

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY



RONALD J. COMER

ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

*To
Herman and Claire Comer,
my models of strength,
with great love and appreciation*

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PREFACE

Ten years ago, Linda Chaput walked into my office at Princeton University. It was an entrance that was to change my professional life. As an editor at W. H. Freeman and Company, Linda had been reading and assessing the various textbooks in abnormal psychology and had formed a number of ideas for presenting the subject more effectively. I had been analyzing the same texts during my years of teaching, clinical practice, and research, and I too was full of opinions about how abnormal psychology should be presented. During a lively discussion, Linda and I discovered that our specific thoughts on the subject were remarkably similar. In fact, by the time she departed two hours later, we had outlined the principles that should underlie the “ideal” abnormal psychology textbook, and we had, in effect, a deal. All that was left was for me to write the book.

End of Act I. When the curtain rises again, it is ten years later. Linda is president of W. H. Freeman and Company. I am still teaching at Princeton. And, oh yes, that small detail, “The *BOOK*,” as my family and I have come to call it, has now been completed. I am older, humbler, and more fatigued than the person who started this undertaking a decade ago. But most of all, I am very pleased and appreciative. After so many years of researching and writing, a textbook has emerged that succeeds, I believe, in all the ways Linda and I had originally hoped and intended. I have tried to make it both comprehensive and balanced, coherent and concise, scientifically accurate and humane.

FEATURES

At the risk of seeming shamefully immodest, let me describe what I believe is special about this book.

- *This book captures all facets of abnormal psychology.* Abnormal psychology is a science and a profession within which numerous theoretical perspectives hold court, research studies abound, hundreds of disorders have been identified, and methods of assessment and treatment are legion. I have tried to present *all* these aspects of abnormal psychology accurately and equally (rather than attend to only some of them or to some more than others), to highlight the most relevant points of each, and to incorporate them into a logical, unified picture that students can easily understand. In addition, I have tried to capture some of the field’s rich history by including a carefully selected mix of both classic and recent mate-

rial. And although the clinical discussions are organized largely around the current diagnostic system, DSM-III-R, they also refer to classification systems of the past, and even to DSM-IV, the upcoming classification system.

- *The major psychological, biological, and sociocultural models are presented in a balanced and integrated way.* This is not predominantly a psychodynamic or behavioral or biological or any other type of textbook. It is a book about *all* these models, drawing insight from all of them and showing how they coexist in the field, how they differ, and how they interrelate. If students are to understand abnormal psychology, they must learn about each of the major models in the field today—its assertions, contributions, strengths, and shortcomings—and the collective influence of these models on the study and practice of abnormal psychology. In fact, I believe that scientists and practitioners from all the different theoretical and treatment perspectives will appreciate the attention and respect given to their positions.

- *Complete discussions of treatment are presented throughout the book.* Rather than taking the traditional approach of placing treatment chapters at the end of the book, preceded by a series of necessarily incomplete “sneak previews” along the way, I have presented a general chapter on treatment early in the book (Chapter 5) as well as separate chapters on “Treatments for Anxiety Disorders” (Chapter 7), “Treatments for Mood Disorders” (Chapter 9), and “Treatments for Schizophrenia” (Chapter 16). In addition, each of the other psychopathology chapters contains a full discussion of treatment approaches to that problem. This presentation reflects the specificity of treatment that is now characteristic of the field and complements the way in which many professors prefer to discuss treatment in class.

- *Numerous case studies bring clinical, theoretical, and treatment considerations to life.* In writing the text I have worked hard to find case studies and other case materials that would provide vivid descriptions of the different pathologies, the many possible contributing causes, and the various approaches to treatment.

- *The book is designed to be adaptable to different courses and teaching preferences.* Each chapter is essentially self-contained, with cross-referencing to other parts of the book whenever that might be useful. Thus, while the first four chapters cover introductory topics and build on one another, Chapters 5 through 21 may be read in

whatever order makes sense to a professor. For example, professors who prefer to cover treatments collectively at the end of the course can postpone the four treatment chapters without creating any problems for their students. Chapters can also be skipped or made optional without affecting a student's grasp of basic concepts.

