

between analyst and analysand. He then goes on to discuss some of the attempts to address this power imbalance through mutual analysis, person centred theory and group work. The final chapter gives examples of initiatives that have been inspired by therapy but leave the therapeutic arena all together, developing, argues Totton, a new sort of political practice.

This book is quite difficult to review because it covers such a vast area, and I suppose this would be one of the criticisms that we could level at Totton – too much breadth and not enough depth. I think this would be rather unfair. The book does offer soundbites in some areas and more depth in others, but even the shorter chapters are succinct and to the point, offering the reader avenues for further explanation. The advantage of this of course is that it can be used as a reference text as well as a monograph. The reader can dip in and out of subject areas and use Totton's pointers to further research. This book really does deliver what it promises, it is political and it addresses all angles of political action and awareness within the psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic community and discipline. As such, I feel that it will appeal to a wide audience, practitioners, academics and lay readers alike, and is both a readable monograph and a useful reference text.

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A PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Organisations, Anxieties and Defences: Towards a Psychoanalytic Social Psychology. Edited by RD Hinshelwood, Marco Chiesa. London: Whurr, 2002; 250pp, £22.50 pb.

Agoraphobia; anti-nuclear campaigners; bounded organism; dialectics of We; differentiated psychic space; Einstein; fraternity; household gods; human cloning; inner city schools; intrahospital clubs; modernism; semi-permeable membrane; Oscar Wilde; World War II: all these words, whatever they might mean, belong to the index of a book that is a prolegomena towards a psychoanalytic social psychology.

Everyday talk has it that we can feel lonely even in a crowd; psychoanalysis suggests we can feel crowded by ourselves. *Organisations, Anxieties and Defences* is a densely academic survey of psychoanalytic research into groupness since Freud's 1929 *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. Up until then, it is hinted, Freud dismisses the group in favour of a 'humanity' metonymically reduced to the neurotic individual: modern man in his singularity, dispersed, repressed, alone with fake memories of parents who betrayed him. With *Civilisation and Its*

Discontents Freud recognizes and follows through the logic of the inextricability of the individual from the group. 'What began in relation to father', Freud writes, 'is completed in relation to the group.' For this excellently produced textbook, a group can cover anything from bus stop queues to organizations to institutions and it even applies to individuals and their mantelpiece of multiple personalities.

Although Freud's reversed reductionism is winked at, and the book's ending is a checkup on his 'baby' in the twenty-first century, *Organisations, Anxieties and Defences* covers much more work from the significant others: Mayo, Sherif, Asch, Trotter, Le Bon, McDougall, Anzieu, Lewin, Sartre, Kaës, Fornari, Bion, Rice, Riviere, Turquet, Bleger, and more besides, including the authors themselves, Hinshelwood and Chiesa. The question of groupness is a compelling one. That the human being is born into a biological existence of physical objects and satisfactions, and at some point is required to transfer into a world of ephemeral symbols, is the starting fuel for this book. Groups form, but how do the orders of the biological and the symbolic interact with, or interrupt, each other? And how do groups, once formed, stick together? The book's central metaphor for the binding substance is the quite existentialist trope of glue and stickiness – and Kleinians suggest introjection, projection and identification make up the cowgum.

Less sticky answers to the group question offer 'skin' as a containing metaphor for the binding of individuals and arousal of group-specific phenomena. 'Each person and each group process', write Hinshelwood and Chiesa, describing Anzieu's skin-ego theory, 'involves the functioning of a protective boundary that retains the sense of identity of the person,

and of the group.' The thought is that our surface skin does not contain us at the expense of our being unable to transcend the surface element, that there is an equivalent 'skin' or 'envelope' or 'link' that contains, or does not contain, the group, that this is an illusion and one that derives from the mother's body. The group can either let individuals experience their own boundary and identity, or it acts as a defence against persecutory anxieties of being penetrated or broken apart. Either way, the sense is that the group unleashes psychotic tendencies in its members, but that it is only in this way that the group experience becomes the most human of all, paradoxically. Here's the Catch-22: 'It is not . . . that institutions serve as a defence against psychotic anxiety, induced by institutions, but that they are "vessels for syncretic sociability or for the psychotic part" of the person, which without institutional organisations would be psychotic.' Groups are a way of holding psychotic material. Serial murderers rarely work in groups.

Organisations, Anxieties and Defences is divided into two parts. The first, 'the international field', takes research from North America, Italy, France and South America. The second part, 'the British contributions' brings the book back home, to the Northfield Military Hospital, the Tavistock Institute, the University of East London. In all these chapters, whether they describe a Coney Island amusement park, an Italian bureaucracy, Hitler's regime, jails in France, group television watching, the myth of Jason and the Argonauts – the central tension of unconcealing a psychoanalytic social psychology is between the reclusiveness intrinsic to analytic work and the wish to look outwards and comment on the larger societal picture. It is as if the analyst is looking at the client but also past

the client and out the window – the criticism being that he cannot do both at the same time: either one form of looking disrupts the other and breaks the concentration of the analyst towards the client, or else the desire for concentration on not just the client but the whole of society disrupts and ridicules the specific ocular activity of keeping eye contact with just one out of the millions. Whether this is true is anchored on which species of groupie you belong to: either the constitution of the group is an extension and transformation of individuality from the intrapsychic to the intersubjective (in which case psychotherapists are well placed to analyse society's collective unconscious), or the group is an entity in its own right with its own unconscious and its own individuality, albeit of a many-headed kind (so leave it to the anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists).

After reading this global tour of the possibility of a psychotherapeutic politics, I for one am convinced that psychoanalytic social psychology exists as a democratic, interdisciplinary, deconstructionist discourse that can undercut power struggles and help create a healthy interaction between biology and symbols. It is early days (the subtitle is prefaced with 'Towards') and there are no official psychoanalytic social psychologists that I

know of yet (though the interdisciplinary theory suggests there has always been a psychoanalytic social psychology – we just hadn't noticed). Urgent research work needs to be carried out in the turbulence of the contemporary political situation, as groups and their anxieties and defences continue to figure dramatically from race-related riots in north England and the rise of right-wing politics in Europe, to mob rule in post-conflict state-of-nature Iraq, to suicide bombers in Israel and Palestine. The suicide bomber, indeed, structurally antagonizes and disrupts the group logic in what are seen as brutal and cowardly attacks that literally blow the group apart from within: perhaps the suicide bomber shows all groups to be riddled with anxiety, yet impotent in defence.

The couch is at sea, as one contributor puts it. This is a lasting metaphor, with connotations of a Noachian deluge and the potential for Albatross sightings. It is quite applicable to the possible danger and uncertainty of transporting psychoanalytical theory from the individual level to the organizational. And whether, and indeed where, the couch docks, remains to be seen, with deserved excitement.

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