

Although forensic psychiatrists are trained to examine accused persons such as Andrea Yates for feigning madness, it is far more difficult to detect the accused feigning badness or filling in the blanks as we might expect them to. Some accused would rather present themselves as bad than mad, more terrified of the aloneness of the latter than the legal consequences of the former. In this instance, if a trained, thoughtful, and experienced forensic psychiatrist could, as any human being might, become confused in the heat of cross-examination between what he was told and his observations, then is it not as likely that Andrea Yates, in the midst of the unbearable grief that the death of her children brought to the surface, might have become confused between what she imagined she was supposed by society to say to the videotape-directing interviewer and what she actually remembered? Neither Andrea Yates nor Dr. Park Dietz should be scapegoated for the failures of the mental health and medicolegal systems.

O'Malley succeeds in providing detailed, memorable descriptions of the horror, and she explicates formerly mysterious issues of the religious influences of Mr. Woroniecki, the role of Randy Yates, and the political and financial aspects of the trial. Psychiatric ethics courses can use *"Are You There Alone?"* to raise haunting questions regarding the injustice of a social and medical system where psychotic patients feel they need to present themselves as bad rather than mad.

BEATA ZOLOVSKA
Boston, Mass.

HAROLD J. BURSZTAJN, M.D.
Cambridge, Mass.

PsychoBible, by Armando Favazza, M.D. Charlottesville, Va., Pitchstone Publishing, 2004, 431 pp., \$19.95 (paper).

Dr. Favazza has taken on the daunting task of reviewing the interface between the Christian religious belief system, especially the Bible, and psychiatry. As a clinical psychiatrist and a seminary graduate, I was eager to read this book. I was engaged by some aspects of the book but disappointed by others.

The Bible has been used, misused, and abused throughout the centuries. It has been the basis for great good, but unfortunately also for evil: to justify slavery, wars, persecutions (the persecuted having become the persecutors), financial exploitation, environmental destruction, subjugation of women, and denial of citizenship rights to homosexuals. These abuses happen because the Bible is a powerful tool that can be wielded by greedy, arrogant, bigoted, and otherwise sinful human beings to support their own agendas. We human beings, present company included, are all sinners (Romans 3:23), a religious principle that is empirically verifiable.

Chapter 4, on homosexuality, is among the better sections of *PsychoBible*. What one sees in the Bible is often directly related to one's preexisting opinions, and the issue of homosexuality is perhaps the most telling example. Dr. Favazza identifies the first-century context of pagan temple prostitution in which Paul's letters were written and demonstrates how those whose political agenda is against homosexual rights lift these passages out of context. People who are negatively predisposed toward homosexual rights tend to see in Paul's letters a blanket condemnation of all homosexual behavior. Those

who are predisposed to support homosexual rights, on the other hand, tend to see a more limited condemnation of the fornication and temple prostitution practices that were widespread at that time.

PsychoBible contains some good discussions of the ideas of Freud, Jung, and others pertaining to religion. There is a great deal of helpful historical background information on the compilation of the Old and New Testaments. There is coverage of healing through prayer and interesting topics in neurotheology, such as out-of-body experiences.

Those who claim that the Bible is entirely without error ("verbal and plenary inspiration") are themselves demonstrably mistaken, but to call such people "stubborn" and "lazy," as Dr. Favazza does (p. 324), seems inappropriate for a scholarly work. Bias in the opposite direction (the "minimalist" position) assumes that everything in the Bible is incorrect or is a culturally motivated distortion until proven otherwise. Dr. Favazza cites the Jesus Seminar (a group of minimalist scholars) repeatedly and approvingly but fails to note that its findings are arrived at on the basis of serial speculative assumptions. Between these two extremes can be found more moderate and evidence-based ways to consider the accuracy of the Bible.

PsychoBible is weak on matters of theology, and there seems to be little understanding of the nuances of basic Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity and the Atonement. Martin Luther's contributions are given a few scant lines, while his negative aspects (he was anti-Semitic, had bowel problems, and used vulgar language) get extended coverage. One does not come away with a balanced understanding of Luther. Several pages are spent recounting the hypothesis, accepted by almost no one, that Jesus faked his own death and resurrection (pp. 69–74).

Dr. Favazza makes several dismissive statements for which he gives no supporting evidence. One example is that it is "doubtful" that Luke was either a physician or a companion of Paul (p. 7). Although it is true that the attribution of authors' names to the gospels was done decades after their writing, there is a case to be made that Luke, the first-century companion of Paul, did in fact provide the source material on which the present Gospel of Luke is based. Another example is the statement that Isaiah's Old Testament prophecy of the Suffering Servant "certainly was describing Israel" (p. 26) as opposed to the future Christ.

PsychoBible is written throughout with a tone of flippancy. For example, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Medication" (p. 243) is the title of one chapter. Flippancy might make the book entertaining but also conveys a message about how the author regards this subject matter. There are some notable misspellings (Roman emperors "Trojan," p. 48, and "Domition," p. 29) and incorrect uses of theological terms ("divine entities" would not include "angels, saints, and demons" [p. 22]; monotheism and henotheism are confused [p. 20]). Much of the material in the Notes section would have been better incorporated into the main body of the text. There is an extensive bibliography, but citations in the text are sometimes inadequate. I tried to track down the original source page numbers for a quotation from St. Augustine cited on pages 15 and 330 but came to a dead end.

