
Drescher puts the analytic tradition on the couch and treats it for its own pathology and developmental arrest: its homophobia, anti-homosexuality, homo-hatred and homo-ignorance as Anastas and Appleby would name it. (See Anastas and Appleby's wonderful book It's Not Just a Phase, which is the social-ecological companion piece to Dresher's more analytic-intrapsychic work). For those of us doing therapy with gay men over the past decades, it is sweet justice to find a capable clinician who has the intellect, diligence, and acumen to so effectively confront distorted analytic theory. On this front, Drescher extends the important work of other champions such as Cabaj, Stein, Isay, Cornett, and Lewes.

After analyzing the old theory, Drescher spins more useful theory of another cloth—so lovely and fine—a way of seeing and hearing which keeps our eye on the cloth: our own and our clients' cloth which we spin together. Embracing Winnicott's notion of the therapeutic holding environment as a space in which all of a client's feelings and ideas are allowed to emerge, he uses intersubjective theory to deconstruct what affective meaning is being spun by all in the room: by the clinician and the client while never ignoring the cultural fabric of both parties. He avoids the pretense of being free of the contextual fabric that binds us. Instead, he demonstrates an exquisite sensitivity to the texture, hue, and manufacture of it.

Drescher offers a new perspective and he does it with formidable character. His stance builds beyond the victimization that gay men have suffered: as clients and as practitioners and clinicians. He capably squares with abusive homophobic theory to understand it. To frame his achievement in trauma theory: he has named the abuser, and he has been able to move through the stages of a healed relationship to safe engagement. Though rarely speaking of his personal experience, he gives voice to cumulative suffering remembered and mourned; a collective witnessing of the pain of gay clients and gay analysts endured over the past analytic era of rampant, unchallenged homophobia, anti-homosexuality and homo-ignorance. He then reconnects with reformed analytic theory and successfully applies it to clinical work with gay men.

Drescher's is no dry exercise. With wit and passion, he engages us with the same confidence as he engages the theory. In the first half of the book, he brilliantly deconstructs past theory and analyzes the constricted masculine defenses of the men who invented the theory: from Freud's notions of arrested sexual development to later more hostile American analysts who classified homosexuality as neurotic caused by failures of parents or trauma.

Most vitally, Drescher's work stands alongside new work which shifts our attention from etiology of homosexuality to understanding homophobia and anti-
homosexuality. That he remains humane in his treatment of iatrogenic homophobic and anti-homosexual analytic theory is testimony to his capacity. He challenges us all to be more completely human in all our diversity and differences.

He is tenderly respectful of theorists like Harry Stack Sullivan who struggled with his own homosexuality and found vital partial truths although his homophobia often overcame him. Drescher suffers no fools. Socarides and other "reparative" therapists get a thorough reading and are challenged point by point for their defensive distortion of fact and past theory. Their anti-homosexual bias is completely exposed.

He liberates us from the shackles of arcane theory and reinvigorates our appreciation of theory; not as some totemic Truth but as freshening perspective to trip our mind and emotion out of a more stale mindset we may revert to as we struggle to stay alert to difference. We are made more alive in our engagement. For example, while pointing out how enmeshed others have been in claiming some answer to the mystery of etiology of sexual identity (in all its diversity), Drescher gracefully sidesteps that prickly thicket. He untangles others' theories and exposes their false convictions built on moral beliefs and binary gender role rigidity. He frees us to listen to our gay clients' narratives and clarifies their common developmental challenges and vulnerabilities. Throughout he is careful not to pathologize gay men for the understandable psychic consequences of these challenges.

In his final chapters, he effectively applies his refurbished analytic frame to clinical work. He enlists the therapeutic stance of respect, the recognition of homosexuality as a normal variant of sexuality, receptivity to the widest range of gay clients' subjectivities, identification of the hierarchies of sexual values of the patient, therapist, and theory, the ongoing need for clinician's capacity for self-analysis, and the occasional utility of therapist's disclosure in therapy with a gay patient.

His review of developmental themes in gay men is astute. A few of his insights: Heterosexist culture dominates and oppresses through all stages of development. Children have little or no opportunity to be exposed to positive images of same-sex relationships. Boys get no affirming help in dealing with their homosexual feelings and consequently often dissociate from them with isolating shame. Gay adolescents are especially abandoned; eg. there are few safe places for them to learn to date.

His chapter on "The Closet" sheds light on the constricting dissociative defenses that hang gay men up there. Here he breaks from the neutral analytic stance. He is clear that the therapist can't afford to wait for a client's material to spontaneously emerge. The therapist's detailed inquiry is required. "Do ask! Do pursue!"

His chapter on "Coming Out" is a qualified: "Do Tell!" He underscores that there is no correct way to come out and that it is an ongoing process. The critical focus in treatment should be on the client's struggle to come out to himself. By coming out, a gay man may overcome his dissociative defenses and more fully integrate his feelings—not just his sexual ones. Throughout the book, Drescher applies the same humane, inquisitive examination of his clients. The book is rich with clinical material. His voice is as interesting and acute in the clinical material as in his analysis of theory.

My one disappointment: the impact of AIDS on gay men's development and the multiple meanings of HIV in the analysis of gay clients is largely missing. I look forward to more from Drescher on this vital topic. (In the meantime, for