



# Father Hunger: Explorations with Adults and Children

*James Herzog*

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James M. Herzog's *Father Hunger: Explorations with Adults and Children* will quickly take its place both as a landmark contribution to developmental psychology and as an enduring classic in the clinical literature of psychoanalysis. We live in an era when a great many children grow up without a father, or, worse still, with fathers who traumatically abuse them. Yet, society continues to ignore the emotional price that children pay, and often continue to pay throughout their lives, for this tragic state of affairs.

*Father Hunger* will change this situation. First drawn to his topic by observing the recurring nightmares of clinic-referred children of newly separated parents - nightmares in which the children's fear of their own aggression was coupled with desperate wishes for their fathers' return - Herzog went on to spend more than two decades exploring the role of the father in a variety of naturalistic settings. He discovered that the characteristically intense manner in which fathers engaged their children provided an experience of contained excitement that served as a necessary scaffolding to the children's emerging sense of self and as a potential buffer against future trauma.

A brilliant observer and remarkably gifted, caring clinician, Herzog remains true to the ambiguities and multiple levels of meaning that arise in therapeutic encounters with real people. He consistently locates his therapeutic strategies and clinical discoveries within a sophisticated observational framework, thus making his formulations about father hunger and its remediation of immediate value to scientific researchers. A model of humane psychoanalytic exploration in response to a deepening social problem, *Father Hunger* is a clinical document destined to raise public consciousness and help shape social policy. And in the extraordinary stories of therapeutic struggle and restoration that emerge from its pages, it is a stunning testament to the resiliency of the human spirit.

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