THE CONCEPT OF THE NORMAL CHILD AND ITS MANY VARIATIONS

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The Concept of the Normal Child and its Many Variations

Children and Adults

- The concept of normality both for children and adults is somewhat elusive
- Freud considered the line between normality and pathology to be very indistinct
- For adults, widely accepted criteria concerns the ability to work, a good sexual adjustment and the capacity to enjoy leisure
- Adult criteria does not fit children
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Children and Adults

- The adult is a “finished” product
- The child is in a constant process of very active development
- As a result normality is different at different ages and much more complex to assess
The issue of what kinds of external stimulation it takes for the brain to develop normally is important here. They increase:

a) The degree of vascularization of certain areas of the brain

b) Increase in dendritization

c) Increased mielinization
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Normalcy vs. Pathology

- With kids it may be more difficult to assess “normalcy” than pathology
- Children, particularly very young children are part of a very complex system
- Let us consider as an example a case of developmental retardation in a 9 months old
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Infantile Neurosis

- Normality has a wide frame of reference and variations
- The question of assessing developmental conflicts
- Best example of the above is the Infantile Neurosis
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Developmental Interferences

- The differences between the manifestations of a developmental conflict and other forms of psychopathology
- The issue of “developmental interferences”
- Factors that influence the impact of developmental interferences
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Symptoms from Developmental Interferences and Neurosis

- Differences between symptoms due to developmental interferences and those of neurosis
- Other factors complicating the assessment
- Some special situations, subcultures etc (being raised in a ghetto for example)
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Various Points of View

- The various points of view defining normalcy
- The role of physical handicaps
- The role of experience
- Anna Freud’s view
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Bibliography


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Bibliography