

jurors” (p 189). The obvious: “Challenges to professional experience should be met with knowledge of the literature and affirmations of the worth of your findings” (p 23). “When you truly do not know, say so. Don’t waffle” (p 186). The counterintuitive: “Always have in reserve slow and quiet replies and proper manners, and if the opportunity arises, clinical reflections” (p 103). “When the time is right to disagree with cross-examination questions, do so with strength, clarity and conviction” (p 136). “When the cross-examination question is true but asked in a pushy and negative manner, consider agreeing strongly” (p 169).

There is an up-to-date composite reference list that even includes the latest edition in the Ziskin and Faust series¹ and a useful index. Readers are invited to share their testifying experiences directly with the author by e-mail, perhaps with a third edition in mind.

Reference

1. Faust D: Coping with Psychiatric and Psychological Testimony, 6th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012

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Parental Alienation: The Handbook For Mental Health and Legal Professionals

Edited by Demosthenes Lorandos, William Bernet, and S. Richard Sauber, Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Ltd., 2013. 550 pp. \$89.95.

Child custody disputes have no ethnic, educational, or socioeconomic boundaries. When Albert Einstein’s marriage was ending, he feared that his wife was intentionally “poisoning” their two children against him (Ref. 1, p 210). Cases of such behavior were first reported in the legal literature in the 19th century and in the mental health literature in the mid-20th century. Despite the devastating effect that custodial discord can have on a child’s development, there are few laws against this practice.

A parent who undermines the relationship of a child with the other parent without reasonable cause is disregarding the youth’s need for, or possibly right

to, this meaningful association. Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child² states that “the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” (p 39) in all child welfare matters. In 2010, Brazil legislatively outlawed parental alienation (PA), which it defined as an action that is designed to disrupt a youth’s “psychological education [that is] promoted or induced by either parent” (p 478).

One problem with studying PA is that it lacks a universal definition. Brazilian Law focuses on the need for children to form healthy attachments with their parents. In the United States, however, PA generally is described as a mental condition, which is how Richard Gardner introduced the term in the 1980s. This ambiguity makes it challenging for professionals to compare research studies, to identify effective interventions, and to hold malefactors accountable for their behaviors.

The editors of *Parental Alienation: The Handbook For Mental Health and Legal Professionals* addressed this problem by defining PA as a mental condition that affects a child or adolescent “who allies himself or herself strongly with one parent (the alienating parent) and rejects a relationship with the other parent (the target parent) without legitimate justification” (p 39). The editors invited 11 mental health and legal professionals to contribute to this compendium of scientific, legal, historical, and international data about PA. The text is divided into two sections: Strategies for Mental Health and Legal Professionals and Foundations for Parental Alienation: Historic, Scientific and Legal. The 16 chapters can be read in any order. Most begin with a case that serves as a springboard for examining relevant clinical, social, and legal matters. The editors summarize key points in most chapters as a helpful review of the material.

PA is classified as mild, moderate, and severe, based on the capacity of the alienating parent to develop insight and to modify his behavior, as well as the level of impairment of the affected child. The authors examine the literature and outline forensic and clinical mental health interventions for each level of alienation. In some cases, the alienated child may display significant symptoms and impairment that may meet criteria for a mental disorder. Counseling affected children and parents may result in restoring healthful relationships, but in more challenging cases, a modification of the custodial arrangement may be indicated. Severe cases of PA may involve an

alienating parent who has a mental disorder that impedes his capacity to comply with court orders and counseling recommendations and can ultimately result in the loss of parental rights. In a few cases of severe PA, the alienating parent has kidnapped the child or children and moved them to jurisdictions that may be more favorable to that parent.

PA can be devastating for the parent who is the target of the alienation. The child's rejection of the target parent can be emotionally overwhelming. Although reunification therapy can be effective in some cases of mild to moderate alienation, the cost of such services is not covered by health insurance nor are the legal costs. Health insurance may cover some of the costs for treatment if the stress on the alienated child meets threshold criteria for a mental disorder. Parental alienation syndrome was proposed for inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5).³ Though unsuccessful, the effort illuminated gaps in the scientific literature that may inform future research and standardization of classification criteria for PA.

The book contains a thoughtful discussion about PA and allegations of sexual abuse, which must be investigated in a thorough, sensitive manner. An incorrect interpretation of the facts can have disastrous consequences for all parties. The discussion about reunification therapy includes a detailed chart that distinguishes between the roles of reunification therapists and court-appointed reunification monitors. The chart illuminates the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries and of not serving in dual roles. The importance of not exceeding the scope of one's training is also emphasized.

The legal and clinical literature is used to examine the history of PA. There is an argument made for admissibility of PA testimony, based on the *Frye*⁴ and *Daubert*⁵ standards. A summary of recent case law involving PA in North America suggests that some jurists are using mental health expert testimony to develop additional insight into these cases, and some appellate courts are cognizant of the complexity of these cases. Discussions that serve to educate attorneys and family court judges about litigating and adjudicating PA cases may be used by mental health professionals seeking to conceptualize their roles in these proceedings.

The book contains discussions of international perspectives on family law and PA and a discussion of Brazil's parental alienation law. A CD is included

that contains 500 case law citations from most North American states and provinces, a bibliography of more than 1,000 contributions to the medical and legal literature, key media articles on PA, and 25 sample motions.

This book, which advances efforts to establish consistency in terminology, classification of, and standards for PA, is a valuable resource for clinical and forensic mental health professionals and for legal and social service professionals and their trainees who work with children of divorce and their parents.

References

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4. *Frye v. United States*, 293 F. 1013 (D.C. Cir. 1923)
5. *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals*, 509 U.S. 579 (1993)

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The Act of Killing: Chaos in Postcolonial Indonesia

Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Co-directed by Christine Cynn (and numerous Indonesian partners and collaborators). Produced by Signe Byrge Sørensen. Distributed in the United States by Drafthouse Films. Released in the United States on August 31, 2012. 122 minutes.

The Act of Killing is a documentary film based on the massacre of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese and suspected Communists in 1965 and 1966. The action, however, takes place in the present and centers on the men who personally carried out the killings. The men, who are gangsters and paramilitary types, have remained in power.

The historical facts are no secret. A former Dutch colony, Indonesia was oppressed by Japan through World War II. Under the dictatorship of President Sukarno, military and Communist forces balanced precariously. His regime was toppled in the mid-1960s. In October, 1965, an organization with alleged ties to the political left assassinated six army