

Some of this is successful, but by no means new, challenging Kraepelin's concept of schizophrenia as a disease and exposing the thoughtless way in which we often use antipsychotic drugs. But other chapters are muddled. Regarding social issues, he first acknowledges links between schizophrenia and deprivation but cannot explain them. He then finds himself attacking the Thatcher years and the establishment of an apparently permanent underclass, and finally he attacks Goodwin for his "arrogance" in daring to publish a discussion document on neuroscience. His chapter on philosophy is worthy, but hardly novel, spelling out the shortcomings of materialism, reductionism and determinism, proposing a new inter-subjective phenomenology as an alternative.

In the "synthesis", Thomas singles-out auditory hallucinations for thorough re-examination, as if these were the only, or most important, symptom of schizophrenia. Similarly, he emphasises class and cultural differences between doctors and their patients as the main barrier to an appropriate dialectic. Finally, his conclusion is a spiritual call to arms, to acknowledge "the other within us" as the means whereby we will understand, and so help, our patients.

Some of us came into psychiatry in part to avoid being real doctors and will already be very familiar with all of the themes in this book. I am perhaps also spoilt by the calibre of colleagues I work with, in particular trainees who are open to the ideas to be found in this book. Others may not be so lucky and will welcome a challenge to their current thinking, and a means to help broaden the outlook of junior colleagues. This book can therefore be seen either as laudable, but ultimately disappointing, or as a modestly priced, radical but readable, critique of current theory and practice.

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An Introduction to Object Relations

By Lavinia Gomez. London: Free Association Books. 1997. 245 pp. £15.95 (pb). ISBN 1-85343-347-0

The purpose of this book is to introduce the world of object relations to students of

psychotherapy and counselling. It opens with a summary of Freudian theory and charts the historical development of object relations through the varying perspectives of its major founding contributors. The latter part of the book explores the uses, limitations and underlying assumptions of object relations theory.

Object relations theory places relationship at the heart of what it is to be human. The concept of an object is not easily imbued with human qualities. Likewise, the notions of "I, it and overit" used by Freud in his original German writings have been translated using the pseudo-scientific Latin terminology of ego, id and superego. I wonder what might be gained (or lost) if we were to use the word 'human' instead of the more impersonal 'object' when talking of relations theory.

Throughout this book the author makes exciting links between the biographies of individuals and the theories they espouse. The individual is seen as an important context for the theory. The chapters on Freud, Klein, Fairbairn, Winnicott, Balint, Guntrip and Bowlby are thought-provoking. There is a sense of freshness in the writing that brings life to some arid and difficult theoretical concepts. The author's clearly stated views on the value of the different contributions do not hinder the reader making his or her own assessment.

In the last three chapters the author more clearly states some of her own views about the specifics of psychotherapy practice and the more general place of object relations theory within society. This book is enjoyable, stimulating and informative. I would recommend it to students of psychotherapy and counselling, and also to psychiatrists in training or in continuing professional development.

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Attachment, Intimacy, Autonomy – Using Attachment Theory in Adult Psychotherapy

By Jeremy Holmes. London: Eurospan Group. 1996. 240 pp. £23.95 (pb). ISBN 1-56821-872-9

This is an altogether more personal exposition of attachment theory than that pro-

vided by Holmes' previous general introduction, *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory*. He nevertheless includes useful introductory elements as he illuminates the genesis of Bowlby's ideas, compares and contrasts these with classical psychoanalytic and Kleinian thinking, finds affinity and supplementation with the work of Winnicott, Fairbairn and Sutherland, and concisely scans some pertinent research. This is well supported by clinical vignettes, one of which is particularly memorable for its intimate and revealing description of Holmes' struggle with feelings of failure following a patient's suicide.

Holmes is at his most compelling when contemplating the key emergent theme: the need to overcome splitting mechanisms, whether between psychiatry and psychotherapy, within the fragmented field of psychoanalytic thought, or between the state and its people. He rests this pluralistic message upon his innovation of the concept of non-attachment. This openness to self as well as the other, eschewing insecure clinging attachment and detached splitting, is the moral development Holmes would have us aspire to. Holmes is an exemplar of this with his attachment to Bowlby, which allows criticism, for instance, over Bowlby's relatively impoverished account of the internal world.

Holmes' treatment of narrative within psychotherapy provides opportunity to evaluate whether non-attachment can transcend splitting. On the one hand, he adopts the subjectivist view, and sees psychotherapy as an opportunity to create more relevant and subtle narratives for life-stories. On the other hand, he wishes to avoid the objectivist criticism that such 're-storying' suggests that anything goes and one story is as good as another. He finds the bridge between subjective and objective in the theory that social experience is etched into the structural biology of the brain. He also seeks to promulgate the view that the 'grand-narratives', including science, should be understood in relativistic terms as languages, as well as supporting empirical research as being crucial to practice. It is not clear how the 'hardwiring', of experience can leave therapeutic space for 're-storying' or how hermeneutics and natural science are reconciled. That these resolve is more a matter of faith than argument.

This deserves wide readership.

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