Book Reviews

Communicative Musicality: Exploring the Basis of Human Companionship by Stephen Malloch and Colwyn Trevarthen. Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009; 627 pp; £52.25 hardback.

If you have ever worried that psychoanalysis may have put itself in an intellectual ghetto, and that the extraordinarily rich insights of our gifted clinicians are failing to engage an ongoing dialogue with the wider world, here is a book to confirm your anxieties. A work of massive scholarship relating to the mental development of infants (24 papers, 37 authors, 627 pages, weighing close to 3 pounds), it includes not a single reference to Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Mahler or Bion. Among psychoanalysts, Daniel Stern alone is abundantly referenced; John Bowlby, in many ways an ancestral figure for Stern, receives one mention. The authors are developmental psychologists, linguists, neuroscientists, musicians, anthropologists, music therapists; Jaak Panksepp, rather wonderfully, is a Professor of Animal Well-being Science. Trevarthen himself was until recently Professor of Child Psychology and Psychobiology at Edinburgh University. Not one of the authors is a psychoanalyst.

The topic, however, has to be of profound interest to psychoanalytic thinkers. The editors intend 'musicality' as a term of the utmost generality: they write: 'It is our common musicality that makes it possible for us to share time meaningfully together' (p. 5), and they show convincingly how psychology, prior to the late 1960s, was blinded to this fact by its prejudice in favour of problem-solving and the belief that 'communication' was primarily to do with cognitive information processing. (Trevarthen and Malloch do not, of course, think these functions are unimportant; merely that they emerge out of the deeper space of 'musicality' and the whole world of dance-like non-verbal communications that Daniel Stern called 'vitality affects'.)

It is impossible, in the space of a short book review, to comment on all the papers in a book of such scope, variety and often densely packed erudition. Rather than try to say a few dutiful words about each in turn, I shall, very arbitrarily, comment on half a dozen of them at a little length. But it may be helpful to summarize first the central theory out of which these papers have developed, which is associated above all with the pioneering work of Stern and Trevarthen, and which Trevarthen names 'innate intersubjectivity'. According to this theory (which is backed up by a huge amount of research and experimental data), a baby is born anticipating a sympathetic, interactive social environment, in which he or she will encounter fellow-human subjects – very different from 'things' – who will be loving, care-taking and responsive. These subjects will also be available as *companions* in the baby's

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encounter with the world, interested in the baby's experience and enjoying the baby's responses in a way that is not captured by the equivalent psychoanalytic term, the baby's 'objects'. In this interactive environment there takes place a detailed and specific, unique 'protoconversation' with the mother and other carers, which precedes the development of verbal communication and which is characterized by musical features such as rhythm, pitch and a dance-like use of gesture and facial expressiveness. The baby is active and indeed may take the lead in initiating, developing and terminating these protoconversational exchanges, which often provide extraordinary pleasure to both parties, and which evolve and modify with great subtlety, largely unconsciously, to keep in step with the baby's development.

Trevarthen's intersubjective baby is very unlike the baby of Freud's primary narcissism, in some ways resembles the Kleinian baby who is 'object-related from birth', and is recognizably the same creature as Daniel Stern's baby who takes part in affect attunements and responds to vitality affects. This little sequence of theories represents a steady advance in our understanding of infants, and I venture to think we are unlikely to have reason to go back to its earlier stages. We are now ready for a much more informed debate about the relation between the 'clinical infant' of psychoanalysis and the actual infant we might meet in the nursery, and the work of Stern, Trevarthen and their colleagues will undoubtedly play a major part in that.

The editors have divided the chapters in their book into five sections: on the origins of musicality, on musicality in infancy, in relation to healing, in relation to childhood learning, and in performance. I shall look in particular at chapters from the first and third of these sections.

