

# OKS



Title: Brain, Attachment, Personality: An introduction to neuroaffective development

Author: Susan Hart

Publisher: Karnac Books Ltd

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Reviewed by: Shevonne Rautenbach

This book offers an outline of the emerging field of neuroaffective developmental psychology. This new paradigm, whose beginnings author Susan Hart credits to Freud's early assertion that psychoanalysis would one day merge with neurophysiology, attempts to integrate developmental theory with the field of neuroscience. Hart, a clinical psychologist whose practice focuses on child and family therapy, notes that modern technology offers new insight into neurological development. This allows for a greater depth of understanding of childhood development, and in turn leads to Hart's assertion that children's development takes place within the dynamic interaction between genetic predispositions, neurological development and the environment, which shape one another in a mutual process which begins at the time of conception. In this book Hart outlines her ideas on how the integration of the fields of psychology and neuroscience can lead to a more holistic understanding of early development; and how this understanding may relate to our conception of adult

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Hart adds a new perspective to developmental theory by including an in-depth understanding of foetal development as the start of child development, as this is an essential period in neurological development, during which the foetus is particularly vulnerable to environmental factors. Further, Hart attempts to understand 'critical periods' of childhood brain development, and how the environment directly impacts upon such development.

This book outlines foetal, infant and childhood development on three levels: the neurobiological, the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. Additionally it attempts to explicate the complex interplay between genes, neurophysiology and environment. As an introductory text, this book offers a straightforward and clearly organized approach to the unpacking of the many facets of brain structure and function. This includes an understanding of neural circuitry (rather than a static understanding of structure alone), neurotransmitter functioning, as well as an exploration of gender differences and brain lateralization issues. Hart also explores the interplay between the

cognitive concepts of memory and consciousness and the neurophysiology of these concepts, and how this interplay may impact upon the development of a sense of self and personality.

Although this book offers a clear introduction to neurological structure and function, this detail leaves the intrapersonal and interpersonal areas less thoroughly addressed. During the reading I became hungry for a richer inter-weaving of the meaty neurological theory with lighter notes of intrapersonal and interpersonal theory. Hart introduces (but does not expand upon) interesting concepts, such as the concept of the 'other' as a neural pattern, the understanding at a neural level of the transferring of moods and actions unconsciously between individuals (sounding suspiciously like projective identification), the concept of nervous system synchronicity between infant and caregiver and its links to attachment, as well as the concept of affect-regulation mirroring which allows the infant to develop an internalized impulse regulating system. It was these nuggets of psychological-neurological crossover which got me searching the internet for her next book.

This book clearly introduces a new area of theoretical integration, and gives an excellent introduction to this fascinating and complex paradigm. Hart expertly and carefully explicates the dynamic interplay between psychological and neurological development, and allows a greater insight into the age-old question of mind-brain connection. Although requiring a little of your own brain power for its reading, this book is well worth the effort.

## About the reviewer

Shevonne Rautenbach is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Pietermaritzburg. She works in the area of neuropsychology with a special interest in developmental neuropsychology.

**Book title: Multicultural understanding of Child and Adolescent psychopathology: Implications for Mental Health Assessment.**

**Author: Thomas M. Achenbach and Leslie A. Rescorla**

**Edition: Hardcover**

**Price: \$40.00**

**Reviewed by: By Richard Skaff**

## Global mental illness according to the global experts

In this epoch of global warming, global corporations and global government comes a book by Achenbach and Rescorla that attempts to globalize psychopathology and endeavors to find common ground for mental illness around children in the world. The volume presents an ethnocultural aspect of psychopathology from two perspectives: The empirically based and the diagnostically based approaches, their similarities and their differences.

This text attempts to synthesize a display of international findings that increase awareness on cultural variations in children's emotional and Behavioural problems.

The book consists of eleven chapters that flow cohesively and cover multi-aspects of the multicultural forms of alleged psychopathology. Every chapter has a helpful summary that edifies the basic theme in each of the chapters. Chapter one discusses the need for multicultural research on children's problems. In chapters two and three the authors present details of the empirically and diagnostically based approaches to psychopathology. While in chapter four, five, and six they present multicultural research on empirically based scale scores, correlates of scale scores and patterns of problems. In chapters seven and eight the authors discuss multicultural research on prevalence rates, correlates, and patterns of disorders defined in terms of diagnostic categories. In Chapter nine, they compare findings from the empirically based and diagnostically based approaches, and in Chapter ten they depict the demands posed by the findings and strategies for meeting these challenges. In the final eleventh chapter, the authors consider the various strategies in which multicultural research could contribute to understanding, assessing, preventing, and treating child psychopathology.

The text is basically a psychometric exhibition. The use of statistical and technical terms in this volume like etic, emic, bottom-up strategy, top-down strategy, taxonomy, nosology, kappa coefficient, Pearson rs, criterion related-validity, factor analysis,

