

to realize that for such a person the mind is 'itself a sexual organ' (p. 54). Next is *Early Signs*, in which he discusses the first adolescent episode, medication and the challenges of working analytically with a sufferer. There again follows a list of the Axioms, and finally, *The Psychoanalysis of Manic Depression*. In this context Bollas notes at the end 'Ordinary sanity is distinctive, but also disappointing. But you can't have everything' (p. 64).

The last part of the book is a Q&A in which the discussant, Sacha Bollas, asks follow-on questions, some of which are expansions of Christopher Bollas's ideas; for example, is the borderline tendency to occupy the object by taking it's pain a form of introjection? (p. 68). Sometimes they are more challenging questions; for example, when thinking about a narcissistic character Bollas is asked, 'But what if he simply reiterates the validity of what he has said?' (p. 67).

Overall, this book is worth the investment of both reading and thinking about. The theory is both very dense and at times deceptively simple. The book takes the reader, sometimes at breath-taking speed, through Bollas's ideas about character developed over 30 plus years of clinical work and writing. Through his dissecting and describing the lived experiences of the various character structures, the reader is offered a way of thinking about clinical work with these sufferers. Sometimes the parts describing the experience of the sufferer are hard to metabolize. This is possibly because they are at times very raw, and possibly because at other times they feel rather contrived. However, Bollas's endeavour to understand the territory and to give his patients the space to be who they are comes through. In answer to one of the questions, Bollas writes of 'the right of free speech in analysis' (p. 67). I think the book shows something of how he has tried to demonstrate this in his writing as well as how he tries to give this freedom to his patients.

Jan McGregor Hepburn

North of England Association of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists
[janhep@gmail.com]



Sexuality and Gender Now: Moving Beyond Heteronormativity edited by Leezah Hertzmann and Juliet Newbigin. Published by Routledge, Abingdon, 2020; 358 pp, £32.99 paperback

There is something refreshing about this bold new collection of essays on gender and sexuality edited by Leezah Hertzmann and Juliet Newbigin. It may have to do with the ways the personal and the professional emerge distinctively in each chapter, whether written by psychoanalytic clinicians, theorists and researchers, or those who identify as users of psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Organized into three sections – 'Sex in the Consulting Room', 'Desire', and 'Perspectives on Gender' – the

collection includes contributions from leading figures in the British and North American field who work at the intersections between psychoanalytically orientated therapeutic practice, and gender and sexuality. Yet in each chapter, even those that develop complex theoretical arguments and new theoretical concepts, it is the practitioner and patient experience that emerges so powerfully to tell subtle, often destabilizing, yet nuanced stories of the body, desire, sex, sexuality, and personhood. These experiences surface in the collaborative work between practitioner and patient where chapters have included direct patient involvement in their writing (as in Melanie Suchet's fascinating chapter that charts her work with a patient who comes to call himself Raphael); in the self-reflective work of examining what gender and sexuality evoke in the consulting room and in the supervisory relationship (as David Richards discusses in his excellent chapter); and in the careful introspective work necessary to constantly challenge the 'gender beliefs' that naturalize sexuality and gender as they are lived by therapists and patients, and in culture more widely (as Jack Drescher elaborates). This insistence that personal, at times disturbing, experiential understandings of gender and sexuality are, in the end, all we have, and that psychoanalysis is at its worst when it operates as a master discourse, pronouncing on the meanings of sexual difference and sexual object choice, culminates in the final essay in the collection. This is a long and moving first-hand account by an unnamed trans man of both his ongoing process of gender transition and his simultaneous experience of a long-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy, voicing the complexities that perhaps everyone lives as we are strung out between identity, the body, culture, and psychic life, and yet play out in particular ways in transgendered experience, especially in social worlds that are transphobic, and structured through heteronormativity. Emphasizing the age-old tension within Freud's own thinking about gender and sexuality, in which he veers between an account of infantile sexuality as an irrepressible unconscious force that becomes organized and partially satisfied in a developmental chain, centralizing sexuality as *the* force that produces and organizes psychic life, and Freud's more normative account in which that organization falls in step with, and reinforces, already existing social forms of life, Hertzmann and Newbiggin's volume strives once more for a psychoanalytic discussion of gender and sexuality that can rethink the tension in such a way as to speak back to psychoanalytic theory without biting the hand that feeds us.

