Book Reviews

Edited by **Manu Bazzano**, Book Reviews Editor

The Colonialism of Audit Culture

What is Madness?

By: Darian Leader
Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 2012, 368 pp
ISBN: 978-0141047355
Reviewed by: Jeff Harrison, Psychotherapist

'What is madness?' is a good question; and Lacanian analyst Darian Leader's book is an admirable attempt to, if not answer it, then at least explore its many layers. He deals with the problems of definition, diagnosis, causes, triggers and treatments. There are also three chapter-length 'case studies' (on Lacan's Aimée, Freud's Wolf Man and Harold Shipman).

Leader tries to make sense of how psychotic people try to make sense of their lives. His focus is not on the crude cure (he makes the point that removing symptoms can be more traumatic than bearing them), but on listening, understanding and respecting patients: 'helping them to find their own solutions, using the logic not of the clinician's belief system but of their own psychosis'. His emphasis is on the individual voice and its creation and ascription of meaning.

Many readers of this journal will be sympathetic to Leader's suggestion that the DSM obsession with category and symptomatology might itself be a 'symptom of psychosis'. He offers a welcome critique of our creeping audit culture and the dangers of 'psychical colonialism'; and he seeks to rescue the human being from both the caricature of madness (florid raving) and the psychiatric label. There are many interesting things in the book, not least the notion of 'quiet' (or invisible) madness.

The broad thesis is that 'delusion is less a problem than a solution' and 'what are generally taken to be the symptoms of madness are in fact responses to [it]'. Leader works around two key distinctions. He shows that the one between delusion and sanity is far from watertight; but that the one between being mad and going mad should be upheld.

Nevertheless, many of the tenets of psychoanalysis can seem far-fetched, and Lacan's own writings are frequently arcane. In his recap of some of these ideas, Leader's own critical probing seems to be suspended. When this material talks of a girl seeking a penis from her father – 'not as an anatomical organ', we are assured (as if this renders the contention merely matter-of-fact) – 'but in the form of a child', the background theory threatens to detract from the argument.

Leader is on safer ground when he argues, with both insight and sensitivity, that madness is a response to an inner crisis and has its own logic and language (and is not therefore an 'illness' as normally understood). Meaning – the loss of meaning – is central to it. Implicit in this is a fairly rational world-view, one perhaps not supported by his own account of people telling him that they would still happily have been patients of Shipman even after he had been convicted.

Written from a Lacanian perspective, is the book, then, accessible to the non-specialist? The answer is 'just about'; although some of the more engaging sections, not coincidentally, are when Lacan is least

central. Much of the material is organised around three elements in Lacan's reworking of the 'Oedipal journey': namely, 'struggling with the questions of meaning, localizing the libido and creating a safe distance from the Other'. In psychosis, there is a break in meaning. Symbolic frameworks fail. This happens when the function of the father (a 'third term' added to the mother–child dyad) in the form of the 'phallic law' is not adequately imposed. The tone of the Lacanian imagery and language here (which Leader again seems to accept uncritically) will again be troubling for some – and not just feminists. Furthermore, as Leader himself argues throughout, delusion is often characterised by blind adherence to a system of belief and the psychotic 'restoring a lost order or system to the world'.

In the early chapters, too, Leader seems to have some trouble marshalling his material – thematically and chronologically, it can be hard to follow. Subheadings might have helped at times, if only to sharpen both the historical developments and the contours of the argument. There are also some inconsistencies in points made. Also, especially for a book that highlights the importance and subtlety of language, the prose at times is somewhat stodgy; although Leader does have a gift for telling the stories of the figures who illuminate his points. Nevertheless, the book feels overlong and the argument at times risks being submerged by the weight of examples that are drawn in; whereas, at other times, a little more explanation, rather than repetition, of key ideas would have helped. A final note: a book of this type is simply incomplete without an index.

