

man suffering both a neurosis, and a physical illness (Peyronie's disease) which developed in the course of the psychoanalysis. The analyst's reconstruction was of the circumstances in which the patient (antisemitic with a Jewish analyst) had been circumcised at five years of age. The group members clearly differed over the effects which the reconstruction had, and over the various meanings which they saw in the material presented; it would have been useful to have their opinions differentiated more clearly from one another and from the author's own comments.

The second case is of a woman in her twenties who, between the ages of seven and eleven, had had a secret sexual relationship with her father's best friend. The family relationships are described, the father's alcoholism and his bathing his daughter into her teens, and the mother's compliance, but they are incomplete: an elder sister is simply mentioned but not otherwise reported, even as observer.

The third case is the analysis of a child from five to ten years old. A convincing reconstruction was of her devastation at the birth of a younger sister when she was two, but, once more, the mix of group members' and author's ideas does not help the reader to decide the relative importance of interpretations.

The other five chapters are replete with wise generalisations from the author's long experience. His history of the concept is valuable, and also his examination of its practical use in clinical work. A careful re-reading might have saved more repetition.

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Healing Homosexuality: Case Stories of Reparative Therapy. By JOSEPH NICOLOSI. Northvale, NJ: Aronson. 1993. 230 pp. Price not listed.

The material for the larger part of this book is drawn from tape-recorded therapy sessions conducted by the author. Each of the first eight chapters of this book is devoted to one of his clients, in terms of the individual's presenting problems, his history and his subsequent management. Each of the clients was dissatisfied in some way with his homosexual way of life, and benefited from the psychotherapy offered by Dr Nicolosi.

The author points out that in 1973 the American Psychiatric Association deleted homosexuality from its list of diagnostic categories, and this decision was significantly influenced by the personal testimony of homosexual men who felt that their sexual orientation should not be regarded as pathological. Dr Nicolosi is clearly anxious to draw attention to the fact that many homosexual men are not comfortable with a homosexual identity, and in seeking help to change are in fact identifying their sexual orientation as being an undesirable condition.

Issues surrounding homosexuality continue to provoke lively argument. Publications in this area over the past 20 years have tended to be heavily weighted in favour of the 1973 decision of the American Psychiatric Association. Dr Nicolosi's book, which should be read in conjunction with his earlier publication, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality*, does something to redress this balance. I would recommend its addition to the Psychiatry Section of any medical library.

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Affirmative Dynamic Psychotherapy with Gay Men. Edited by CARLTON CORNETT. Northvale, NJ: Aronson. 1993. 264 pp. US \$35.00 (hb).

In the nine chapters of this book, the contributors have presented arguments and much anecdotal evidence in support of a therapeutic approach to the psychologically distressed homosexual man, which aims to encourage such a patient to see his sexual behaviour as a normal variant of human sexual expression, other than a pathological phenomenon. The title of the book emphasises this positive approach, which is firmly based in psychoanalytic theory. From the outset, emphasis is placed upon the role that is played by society in the aetiology of the homosexual man's psychosocial difficulties. As the editor points out, "consistent emphasis is placed on the roles that homophobia and intolerance play in creating and continually renewing shame, guilt and other distressing symptomatology in the gay man". Traditional psychoanalysis is seen as a major offender in this area, since it views homosexuality as fundamentally pathological.

The theme is developed that the homosexual man should be encouraged to see himself and his sexual orientation in a more positive light, and that psychoanalytic treatment can help in this way provided therapists are willing to give up their reductionist views of seeing certain patterns of sexual behaviour in terms of good or bad and healthy or sick.

Homophobia, and the role played by society in generating hatred and fear of the homosexual community, form the single most prominent theme of this book. Great importance is attached to the degree to which the homosexual man internalises the homophobia that he encounters in the society in which he grows and develops. It is claimed that this internalisation results in shame and that this in turn generates self-contempt and self-loathing. Techniques are discussed whereby the homosexual man may be helped in developing a more positive view of himself and his sexual orientation. Emphasis is also placed on the fact that a patient may be afraid of personal change, and the importance of the therapist's role in facilitating such a change.