The musicality of the infant's protoconversation is only one manifestation of the universal phenomenon of 'communicative musicality' in human beings. There is still much puzzlement about the reason for the enormous importance of music in adult life, but the fact is undeniable and is true in all societies. (It was discussed recently by Oliver Sacks in *Musicophilia*.) Several authors here address the question by way of the evolutionary background. Panksepp and Trevarthen write:

> Every human brain senses musical–emotional meanings many months before it becomes a facilitator of linguistic–propositional signs. For a child, musical expression is as natural as moving itself. If anything in the higher human brain has a genetically preordained evolutionary history, it is the fundamental urge to communicate in the temporal cadences of emotional movements, with endlessly creative protomusical dynamics . . . Even if humans are the only species that makes and appreciates music, we find that the rhythms and basic sounds of musicality are evident in the sometimes long and intricate social displays of other animals. (p. 107)

However, finding precursors for human musicality in animals is harder than you might think. There is nothing remotely comparable in other

animals to the ceaseless musical creativity we call conversation. Per Aage Brandt (Professor of Cognitive Sciences and Modern Languages) suggests that this capacity developed vastly *after* homo sapiens was established as a biological species – as recently, he suggests, as 50,000 years ago. He makes the intriguing suggestion that one source of the development might have been the use of proper names to establish the uniqueness of individuals: parental couples, separated for long periods of time, need ways to hold one another securely in mind. And names are 'intimately related to parental feelings, to the procedures of "giving" names, analogous to the idea of "giving" life, and especially to the existence of a universal practice of voiced interaction between infant and parents' (p. 34). Perhaps the importance of this unique musical sign, 'my name' or 'your name', gave rise to a deepening sense of the importance of musical qualities.

Bjorn Merker (neuroscientist) suggests that another fundamental evolutionary development had already occurred subsequent to the biological separation of hominids from apes. This he calls 'vocal learning', and it is paralleled in the 'learning' of song by birds and whales. It may serve the evolutionary purpose of demonstrating health: someone with talent and stamina for song, dance, etc. is someone to be taken seriously as a mate, provider or fighter. 'What looks like frivolous aesthetic excess thus turns out to have a serious purpose at the heart of the central reproductive drama' (p. 51). The universal presence of learned rituals and 'expressive mimesis' in human societies has emerged, he suggests, for similarly fundamental reasons. Merker proposes that an innate motivational predisposition to mimetic response – both vocal learning and bodily mimesis – 'may rank as the single most crucial adaptation that our species has evolved in the sphere of behaviour' (p. 55). This is an engaging thought and seems supported by the fact that our ubiquitous involuntary 'sympathy', crucial to protoconversation and to all cooperative human endeavour, also derives from the mimetic character of the so-called 'mirror neurons'.

Ellen Dissanayake (an independent scholar and writer on the arts) perhaps imagines most deeply the likely reality of the lives of early hominids, developing for the first time in the history of the universe a capacity for memory of the past and foresight concerning the future. She suggests that anxiety control was probably the strongest motivator. (Sex may have been less problematic.) Musically expressive acts make for feelings of love and mutuality, deeply reassuring in a frightening world. 'Ceremonies' – which she describes as 'collections of arts' and which are universal among tribal peoples – are best understood in relation to this rich context of anxieties and uncertainties, and the need for 'emotional reassurance that the group's efforts would prevail'. 'Having something to do in times of stress', she says, 'would be more soothing – and safer – than going one's own isolated, anxious way' (p. 26). Human beings are unique among mammals in their ability to synchronize their behaviour to a common beat or pulse, and

'simply keeping together in time with other persons produces a feeling of well-being or euphoria' (p. 539).

The general point that musicality is to do with the intersubjective sharing of experience is made by many of these authors. 'The core emotions of vertebrate brains have evolved to resonate among emotionally interacting individuals', say Panksepp and Trevarthen (p. 115). They describe children with the rare Williams Syndrome, who may have an IQ of 50 and be so ill coordinated that it is hard for them to walk downstairs, but who love dance and music, often have perfect pitch perception, and 'are outgoing and socially joyous and communicative', making more normal children seem reserved by comparison. These children show that musicality and social emotionality go together in the brain and can operate separately from information processing.