'Good Science'

Genes, Cells and Brains: The Promethean Promises of the New Biology

Edited by: Hilary Rose and Steven Rose
Verso, London, 2013, 336 pp
ISBN: 978-1844678815
Reviewed by: Manu Bazzano

In Chapter 3 of this truly remarkable book, in examining the ever-ambivalent liaison science has with ethics, the authors focus on the 'Doctor's Trial', a chapter in the international prosecution of Nazi war criminals which took place in Nuremberg in 1946. Throughout the trial, the Nazi doctors confidently defended what they called their 'research ethics': their practices were not dissimilar from those performed in other countries, they contended; like scientists in the USA, Europe and elsewhere, they too were doing 'good science'. Doctors had already played a key role in eugenics and the implementation of 'racial hygiene' in Germany before the outbreak of war, exterminating 400,000 'mentally unfit' German citizens in the name of 'public service'. With the trial focusing on war crimes only, the massacre was not on the agenda:

> Since they shared with the Nazis the eugenics project of reducing the numbers of the unfit, prosecuting the murderers would not only have extended the charges beyond war crimes but potentially opened up the uncomfortable question of what other nation states had done and were doing to their 'mentally unfit' fellow citizens. Instead, the Nuremberg prosecutors focused on wartime experiments conducted on foreign nationals: Jews, Roma, communists, socialists or the physically or mentally 'unfit'. This was seen as a way of avoiding an unwelcome precedent for intervention in the internal affairs of a state. (p. 93)

Twenty-three medical researchers were accused of murder and torture; sixteen were found guilty; seven of them were acquitted, including Hubert Strughold, who was recruited into US bio-medical research. His was not an isolated case. Several scientists with a Nazi background were recruited by the Truman

administration in 1946 during Operation Paperclip, a clandestine transportation to the USA, with fake visas and forged documents, of dozens of Nazis from Germany, together with collaborationists residing in Eastern Europe and in the Baltic countries. The USA intended to employ their expertise, and when the entire operation was exposed, Truman justified his actions by saying that these people were 'freedom fighters'.[1] Denazification was remarkably inconsistent, with Nazi scientists becoming, in the decades that followed, directors of leading laboratories in West Germany and in other Western countries. Could there be a link between Nazi eugenics and the dominant post-war view of biology and science applied to human beings? Is the notion of the 'mentally unfit' entirely divorced from some of the dominant perspective on human psychology?

Before dismissing the question as preposterous, merely provocative or irrelevant, it might be good to ponder on what Werner Leibbrand had to say. Leibbrand had been a doctor in Germany, but lost his position because of his wife's Jewish ancestry. He somehow survived the Third Reich and became a medical historian. Called by the prosecutors at Nuremberg who were trying to establish a precursor ethical code, he argued that since the beginning of the twentieth century, the dominant view among scientists and physicians in Germany was that patients were 'a mere object, like a mail package'; they were not considered as people, but as 'a series of biological events'. He saw a disturbing continuity between this view of human beings and those of US biomedical researchers. His disturbing piece of evidence was conveniently set aside in favour of other, more palatable views, mainly espoused by Ivy, an influential figure within the American Medical Association, who emphasised the importance of scientific research over and above considerations on the protections of patients. A historian of the trial wrote:

> The primary objective of Ivy's medical ethics principles was to ensure that human experiments were possible in the future. All other issues, like the protection of human and patients' rights in medical science, or the role of an informed consent principle, were secondary to this over-arching objective. (p. 97)

What mattered most to scientists of the twentieth century (and to Darwin and his colleagues in the nineteenth century) was to ensure a future for biological experimentation upon humans and animals. The dominant view was that what had happened in Nazi Germany was an aberration – there was no need for explicit ethical considerations to be applied to the practice of science within Western democracies.

'For most it was business as usual; research carried out in a democratic country was by definition ethical' (p. 97), which meant that the Nuremberg Code, emphasising above all protection of the patient and of the patient's human rights, was duly ignored. The Nuremberg Code is patient/client-centred: a move beyond a reliance on the paternalistic Hippocratic oath and a crucial emphasis on the moral agency of the patient in bio-medical research. The patient must be informed of the aims of the experiment, must be 'free to give or withhold their consent, and must have the unqualified right to withdraw from the research … Furthermore, the research should be for the good of society' (p. 98).