- *The text raises broad contextual issues.* For example, it examines questions about cross-cultural and gender differences in diagnosis and treatment; political and economic influences on the clinical field; the impact of the individual needs of therapists and scientists; and the interaction of the field with a public fascinated by psychological notions and practices.
- *The text devotes full chapters to subjects that are receiving increasing research and clinical attention and that are of special interest to college-age readers, without stinting topics that are traditionally covered.* Complete chapters are devoted to such problems as *eating disorders*, *suicide*, and *dissociative disorders*—topics heretofore given limited coverage in abnormal psychology textbooks.
- *The book is written with a single voice, in clear and straightforward language.* Given the variety and complexity of topics that must be covered in an abnormal psychology textbook, it is all the more important to present them in a coherent and integrated way. This, I believe, is the primary advantage of having a single author. On the other hand, just as students in a classroom may value and profit from guest lecturers, whose personal involvement and expertise add greatly to the course, so I hope will my student readers benefit from the three chapters I chose to have written by guest authors, all major figures in their respective areas of expertise:

Chapter 14, "Sexual Disorders"

Joseph LoPiccolo
University of Missouri-Columbia

Chapter 17, "Personality Disorders"

Theodore Millon
Harvard Medical School
and University of Miami

George S. Everly, Jr.
The Johns Hopkins Health System
and Loyola College

Chapter 20, "Problems of Aging"

Dolores Gallagher-Thompson
Stanford University
and Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Larry Wolford Thompson
Stanford University
and Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Like the other writings of these contributors, their chapters in this text are absolutely superb. Moreover, they worked closely with me in developing the chapters to make sure they are well integrated with the rest of the book, fulfill its goals, and answer the needs of the introductory reader.

- *The book is designed to affect and motivate students.* Abnormal psychology is, after all, a moving and exciting subject that should strike all sorts of chords in readers. I have tried to write with humanity, to communicate my excitement, enthusiasm, and sense of discovery about the subject, and to incorporate my years of experience in teaching, practice, and research. Moreover, in choosing the case excerpts, special boxed discussions, authentic photographs, and telling illustrations and tables my goal has been to move as well as to enlighten, for it is always important to bear in mind that the subject is people—often people in great pain.
- *The book provides "tools" for thinking critically about abnormal psychology.* I have tried to help readers grasp the logic underlying research and assessment; the connections between a model's principles and the studies, assessment tools, and treatment approaches used by its proponents; and the *weaknesses and strengths* of various studies and interventions. Moreover, each chapter ends with a "State of the Field" section that provides a sense of perspective about where the clinical field is today, where it came from, and where it seems to be going. Ideally, readers will acquire not only an extensive body of information from this text but also an ability to assess and question it, process it effectively, and remember it accurately.

SUPPLEMENTS

The textbook itself is enhanced by a series of highly effective supplemental materials.

- An *Instructor's Manual*, by Janet A. Simons of Central Iowa Psychological Services and Ronald J. Comer, provides detailed outlines of each chapter, lists of principal learning objectives, and exciting and novel ideas for varying lectures and launching class discussions.
- A *Student Study Guide*, by Norris Vestre of Arizona State University, reexamines the content of each chapter by means of chapter summaries, lists of key names and terms, special elucidations of important ideas, numerous sample test questions (both multiple-choice and short-answer, with all answers provided), and suggestions for additional reading.
- A comprehensive set of **Test Questions**, written by me and several of my colleagues, offers approximately 2,000 multiple-choice, true-false, and short-answer test

questions, all graded as to difficulty, identified as “applied” or “factual,” and keyed to specific pages in the textbook.

- **Computerized Test Questions**, identical to the printed *Test Questions*, is available in both IBM and Macintosh formats.
- **Video recordings** of the complete thirteen-part telecourse, *The World of Abnormal Psychology*, produced by the Annenberg/CPB Collection, examines the complex factors underlying abnormal psychology, demonstrates the various approaches to treatment, and elucidates current directions in research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am enormously grateful to the many people who have contributed to the writing and production of this textbook. A simple thank you fails to do justice to the importance of their work and to the quality of their performance. Their efforts have meant much more to me than I can possibly express.

I begin with the guest writers, who contributed three important chapters to the book. Joseph LoPiccolo, Theodore Millon, George Everly, Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, and Larry Thompson have brought expertise and consummate skill to their presentations, and the results are simply wonderful.

In addition, Dr. Steven Winshel wrote many of the boxed discussions that appear throughout the book. Steve invested the boxes with great insight, vitality, and humor and made sure that they complemented the text discussions. He also prepared the chapter summaries and the book’s glossary. I greatly appreciate Steve’s enthusiasm, his extraordinary work ethic, and the warm friendship that he extended throughout the undertaking.

