Picking up the Pieces — Two Accounts of a Psychoanalytical Journey

Fayek Nakhla and Grace Jackson
Yale University Press, 1993, £16.95, 166pp.

This book is a remarkable and moving account of a psychoanalytic journey told by both the doctor and the patient, who writes under the pseudonym of Grace Jackson. Apart from the fact that there are few joint accounts of the psychoanalytic voyage, what makes this book remarkable is the extent to which the client's condition, which was severely regressed, fragmented and self-destructive, drove the practitioner beyond the conventional bounds of analytic treatment in his attempt to provide for her a holding environment. To give you an idea of the demands made on the doctor by this particular client it is sufficient to say perhaps that Grace spent the first 18 months of her sessions in complete silence . . . and when she did begin to communicate with her analyst it was through the medium of broken glass with which she would regularly, for several months, mutilate herself to the extent of severing tendons in her arm. Far from preventing her from doing this or having her contained and managed in psychiatric care, Fayek Nakhla, with the support of hospital containment as a background resource and occasional pharmacological management, tolerated and met analytically these primitive outbursts of destructiveness and self-destructiveness and to a certain extent encouraged her to go on doing this for as long as she needed to. I quote from Grace's diary, ' The doctor says you have to keep cutting yourself. Go on cutting yourself; you have to remain in touch with your body, with yourself in what ever way you can.'

In cutting herself, in the pain and in the blood and in the reaching out for help that this act of self-mutilation involved, Grace began to get some primitive feeling of herself which up until that point had not existed. In fact through most of the initial years of therapy Grace only felt she existed in two ways. Firstly through her diary in which she meticulously and obssessively records the minutiae of her life in order to give herself the feeling that she has actually experienced anything, and secondly through the act of cutting herself, an action that functioned on several levels of symbolic and actual meaning. Eventually these two ways of maintaining a sense of self came to be replaced by Grace's relationship with Dr. Nakhla in which she allowed herself to regress to a state of undifferentiated unity with him out of which the emergence of a separate self could begin to develop.

The book is remarkable testament to two people's courage in exploring the frontiers of non-existence and faith in the curative power of therapeutic relationship. Mercifully, in modifying his treatment approach, Dr. Nakhla resorted more and more to an existential-analytic perspective influenced by the writings of

D.W. Winnicott, Harry Guntrip and others of the British Psychoanalytical School who have pioneered the analytical understanding of theory and practice of working with the regressed client. In the course of his management of Grace, Dr. Nakhla overstepped many of the usual boundaries of analytic treatment: physical contact, which was frequent, time duration of sessions, which as treatment went on became more extensive and less strictly bounded and, on one occasion, which Grace reports as being of enormous personal significance to her, Dr. Nakhla visited her at home and, with Grace's consent, read her diaries.

I squirmed slightly at the way that Dr. Nakhla felt he had to uneasily glance over his shoulder at his more orthodox psychoanalytical colleagues and justify these departures from detached analysis into a world of human meeting where he, like Grace, was not equipped with the knowledge of the rules beforehand.

In sum, the book is an unusual demonstration of the power of therapeutic relationship in whatever approach the practitioner rests and shows how the analytic tradition, despite or even perhaps because of its many constraints, still has the ability to throw up people who are brave enough to go beyond it.

David Kalisch

Discovering Your Self: Breaking Walls — Building Bridges

Reinhard Kowalski
Routledge, 1993

In *Discovering Your Self* Kowalski states that one of the main purposes of this book is to enable the reader to find his/her inner centre of stability in order to be able to help others to find theirs. It is a book for psychotherapists and all who practise in the role of counselling and enabling others, and is a journey through cognitive and behaviour therapy, boundaries, activity theory, psychosynthesis, stress, domination and partnership. It ends with the unification process and uses Kowalski's homeland as an example of breaking walls and building bridges.

Kowalski suggests that there is no one right approach, no one perfect model of working. He charts his own personal history, training, and development as an example of the history of the journey from cognitive behavioural therapy to psychosynthesis, and continually returns to the theme of psychotherapy being closely linked with the societal and organisational systems around us. In the chapter 'Psychosynthesis, the Higher Perspective', he clearly illustrates the inter-connectedness of the physical greenhouse of consumerism, and the psychological greenhouse of trapped energies, resulting in personal crowdedness and increasing

psychological heat which is more widely recognised as stress. I first briefly saw the 'Egg Diagram' as a counselling student a few years ago, and I welcomed the clear explanation of its relation to stress. It brought together for me the theory and my present day working applications of the theory.

