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Images of the Psyche: Exploring the Planets through Psychology and Myth

Christine Valentine
Element, 1990, £10.99, 108pp

The struggle for meaning and shape has given rise to a wealth of symbol and story in the history of humankind, and to a number of maps by which we may navigate the difficult course of life as a human being on this earth. In her book Christine Valentine takes on the task of superimposing, or perhaps overlaying, three of these maps, charting the ways in which they inform each other, and therefore us, as we reach different stages in our journey.

The book is a rich mix of psychology, mythology and astrology, written by an astrologer/psychotherapist (psychotherapist/astrologer?) who works with the straddling of the two worlds in her own life and work and therefore has much to offer by blending the two. Mythology informs both astrology and psychology, so the myths in the book bring the tensions and ambiguities to life and provide ready metaphors for the journey.

I am struck by how much at home in all three worlds Christine is. She can therefore go beyond the possibility of a too narrow focus which devotees of only one may slip into: the book has a broad focus and deals with the psyche at many levels, both through and beyond ego. As somebody with only a superficial knowledge of astrology I did not find the charts she includes informative, but was interested in her interpretations of the charts of Freud, Jung and Winnicott as they relate to their work and concerns. I would also be interested in how the map of the body might relate to the other three maps, but perhaps this is broadening the scope too far.

There is a broad theme of interconnectedness, of opposites needing to balance one or another. This interconnectedness is implicit in astrology, as we have to take on the enormous concept that each of us in inextricably connected to the furthest planets. It is increasingly clear that not only do they affect us, but that we have an effect on at least our own planet, if not beyond this world. This book is a clear study which has much to offer people engaged in any of the disciplines it covers.

Maxine Linnell

Mothers Surviving Child Sexual Abuse

Carol-Ann Hooper
Tavistock/Routledge, 1992, £35.00 hb £10.99 pb, 240pp

This book, a study of the processes of mothers discovering and coping with the abuse of their child, is rational, well researched, full of rich detail and I suspect will become required reading for all those who work in this field.

The mother, who has the formidable task not only of coming to terms with the revelation, coping with the authorities, salvaging the remains of her family and pulling something meaningful for herself from the wreckage, has to deal with many losses. But as carer she is central to the recovery of the victim. Hooper's message is that if the mother can be helped to cope, then so will the child be helped.

Hooper confesses to a feminist stance in this study (1% only of women abuse), seeing male abuse as the result of patriarchal attitudes. She makes a plea for male infants to be involved in caring, suggesting that this may enable them, as they grow, to identify with those more vulnerable than themselves.

In spite of much that I learned, I was troubled by two things. Firstly by the list of women and the facts about them being relegated to the end of the book, thereby devaluing them even though this was their story; and also by the even prose, creating a sense of control which kept striking me as incongruent with the material. I know this is an academic book, but through its conscious and unconscious messages the student social worker learns. And what came across to me was an alienation from the material which, ironically, echoed the alienation currently inherent in caring for the mothers which Hooper was bringing into focus by writing this book.

'No one listens to mothers' was a recurring complaint. I'm still not convinced they are really being heard. I got no real sense of their misery. I was left wondering if they had felt used yet again.

Anna Wiseman

The Hypnotic Brain: Hypnotherapy and Social Communication

Peter Brown
Yale University Press, 1991. £29.00 hb, 322pp.

This attempt to explain hypnosis regards it as an innate capability of the human brain and an outcome of our ability to communicate in uniquely human ways. Although one reviewer, on the jacket, describes this book as original, it

consists largely of quotations from the work of others, selected to support the author's contention. Thus the book is a rich collection of references but a necessarily biased one. I do wonder whether Peter Brown, consciously or not, has actually attempted to put Erickson's practical contributions to hypnotherapy into a theoretical framework, especially as he is so attracted to the importance of metaphor and synchronicity of rhythm in face-to-face communication.

In supporting his ideas Peter Brown knows few bounds. Chronicling the development of human communication skills, he reaches back 20 million years. Dealing with the vital involvement of facial expression, he gets down to the attachment of muscles to bones. Brown being a medical man, it is perhaps inevitable that he swings between describing the hypnotic condition in terms of mind function and then of the associated brain neurochemistry.

After his personal opinion of its origins, it is surprise to find Brown's perception of the actual hypnotic state and of hypnotisability resting largely on those well known experiments conducted mostly on college students by their superiors. The very fact that the signs and outcomes of hypnosis depend on individual expectation and on the nature of the relationship with the hypnotist have put the precise conclusions of these experiments into some doubt for quite a while; just one example is Hilgard's cold pressure tests as a measure of pain control capability in a therapeutic context.