I recommend this book, but not without reservations, to discerning readers who are interested in human behavior and

Christianity. There is much here that is useful, but *PsychoBible* is not without flaws. Informed readers should expect to find some areas in which they will disagree with Dr. Favazza.

OWEN D. BUCK, M.D., M.S., M.T.S.
Lewiston, Me.

***European Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, by Ian Stevenson, M.D. Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co., 2003, 278 pp., \$49.95.**

This is an unusual book to be reviewed—unusual in that it is essentially a monograph that presents some of the results of Dr. Stevenson's lifelong researches into the evidence for reincarnation, and unusual in dealing with a topic—reincarnation—that is a very rare focus in psychiatric discussion, especially in these days of increased interest in neuropsychologic and molecular genetic approaches to complex human behaviors, including psychopathology. Accordingly, background information is warranted to show how this particular book fits into the study of human behavior and, by extension, psychiatry, and how this monograph from Dr. Stevenson's research career is a product of his lifelong interest in the paranormal—extrasensory experiences and kindred phenomena.

Ian Stevenson was born in Canada, the son of a Scottish lawyer and his wife, who had an interest in psychic phenomena. Stevenson studied medicine at St. Andrews in Scotland and at McGill in Montreal. During the late 1940s, early in his medical career, he did research in psychosomatic medicine at New York Hospital, where Dr. H.G. Wolffe led a group investigating effects of life stress and its concomitant emotion on patients' organ systems. Because of his discontent with the then current psychosomatic interpretations of his colleagues, Stevenson moved into psychoanalytic training in 1951, graduating from the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute in 1958. In 1957 he became a child psychiatrist at the University of Virginia Hospital at Charlottesville.

Early in his career at Charlottesville he became aware of the lack of scientific method behind Freudian psychoanalytic hypotheses such as the "assertion that a person's later character depends almost exclusively on the events of infancy" (1) and the lack of interest in other concepts of unconscious mental processes "current in the early 20th Century (including Pierre Janet, Morton Prince, William James, C.G. Jung, and FWH Myers)" (1). These dissatisfactions with the prevailing psychiatric interpretations of personality led Stevenson in the early 1950s to read systematically in the literature of theosophy and psychic research. He became more attracted to and involved with psychic research because of its approach to both spontaneous psychic phenomena and laboratory methods to demonstrate phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance. For a variety of reasons Stevenson chose the "study of psychic experience—those that occur spontaneously in everyday life" (1).

Stevenson's approach to the question of reincarnation was to evaluate the evidence for it and devise a protocol for the gathering of further evidence to delineate the phenomena of human behaviors, which suggested that some aspects of human personality might survive apparent death and manifest themselves in the living. Stevenson described his general approach (for which the book under review provides a specific example) as follows:

In the study of spontaneous paranormal phenomena we must usually interview and cross-question informants about events that have happened before we arrive on the scene. In principle, the methods are those that lawyers use in reconstructing a crime and historians use in understanding the past. Once we have the best account possible of the events in question, we consider one by one the alternative explanations and try to eliminate them until only the single most probable one remains. Then we try with further observations to confirm or reject the initially preferred explanation. In addition, we search through series of apparently similar phenomena for recurrent features that may provide clues to causative conditions and processes of occurrence. (1)

After careful review of available phenomena that had suggested the possibility of reincarnation, Stevenson, following the methodology of early psychic researchers (Gurney et al. in 1886 and Myers in 1903), devised a protocol for recovery and evaluation of memories of apparent previous lives, a process Stevenson described in 1977 (2). This paradigm for investigation focused on spontaneous cases suggestive of reincarnation that were described in young children. Why young children? Because young children should be less likely to be exposed to information about life details of a dead individual who is reincarnated.

A brief description of a typical case of the reincarnation type would show the following features: 1) Starting in years 2–4, the child spontaneously narrates details of a previous life. 2) Volume and clarity of statements from the child increase until ages 5–6, when the child talks less about them. 3) By age 8, remarks about previous life generally cease. 4) Unexpected behavior unusual for child but concordant with behavior of deceased person occur, e.g., phobias for guns or special interests and appetites. 5) In many cases the child has a birthmark or congenital deformity that corresponds in location and appearance to fatal wounds on the body of the previous personality. A high number of reincarnated personalities report violent death, which the child alludes to. 6) In some cultures the individual who "reincarnates" predicts his or her next incarnation and may appear in a dream to the expectant mother of the child to announce an intention to reincarnate in the baby. 7) After the age of 10 these child subjects usually develop normally.

Stevenson has followed this information-gathering protocol since the early days of his worldwide travels to investigate spontaneous cases suggestive of reincarnation, which have been published over the years as separate volumes covering different cultures and a book, now in its second edition, which summarizes his work to the present (3). The present monograph, *European Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, fits into this series of publications (4–8).

As the author states in his preface to this book, there are three purposes for the present publication: 1) To show that cases of the type described above occur in European cultures, where fewer individuals believe in reincarnation than in Asia. 2) To show that essential features of these cases are similar to those found in Asia, Africa, and Northwest North American native tribes. 3) To show that some of the cases reported provide evidence of information transmitted by means outside of normal communication—extrasensory perception being one