This was followed by an excellent chapter devoted to stress which included theoretical considerations, implications for the therapist, personal exercises for the reader, and a workshop example for the lay person, 'Fred and the Banana Skin'. For me, this is a clear example of the diversity of the book. It weaves in and out of complicated theory and basic practical exercises with clear guidelines. Just whenever I felt that the reading was getting too heavy for me, Kowalski pre-empted my dilemma and his encouraging voice and guiding hand came from out of the pages at just the right moment.

In the chapter 'Activity Theory' Kowlaski's concept of offering himself and his writing style as an application of activity theory illustrated, for me, the essence of the book. He integrates theory, examples of practice, himself as a person, author and psychotherapist, and in a unique way breaks down the barriers between author and reader.

In the final chapter 'Unification Process — German Example' Kowlaski likens the crumbling of the Berlin Wall to what we experience when walls within ourselves begin to crumble, but he warns that while we are building bridges to create a unity we sometimes do not see the space in between. Nothing is meaningful as long as we perceive only separate fragments. He includes several poignant poems in the book; this extract is from *Embracing Difference*:

We may see beauty and love,
Pain, longing and belonging,
Flowers and Trees.
And sometimes I can see it best,
From the bridge that I am trying to build.

Sandra Booth

Jung and Eastern Thought: A Dialogue with the Orient

J.J. Clarke
Routledge, 1993, 217pp.

Professor J. J. Clarke has given us a critical, well-balanced book on Jung's contribution to the understanding of the East by the West which he calls a rigorous and forthright confrontation with the Orient from a psychological point of view.

The first part of the book takes us painstakingly but articulately through the history of our rapprochement with the East. Many philosophers are quoted, culminating in Hans-Georg Gadamer, a pupil of Heidegger and a contemporary exponent of the art of understanding, or hermeneutics. Gadamer's central idea is that of

seeing the meaning between the part and the whole, a view shared by Jung who was among the first of holistic thinkers.

After this historical perspective ('without history there can be no psychology' said Jung) we are well-placed for the fascinating second section in the book on Jung's own exploration of Eastern thought, including Taoism, Yoga and Buddhism. The comparisons, contrasts and development of his thought in relation to these are well brought out. The conjunction of opposites formed a link between his thinking and that of the East, as did his theory of the collective unconscious and the archetypes. Professor Clarke also makes it clear how Jung could be often misled by poor translations and by lack of exposure to eminent oriental thinkers. But remarks and judgements that might be considered patronising today were nonetheless forging new attitudes.

The final section, *Reservations and Qualifications, Criticisms and Shortcomings*, would read better were it not for the author's irritating habit of repetitive quotations that had already appeared earlier in other sections. That aside, I found both Jung's theories and oriental attitudes to life were considerably more understandable after reading this book.

As a mystic training to be a psychotherapist I found the impossibility of explaining my spiritual perceptions and experiences in psychological terms deeply frustrating. It helps therefore to read that Jung failed 'to grasp the full meaning of the idea of enlightenment' and thus basically reduced the spiritual to the level of the psychological. 'In the final analysis Jung remained wedded to a dualistic outlook, one which denied the possibility of fusing subject with object in some higher unity.'

This East-West dialogue, to which Jung made such an interesting and fruitful contribution, is essential to the progress of mankind. Far from being resolved, it is only just beginning.

Bronwen Astor

On the Shoulders of Women

Ilene J. Philipson
Guilford Press, 1993

In *On the Shoulders of Women* Ms Philipson writes an extremely well-researched account of the feminisation of the psychotherapy profession in the United States and describes some resultant dangers. She argues that the feminisation of a profession such as that of bank clerks almost inevitably leads to the devaluing of it. However, in her eagerness to prove that the increased participation of female therapists in the free, state-provided 'managed care' programme also caused them to have less power and authority and deskilled them, she seems to forget that this programme leads to greater mental health benefits for a wider class range.

