

## **A book review of**

Figley, C.R. (Ed.). (2006). *Mapping trauma and its wake: Autobiographical essays by pioneer trauma scholars*. New York, NY: Routledge. (258 pp, \$49.95 hb, ISBN: 0415951402).

*Mapping Trauma and Its Wake* is a remarkable book edited by Charles Figley, Ph.D. Dr. Figley selected seventeen pioneers in the field of trauma, and asked that they contribute to this edited volume, published in 2006. Many of the pioneers' names and their work are well known to psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists working in the field of trauma. Their ages range from fifty to ninety-three; their countries of origin are America, Israel, The Netherlands, and Norway. Thus, their contributions are internationally recognized and multidisciplinary. Each author was asked to organize his or her chapter in the same format and to answer four questions: 1) what were the events in your life that led to your interest in trauma? 2) what have been your greatest achievements and contributions to the field? 3) who were the people who influenced you to make these contributions? and, 4) how would you hope current and future trauma scholars would build on your work? In each of the chapters there is a contemporaneous photo of the author and a photo of the author in the seventies. Parenthetically, it was fun to see how some of my friends and/or colleagues looked thirty years ago. In some ways it was like going to my high school reunion. The suggested organization of the chapters and format makes the volume much easier to read than the usual multidisciplinary and edited book.

I won't spoil the fun that the fortunate reader of this volume will have as they peruse this series of contributions/autobiographies of living pioneers in an ever expanding field. Again not to spoil the surprise and excitement of the reader I will not identify all the individual authors. I will note, however, that I did not expect to discover how many of these pioneers had experienced personal trauma in their own lives, and the number of authors who, upon reflection, perceived that their personal trauma had influenced their career.

It is clear that though so much has been done by these pioneers, much remains to be done. The research tools and techniques of the past and now the new tools and techniques, such as MRI's and SSRIs which are available, are explored and critiqued in depth. These authors understanding of cognitive and behavioral responses to traumatic events has increased our treatment armamentarium, expanded the data base, and added to our professional journals. We

are grateful. The textbooks in the field of traumatology have multiplied. Thus there is still much more for future scholars and therapists to use in understanding and treating patients. Dr. Frank Ochberg expresses the history and future of this field well and concisely:

We have a science based on ancient principles—keen perception, rigorous analysis, and modest claims of new truth as new truth slowly becomes evident. We have a species—our human species—that is capable of advanced intelligence and primitive cruelty. What could be more exciting or productive than harnessing our intelligence to overcome our cruelty?

I commend Dr. Figley for collecting this series of autobiographical essays. It not only is a good read, it is a wonderful roadmap and guide to the distances traveled in the past and the long distances to go in the future.

Elissa P. Benedek, M.D.

University of Michigan Medical Center