Yet the tightrope the contributors must also walk is alluded to in the title of the volume, 'Sexuality and Gender Now'. Although there is an urgency for psychoanalysis to 'modernize' and get itself 'up to date' on contemporary lived experiences of gender and sexuality, there are time lags and temporal judders of all sorts at work in psychoanalytic understandings of how we live gender and sexuality, so much so that gender and sexuality never coincide, we could say, with the 'now'. Freud was clear that sexuality comes both too early for the infant – a point that Jean Laplanche goes on to elaborate extensively with his return to the traumatic quality of sexuality that is explicit in Freud's early thinking (Laplanche, 1997) – and too late, in the sense of the sexual event that produces the trauma of the earlier event retroactively, a process captured in Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit* (Freud, 1895). Sexuality is the name

for that time lag, the element of psychic life that evades the 'now' and yet is formative of the mental processes that govern us. Even if we follow Laplanche's insight that sexuality intrudes on the infant from the generation that comes before, nevertheless, as Juliet Mitchell stated some decades ago, a person is 'formed through their sexuality, it is not "added" to him or her' (Mitchell, 1982, p. 2). For Freud, gender, or the more psychoanalytic term 'sexual difference', also operates through a lag. However we situate Oedipus temporally, there is always retroaction built in (Oedipus's realization comes too late – 'oh, that was my father I killed, that was my mother I slept with'), so that the precarious, temporary, and reversable establishment of an identification with a norm (I am a man, I am a woman, I am neither man nor woman but something else entirely) comes both before and after the event, missing the 'now', again and again.

Nevertheless, the hope that gender and sexuality will inhabit the 'now' haunts each of the contributions in interesting and important ways. Juliet Newbigin is concerned to re-establish the consulting room as a place where sexual excitement and sexual practices, and not just love and intimacy, can be talked about openly, without judgement or fear of criticism. For those involved in contemporary ChemSex practices, for instance, she notes the need reported by the European ChemSex Forum for therapeutic spaces that are informed, sympathetic, and aware of histories of low self-esteem and shame that are only compounded when met with a therapeutic attitude of frustration, on the part of the therapist, at what is still seen in psychoanalysis as a 'perverse' psychic solution to internal disturbances. Poul Rohleder takes up this point further, in his discussion of hyper-masculinity as a defence against shame induced by homophobia that continues to pervade social discourse despite the 'new' social acceptance of same-sex desire. Again, therapists need to understand their own internalizations of norms governing sexual behaviour, in order to keep the consulting room genuinely open to explorations of sex. The three essays by Leezah Hertzmann, Dianne Elise and Giorgio Giaccardi clustered around same sex desire, cross identifications, and gender and sexual fluidity across the life course, also find themselves having to continue to chip away at the regressive pull within psychoanalysis to return to certain accounts of the oedipal configuration, whilst obscuring others. Despite decades of feminist and queer psychoanalytic scholarship that have challenged classical accounts that insist on the bifurcation of desire and identification, there remains a tendency to marginalize psychic bisexuality, obscure the erotic desire for/of the mother, and insist that the inevitable loss of the primary object falls out, once and for all, along heteronormative lines. Giaccardi argues for the constant work of 'mending the symbolic' in the sense of creating 'patches' that enable the cultural representation of same-sex desire. These representations have real effects over time, both in terms of an individual's history which, as Giaccardi states, is a life-long task of cultivating a dynamic interplay between sameness and otherness, between 'being' the other and 'having' the other, and in terms of the sedimentation of culturally available representations of same-sex desire out of which selves are also built.

