

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

A Psychoanalytic Perspective

edited by

DEBBIE HINDLE and
MARTA VACIAGO SMITH



Personality Development

Personality Development: A Psychoanalytic Perspective is a comprehensive overview of infant observation and personality development. Beginning with intra-utero life and going through to early adulthood, it focuses on the emotional tasks involved at each stage of development and the interplay of internal processes and external circumstances. Central importance is given to attachment and to psychoanalytic concepts, such as the Oedipal complex, separation and individuation, and the development of the capacity to think. The emotional processes are seen as 'states of mind' rather than fixed stages.

Using considerable new clinical and observational material, *Personality Development: A Psychoanalytic Perspective* will be of interest to those teaching personality development courses, as well as mental health and child care professionals.

Debbie Hindle is a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist. **Marta Vaciago Smith** is a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist with the Community Mental Health Trust in Leeds.

Personality Development

A Psychoanalytic Perspective

Edited by Debbie Hindle and
Marta Vaciago Smith



London and New York

First published 1999 by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002.

© 1999 Debbie Hindle and Marta Vaciago Smith, selection and
editorial matter, individual chapters, the contributors

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or
reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic,
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter
invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in
writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British
Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Personality development : a psychoanalytic perspective /
edited by Debbie Hindle and Marta Vaciago Smith ; with a
preface by Margaret Rustin.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

I. Psychoanalysis. 2. Developmental psychology. 3.

Personality. I. Hindle, Debbie, 1949- . II. Smith, Marta Vaciago,
1944- .

BF175.45.P47 1999

155.2 '5--dc21

99-17408
CIP

ISBN 0-415-17957-2 (hbk)

ISBN 0-415-17958-0 (pbk)

ISBN 0-203-13063-4 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-16184-X (Glassbook Format)

Contents

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	vi
<i>Preface by Margaret Rustin</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
1 Introduction	1
DEBBIE HINDLE AND MARTA VACIAGO SMITH	
2 Intra-uterine life and the experience of birth	13
RUTH SEGLOW AND HAMISH CANHAM	
3 Babyhood: Becoming a person in the family	33
LISA MILLER	
4 The toddler and the wider world	48
DEBORAH STEINER	
5 Kings, queens and factors: The latency period revisited	71
JUDITH EDWARDS	
6 ‘It’s just an ordinary pain:’ Thoughts on joy and heartache in puberty and early adolescence	92
MONICA LANYADO	
7 Adolescence: A personal identity in a topsy-turvy world	116
CHARLOTTE JARVIS	

8	The transition from late adolescence to young adulthood: Oedipal themes	138
	LYNDA MILLER	
9	The transition from late adolescence to young adulthood: Student life	158
	DAVID HARDIE	
	Endpiece	175
	DEBBIE HINDLE AND MARTA VACIAGO SMITH	
	<i>References</i>	177
	<i>Selected reading list</i>	186
	<i>Directory of further learning opportunities</i>	190
	<i>Index</i>	193

Notes on contributors

Hamish Canham is a child and adolescent psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic, tutor on the Observational Studies course and on Clinical Training in Child Psychotherapy, and joint organising tutor of the Emotional Factors in Learning and Teaching courses.

Judith Edwards is a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist working in a Family Consultation Centre and teaching child development at the Tavistock Clinic. She is currently joint editor of the *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*. Previous publications include chapters in *Autism and personality* (edited by A. Alvarez & S. Reid, Routledge, 1999), the *Handbook of child and adolescent psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic approach* (A. Horne & M. Lanyado, Routledge, 1999); and *Unwilling to school* (Berg & Nursten, Gaskill, 1996).

David Hardie is a child and adolescent psychotherapist who has worked in student health for 20 years, has taught on the Tavistock course on Counselling in Education, and on the Diploma in Student Counselling and the MSc in Counselling at Burbeck College. From 1976 to 1979 he was Head of Education at Peper Harrow Therapeutic Community.

Debbie Hindle is a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist. She was the founding organiser of the Nottingham Infant Observation and Work Discussion course, and has worked in the public sector for many years. She currently is a visiting lecturer at the Under Fives Study Center, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Charlotte Jarvis is a child and adolescent psychotherapist who has specialised in work with adolescents, and has worked at the

Brandon Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy. She teaches and lectures at the Tavistock Clinic and on various other courses in Great Britain. Currently she is Director of Open Door, Hornsey Young Peoples Consultation Service.