The response of normal infants to music is examined by two Greek researchers, Katerina Mazokopaki (developmental psychologist and musician) and Giannis Kugiumutzakis (developmental psychologist). They are especially interested in rhythm: Kugiumutzakis has observed the imitation of vocal sounds *with their rhythms* in neonates 'less than 45 minutes old' (p. 186). In the experiment recorded here, they played music to babies and recorded their responses. This has resulted in some wonderfully expressive sequences of photographs. Panos, age 9 months (p. 198), is typical: he first shows alert surprise, looking round to see where the music is coming from, then relaxes into a smile of sheer delight, and in the final photograph we see him leaning forward happily, totally absorbed, rhythmically slapping towards the cloth in front of him. The researchers understand this to indicate that the music has become a Virtual Other for the baby, and the baby's rhythmical action is dance-like and an interactive communication. In an impressive phrase, they conclude that future research should examine further 'the fate-spinning phenomenon of psychological intersubjective synrhythmia' (p. 203). It would indeed be interesting to see how early capacities for musical expression map on to children's long-term welfare.

The healing function of music has been recognized from the earliest times. Apollo was the god of both music and healing, and we all know from daily experience how calming and relieving music can be. Nigel Osborne (Professor of Music) worked with traumatized children during the war in Bosnia (1992–95), and in Albania during the war in Kosovo in 1999. He gives a heart-breaking summary of the emotional consequences of war for children: in 1994 in Sarajevo, 48% of girls and 38% of boys over the age of 13 suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); the corresponding figures for under-13s were 38% and 34%. The musical workshops he set up were simply to provide distraction from the brutalized conditions of life during the war, and also opportunities for creative expression 'and joy'. Joy may seem a little ambitious but 'the children's responses were immediate and unambiguous. It was not unusual for generally melancholic and reticent groups to leave a

session laughing and dancing' (p. 338), or at least calmed and focused. Workshops of this sort also showed a remarkable (almost total) absence of negative side-effects.

Osborne describes the use of singing and hand-held percussion instruments such as chime-bars and tambourines. He suggests that healing takes place in a 'psychobiological loop' involving hearing (often terribly traumatized by gunfire, explosions, the sound of helicopters, etc), the heart (hyperaroused in PTSD and with a higher resting rate relative to untraumatized people), respiration (often irregular or out of control in PTSD) and body-movement (children with PTSD are often hyperactive and uncoordinated). All these systems affect one another, and affect also the basal metabolism, levels of cortisol and levels of neuro-transmitters such as noradrenaline and serotonin. Osborne makes only a modest claim for the value of his work, but his account is very convincing. He describes in effect what Dissanayake calls a 'ceremony'. As the children sing together, or play their instruments, they are synchronized, engaged in mutual trust, enabled to have a sense of achievement, and may experience joy in their own competence and in the music they are creating. One might call it the opposite of being a child in a war.

Another chapter on the healing effect of music is by Jacqueline Robarts (music therapist). 'The power of the music–therapeutic process', she writes, 'is in the music itself, and it is impossible to convey its richness fully in words' (p. 377). This is a difficulty that all these papers wrestle with and perhaps the book should have been supplemented with a CD.

I should declare an interest here. Some years ago, I had a sample music therapy session with Robarts, to see how it worked, and was lastingly impressed by the access it gave me to experiencing emotions enjoyably in the body, altogether different from the experience of arriving at them verbally on the couch. I can say too from that experience how the sense of being supportively, almost un-noticedly 'accompanied' by the therapist on the piano made for a sense of safety and secure holding.

She writes: 'For children whose natural pathways of symbolization have been blocked, affecting identity and a cohesive sense of self, music therapy can offer a means of forming or regaining meaning by constructing capacities for symbolization that grow from the implicit realm of emotional communication' (p. 381). She describes working with a child, Sally, whom she saw once a week from the age of 7 to 14. From the age of $2^1/_2$ to 7 Sally had been the victim of extreme sexual abuse by her mother's partner and another man; she had in effect been tortured. By 7 she was psychotic and uncontainable, doubly incontinent, prone to piercing screams, hysterical laughter, banging her head against walls; restraint to protect her was experienced as repetition of the abuse. It took two years (with parallel individual psychotherapy) for Sally to start to emerge from her psychotic states of mind, and to begin to stroke the instruments rather than kick or hit them. Robarts

describes in detail a session from the third year, in which we see Sally gradually become focused from her initial hostile, chaotic mood. She is held by the 'tonal–rhythmic field of sympathetic resonance' created by Robarts at the piano as she endeavours to keep matching Sally's ever-changing, dissonant moods. At one point, Robarts plays repeatedly a three-note motive: 'I use it as a way of "calling out" to her without using my voice' (p. 390), in the hope of creating islands of new experience in which Sally may feel related to non-traumatically. (I was reminded of Brandt's speculation about the 'musical sign' of one's unique name.) Interestingly, at another point in the session, Robarts does use her voice, putting Sally's feelings into very simple words: this is both interesting as a musical event in the session, and also in creating a bridge between the 'implicit realm of emotional communication' and the verbal world.