The uses of hypnosis are significantly described as 'clinical', and it is presented as being mainly a technique for modifying psychobiological function, in such conditions as asthma, hyperventilation, bowel disfunction, pain and blood pressure. The whole area of the addressing of unconscious trauma — uniquely simple with hypnosis — and perhaps one of the most significant therapeutic uses of it, is completely ignored even though a rare reference to such trauma notes its effects as 'lasting for decades'. Two final chapters on multiple personality disorder and Erickson's therapeutic techniques are interesting, but largely a re-presentation of existing material.

I am not sure who this work is intended for. The content that might appeal to a therapist is very dispersed. Academics still seeking the true identity of hypnosis may feel they should have it on their bookshelves, but at £29 I would look in the library for it.

Graham Gorman

Hard-earned Lessons for Counselling in Action

Windy Dryden (ed.), Sage, 1992, £19.95 hb £8.95 pb, 160pp.

The fallibility of our fellow eminent practitioners can be a curiously reassuring reminder of our common human frailty. It is a comforting compensation

for all of us that learning from our errors can improve our work.

In this book ten counsellors describe their 'hard-earned lessons'. Despite a wide range of styles and experiences, some common themes emerge. The negative outcomes of applying theories and approaches too rigidly are graphically described by Windy Dryden, David Mearns and Michael Jacobs, who warns against the dangers of 'therapeutic ambition'. John Rowan relates how he abandoned one of his basic assumptions and became a rescuer — to *good* effect. Petruska Clarkson recalls her unrelenting twenty-year search for the curative factor within a theory. Her quest for the 'Holy Grail' resulted in a return to the obvious: namely what she had thought was the context of counselling, the therapeutic relationship, was indeed its essence.

Other contributors emphasise how our personal lives indubitably affect counselling practice. Emmy van Deurzen Smith describes how pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood limited her capacity for involvement for a period; Windy Dryden tells how the uniform practice of doing nothing but counselling all week caused deep malaise, making him acknowledge his need to engage in varied activities; Pat Milner admits how being a workaholic resulted in debilitating illness.

The value of establishing boundaries is stressed by Moira Walker, who sees them as 'a powerful psychological holding agent', while Pat Milner praises their 'preservative nature'.

On the question of power, there seemed to be a consensus. We must be wary of allowing power to become tyrannical, while accepting that we use it. Robin Shohet advises us to take pleasure in the proper use of power rather than denying it. David Mearns stresses that we cannot abrogate it, as to do so would be inauthentic.

Our need to listen to our clients and their experience is another theme. Windy Dryden recounts his chagrin at missing the vital information that two of his clients were alcoholics. When he questioned them over this omission, he was chastened by their response: 'You never asked'.

The wisdom implicit in existential paradox is a recurrent motif. Emmy van Deurzen Smith finds a curious peace through the open revelation of her errors: 'One thing I have learnt for sure is that I shall forever be lacking. I have faith in my failures, as guidelines to my work, and similar faith in my client's ability to learn from their mistakes.'

Although the number and disparate styles of the contributors leads to a degree of fragmentation, they are unified by genuine and explicit revelation of their failings and a commitment to recycle learning. I certainly can apply their lessons to some of my own dilemmas, and am sure other practitioners can benefit likewise.

Val Simanowitz

Various volumes of Carl Gustav Jung

Routledge 1991-2 (for a full catalogue write to Routledge Customer Services, ITPS Ltd, Cheriton House, North Way, Andover, Hants SP10 5BE)

Routledge are gradually bringing out the collected edition of the works of Jung in paperback. It started with *Psychology and Alchemy* (vol. 12) and continued with volumes 3, 6, 7, 9 (two volumes) and 17. It is not clear as to whether the intention is to bring out the whole of the collected edition, or just the most popular parts, but for anyone who wants to get Jung reasonably cheaply this is a marvellous opportunity.

It seems a bit late in the day to review these books, since you must know by now whether or not you want to buy the major works of Jung. Here though is a chance to go to the fountainhead at a reasonable price.

John Rowan

Self-directed Groupwork: Users Take Action for Empowerment

Audrey Mullender and Dave Ward
Whiting and Birch, 1992, £9.95 194pp

Empowerment is one of those terms which was first used by humanistic psychology, and later used even more in transpersonal psychology and its associated work with organizations. But you will look in vain for any mention of the humanistic, the transpersonal, or any such notions in this book. Even the work of John Southgate, which one would have thought was highly relevant, is nowhere mentioned. Neither is Sue Holland, whose work on a housing estate is well known. Nor is there any mention of co-counselling or any of its associated ideas.