Monica Lanyado helped to found the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy training in Scotland and remains involved with training issues at the British Association of Psychotherapists in London. She carried out clinical research on sexually abusive behaviour in young adolescent boys at Great Ormond Street Hospital, London. She is former co-editor of the *Journal of Child Psychotherapy* and joint editor with Anne Horne of the *Handbook of child and adolescent psychotherapy: Psychoanalytic approach* (Routledge, 1999). She is currently in private practice.

Lisa Miller, consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist, is Chair of Children and Families Department, Tavistock Clinic. Her special interest is in infant observation and work with under-5s. She was formally organiser of the 'Under 5 Counselling service' at the Tavistock Clinic and is editor of the *International Journal of Infant Observation*.

Lynda Miller is a consultant psychotherapist at Enfield Child and Family Service and in the Learning Disabilities Service at the Tavistock Clinic. She has a special interest in working with adolescents.

Margaret Rustin is a consultant child psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic, London and has been on the senior staff of the Clinic since 1971. Since 1986 she has been Organising Tutor of the Tavistock Child Psychotherapy training and in 1993 she was elected Postgraduate Dean of the Clinic. She has co-authored with Michael Rustin *Narratives of love and loss* (1987), and co-edited *Closely observed infants* (1989) and *Psychotic states in children* (1997).

Ruth Seglow is a child and adolescent psychotherapist at the Marlborough Family Service, London, and co-editor of the *Bulletin of the Association of Child Psychotherapists*. She is a tutor on the Observational Studies course at the Tavistock Clinic and senior leader for Counselling: Aspects in Education, run

jointly by the Tavistock Clinic and the University of East London.

Deborah Steiner trained as a child and adolescent psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic and worked for many years with children and families in child guidance. She has also trained as a psychoanalyst at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, London.

Marta Vaciago Smith is a consultant child and adolescent psychotherapist within the Community and Mental Health Trust, Leeds. She is the course organiser and assistant senior lecturer for the masters degree in Psychoanalytical Observational Studies, Leeds University.

Preface

Margaret Rustin

The series of lectures gathered together in this book provide a fine representation of contemporary thinking about the development of the personality, viewed from a psychoanalytic perspective and growing from the clinical practice of the child and adolescent psychotherapist. The editors introduce the book with the most helpful overview. They expound two organising concepts, which serve to link the subsequent material, and which exemplify current preoccupations in psychoanalysis. First, they explore Oedipal themes, the necessary and painful encounter for the child with reality of parental sexuality and the crucial process of becoming aware of that from which we are excluded. The ways in which this triangular constellation reappears as a challenge and an opportunity for development in the process of growing up is linked to the second theme, that of the importance of learning to think about ourselves and others and to acquire a capacity for observation and reflection about our personal lives. These central ideas do indeed inform the detailed exploration of particular periods of development in the life of the child which follows.

It is impressive to realise as one goes along that the book has a sustained inner coherence based on the theoretical paradigm outlined by the editors, and yet succeeds in preserving the individual voices of its authors. The editors have clearly sought to avoid losing the tone of the original lectures, which created such a lively interchange with their audiences, and should also provide much opportunity for thought among readers. The emphasis of the writers is quite varied, and the methods chosen to bring to life the topic of each chapter are diverse. Some writers are more interested in what the traditions of infant and child observation have revealed, some are more drawn to the development of theory, some are more alert to the impact of social and cultural change, and some write primarily from careful and

profound thinking about their clinical experiences. This variety leaves a lot of space for the individual reader to formulate lines of enquiry and to link the writers' ideas with personal and professional experience. One can also imagine that the book would serve as a basis for a reading group to work through systematically.

The book is a splendid offshoot of the lively growth of interest in the ideas of child psychotherapists throughout Britain and Europe and is also a timely contribution to contemporary thinking about the fundamentals of development. The story it tells of the relational basis for personality development is highly relevant reading for policy-makers troubled by evidence of difficulties in parent-child relationships. It greatly enriches the over-behaviouristic or somewhat superficial 'child-centred' accounts of development that often hold sway by its combination of sensitivity and rigour. It demonstrates the continuing fertility of psychoanalytic thinking, which is properly rooted in observation and clinical work.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank Margaret Rustin for helping us to organise the first Personality Development series of lectures and for identifying possible contributors. Her sustained interest in facilitating the development of child psychotherapy training outside London is evidenced by her Preface. Special acknowledgement needs to go to Margot Waddell who was a contributor to the first series of lectures represented in this book and an inspiration to so many of us who trained at the Tavistock Clinic. We are also grateful to Val Binney, consultant clinical psychologist, Children's Services, Sheffield for administering the course, and for the assistance given by her students and department. We also want to thank Jane Allen-Brown of the Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies, University of Sheffield, where the course is currently held.

