

The contextual approach is highly optimistic. Rather than focusing on pathology, the aim is to tap residual resources of trustworthiness in close relationships, however sterile and destructive they may appear to be.

This overlong book is wordy, repetitious, diffuse, and replete with difficult and sometimes nebulous concepts such as 'intrinsic relational tribunal' and 'rejunction'. Nevertheless, it has much to offer a patient reader, not least the verbatim transcripts of clinical sessions. Its major contribution is the thought-provoking insistence on the importance of ethical choice in the process and context of psychotherapy.

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Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire. By HANS EYSENCK. Middlesex: Penguin Books. 1985. 224 pp. £3.95.

It has become fashionable over recent years among those who are unconvinced of the value of psychoanalysis to follow Karl Popper and pronounce it irrefutable, thereby denying it scientific status but allowing it some epistemological significance. Eysenck will give no such escape route for Freud, his ideas, or psychoanalysis. For him, psychoanalysis should be taken as a science in that it puts forward testable hypotheses which can be refuted, and he is satisfied that they have been. Furthermore, he sees it as not only bogus but dangerous.

For anyone who wants to take psychoanalysis seriously there are some very worrying and perplexing things about Freud, the theories that have developed from his work, and the clinical practice deriving from it. Eysenck identifies some of these and begins to build an effective attack in his usual compelling style. However, his purpose emerges as annihilatory rather than constructive, and because of that the book is seriously weakened. To anyone with first-hand experience of psychoanalytic practice, the latter is unrecognisable in the way it emerges as the book proceeds. When he is likening it to prostitution, warning readers never to trust anything that analysts say, comparing it to Marxism (it used to be National Socialism), or describing those who use it with difficult clients as simply requiring to feel powerful, then he really loses credibility. He is careful to say that psychoanalysis has never been fully accepted by academics or the scientific community, and suggests that it is only a minority of the older generation of American and British psychiatrists who remain committed and that these will be eroded as a newer, fresher generation take their place. I don't see much scientific rigour in putting that picture forward, although it certainly could take in people who are not familiar with the amount of training in psychodynamic psychotherapy, use of psychoanalytic models, and treatment procedures going on in British psychiatry and allied disciplines in the

1980s. I would suggest that in this country one can see and welcome a diminution in the use of psychoanalytic theory as a popular quasi-philosophical 'catch all', accompanied by an increase, albeit as yet insufficient, in the critical evaluation of psychoanalysis as a clinical method.

I have no doubt that the book will be music to the ears of those who want to see psychoanalysis dead and buried, but for those working alongside professional colleagues of all disciplines actually in the field of patient care what has really declined is the interest in this kind of 'bee-in-the-bonnet' approach to scientific disagreements. This is particularly true of the younger generation of clinical behaviourists who are refreshingly open-minded and keenly critical. They are no more ready to take Eysenck for granted than they are Freud, however loudly they may buzz.

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The Sociopathic Personality. By BENJAMIN B. WOLMAN. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 1987. 202 pp. \$25.00.

This is a rather muddled book which attempts an overview of all kinds of deviant behaviour in comparison with or in relation to sociopathic (which the author equates with psychopathic) behaviour. Thus brief paragraphs on alcoholism, drug addiction, the moral crisis, criminal violence, dictators and fanatics, etc. all appear under a series of sub-headings. Sometimes the subject matter is repeated in another part of the book.

Many paragraphs start in the same way: "Not all alcoholics are sociopaths and not all sociopaths are alcoholics but . . .", "Not all sociopaths are violent and not all violent people are sociopaths . . .", "Not all anti-social and self-righteous individuals are sociopaths but . . .". There are sweeping statements which research does not uphold, for example: "They plan to commit suicide but they never do it" and "All sociopaths I have seen were hypochondriacs".

The style is anecdotal in the main, mixed up with reviews of some of the established literature and references to more obscure papers. The reviews, however, are presented too briefly to impart the full message, and are wholly uncritical, so that unless one already knows the literature it is difficult to sort the worthwhile from the worthless.

The author wanders frequently into personal statements about the political arena, in particular the persecutions of the Nazi regime ("The Nazis were aggressive-sadistic psychopaths"). Nixon and Khomeini are both mentioned, as are terrorist gangs, the decline in moral standards, and the need to give young people today more purpose in life.

The only two references I tried to follow up were incorrectly indexed, and the subject index is rather sparse.