The view that self-contempt and guilt lead a gay man to seek psychotherapy is counterbalanced by the contribution of Charles Silverstein in Chapter 6 of this book. He argues cogently that the homosexual man is often ill-prepared to deal with the conflicts and ambiguities in his lifestyle, and the confusion and associated depression are the primary motivating factors impelling the homosexual man to seek psychotherapy.

The book provides some useful psychotherapeutic insights into the management of homosexuals who are HIV positive, pointing out that such patients carry an additional burden of guilt due to the fact that they have contracted the disease. The book concludes with an examination of the sexual orientation of the therapist and how this influences the therapeutic process.

The authors have produced a very readable book, firmly based within the psychoanalytic approach to psychotherapy, which it should be seen as expanding and extending, rather than contradicting its traditional teachings. However, I believe the book overstates the contribution of a homophobic society to the problems of the homosexual man. The great change in attitude towards homosexuals that has taken place in our society over the past 30 years does not need to be emphasised here. I believe that the book is in this sense already a little dated. I would see it as a useful addition to the shelves of a library specialising in psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

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Accepting Voices. Edited by MARIUS ROMME and SANDRA ESCHER. London: Mind. 1993. 258 pp. £13.99 (pb).

Karl Jaspers once suggested that the failure of empathy and intuition to understand the person with psychosis is diagnostic: he used the term 'abyss' to characterise this discontinuity of understanding between normal (and neurotic) experience on the one hand and psychotic on the other. By and large we do not suppose that psychotic patients are like ourselves, and modern approaches have dwelt on causal explanations with considerable success. Yet as professionals we are all aware of scepticism among our patients for current concepts and treatment methods. We are apt to put this resistance down to lack of insight and regard calls for psychotherapy as anachronistic.

Someone once said that explaining the neural basis for blushing does not mean we understand it. Data linking acute and chronic stress with psychosis has suggested that there may indeed be a 'normal' context to psychosis. Similarly, this book by Professor Romme and Sandra Escher attempts to help us understand the hallucinator and how the bizarre meanings attached to voices can make sense in context. It centres around

some fascinating personal accounts of voice hearers, seven of whom have never received psychiatric help (they all view their voices as guiding and benevolent) and a further six who have "grown out of psychiatric care", finding their own ways of living and coping with their voices. These confirm this reviewer's judgement that the experience of voices – their apparent omniscience and plausibility – is a context that can lead ordinary people to imbue them with power and authority. The various frames of reference of voice hearers are elaborated by their adherents in Chapter 7, including a Dutch gerontologist who suggests that "humans . . . may transcend physical existence and find access to other dimensions . . . than the visible world". Clearly some frameworks present a major challenge to the empirical psychologist.

The authors argue that we should respect the hearer's perspective, and that the content of voices and the nature of the relationship with them may have a personal meaning and a personal context (sexual abuse and unresolved loss are described in many of the contributions). Some sound advice is offered, in particular that the hearer must "understand that the voice is not more powerful than yourself". The authors' main theme, however, stresses the acceptance of voices rather than denial and resistance, this being the predominant style of the 'copers'. The 'copers' also view their voice as originating from an external agency; thus the authors advise use of the less pejorative term 'extrasensory perception' and suggest "... accepting the presence of an influence outside of yourself" (the authors overlook some of their copers who do not subscribe to this perspective). The authors' constituency is the voice hearers themselves, and they are to be congratulated in their efforts in bringing them together. It is patently clear that not all hallucinators are the same, and forms of acceptance practised by some will be harmful to others. I do not understand why this is not stressed more clearly. This book is challenging and deserves to be read by the professionals involved in the care of people with psychosis.

I think Jaspers would have found this book fascinating and might even have led him to revise his concept of the abyss, but I don't know that he would have recommended it yet to his patients.

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Causes, Coping and Consequences of Stress at Work. Edited by CARY L. COOPER and ROY PAYNE. Chichester: John Wiley. 1990. 418 pp. £14.99 (pb).

There cannot be many of us who have not at times experienced stress at work or who could not produce a lengthy list of the culprits or causes of it. However, this