We would like to thank Karen Baker, senior registrar in child psychiatry, Nottingham who wrote a review of the series for the *Association of Child Psychotherapy Bulletin*, which led to the course being repeated elsewhere, Dr. Bernard Ratigan for his very helpful comments on the text, and also Amanda Waring and Tony Brodrick, who were involved in painstakingly preparing both the initial proposal for the book and the manuscript. We would also like to thank Alison Swan Parente and Sheila Hewitt for their time and attention given to reading the manuscript.

Finally we would like to thank all the contributors and the members of the course whose participation, lively discussion and requests for publication resulted in this book.

PERMISSIONS

In Chapter 2, ‘Intra-uterine life and the experience of birth’, we would like to thank Faber and Faber for their permission to include an extract from ‘East Coker’ in *Four Quartets*, published in *Collected poems* by T.S. Eliot 1905–1962, and for the same excerpt from ‘East Coker’ in *Four Quartets*, copyright 1940 by T.S. Eliot and renewed 1968 by Esme Valerie Eliot, reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace & Company. Extracts from *The earliest relationship* (Brazelton & Cramer, 1991) were reproduced by permission H. Karnac (Books) Ltd.

In Chapter 4, *The toddler and the wider world*, some of the material has appeared in an earlier publication by Deborah Steiner, *Understanding your one year old*, Rosendale Press, 1992.

An earlier version of Chapter 8 was published in 1995 in *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 9, 3, entitled ‘The transition to adulthood: Oedipal themes’, by Lynda Miller.

We would like to thank Beta Copley and Barbara Forryan for giving us permission to use and to update The Directory of Further Learning Opportunities, previously published in *Therapeutic work with children and young people*, Cassell, 1997.

NOTE

On confidentiality

Throughout the book, all names of persons referred to have been changed and every effort has been made to disguise their identity, but not in ways that change the meaning of the observation and clinical material.

On terminology

Throughout the book the use of the term ‘phantasy’ refers to unconscious processes, and ‘fantasy’ to conscious thoughts and wishes. The term ‘object’ indicates a person with whom the subject has an emotional relationship and/or an internal object, which is a mental representation of the person or relationship.

When referring to an infant, child or adolescent either ‘he’ or ‘she’ may be used, but generally in the text ‘he’ is used unless reference is being made to a specific observational or clinical example.

Chapter I

Introduction

Debbie Hindle and Marta Vaciago Smith

Fragments of the Rivers

It is not possible to descend twice in the same river

Heraclitus

As Heraclitus says, ‘everything changes’. In this book we will see how throughout life we go on revisiting points of development, reliving conflicts and gaining new insights, which may in turn enrich our current lives. What follows is an account of what is essentially a journey, which begins within the family and continues into the wider world.

Development here is not envisaged as a linear trajectory, but as interlocking orbits forming a spiral. Nor does development take place in isolation, but in the context of relationships that may themselves be continually changing. In this book we emphasise the interplay between the internal and external world and the development of the thinking mind, which is so crucial to maintaining a sense of self. By trying to capture the uniqueness and complexity of the developing personality, the contents of the lectures also bear testimony to the way in which hope supports the journey described. Hope implies expectation and desire, underpinned by a feeling of trust. It is to such openness to trust that this book is addressed and to describing the way in which unresolved intrapsychic, interpersonal issues may be renegotiated at different stages of development. In this sense, the present becomes the crucible of past and future.

THE HISTORY OF THE COURSE

'Personality Development' is an integral part of a course entitled 'Observational Studies and the Application of Psychoanalytic Concepts to work with Children, Young People and Families' originated at the Tavistock Clinic.

This Observational Studies course has evolved over many years into both a foundation course for clinical training in child and adolescent psychotherapy, and a course in its own right, which since 1991 can be completed as a postgraduate diploma or an MA degree.

The development of the various components of the course was heavily influenced by Esther Bick and later by Martha Harris (M.H. Williams, 1987). The course addresses the needs of people undertaking work with children, adolescents and families. It is designed to foster and deepen awareness of human development and interaction, through the development of observational skills and an understanding of psychoanalytic concepts. The study of the various stages of the life cycle confers unity and a sense of continuity to the multifaceted experience of learning. The Personality Development section of the course provides a framework in which an understanding from different seminars and different fields of research may coalesce. Within the Tavistock Clinic, Margot Waddell, psychoanalyst and consultant child psychotherapist, taught personality development to nearly a generation of students and has influenced many of the contributors to this book. Her recently published book *Inside lives: Psychoanalysis and the growth of the personality*, referred to in the suggested reading list, is a testimony to her focus in this subject from the Kleinian and post-Kleinian psychoanalytic tradition.