In her desire to preserve women therapists' professional status, she prioritises their interests above the mental health needs of the whole community. In decrying the fact that a consulting room in a woman's home does not carry the status of one in a hospital or clinic she is accepting hierarchical male notions of the importance of the 'public domain'.

However Ms Philipson redeems much of this in the second half of her book, where she skilfully traces the influences of both feminism and feminisation on theory and practice in the fields of psychotherapy and family therapy. Whereas the numerical strength of women in family therapy has forced male practitioners to accept the fundamental inequality of male/female power relations as a major cause of family dysfunction, a recognition and acknowledgement of feminist influence in the psychotherapeutic world has been slow to come.

Feminist writers such as Chodorow, Baker-Miller and Gilligan focus on the centrality of the mother role, moving away from Freudian concepts of patriarchy, autonomy and drives to an emphasis on 'connectedness' and the significance of the therapeutic relationship. This new 'relational' psychotherapy has been widely adopted, yet its debt to feminist thinking is largely ignored.

Ms Philipson thinks the greater presence of women in psychotherapy mirrors an increasing tendency for women to deal with the 'emotional messiness' in the family and all other areas of society. Men have largely abandoned the emotional sphere and she quotes a startling figure that 50% of American children are now wholly or partly brought up by a single woman. Finally Ms Philipson wisely advocates that the fast-diminishing status of this new 'female' profession must be seriously addressed.

She recommends improved standards of training and more women at managerial level in state care programmes. She exhorts that society as a whole should upgrade the 'ethic of care' and should recognise that we shall probably all undergo a period of dependency at some stage of our lives and that this can enrich our understanding. In these times when beggars are regarded as 'eyesores' this advice needs to be heeded.

Val Simanowitz

Art Therapy with Offenders

Marian Liebmann (ed.)
Jessica Kingsley, 1994, 308pp.

Self & Society readers will find this superb book a valuable contribution to in-depth work in their therapy and with themselves. For in part we are all offenders. We sometimes move amidst the dark shadows of society. We are all members of an unfinished and often deviant creation. Although we strive for life, light and love,

yet we fear; we hate; we betray; we lust; we act violently; we punish ourselves and others; and sometimes we suffer from the penal retribution of the state.

Although this brilliant and beautiful collection of papers and illustrations portrays those who were caught, the deeply moving focus on transformation also speaks to those of us who, despite our freedom, struggle with the others through 'mists in the darkness', as one chapter heading suggests, where 'everything with a substance casts a shadow'.

Most of the contributors to the book are women and Marian Liebmann, its editor, and author of two earlier classic texts on the subject, is the archetypal New Woman who has combined her powerful imagination in work as an art therapist and teacher with hard world experience as a probation officer. Yet now she has further developed her experience of conflict and her Quaker commitment to peacemaking through three years as director of the national voluntary organisation Mediation UK. So Marian understands the human drive for conflict resolution from intrapsychic as well as interpersonal and community perspectives.

In her introduction she points to the benefits of art therapy and its potential for non-verbal communication, self-exploration and self-expression for those who are socially stigmatised and isolated as well as being damaged and dangerous. She points to the rehabilitation ethic, now politically incorrect, which has inspired the commitment, tempered with realism, of art therapists, who become as vulnerable as the designated criminals with whom they share oppressive conditions.

In each chapter pictures tell their individual stories, for 'nobody is who they really are'. Hence the mask on the book's cover, drawn by one man, and the two faces under one hat painted by another. Yet another picture shows a strong 'open heart' between two trees, and in a chapter on 'building up to a sunset' a Turner-type storm at sea is followed by a sun serenely setting.

Most offenders feel that they are 'out of line' and this phrase entitles a chapter in which the therapist describes the struggle of a man to coil a pot and keep it whole week by week without it crumbling or collapsing. Revealing words often accompany drawings, as in the case of a violent schizophrenic who drew faces of the devil and a smiling man: he had written 'Evil comes from suffering and makes others suffer', a saying of sanity-in-madness that Ronnie Laing would have appreciated.

Marian once helped a group of young men make Self Boxes from a choice of boxes and materials: one was turned into a neat white house; another was labelled FUTURE and had labels with JOB, FAMILY, CRIME-FREE LIFE inside; a third featured DRUGS — SEX — MONEY. As she concludes the book she reminds us that it is the concreteness of art which relates to that of life itself in non-threatening ways and that for some of us it may be the only creative and constructive power able to bring release from self and social punishment.

