



Delusions and the Madness of the Masses, by Lawrie Reznek. Lanham, Md., Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010, 225 pp., \$59.95.

Delusions and the Madness of the Masses, authored by Lawrie Reznek, is a very interesting and novel book from a psychiatric, psychobiological, and societal point of view. At the main core of the book lies the conceptualization of what madness is and what madness is not—this not only from a professional point of view within the fields of psychiatry and psychology but also from a societal at large point of view. Throughout the entire book, the author addresses the basic issue of what madness is all about as well as the conceptualization of madness from different perspectives.

While focusing on what madness is and is not, Reznek addresses such topics as the conceptualization of delusions. The examples discussed and analyzed in this regard are not only quite challenging to the current views of society but quite interesting and logical as well. The view and role of religion in this respect are also thoroughly reviewed by the author vis-à-vis psychiatrists' current view of delusions and madness. Without question, the arguments raised by Reznek are extraordinarily powerful and enlightening. In this respect, this book is one of the most interesting and intriguing texts that I have ever read in my career as a psychiatrist. The philosophical and religious points of view raised by the author in his pursuit of what is logical and illogical and what is real and unreal are both fascinating and of great interest from a psychiatric and psychological perspective as well as from philosophical and religious perspectives.

At the core bottom of this book and what I learned the most in reading it is the role of dogmatism in today's society across the world. My take-home lesson, which this text demonstrates quite clearly, is the fact that dogmatism must and can be scientifically and morally examined as well as understood in today's societal points of view. In reading this book, the differentiation of what is sane and insane becomes a major challenge, not only for the reader but for society at large also.

Reading this text has made me reflect about my own points of view vis-à-vis madness and also my own perception of how we psychiatrists look at the understanding of delusions, madness, the role of cultures around the world, the influence of religion in this respect, and the philosophical viewpoints of society or societies across the world. On the other hand, however,

after reading this book, I felt more comfortable about being a psychiatrist. It has also permitted me to realize more clearly how humanistic we need to be, particularly when we take actions that will affect other human beings in every respect.

I sincerely recommend this book not only to my psychiatrist colleagues but to any person who might be in a position to act in one way or another vis-à-vis the fate of other human beings, such as psychiatric patients.

PEDRO RUIZ, M.D.
Miami, Fla.

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Freud's Mexico: Into the Wilds of Psychoanalysis, by Rubén Gallo. Cambridge, Massachusetts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Press, 2010, 408 pp., \$32.95 (hardcover).

I had no idea what I would find in *Freud's Mexico* but must say I have been surprisingly rewarded by reading a book that I would have been most unlikely to look at. Rubén Gallo has given us a fascinating introduction to Mexican intellectual history and significant figures in the first half of the 20th century. He does this by showing how Freud was like a Swiss Army knife or a Rorschach. That is, Freud and the psychoanalytic movement he inspired were used in different ways in different fields by different artists and academics and professionals. Readers will become familiar with the richness of Mexican culture as we see how Freud and psychoanalysis were used to justify and understand Mexican behavior and ideas. This is the first half of the book. In the second half, Gallo introduces us to aspects of Freud's life and mind as it related to Mexican and Austrian history, his fascination with the Spanish language, and how this played out in his dreams. All of this is presented in a very readable, scholarly, and absorbing manner. Once I got into the book, I found it hard to put down.

The first half of the book is called *Freud in Mexico*. It begins with Salvador Novo, a young and flamboyant poet who seemed to represent an exception to the coolness with which most Mexican poets met Freud. The atmosphere was different

from other parts of the world. Novo, by contrast, was an extremely colorful figure who embraced, both figuratively and literally, Freud's ideas about sexuality and particularly homosexuality. Novo was openly gay in a very Catholic setting and used Freud to justify how his behavior was normal. He used Freud in his poems and became what we would now call a cult figure on the new medium of wireless broadcasts. In contrast to homosexual writers in other countries, Novo was able to live an open and celebratory life. Just how he did this is the opening chapter of the book.

