery.

Enter into this dilemma John Searle and his concept of the "gap." Considering cases of rational deliberation, Searle tells us "there is, in short, a gap, or a series of gaps, between the causes of each stage in the processes of deliberating...and the subsequent stages," and that "at each stage [in a deliberation], the conscious states are *not* experienced as *sufficient to compel* the next conscious state" (p. 42; italics added). According to Searle, it is the "conscious experiences" of these gaps that give us "the conviction of free will" (p. 45). Searle comes down squarely on the side of those who believe in freedom of will and that freedom of will makes change possible.

For psychiatrists and neuroscientists, many questions are raised by Searle's assertion of a gap between antecedent causal conditions and conscious states. How large is the gap? Can it change over time and with development? Is it influenced by unconscious processes? And most importantly for psychiatrists, do some patients suffer from what is essentially a confined or restrained gap, which severely limits their choices?

Space constraints do not allow even a preliminary sketch of the possible answers to these questions, but clearly any psychiatrist who attempts to increase the scope of patients' choices would do well to explore Searle's concept in more detail. It is our contention that in most patient encounters it is precisely the presence of this gap that makes work on its influences (including the unconscious) possible.

Many psychiatrists may shy away from philosophical discourse, viewing it as either irrelevant to their practice or as simply too much rough sledding, just a series of overly complex arguments with little or no benefit to them in their treatment of the mentally ill. Searle's style is different! He shuns jargon, and although his writing may at times be complex, it never becomes obscure. Philosophical arguments are supported by easily understandable, everyday examples. For those of us interested in being able to better frame what it is we are doing when we treat our patients, reading Searle is an indispensable source of insight and thoughtful provocation. Whether you ultimately agree with him or not, the book is well worth your time.

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Genes, Environment, and Psychopathology: Understanding the Causes of Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders, by Kenneth S. Kendler and Carol A. Prescott. New York, Guilford Press, 2006, 388 pp., \$45.00.

This book is a gem. It takes the reader on a behind-the-scenes excursion into the rationale, methodology, and findings of one of the most ambitious and influential genetic-epidemiological studies in recent history. The Virginia Adult Twin Study of Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorders (VATSPUD) is a systematic attempt to explore the roles of genetic and environmental risk factors and their interaction in the etiology of a range of common disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder, major depression, and phobias (grouped as internalizing disorders) and childhood conduct disorder, adult antisocial personality disorder, and substance and illicit drug use (grouped as externalizing disorders). Committed to avoiding the methodological flaws of previous generations of twin and epidemiological studies, the authors ascertained a large population-based sample of same-sex and opposite-sex twins (more than 4,500 pairs) through the Virginia Twin Registry. This sample, which included some parents as well, allowed them to test a wide range of hypotheses relevant to the central themes of the study. Many of the subjects were longitudinally assessed. In addition to reporting prevalence data and heritability estimates for each disorder and for comorbidity, this study is the most rigorous attempt to date to parse the role of specific environmental risk factors, both temporally distant and recent. Among the other topics addressed are whether environmental risk factors are truly causal (as opposed to correlational but noncausal), disorder specificity of, and sex differences in, genetic and environmental risk factors, and changes in the interplay between these factors over the course of development. This abbreviated list