During the last 20 years, Observational Studies courses have developed outside London, in Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Oxford, Leeds, Liverpool and Nottingham. These developments were made possible by the combined efforts of locally based child psychotherapists and visiting tutors from the Tavistock Clinic. Limited resources, however, meant that a flexible and imaginative approach was needed in order to offer more seminars. By joining forces between the courses in Leeds and Nottingham, we were able to mount a Personality Development course located in Sheffield, a midway point.

We needed to think about how best to meet the requirements of the course and the needs of our students. We also thought it would be an enriching experience for our students to open the course to a wider professional audience. The course attracted a wide range of professionals, GPs, Health Visitors, Paediatricians, Child Psychiatrists, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Social Workers, Counsellors and Adult Psychotherapists, indicating an interest in psychoanalytic thinking and its relevance to professional work.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

A series of seminars was designed to cover the stages from babyhood to early adulthood. Each seminar was divided into two parts: the first a lecture, the second a clinically based discussion. Although organised as a series, it was also intended that participants could attend individual lectures. Some repetition in the book reflects the fact that each lecturer had to take this into consideration. In the discussion, emphasis was placed on participation and students were encouraged to link the lectures with their own work experience. A reading list was provided for each lecture.

What could have been a fragmented series proved to have a robust structure. In relation to the Observational Studies courses, our presence in the seminars provided some continuity. Likewise, we found students kept themes from the lectures alive in other seminars. From feedback forms we learned that participants found the seminars to be surprisingly integrated. In retrospect we could see how crucial working together was to the success of the course. Only through the administrative support provided by the Clinical Psychology department in Sheffield was it possible for us to work together across the region

We were struck by how working together parallels the process of development. Development begins and continues within the medium of combined forces, a theme that will be addressed throughout this book. The success of the course was confirmed by the fact that it was re-run in the same format in Bristol, Durham, Liverpool and London.

FROM LECTURES TO CHAPTERS

In editing this book, our first aim was to preserve the spontaneity with which the lectures were delivered in the hope that the reader would be transported into the atmosphere of the course. As the lectures were pointers for further discussion, so it is hoped that reading the text will encourage further thought. The book is not intended to be a comprehensive work on personality development, rather an exposition of 'work in progress'. We envisage the book being used by a wide range of professionals, similar to those who attended the course. What cannot be included is the richness of the ensuing discussion, based on the clinical material within the text or brought by participants. It was to the discussions that both students and lecturers brought their dilemmas, often linked to the painful social, economic and political milieu that impacted on their work. The ensuing, ongoing conjunction of external circumstances with internal processes and reverberations was both liberating and empowering.

As all the contributors are child and adolescent psychotherapists, working and teaching mainly in the context of NHS Trusts, the material to which they make reference is taken from their experience. This may seem to give a particular bias to the consideration of personality development, as many examples are drawn from therapeutic work. The aim of the course, however, was to focus on *ordinary* development. Yet the more we thought about this, the more aware we were that in *ordinary* development there is a tension between moving on, standing still, and even retreating from the challenges of growth and change. Therapeutic work may best highlight those factors which facilitate and those which could interfere with development.

In this book, the emphasis is on development as a process. Although each chapter ends with a conclusion of that stage, the reader will be aware of the recapitulation of earlier stages in later stages. The metaphor of a spiral best illustrates the juxtaposition of linear time with the circularity of the internal experience that we are attempting to capture and describe.

DIFFERENT VOICES AND SHARED IDEAS

Each lecture is written by a different contributor. One of the purposes of the course was to offer participants the opportunity to hear a range of speakers, an experience otherwise not available outside London. Their contributions also stand as a reminder of the uniqueness of each individual's personality.

