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## *Disabling Barriers: Enabling Environments.* John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver.

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## BOOK NOTES

Janis Tyler Johnson. *Mothers of Incest Survivors: Another Side of the Story*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1992. \$20 hardcover.

It is difficult to examine familial sexual abuse scientifically not only because it is an emotionally laden subject but because it is a secret subject. Johnson's in depth ethnographic study of six mothers whose daughters were victimized is, therefore, an important one. She reports on the experiences of these mothers, using their own words, and describes how they discovered the secret of incest, how they responded and why they kept it secret. Johnson challenges the belief that most mothers collude to aid and abet the father's sexual abuse of the daughter. She shows how complicated the dynamics of incest are and urges professionals to listen to the different ways of 'knowing' about incest that a mother may have. She shows professionals how to be truly responsive to the mother's experiences and to provide meaningful help.

John Swain, Vic Finkelstein, Sally French and Mike Oliver (Eds). *Disabling Barriers: Enabling Environments*. London: Sage Publications, 1993. \$22.95 papercover.

This edited book is intended to serve as a textbook for Britain's Open University. Unlike many other textbooks, it does not survey the field of physical disability but instead examines the way disabled people themselves are taking control over their own affairs. The majority of chapters are written by disabled people and this, the editors point out, is compatible with the book's primary objective which is to demonstrate that disabled people are playing a much more active role in formulating policies and designing services to meet their own needs.

The book illustrates how the barriers which society has created for the disabled can be overcome through an attitude which emphasizes the enabling environments which disabled people are creating for themselves. Those who work in the field of disability need to understand this new dynamic. To make a positive contribution, they must see the world from the

perspective of disabled people and support disabled people as they seek to change the social, structural and economic barriers which impede their attainment of full citizenship.

Christopher Bagley with Loretta Young and Anne Scully. *International and Transracial Adoptions*. Aldershot, England: Avebury, 1993. \$66.95 hardcover. (Distributed in the United States by Ashgate Publishing Co. Brookfield, VT).

In Western countries today, adoption practice is changing very rapidly indeed. The conventional mode of adoption in which childless white middle class families adopt children born outside marriage to young white women is fast disappearing. Consequently, childless couples are engaging in new forms of adoption of which international and transracial adoptions are becoming much more prominent.

The authors report that the outcomes for children in international and transracial adoptions can be extremely positive. Based on extensive empirical studies, they show that the majority of children who are placed make healthy adjustments and do well in the longer term. The authors do not deny that a minority of children do not succeed, and they do not fail to recognize that some adoptive parents experience difficulty in rearing and children of different cultural backgrounds. Nor do they avoid the complex controversies that attend international and transracial adoptions. Nevertheless, they believe that if the current trend towards truly open adoptions continues and if the cultural identity of the child is sustained, transracial and international adoptions offer a positive means of meeting the needs of abandoned and neglected children around the world.

Alice S. Baum and Donald W. Burnes, *A Nation in Denial: The Truth About Homelessness*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993. \$49.95 hardcover; \$16.95 papercover.

Most experts agree that the problem of homelessness has become more visible during the last fifteen years. However, there is less agreement about its causes and about the steps needed to address the problem. While much academic research points to the role of economic and social factors in the etiology of