Yet the subsequent Helsinki Declaration set by the new World Medical Association (WMA) relegates the moral agency of the subject from the first place it occupied in the Nuremberg Code to the ninth. 'Good science' becomes, instead, the key criterion, a sinister echo of the Nazi doctors' defence at Nuremberg, i.e. the prioritising of 'good science' over human rights. The election of the ex Nazi Hans Joachim Sewering to the WMA presidency in 1992 (who later was forced to resign due to international protest) was a conspicuous event. He had allegedly been 'responsible for the death of 900 physically and mentally disabled children by transferring them from Schoenbrunn to the Eglfing-Haar "healing centre", a euthanasia facility south of Munich' (p. 100). Sewering was charged with the death of fourteen-year-old Babette Fröwis, whom he diagnosed as an epileptic and sent to Eglfing-Haar without even seeing her. In 2008 the by-now nonagenarian was awarded the Gunther-Budelhmann medal for 'services to the nation's health system' by the German Federation of Internal Medicine.

The Nuremberg trial and the problems of post-war science constitute only one example within one of the topics discussed by the authors. As epitomised by the title, this accessible and outstanding book examines three main topics: genomics, regenerative medicine and neuroscience. The unifying factor for all three

is the utter failure in recognising the complexity of human beings as biosocial creatures shaped by history, the overriding and highly manipulative influence of neo-liberal politics, and the resulting transformation of the human sciences into biotechnosciences, i.e. the 'blurring of boundaries between science and technology, universities, entrepreneurial biotech companies and the major pharmaceutical industries' (p. 2). In the process, Prometheus – the Titan who stole the fire from the Gods to give it to mankind, and who also fashioned the first human from clay – becomes Frankenstein's monster.

The current fusion of biomedicine and biotechnology promises to transform the lives of a wealthy minority for the better. Evolutionary theory offers to explain human origins; genomics promises to define difference; the neurosciences promise to predict behaviour, explain consciousness and, as with Simon Baron-Cohen and 'brain organisation theory' (rightly criticised by feminist neuroscientists Jordan-Young and Fine), even resurrect essentialism within gender difference.

The marriage of convenience between reductive science and neo-liberalist ideology has its roots already in Darwin and his embracing of Malthusianism. That Darwinism had from the start all the hallmarks of an ideology was crystal clear to one of Darwin's contemporaries, Karl Marx, who in a letter to Engels of 18 June 1862, three years after the publication of On the Origin of the Species, observed how remarkable it was that Darwin had discovered, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions' and the Malthusian 'struggle for existence'. Liberalism and Darwinism fed on each other: the former assumed from the notion of natural selection a scientific validation for the affirmation of the struggle for existence in society, while the latter acquired a philosophical framework which propelled the popularity of the idea. The result was pseudo-biological pessimism, not at all inevitable when one thinks of the different route taken around the same time by Russian evolutionary scientists, and which culminated with Kropotkin's (1902) notion of 'struggle for life' against Darwin's 'struggle for existence'. This was not a matter of semantics, but an altogether different vision which engendered Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid against the unbridled individualism of Darwin's notion.

The 1980s and the 1990s have prolonged the honeymoon between evolutionary psychology (itself a renewed version of the mid-seventeenth century notion of biology-as-destiny) and the pharmaceutical industry. The scenery for such money-spinning liaison was happily provided by neo-liberalism, with its vision of the world as a jungle of brutal struggle where only the toughest (and the richest) survive, and where the maladjusted have to be anaesthetised.

That science is objective and disinterested is a myth the authors debunk with great skill. Recognising that such a task is still urgent today might come as a shock to some readers, given whole decades of battles for human rights and against the subservient role of science to the interest of capitalism.

