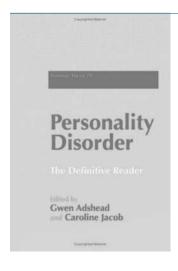
# **Book reviews**

Edited by Allan Beveridge, Femi Oyebode and Rosalind Ramsay



## Personality Disorder: The Definitive Reader

Edited by Gwen Adshead & Caroline Jacob. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 2008. £22.99 (pb). 280pp. ISBN: 9781843106401

Personality disorder, once the enfant terrible of psychiatry, has now come of age, having agreed diagnostic criteria in both the major glossaries and even possessing its own National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence treatment guidelines. Adshead and Jacob have collected a series of classic papers focusing on that most destructive aspect of personality disorder – the exquisite talent of an individual who has the disorder in alienating anyone who ventures near and tries to help them.

The book starts with Winnicott's classic study, well summarised in its title 'Hate in the countertransference', which describes how patients with personality disorder are adept at eliciting hatred from their therapists, a hitherto unthinkable sentiment for a carer. However, it was Main's work at the Cassel, in his classic 1957 study of psychiatric nurses, 'The Ailment', a must-read for both trainees and the trained, which showed the way forward through this therapeutic impasse. Main started a research group which entailed meeting every week with the Cassel nurses, who began to describe their experiences with 12 difficult female patients who would now be considered as having borderline personality disorder. He described how the patients would sometimes single out a nurse, perhaps imbue her with qualities of greater compassion and understanding than her colleagues, and how there would be 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' of nurses, processes we now recognise as splitting and projection. Uncertain as to whether such information was helpful, Main nevertheless thought he had achieved something and wrote:

'I must point out one clear gain. The nurses had owned painful distresses, concealed ailments connected with certain patients' ailments, and by disclosing those in respect of themselves and each other, they arrived not only at an increased capacity to recognise insincerities in their daily work, but a personal easement in it. They became less afraid of difficult situations and surer at their craft' (p. 71).

Nowadays, staff supervision and staff support forms the cornerstone to the many diverse modern personality disorder treatment programmes offered in the National Health Service. Studies emanating from the Henderson Hospital (now sadly no more) by Kingsley Norton describe how the therapeutic community model of sociotherapy, combined with the use of peer-group reflection, can sometimes help a client achieve a greater degree of personal maturity. This model has been partially incorporated into modern treatment programmes, which are more oriented to day care than the original in-patient model of the Henderson.

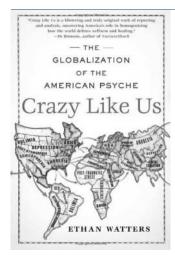
There then follows a group of theoretical papers attempting to explain the dysfunctional relationships in terms of animal ethology, attachment theory and classical psychoanalytic theory. All are well written, each more plausible than the next, yet sadly such theorising has done little to alleviate the plight of these patients or offered much in the way of comfort to their carers. Such collections, often accompanied by sterile debates on issues of treatability and non-treatability, form part of an inevitable diet of any compendium on the personality disorders and are likely to remain so until there is some seismic shift in our understanding of these disorders.

The book ends with another short but 'must-read' paper, on the issue of professional boundaries and the medico-legal dangers of crossing them. Gabbard and Gutheil carefully review the danger of gifts, touching, self-disclosure by therapists, inappropriate clothing, money and the setting for therapy. The founders of psychoanalysis were not nearly so circumspect in this realm. Freud was the analyst to his own daughter, Anna; Melanie Klein took Clifford Scott on holiday with her and continued his analysis while he reclined on her hotel bed; Winnicott often ended his sessions with coffee and biscuits. Such boundary violations would be unthinkable now, but then 50 years ago patients were much nicer than today and did not sue their therapists.

This book is excellent value for anyone who has had difficulty working with clients who have personality disorder – but then isn't that just about everyone?

George Stein The Priory Hospital Hayes Grove, Prestons Road, Hayes, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7AS, UK. Email: george.stein2@btinternet.com

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#### **Crazy Like Us**

By Ethan Watters. Simon & Schuster. 2010. US\$12.99 (pb). 320pp. ISBN: 9781416587194

The idea that Western psychiatry has imperialistically exported its syndromes is well established in anthropological discourse. Among psychiatrists the notion remains controversial, as many hold the view that culture may shape psychiatric disease presentation, but underlying disorders remain the same.

This provocative book by journalist Ethan Watters is an exploration of the anthropological viewpoint, arguing that alongside the globalisation of American culture there has also been an Americanisation, often through the influence of DSM–IV, of the understanding and treatment of mental distress, which is changing the very nature of mental illness abroad.

