

been formally evaluated, and the author admits with disarming honesty that her evidence for its effectiveness is anecdotal. However, she makes a clear and welcome plea that such treatments be formally evaluated. Being an American book, some of the practical advice will be of little value to workers in the UK – for example, there are lists of useful American addresses from which to obtain materials to use in the group. Also, the writing style is that rather uncomfortable mixture of second-person ‘buttonholing’, occasional slang, and unnecessary jargon sometimes found in American texts that I, for one, find difficult to read. However, it is admirably short, and the content more than makes up for the style.

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**The Sexual Relationship: An Object Relations View of Sex and the Family.** By DAVID E. SCHARFF. London: Routledge. 1988. 268 pp. £8.95.

This volume is published as a part of a growing and impressive collection of works which make up the *International Library of Group Psychotherapy and Group Process*. Scharff is an American who spent time at the Tavistock Centre in the early 1970s. The British school of object relations theorists has had a profound influence on his thinking and practice. This is apparent throughout the book, and is reflected in the subtitle. In the development of his understanding of difficulties encountered in sexual relationships, Scharff has clearly also been influenced by Bowlby: a secure attachment to the mother or a difficulty in this area is understood to inevitably influence the ebbs and flows of sexual interactions.

Scharff views the sexual relationship as an interactive screen, found in the space between two individuals. This ‘screen’ attracts projections from each person’s inner world, and consequently will reflect their capacities to develop, or needs to defend against, a creative partnership. Due to the variety of psychosomatic elements which are called into play in an encased sexuality, Scharff suggests that it is in this area that therapeutic links can be made between the formative years of each partner and the difficulties found in their external world of adult relationships. This point is illustrated through an abundance of case examples.

Scharff gives the reader access to his style of work as he explores his patients’ earliest experiences: with the mother, with the parental relationship, and with the preoccupying themes in the family of origin. His main emphasis is on the interpretation of inner-world influences, particularly because these tend to be beyond the conscious reach of his patients. However, he does not overlook the impact of the more external factors such as naivety, lack of experience, and bodily realities such as dysfunction, ill-health, or aging. Scharff con-

tinually and helpfully stresses interactions: “At any given moment, the maturity of sexual relatedness is an achievement resting on the balance between the individual, his internal objects, and his external relationships.”

There are times when the case examples are so plentiful that they become obscuring. However, overall this is a successful blend of theoretical statements and illustrative material. Scharff has a thorough and accomplished style which challenges the reader to think. His notation of reference material is particularly good, and provides a rich diet for further reading. There are even two appendices: one outlining the fundamentals of object relations theory, and the other the sex therapy treatment model he uses, which is based on Helen Kaplan’s work. This book is a worthwhile read and is thoroughly recommended.

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**The Anatomy of Madness. Essays in the History of Psychiatry. Vol III. The Asylum and its Psychiatry.** Edited by W. F. BYNUM, ROY PORTER and MICHAEL SHEPHERD. London: Routledge. 1988. 353 pp. £35.00.

In reviewing the first two volumes of this series (*Journal*, September 1986, 149, 389–390), I likened the contents to a literary lucky-dip with a prize for everyone who chances his arm. This third volume maintains the same standard of excellence, although I missed the punch-ups between different contributors holding opposing views on kindred subjects which were such an intriguing feature of the earlier volumes. The choice of subjects is wide-ranging, and anything but parochial in interest. Thus, there are essays relating to psychiatry in Denmark, British India, Italy, France, and America, apart from those appertaining to the UK.

From a personal and selfish point of view I welcomed David Cochrane’s able and much-needed account of the London County Council (LCC) as administrators of Victorian lunacy policy. In actual fact, the hospitals controlled by the LCC up to the outbreak of the second world war ringed the metropolis like a bicycle wheel, with County Hall, the administrative power house, at the hub and the Maudsley, the think tank, a little off-centre. All together they provided a mental health service which, despite its rigid social stratification and its religious devotion to the book of rules, was efficient, prestigious, powerful, and seemingly as eternal as Imperial Rome. Of these things I know because, like so many of my generation, I served my psychiatric apprenticeship under its aegis.

For equally selfish reasons I enjoyed Richard Russell’s chapter, because of its special reference to the West Riding Lunatic Asylum in Wakefield where, as a student at Leeds, I was richly entertained by the patients, mainly hypomanics, at what purported to be a clinical