There are also a number of very talented colleagues and individuals who wrote early drafts of various sections of the book. They include Bob Croyle, Lisa Fisher, Allison Fishman Gartner, Dan Gilbert, Nimali Jayasinghe, Aimee McCullough, Rona Milch, Tracy Munn, Betsy Preston, Fred Rhodewalt, Lauren Siegler, Susan Stein, and Gita Wilder. I also greatly appreciate the conscientiousness and hard work of the many research assistants who helped with the book, including Linda Chamberlain, Meath Bowen, Jeff Gossett, Robin Bennett, Terry Caton, Rob Falk, Millet Israeli, Karen McQuillen, Mary Parker, Lisa Tanners, Sue Varga, and Alicia Williams.

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Often overlooked by others, though certainly not by an author, are the individuals who help prepare the manuscript, doing everything from typing to photocopying to mailing to hand-holding. I was particularly blessed in this regard and fervently thank Arlene Kerch and Arlene Kronewitter for their outstanding work, cheerful dispositions, tireless efforts, understanding, and repeated willingness to put my endeavor above their personal schedules. Similarly, I am grateful to Elaine Bacsik, Ashley Blackwell, Daphne Flowers, Linda Holmak, Marion Kowalewski, Theresa Mizenko, Bernie Muccilli, and Barbara Pallotti for their many efforts over the years.

And, then, of course, there are the people at W. H. Freeman and Company. I am indebted to Linda Chaput, the president of the company, for standing by the book for so long and making sure that it became what we first envisioned. She placed the confidence and resources of the company behind me and always put a standard of excellence before all other considerations. As special as Linda has been to me, the list of talented and caring people at W. H. Freeman only begins with her.

I have worked with three editors over the years, each of whom performed remarkably, showed superb editorial skills, and became a close and valued friend. Jonathan Cobb worked with me during the early years of the book and taught me how to transform ideas, ambitions, and teaching insights into an authoritative, clear, and engaging textbook. Nancy White, the editor during the middle years, provided special dimensions of support and gentleness, which, along with her many editorial contributions, brought me and the book into position for the stretch run. Moira Lerner has been the editor during the past several years and has helped bring the book to

fruition. Virtually every sentence in the book has her mark. She is truly a magician in her work, a person of whom I am in awe. Moreover, she is as delightful a person as I have ever known. I will not miss the phone bills of our coast to coast relationship, but I will certainly miss our daily discussions. I wish every author a Moira Lerner for an editor.

Three other persons at Freeman have also made very special contributions that I would like to mention. During the past year, Philip McCaffrey, the project editor, has worked tirelessly and unselfishly to shepherd this book through the process of production. I greatly admire and appreciate his total dedication, his gentle and caring manner, and his extraordinary contribution to both the content and the form of the book. Travis Amos, the book's photo researcher, has worked with great taste, diligence, and enthusiasm to bring the subject matter of abnormal psychology to life. His endless searches for the perfect photograph or painting and his uncompromising commitment to excellence have greatly enriched this book. I also wish to thank Megan Higgins, the art director. Her impressive talent and unceasing efforts to create a compelling and enriching design have led to as handsome an appearance as I can imagine. Even a cursory glance through the pages of the book attests to this accomplishment.

In addition, I would like to thank Mary Shuford, managing editor; Barbara Salazar, copy editor; Bernice Soltysik, indexer; Mary Louise Byrd, proofreader; Nancy Giraldo Walker, rights and permissions manager; Susan Stetzer, production coordinator; Mara Kasler, illustration coordinator; Maura Fadden Rosenthal, page makeup designer; and Jodi Creditor, all-around great worker. Some former members of the company also left their mark on this book: Neil Patterson, past president; Linda Davis, past vice president; and Elisa Adams, past director of development. Obviously, I've enjoyed and profited from my association with this gifted group of professionals.