Published in 2020, the ‘now’ of the volume’s title, however, pushes us to think further about sameness and difference, not just through the concept of heteronormativity, but through the ways that whiteness continues to structure psychoanalytic theory and practice. 2020 was not only the year of the global Covid-19 pandemic, but a year in which socially structured difference – social inequalities brought about by poverty, disability, age and race that compound those of gendered violence and discrimination on the basis of sexuality – became even more visible as the pandemic played out in uneven and unjust ways. The ‘now’ of sexuality and gender, as critical race theorists have argued, is never outside of race, as experiences of blackness, brownness and whiteness fundamentally structure gender and sexual experience (Crenshaw, 2015). Psychoanalytic accounts of sexual difference and sexuality in the volume leave the white determinants of its own categories untouched, even as they attempt to move the discussion ‘beyond heteronormativity’. It is perhaps precisely at the point that psychoanalytic discussions of sexual difference and sexuality are complicated by those of race, and old and new forms of colonialism and imperialism, that we are able to ‘move beyond heteronormativity’. Hazel Carby argued as early as 1982 that concepts of gender are colonial in the sense of both being constructed through racialization, and exported through colonialism (Carby, 1982). Heteronormativity functions to suture imperialist anxieties about reproduction, for instance, in relation to eugenic discourses of ‘national purity’ and ‘racial contamination’ (Collins, 1998; Lugones, 2007; Snorton, 2017; Stoler, 2010). Both gendering and also ungendering are processes that are racialized (Lewis, 2017; Spillers, 1987; Stoler, 2010). In this sense, moving beyond is not so much about opening the consulting room to the multiple currents of gender and sexuality, which of course it should, but simultaneously opening psychoanalysis to discussions of its whiteness and its assumptions about class, nation, disability and age, and its difficulties with fully understanding the intersections between them. This is where, perhaps, a psychoanalysis that can do ‘difference’ differently will fully emerge.

Lisa Baraitser 

Birkbeck

[l.baraitser@bbk.ac.uk]

REFERENCES

- Carby, H. V. (1982) White women listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood. In: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (ed.), *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Collins, P.H. (1998) It’s all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. *Hypatia*, 13(3): 62–82.
- Crenshaw, K.W. (2015) *On Intersectionality: The Essential Writings of Kimberle Crenshaw*. New York: The New Press.
- Freud, S. (1895) Project for a scientific psychology. In: Strachey, J. (ed. and trans.), *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol. I* (pp. 283–397). London: The Hogarth Press, 1975.

- Laplanche, J. (1997) The theory of seduction and the problem of the other. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* **78**: 653–66.
- Lewis, G., (2017) Questions of presence. *Feminist Review* **117**: 1–19.
- Lugones, M. (2007) Heterosexualism and the colonial/modern gender system. *Hypatia* **22**(1): 186–219.
- Mitchell, J. (1982) Introduction I. In: Mitchell, J. & Rose, J. (eds), *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Snorton, C.R. (2017) *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Spillers, H. (1987) Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book. *Diacritics* **17**(2): 65–81.
- Stoler, A. (2010) *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. University of California Press.



The Work of Whiteness: A Psychoanalytic Perspective by Helen Morgan. Published by Routledge, Abingdon, 2021; 147 pp, £24.99 paperback

This thoughtful book by a senior Jungian analyst with much experience of psychoanalytic institutions is at once timely and well overdue. Timely, because of the growing demands to challenge racism in all areas of our social life, and for white people to own and deconstruct their whiteness, rather than perpetuate racism by enacting it. Timely also because of the backlash, seen in the growing ideological and legal assaults against critical race theory and anti-racist actions. Overdue, because there pre-exists a very long history of anti-racist thought and struggle, eloquently documented in many powerful writings over centuries, and yet positive change is so slow and partial. It is especially overdue within psychoanalysis because aspects of our psychoanalytic concepts are marked by racism and there is a woeful absence of reflection and curiosity about how white hegemony is embedded and embodied in our psyches, and in our writings and trainings. Overdue also because the experiences of many black and ethnic minority trainees on our courses have been and still are those of misrecognition, discrimination and exclusion, while the whiteness of our theories and practices go unacknowledged and unproblematized. Attempts to address this within the psychoanalytic organizations of which Helen Morgan has played a leading part have been stubbornly resisted and change has been very limited, despite the growth of psychoanalytic theorizing about internalized racism.

Morgan substantially adds to the psychoanalytic literature by broadening the focus in an examination of how whiteness, as an unmarked hegemonic term, operates in and through us, socially, institutionally and personally. She shows how whiteness came to connote superiority, as an historically entrenched conscious and unconscious assumption. She locates the domination of whiteness in centuries of imperialism, dispossession, slavery and exploitation, whose intergenerational effects