many types of individual trauma, as well as to be prepared for a major disaster. There remains a need for a companion to the DSM–IV work group book.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is still not well understood and scepticism remains appropriate about much that is written on its nature, course, and treatment. Nonetheless, there remains a substantial clinical problem which occurs frequently outside the extremes of battle and disaster and which many of us fail to recognise or treat.

RICHARD MAYOU, *Clinical Reader, Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, Warneford Hospital, Oxford*

Working with Vulnerable Young Children. By JEAN CAMPION. London: Cassell. 1992. 160 pp. £10.99 (pb), £35.00 (hb).

This book from the Children, Teachers and Learning Series is written by an educational psychologist and is intended for all those concerned with the education of pre-school children. Developmental difficulties ranging from relatively minor to serious and fundamental ones are complicated by social, and environmental disadvantage. The author's belief that "early development is a social process; a search for meaning and personal competence in a world of other human beings" seems to provide the context for the theme of the book. Consistent with this, emphasis is put on the need to recognise and respect the dynamic nature of the process of early development and to facilitate each child's potential for competence and social cooperation. This is set out clearly in the three parts of the book, which is well referenced.

The first part considers the development of young children and early difficulties. Supportive and consistent adult care givers, the opportunity for play and conversation, encouragement, affection, and occasional restraint are the preferred ingredients of an approach which enables children to develop their own skills and understanding. Early learning is seen more as a process that needs to be facilitated than a set of skills needing to be taught in an incremental and set way. Interventions directed to trying to help the child overcome difficulties in his/her development, and to acquire certain skills and understanding by adult direction and control are not favoured.

The second part is concerned with the provision of help for these children and brings together various disciplines from the Departments of Health and Social Security, and Education. The need to develop trust and respect, not only between the providers of help but also with the parents and families of the children, is highlighted.

The third part is an account of the approach taken with eight vulnerable children in a racially and socially mixed outer London Borough day nursery. The help they received and the progress they made are recorded in detail.

Trainee child psychiatrists and staff of child development centres could benefit from some of the ideas in this book.

QUEENIE HARRIS, *Consultant Child and Family Psychiatrist, Heathlands Clinic, Moseley, Birmingham*

Irrationality: The Enemy Within. By STUART SUTHERLAND. London: Constable. 1992. 357 pp. £14.95.

It will not come as a surprise to psychiatrists that man is an irrational creature, but there have been few attempts to map out the limits of human rationality. In this fascinating book, Stuart Sutherland has collected hundreds of examples of what he calls irrational behaviour, mainly derived from social psychology research. He hopes that by pointing out the ways in which people err, the book will help readers to make better decisions more often.

Some readers will be disappointed with the limited definition of rationality which Sutherland provides, and consequently with the limited scope of the book. He defines rational thinking as "that which leads to the conclusion that is most likely to be correct, given the knowledge one has". From this somewhat restricted premise, the author extends his search far and wide for factors which prevent people from making correct decisions. The book is largely about decision theory, the laws of probability, and elementary statistics. In the hands of a less able writer this could be pretty heavy going, but the book is consistently lively, amusing, and intriguing. Some of the examples from social psychology will be known to readers of the *Journal* (the primacy effect, the halo effect, Milgram's work on obedience, Solomon Asch's work on conformity, etc.), but most will be new. There are excellent chapters on in-groups and out-groups, organisational folly, ignoring the evidence, making the wrong connection, and mistaking the cause. Medicine comes in for particular censure for statistical naïvety, but psychiatry escapes lightly.

Sutherland illustrates his arguments with anecdotes and examples culled from history, literature, and the media. These are well chosen and add considerable character to the book. It is fair to say that this book is aimed at a general rather than technical readership, and those looking for a philosophical treatise on rationality should look elsewhere. It should be mandatory reading for all management training courses, and there are few who will not learn something from it. I enjoyed it and strongly recommend it to all readers of the *Journal*.

TIM ROGERS, *Senior Registrar, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh*

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