

**Eccentric and Bizarre Behaviors**, by Louis R. Franzini and John M. Grossberg. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1995. 244 pp. US \$15.95 (paper).

When I think of summer reading, I don't usually think of necrophilia. Somehow, vampirism doesn't seem like the kind of topic you'd like to curl up with next to the pool. But Franzini and Grossberg's book *Eccentric and Bizarre Behaviors* is perfect for that light summer read.

The authors, both professors of psychology at San Diego State University, have written twelve essays on twelve of the most outrageous behaviors recorded in the annals of psychiatry, from erotomania (such as John Hinkley Jr.'s obsession with Jodie Foster) to Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy (where mothers inflict serious harm on their children and then bask in the attention given by medical professionals) to autoerotic asphyxia (self-strangulation during masturbation) and Koro (a man's fear that his penis is disappearing).

The book cover touts the work as offering "profound insights into the human condition," which mark the work as being "reminiscent of Oliver Sack's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*". In the preface, Franzini and Grossberg continue in this line, stressing that this collection is about "real people"—"human beings, not 'patients' or 'cases' or 'diagnoses'" (p. viii). The authors argue against such labeling, claiming that it reveals "rather simple attempts to standardize the behavior disorders", which leads professionals (wrongly, in their opinion) to characterize these individuals as "mentally ill", "perverse", "inhuman", or "animalistic" (p. vii). They propose to take a different, more productive approach to understanding the extreme behaviors of such people, asking: "What motivates them? How did they get that way? Can they ever change and conform to the larger society? Should they? Are they truly fundamentally different from the rest of us?" (p. vii).

These are provocative questions, indeed. But the extraordinary promise of this enterprise is left woefully unfulfilled. While this book may be useful for grabbing the attention of high school students or college freshmen, any reader—professional or not—with even a remotely sophisti-

cated understanding of human psychology and culture is likely to be left sadly disappointed.

The essays in the volume are primarily descriptive, offering very little by way of analysis of the questions the authors raise in the preface, aside from a superficial treatment of what the authors broadly paint as "behavioral" and "psychodynamic" theories of the behaviors. The uneven analysis that *is* present is general and unenlightening. Perhaps the most glaring shortcoming is the lack of cultural analysis which would have substantially enhanced the volume (particularly in the chapters on Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy and Koro). The essays, while easy to read and interesting for what they are, left this reader frustrated by the many provocative lines of investigation left un-followed, or even unacknowledged, by the authors.

But more than a feeling of disappointment, many readers may take offense at the general tone of the work. Perhaps as a strategy for engaging young readers or those who are not professionals in the field, the authors make many attempts at humor and puns in their descriptions of the behaviors in the book. While some of these tongue-in-cheek remarks are merely in poor taste, many (particularly in the chapter on Frottage, where men rub up against women in public places) reflect, and even seem to celebrate (rather than analyze) the tenor of misogyny and the abuse of sexual power implicit in some of the behaviors. While this was undoubtedly unintended by the authors, this general "smirking" tone is evident throughout the work, significantly distracting from the material.

In the end, the volume is an easy read, and is an interesting (if superficial) treatment of some of the most outrageous of human behaviors. The level of presentation and analysis seems to be generally geared to male freshmen, and may be useful as an introductory text (with the above caveats in mind). And, of course, it's not too late to get in that last light read by the pool.

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**Changing HIV Risk Behavior: Practical Strategies**, by Jeffery A. Kelly. The Guilford Press, New York, 1995. 159 pp. \$26.95.

This book is one of a series of treatment manuals for practitioners. This AIDS edition focuses on describing an effective program for professionals who are working with clients at risk for the acquisition of HIV. An introductory chapter provides basic information about the epidemiology and risk factors of this infection. The author then provides a clear description of a behavioral model of risk reduction counseling. Several sample risk assessment questionnaires are provided. Strategies which have been successful in changing thinking and behavior in clients at risk are described.

The strength of this book lies in its description of programs which have been developed and tested with several populations. These programs are congruent with programs for reduction of adolescent pregnancy previously described

in the literature. Success depends on understanding that acquisition of knowledge is not generally sufficient to change risk behavior. Additional attention must be directed toward the acquisition of skills such as sexual assertiveness, sexual negotiation and self-management. Some role play scenarios are provided which have been used to actually assess the skills of clients. Specific information about AIDS misconceptions is provided as well as common sense suggestions for condom use. Suggested interventions are based on the results of several program outcome evaluation studies. While specific counseling strategies will vary depending on the target population, the basic principles of behavioral change outlined in this book can be adapted for use with a wide variety of individuals across many cultures.

Recently some individuals have suggested that new treatment modalities have changed our thinking about HIV, refocusing on AIDS as a chronic illness rather than an inevitably fatal disease. Since the research on which the