Watters's argument takes shape by way of case studies. He examines the emergence of anorexia in Hong Kong, the treatment

of post-tsunami psychological distress in Sri Lanka and the increased diagnosing of depression in Japan, finding that scant consideration was given in these cases to the appropriateness of applying an American model of distress to a non-Western society. A common theme is that of foreign 'experts' introducing their knowledge to a population that is seen as psychologically primitive. The book calls this primitiveness into question, especially when examining schizophrenia treatment in Tanzania, where outcomes are considerably better than in America.

Some of Watters' targets provide rich focus for discussion. In Sri Lanka in particular the book's account of rival research groups scheming to recruit to their own specific brand of post-traumatic therapy is alarming and the concerns raised reflect those held by many psychiatrists. The chapter on depression might be better served by a more in-depth approach. As there is little space given to arguments opposing those this book favours, *Crazy Like Us* is more polemical than analytical. However, anyone who surmises that Watters has an agenda hostile to psychiatry will be intrigued by an admission that his wife is a psychiatrist.

Some may strongly disagree with this book's challenges to the assumption that Western frameworks can generate a universally valid knowledge base. The focus is on America, but the book is sufficiently universal to interest a European reader. It is worthy of purchase for anyone, psychiatrist or lay reader alike, interested in the disagreements between anthropology and psychiatry.

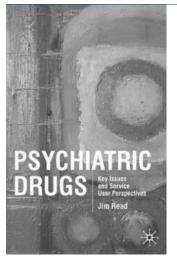
doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.110.082834

The book is written clearly but from a challenging perspective. It highlights arguments about the negatives of medication but without much attempt to give any other view. It quotes liberally from such stalwarts of antipsychiatry as Peter Breggin and other sceptics of current psychiatric practice. It comes from the ethos of the traditional English user movement which, with some justification, sets out a polarised world between psychiatric practitioners and those that receive their help. It is a world in which appeals for dialogue and partnership are made by both sides but sometimes with little apparent understanding of the differing needs of various parties. The book barely touches on the emotional as well as less understood and less tangible reasons of why people resist medication, and instead concentrates on arguments and research based on the evidence of efficacy and negative side-effects. This means that large areas of the user experience are ignored.

After an initial shaky start, the book became a compelling read, but I did sense that it could easily become a handbook for the disaffected. It is good that those who have little control over their lives can gain arguments and information from their own community but at the same time it is alarming, as this seemed so partial. I would much prefer to read a book that was either openly anti-medication or one written jointly from a pro-medication and a sceptical perspective.

**Graham Morgan** Highland Users Group, Highland Community Care Forum, Highland House, 20 Longman Road, Inverness IV1 1RY, UK. Email: gmorgan@hccf.org.uk

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# Psychiatric Drugs: Key Issues and Service User Perspectives

By Jim Read. Macmillan. 2009. US\$28.95 (pb). 208pp. ISBN: 9780230549401



### **Secondary Schizophrenia**

Edited by Perminder S. Sachdev & Matcheri S. Keshavan. Cambridge University Press. 2010. £70 (hb). 450pp. ISBN: 9780521856973

This book is a welcome addition to the debate about the value and purpose of medication. It takes a particular user perspective and challenges assumptions about the very need for medication.

The reasons users do and do not take medication are numerous and swirl into questions of self, identity and autonomy. They are tangled up with illness and belief, with politics and safety, with respect for our bodies and the preservation of our minds.

This book makes many points about the value of medication and questions users' reliance on and faith in it. It looks at the experiences of different communities, examines research into users' views and records the experiences of coming off medication. It is an important publication for people who want to reflect on their own practice and beliefs about medication.

Given the large number of medical books on the market, it is rare for a new volume to find a place in a genuinely new area. This book from Sachdev and Keshavan tackles the topic of secondary psychosis, although the authors prefer the term 'secondary schizophrenia'. This is a topic that is usually subsumed in larger texts of organic psychiatry and neuropsychiatry but never previously justified a textbook as far as I am aware. Many readers will wonder – is there enough primary material on this topic to justify a standalone text?

Over 33 chapters and 436 pages the editors and contributing authors make a resounding case that this is no longer a niche area. The book is extremely up-to-date, with about half of cited references published in the past 10 years. Indeed, I would go further and say I doubt this book could have been written before such recent evidence, cited here, was itself published. Looking at individual chapters, it is probably drug-induced psychosis that is