Yvonne Craig

Reclaiming the Inner Child

Jeremiah Abrams (ed.)
Mandala, 1991, £8.99, 323pp.

This is one of those blockbusters, with everyone you have ever heard of contributing. It is edited by a Jungian therapist. A lot of it I had read before, because many extracts from books are included. There is a delightful article by Gaston Bachelard, literate and poetic. I liked the piece by Gilda Frantz, a Jungian analyst. Also good is one by James Hillman on abandonment, and another by Rose-Emily Rothenburg on the orphan archetype.

The section I really liked best was one which contained a number of exercises which could be done to get in touch with the inner child. Linda Capacchione on 'The power of your other hand'; Joyce Mills and Richard Crowley on 'Contacting the child within'; John Bradshaw on 'Liberating your lost inner child'; Nathaniel Branden on 'Integrating the younger self'; Jean Houston on 'Recalling the child'; Adelaide Bry on 'Replaying the movies of your childhood'; all these are useful and suggestive .

Some of it is sentimental twaddle, and some readers may not get as far as the good stuff I have mentioned, but there are enough good things about this book to make it recommendable.

John Rowan

Out of Bounds: Sexual Exploitation in Counselling and Therapy

Janice Russell
Sage, 1993, £10.95, 159pp.

The author comes from the University of Durham, and the book is based on qualitative research carried out over four years involving about forty people who felt that they had been exploited.

The book goes on to look at sexuality and power, and how they may be conceptualised, and at the ethical and practical implications of what has been discovered. It is not intended to be a definitive rundown on all the problems, but an effort to stimulate thought and further discussion.

There are some exercises which can be used in training on this subject. This is not a particularly humanistic book — the author appears to believe that Maslow's first name was Albert — but neither is it dominated by Freudian jargon. There is some useful material on sexual abuse in childhood. On the whole it is to be recommended.

John Rowan

Accepting Voices

Marius Romme and Sandra Escher (eds)
MIND Publications, 1993, £13.99 pb, 258pp.

This is a superb book, written by a number of authors, some of them experts and some just people who have had experience of hearing voices. The main message is that auditory hallucinations are not necessarily a sign of schizophrenia, and should never be taken as indicating anything unambiguously. They need to be questioned and understood. Sometimes they go away, sometimes they quieten down, sometimes they can be used positively — there are many possibilities. They may be serious, they may be quite minor in their significance.

Because of the variety of contributors, there is no one main message to take away. One of the conclusions which several people came to, however, is that 'Radio 1 therapy' — that is, distracting oneself with music to make the voices harder to hear — is not a good solution. It doesn't really change anything.

This book is to be highly recommended to anyone who hears voices, or anyone who lives with someone who hears voices.

John Rowan

Intervention: Guides and Perils

Leonard W. Doob
Yale University Press, 1993, £25.00 hb, 269pp.

This book tries to take the topic of interventions and say everything that can be said about it. It ranges from individual therapy to international mediation. It is thorough, systematic and extremely boring. Because it ranges over so many areas, it has little to say of interest to people working in any of them. It is a careful academic work, with copious references, very useful to someone writing an essay on interventions. But who is?

John Rowan

Basic Emotions

Nancy L. Stein and Keith Oatley (eds)
Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992, 324pp.

This is the reprint of a special issue of the journal *Cognition and Emotion* which appeared in 1992, devoted to this subject. Accordingly it contains seven academic papers by different authors, taking different points of view on the matter,

and referring to copious research on the subject. These are: Stein and Oatley; Ekman; Johnsonlaird and Oatley; Stein and Trabasso; Davidson; Camras; and Wierzbicka. The important papers by Ortony and Turner are continually referred to but not actually included. There is thus no point of view, no conclusions, no definite outcome to be quoted. Most of the contributors think there are a few basic emotions, but one or two do not. The most popular set is: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, surprise. Another set is: distress-pain, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise, happiness. Another set is: happiness/love/joy, misery/grief/sadness, fear/panic/terror, anger/jealousy/hate. It can be seen that all of these look plausible. Each of them is supported by experiments of various kinds. Yet they do not completely agree. For anybody writing on this subject, this is an excellent standby; but for the ordinary reader it is very specialised and recondite.

John Rowan