Finally, I must take some space to acknowledge those who have provided me with an educational, professional, and personal climate in which I could accomplish this task. I thank my graduate teachers at Clark University—particularly, Bob Baker, Roger Bibace, Len Cirillo, Jim Laird, and Mort Weiner—and my undergraduate teachers at the University of Pennsylvania—particularly Jane Piliavin—all of whose wisdom, theoretical skills, and research know-how fill the pages of this book. I also greatly appreciate my stimulating and engaging colleagues at Princeton University, particularly Joel Cooper, John Darley, and Ron Kinchla, who have been so considerate and supportive since I first started teaching at Princeton almost twenty years ago. Similarly, I thank Dr. Carl Meier of Somerset Medical Center and Drs. Frank Snope and Joe Lieberman

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In closing, I cannot imagine completing a project of this magnitude in the absence of a loving and supportive family, and I am truly grateful to mine. I have already thanked my father and mother in the book's dedication. Their love has been an enduring and motivating presence in my life. I also greatly appreciate my wonderful

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*Ronald J. Comer
Princeton University
November 1991*



The Blue Devils

TOPIC OVERVIEW

DEFINING PSYCHOLOGICAL ABNORMALITY

Deviance
Distress
Dysfunction
Danger
Difficulties in Defining Psychological Abnormality

PAST VIEWS AND TREATMENTS

Ancient Views and Treatments
Greek and Roman Views and Treatments
Europe in the Middle Ages:
Demonology Returns
The Renaissance and the Rise of Asylums
The Nineteenth Century: Reform and Moral Treatment

CURRENT TRENDS

New Treatments for the Severely Disturbed
New Treatment Settings for Less Severe Psychological Problems
Today's Practitioners
Emerging Perspectives
The Emphasis on Research

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- CHAPTER 11** Psychological Factors and Physical Disorders
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- CHAPTER 15** Schizophrenia
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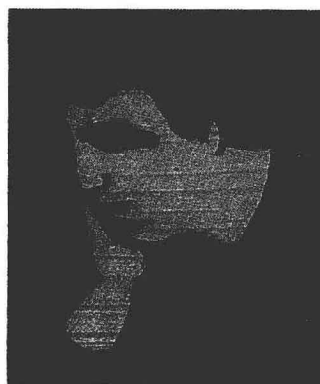
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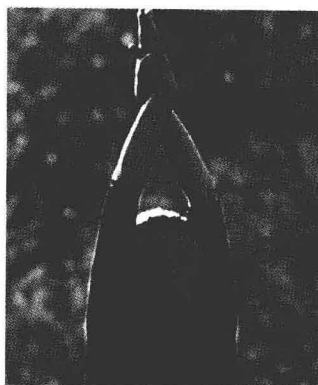
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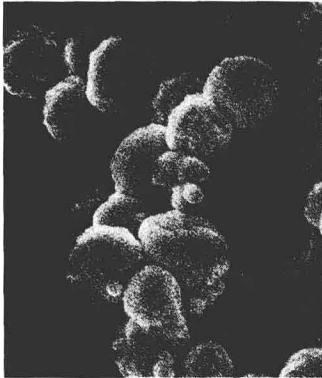
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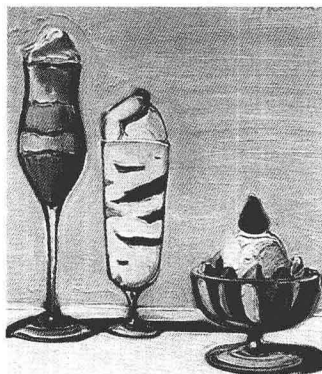
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*By Joseph LoPiccolo
University of Missouri-
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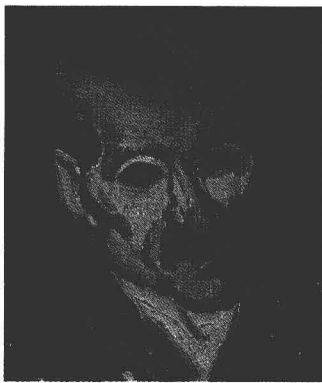
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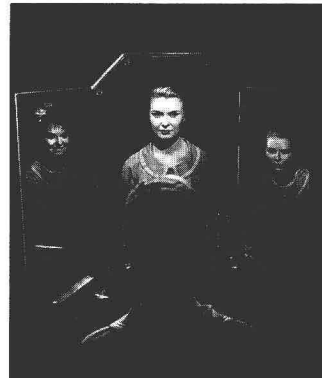
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*By Theodore Millon
Harvard Medical School
and University of Miami
and
George S. Everly, Jr.
The Johns Hopkins Health
System and Loyola College*

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