Because all contributors share the same clinical training, it was not surprising that the course was more coherent than we had initially expected. Their different voices formed a mosaic, as similar themes emerged, were repeated or were considered from different points of view. Central to our training is the development of observation skills, described in *Closely observed infants* (Miller, Rustin & Rustin, & Shuttleworth, 1989) and *Developments in infant observation—the Tavistock model* (Reid, 1997). The importance of attending to deep levels of human interaction and the capacity to reflect on emotional meaning and to learn from experience provides the core for ongoing work. The supporting theoretical framework is based on the writings of Freud, Klein, Bion and those in the broad arena of object relation theories. Throughout the book, ample use is made of psychoanalytic literature, which acts as a compass to guide our bearing and direction. Integral to all the contributors' thinking is a conviction about the interactive nature of growth and development. What is being described as personality development cannot be separated from the wider context of the interplay between different family members or significant others and what may be described as the family life cycle, which is in turn embedded in the social/cultural milieu.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Among the many themes elucidated in the lectures, two main themes repeatedly emerged: the significance of the Oedipal constellation and the development of a capacity to think. Taken together, they provide what we could call the scaffolding on which the personality is built. The Oedipal constellation involves the awareness and acceptance of the creative relationship between two people. From this comes the recognition of dependence, the need for sharing, and the internalisation of the combined object

that functions to strengthen and sustain the individual. Each development point brings a quantity of mental pain, as we will see throughout the book. Whether this pain can be tolerated, modified or evaded depends on the internal presence of a thinking object and stands at the crossroads of development. The significance of the work of Wilfred Bion in our thinking about development cannot be overestimated. The question is ‘How do we become what we are?’ Yet the moment we try to conceptualise this, to capture the moment, circumstances may have changed. As Winnicott (1949/1958) says, ‘All individuals are really trying to find a new birth in which the line of their own life will not be disturbed by a quantity of reacting greater than that which can be experienced without a loss of the sense of continuity of personal existence’.

Oedipal development

‘The entry into the Oedipus complex involves the introduction of a distinctly new form of otherness into the mother-infant dyad that requires a radical psychological-interpersonal reorganisation’ (Ogden, 1989). Throughout this book, almost all the contributors consider the Oedipal situation at different ages and stages of development. The idea that it encompasses a radical ‘psychological-interpersonal reorganisation’ frames our thinking about this psychoanalytic concept. Most contributors to this book refer to the Oedipus complex, but in Chapters 6 and 8 special reference is made to the origins of Freud’s concept and its significance to developmental and clinical issues.

Sigmund Freud (1897/1961a) first ‘discovered’ the Oedipus complex in the course of his self-analysis, as noted in a letter to Fliess. Here he began to think about his hostile impulses towards his father and loving impulses towards his mother. Freud elaborated his thinking about this complex in his clinical work and in his writing (1909/1961f, 1920/1961k, 1923/1961i, 1924/1961m, 1924/1961n, 1931/1961p), but as Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) clarify, he nowhere gives a systematic account of the Oedipus complex. The earliest versions of the complex were based on the simplest ideas about the little boy’s rivalry with the father for attention and an exclusive relationship with the mother. Thoughts about the Oedipus complex for the little girl were complicated by ideas such as penis envy, and a lack of a fuller

understanding of the female's relation to her body and unconscious phantasies. Freud linked the Oedipus complex to his developmental theory of sexuality and placed the resolution of the complex between the ages of 3 and 5 years. Over time, Freud 'saw in [the Oedipus complex] the convergence of universal psychological structure, unconscious personal meaning, and the influence of the power of desire emanating from the body' (Ogden, 1989). In this sense, the Oedipus complex became a cornerstone for his theory of psychoanalysis.

Klein (1926/1981) placed the Oedipus complex much earlier, in what Freud had described as the pre-Oedipal phase. Klein's interest in and work with very young children helped her to observe and hypothesise about their intricate, intense and alternating feelings of love and hate towards each parent. By placing the Oedipus complex within the first year of life, Klein linked it to the infant's apprehension of whole objects, which she described as the realisation of the separateness and independence of others. The sense in which the parents, like the infant, have an emotional life and relationships of their own is crucial to the growth of the capacity for love and concern.

The negotiation of this stage ushers in the possibility of distinguishing external reality from internal phantasy. The omnipotent phantasy of total possession of the object has to be relinquished for the acceptance of his/her separateness. Independence of the object involves the crucial recognition of its intimate relationship with another, to the exclusion of the infant. The infant has not 'created' him/herself with one parent but is the result of intercourse. To accept and benefit from the epistemophilic instinct, infants have to accept the first truth—the fact that their parents have given birth to them.

Development of a capacity to think

This book is also a testimony to something fundamental to human nature: the quest for knowledge, which is always in conflict with the desire to leave things unknown, to turn a blind eye. Klein (1930/1981) proposed that the love of knowledge, which she termed the 'epistemophilic instinct' was present from birth. At the beginning of her psychoanalytic journey, she was concerned with the inhibitions of questions about sexuality and the liberating effect the answering of those questions could have on phantasy life. 'With the term "epistemophilic" Klein creates an inseparable connection between