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Bizarre Behaviours: Boundaries of Psychiatric Disorder. Herschel Prins.
 London & New York: Routledge, 1990, 111 pages, \$57.00 hard, \$17.95 paper.

Reviewed by T.L. Brink, Crafton Hills College

This short paperback is a fascinating discussion of topics ranging through demon possession, vampirism, delusional jealousy, Capgras Syndrome (belief that a loved one has been replaced by an exact replica), Ganser Syndrome (when accused/convicted criminals give silly and approximate answers), Munchausen Syndrome (seeking surgery), and "culture-bound" disorders such as *amok* (killing sprees), *koro* (fear of genital retraction), *susto* (fright), *latah* (arctic hysteria), and *windigo* (desire to eat human flesh).

Prins, a British authority on criminology, with prior books on serial murderers, has a style which is easy to follow. He also has a knack for the appropriate use of footnotes to keep the flow of his writing and yet give the reader extended information.

Anthropologists will be challenged by Prins' moves from -emic to -etic accounts of behavior; at times, he assumes the phenomenological reality of evil, only to draw back to a social scientific conception of sick role. The conclusion Prins reaches is that such bizarre behavior is more universal than culture-bound. Indeed, he cites U.S. and British examples of quiet men who snapped and went on a skilling spree (*amok*), and a British murder and cannibalism case amazingly parallel to that of one recently uncovered in Milwaukee (for *windigo*).

Some of Prins' comments are bold and insightful. For example, "The personality disorders are the Achilles' heel of psychiatry" (pp. 15-16); and "It may be all too easy for the therapist unconsciously to perpetuate the symptoms in a collusive relationship with this particular type of patient" (p. 19).

It is hard to nail down Prins on the theoretical explanation for such behavior. Several times, he suggests that obsessive-compulsive disorder is an umbrella under which these bizarre behaviors can be categorized. Prins is clearly fluent in psychoanalytic theory, but is certainly not tied to it. In the footnotes especially, he calls upon Jungians to offer insights into such behaviors. However, this reviewer has an Adlerian orientation, and found much in Prins to support that perspective: the people who engage in such behavior are frequently life's downtrodden (isolated and exhibiting a low level of competence as well as much resentment against imagined injustices) and find that they can get a sense of power, an excuse from personal responsibility and perhaps even some notoriety.

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