The effects of the dominant scientific reductionism on psychology and psychotherapy are self-evident. This superb book provides ammunition for future battles.

References

1 M. Bazzano, Spectre of the Stranger: Towards a *Phenomenology of Hospitality*. Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012 pp. 101–2.

Welcome to our World

The Science of the Art of Psychotherapy

Edited by: Allan N. Schore
W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 2011, 480 pp
ISBN: 978-0393706642
Reviewed by: Dr Diana Voller, Integrative psychotherapist in private practice; Chartered psychologist & lecturer, University of Roehampton.

The central thrust of this book is the presentation of neuroscientific research, which points to the embodied relational nature of human beings, and linking it to clinical practice – the art of psychotherapy. Whilst humanistic practitioners are likely to welcome the interdisciplinary nature of this enterprise, encompassing numerous fields from within the natural sciences, ranging from neurochemistry and developmental psychology, to evolutionary biology, they may be disappointed to see the art of psychotherapy is only represented by only one discipline, psychoanalytic/psychodynamic psychotherapy.

Nonetheless, this is a monumental work, divided into two parts, and is more reference book than inspiring read. The first part presents a dense, but richly textured meta-analysis of recent research interwoven with clinical vignettes. The second part is a collection of specific papers, from co-contributors, concerning the implications of the data; the diverse scope includes the development of African elephants, family law and the political implications concerning mums returning to work in the USA.

The first five chapters, which comprise Part I, are the most immediately relevant to psychotherapy work, and I found reading them both a validating, and an infuriating, experience. Validating because the central message of the findings presented in the book is entirely consistent with Humanistic Psychology. The limitations of cognitive neuroscience to understand the deeper affective embodied experiences of psychotherapeutic change are recognised; a move away from content to context, from cognition to affect and away from the concept of 'technique' is proposed. The research demonstrates, in its own terms, that the key mechanism in psychotherapy is how the therapist *is*, implicitly and subjectively, rather than what they specifically and actively do. Furthermore, the importance of interpersonal experience in effective psychotherapy is supported by neurological evidence, which emphasises the value of sensitive attunement, empathy, playfulness, authenticity, and non-verbal contact.

What is infuriating is that all of the above, which will be familiar to *Self & Society* readers, so well-established in humanistic circles, and so eloquently described quite some time ago by Carl Rogers, among others, is presented as ground-breaking material marking a paradigm shift, without reference to existing paradigms that already encompass this knowledge. However, it is worth getting past being infuriated, because the extent of the research is ground-breaking, even if the much-heralded paradigm shift is not, and so the book offers an excellent resource for any humanistic practitioner needing to provide medical-model style evidence for their work.

The research data, although impressive in depth and breadth, is technical. The interweaving of the data with clinical vignettes helps to make the links between neurobiology and psychotherapy – but interestingly, the vignettes are never drawn from Schore's own clinical practice. This is disappointing because one thrust of the volume is an emphasis on the changes that take place in the therapist, as well as in the client, so it would have been good to see Schore bringing more of himself into his writing, as he is suggesting practitioners do in clinical practice, and actually demonstrating the paradigm shift in action.

The paradoxical disconnect, the feeling that the book is both a valuable contribution, but at the same time, somehow incongruent, is evident in the actual presentational style of the material. Whilst promoting the benefits of 'right brain to right brain' communication, the book itself communicates in a very left brain to left brain style, so it is a dense text. However, it may be that this sort of translation of basic humanistic principles gives it the necessary technical authority and academic credibility that enables a wider community of practitioners, in psychotherapy and beyond, to access our perspective.

For humanistic practitioners, this comprehensive work presents passionate and cutting-edge scientific evidence for our existing approach to clinical practice. For the traditional interpretative approaches, the book does herald the arrival of various revolutionary paradigm shifts, effectively all in the direction of a right-brain emphasis on 'body-based emotion', re-defining 'the royal road' away from the interpretation of dreams and unconscious processes, to the interpersonal relationship... – welcome to our world!