There is a lot of talk about values, and broadly feminist and anti-racist values are recommended. But when we come to the question of what one actually does, what training is necessary to understand group process or group dynamics, what we get is nothing very much. There is really no difference between a group of six and a group of forty (p. 63). The authors tell us to go for open groups rather than closed or semi-closed ones.

Few exercises are suggested, most of them involving pencil and paper. But there is little appreciation of the emotional side of the group, still less of the imaginal side of the group. There is a lot of talk about consciousness-raising, but a lack of appreciation that this activity can only take the group so far, and that actual

therapy in the group is needed at some point. No doubt the reason for this lack is the extreme emphasis on turning the action outwards all the time: 'So strong are wider social pressures towards "blaming the victim", that to allow personal developments to have undue significance would be a dangerous step back towards patronising and pathologising orientations.' (p. 137) This misses the point which was put years ago in a cartoon in the *Red Therapy* pamphlet which showed Fred Flintstone saying 'I ain't no bourgeois individualist, honest! I just ain't gonna be much help in smashing the system, because the system is doing a pretty good job of smashing me !'

All in all, this is a well-meaning book, but one which is working with one hand tied behind its back, because it is so resolutely cognitive and behavioural, without ever using those words.

John Rowan

Becoming a Profession: The History of Art Therapy in Britain

Diane Waller
Routledge, 1991, £12.99 pb, 290pp.

This seems rather a biased and partial account, which hardly mentions humanistic approaches at all. It is interesting to know that art therapy did not exist until the 1940s, and that there has always been a tension within it as to whether it should be done by artists who have learned some therapy, or by therapists who have learned some art. It is interesting to know that there have been strong Freudian (Naumburg) and Jungian (Champernowne) inputs into art therapy, and that it is conducted mainly in schools and hospitals.

But really it is quite wrong not to mention Gestalt art therapy, pioneered by Janie Rhyne and used in this country by such people as John Hertzell (much mentioned in this book) and Rupert Cracknell, and also not to mention people like Harriet Wadeson, an AHP member who has written two major books on the subject. Instead we get things like:

'Adamson's reference [in 1966] to the "lunatic fringe" seems to be based on fears that artists who were themselves disturbed may be drawn to art therapy for their own needs . . . Adamson may have had in mind 'fringe therapists' (such as members of the many 'growth movements' stemming from the USA in the 1960s — Quaesitor, Esalen, EST. and so on). Being associated with such groups might well have made acceptance by the medical profession unlikely.' (p. 112)

This really is quite a prejudicial statement, since it is unrelieved by any suggestion that things might have

changed later. Appparently even Joshua Bierer was regarded at the time as a bit of a wild man and not quite respectable enough, particularly since he was interested in groups.

There is a tremendous amount in this book about detailed struggles with educational authorities, medical authorities and so forth, which is quite fascinating to historians and people who know the people involved, but a bit dry for the general reader.

John Rowan

Women who Run with the Wolves

Clarissa Pinkola Estes
Rider, 1992, £18.99 hb, 520pp.

This is a bestseller in the USA, where it has been described as a sort of *Iron John* for women. But really it is better than that, with more stories and more analysis and a greater sense of male-female relationships.

Women don't actually have to be wild, according to the author, but they do have to do some justice to their wild aspects. The author is a Jungian and a storyteller, and both of these facets receive full justice. She reanalyses some of the stories mentioned by Bettelheim, showing convincingly how much male bias there is in his work, and telling other stories that Bettelheim would never choose.

We get the nine tasks of women's initiation, and the seven tasks that teach one soul to love another deeply and well. There are some helpful hints on how men can relate better to women. I found some of the stories revealing and illuminating in a way which a more sober and prosaic explanation could never achieve.

For this reason I would say it is a book not only for women, but also for any man who wants to understand women. In Chapter 9 I learned a lot about Shirley Valentine, though she is not mentioned at all, and in Chapter 8 I learned how to understand Thelma and Louise properly, though they are not mentioned either.

In this book there is a real social consciousness, going much further than a merely individual psychology. The author says: 'While much psychology emphasises the familial causes of angst in humans, the cultural component carries as much weight, for culture is the family of the family . . . If the culture is a healer, the families learn how to heal; they will struggle less, be more reparative, far less wounding, far more graceful and loving.' (p.68)

There are chapters on creativity, and rage, and the hidden depths within us. This is a large book in every sense, and there is a lot in it. This book bowls along in a very readable way, and is I think really quite inspiring. It is miles ahead of *Iron John.*

John Rowan