Gallo then proceeds to introduce us to other major Mexican intellectuals. These include an eminent professor of philosophy, a monk who founded a monastery in which psychoanalytic group therapy was central, a leading jurist who "psychoanalyzed" criminals to try to understand them and their crimes, and Frida Kahlo, who in some of her art seemed taken by Freud and psychoanalysis. I found all of these figures fascinating in themselves, but Gallo also took the opportunity to discuss, in a very sophisticated manner, Freud's ideas about religion, as presented in *Moses and Monotheism* and the *The Future of an Illusion*. I also found an extra dividend in this section in that it enriched my feel for Roberto Bolano's recently published and acclaimed novels.

Part II is called Freud's Mexico. We are treated to several different aspects of Freud's relationship to Mexico. Of great interest was Freud's relationship to Eduard Silberstein. This was an intense adolescent relationship that Gallo describes vividly. Central to the relationship was the learning of Spanish, which the boys did without a teacher and in secrecy. A primary focus was on a Cervantes novel as a source of Spanish text and also with content related to other parts of this book. From there Gallo provides us with a discussion of Austrian and Mexican history as they relate to each other and also to Freud's interest in antiquities. This involved *Totem and Taboo* and the role of human sacrifice in Aztec history. He discusses differing scholarly views of these sacrifices, from those of sheer horror to the question of whether such activity was in some ways more civilized than that of the Western world. With all this in mind, Gallo considers the evidence for Freud's special relationship to Mexico, although he was never actually there. Freud's books and artifacts give some support, but then Gallo turns to three of Freud's dreams and the story becomes more interesting and integrates what has come before. Using Freud's methods of reconstruction, Gallo discusses three dreams: the Breakfast Ship, Count Thun, and the Self-Dissection dream. Gallo draws from Freud's own interpretations as well as those of a number of psychoanalytic scholars. He also uses his own reconstructive efforts, including noting Freud's "slips of the pen" to present intriguing insights.

In relation to Freud's dreams and their treatment, I think some interesting questions can be raised. Gallo's scholarship and grasp of classical psychoanalysis is impressive but is now somewhat outdated. What is missing is what is often lacking in most academics' discussions of psychoanalysis, whether positive, as it is here, or negative. This is an appreciation of the changes that have occurred in psychoanalytic practice and theory in the last 30–40 years. With these changes in mind, Gallo might well have paid more attention to Freud's memory of his father's comment that he would never amount to anything (Gallo's own slip of the pen). Freud's memory might lead

to a consideration of his dreams not as evidence of competition or aggression with major authority figures but as indications of his struggle to overcome his shame by becoming or replacing a great man. The Spanish and Mexican connection highlights the special and secret language for expressing these feelings. Louis Breger, in his book *A Dream of Undying Fame*, captures this eloquently.

With all this to think about, I leave this review with the statement that this is a rich and rewarding book, and I think most readers will finish with a sense of having learned a great deal that is new and thought-provoking, both about Freud and about Mexico.

RAMON M. GREENBERG, M.D.
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

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Evaluating Mental Health Disability in the Workplace: Model, Process, and Analysis, by Liza H. Gold and Daniel W. Shuman. New York, Springer, 2009, 322 pp., \$79.75.

Liza Gold, an occupational psychiatrist, and Daniel Shuman, a legal scholar, have written a book that will be very helpful for professionals evaluating psychiatric disability, requests for accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and fitness for duty. For many, it will be a resource to be consulted regarding specific topics, such as the legal aspects of disability evaluation or the rules about Americans with Disabilities Act, both of which may be unfamiliar to many psychiatrists. Read in its entirety, the book offers a useful perspective on work and mental health to general psychiatrists as well as to disability specialists.

The book begins with a rich discussion of the ethical issues involved in disability evaluations and invites each of us to consider our own belief systems about the ability or inability to work. For example, are we fearful of malingering? Do we see the employer as the noncaring oppressor? Do we believe that stress is invigorating or damaging? The first half of the book continues with a complex interweaving of legal, psychiatric, emotional, and social considerations in the study of work and disability. The authors address each area in turn and provide a rich assessment of each, which allows psychiatrists to make informed decisions in ways in which they are comfortable responding to questions about their own patients seeking disability status. The book may also help psychiatrists feel more comfortable participating in work-related evaluations for nonpatients. The second half of this text presents a clearly described set of practice guidelines for mental health disability evaluations. The authors provide excellent descriptions of variations in the definitions of disability, functionality, and level of proof required among the various types of disability assessments (Social Security, private insurers, and workmen's compensation). The final two chapters address the special issues of accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act and fitness for duty examinations, delineating