Finally, after some vague half-singing and shouting by Sally, Robarts uses 'a three-beat phrase, ending with a pause that invites her to play'; Sally responds by half-singing a few words and then shouting 'Da-rk' – a long vowel. Then – close to the end of the session – she sways her body to a lulling rhythm Robarts plays. Even without the music, the reader senses how this therapy is working to effect a gradual knitting together of the self and the possibility of relatedness, even in this terribly damaged girl.

I hope these brief comments give some glimpse of the great richness and variety of this book. Its attempt to describe 'communicative musicality' is a major step forward for psychology, and has particular importance for psychoanalysis, I think, which has discovered repeatedly the need to find ways to 'figure' preverbal levels of emotion and experience. Such central concerns as autism, the paranoid–schizoid position, the transference as a total situation, and the ways in which projective identifications occur may all be illuminated by reflection on the foundational place of 'musicality' in shaping our communication and our sense of meaning and relatedness.

Ellen Dissanayake states the heart of the matter: 'Bodies swayed to music result in minds relieved of existential anxieties, firmed by convictions, and bonded with their fellows in a common cause' (p. 542). It is wonderful to see this now being thought about, with the sensitivity of the protoconversation itself.

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Axis Mundi by Eric Rhode. Published by Apex One, London, 2008; 208 pp; £19.99 paperback.

In this fascinating and beautifully presented book, richly illustrated with spectacular photographs, Eric Rhode takes Plato's myth of the *axis mundi* as a starting point for a personal inquiry into the nature of man's relation to the unknowable. In *The Republic* Plato recounts how those awaiting incarnation are saved from fragmentation by a vision of the rainbow-like *axis mundi* whose function appears to be to guide them towards a revelation of their future state. This pillar of light links the heavens with the Fates – those 'daughters of Necessity' who weave the threads of life – and, ruminating on this from a modern viewpoint, Rhode suggests: 'I might suppose that an infant under threat from fragmentation might find a similar axial of integration through a gaze, the source of whose light is unknowable' (p. 9).

Rhode then adopts the term 'axiality' to demarcate the knowable from the unknowable, referring to that state of mind which is on the verge of apprehending new ideas or states of being. His exploration of axiality is founded on his long-standing interest in ancient civilizations, together with the more recent acquisition of an extensive knowledge of Eastern religions – in particular, those of 'monsoon Asia'. Rhode has not merely read about these but also travelled in order to experience on the pulses the impact of sacred sites and ceremonials and their 'architecture' – in the shape of both buildings or artworks, and belief systems. He writes:

> In monsoon Asia, the concept of making artefacts and the concept of consecration are little differentiated . . . Sacred space can be originated whenever there is a scope for an act of sacrifice, or for travelling from a certain point here to a certain point there by means of the threshold that carries the significance of dying and being reborn. (p. 162)

In exploring the 'traditional cosmologies' of India, China and Thailand, Rhode tackles not just the divide but also the meeting-point which exists historically at the root of Eastern and Western spirituality – something of which we may be aware in principle, but probably know very little about in detail. Rhode's dedicated researches combine with his psychoanalytic experience to make him especially well qualified to interpret for us the oriental affinities and influences behind the father of Western philosophy, in such a way that we can divine their relevance to current thinking about thinking – especially in the wake of Bion. Nonetheless it is probably not appropriate to approach the book in terms of a straight introduction to Eastern thinking and its influence on modern psychoanalysis; a more fruitful response is perhaps to follow the author's own method of allowing the revealed correspondences to spark associations in our own mind. This approach is indicated by the chapter headings which are not 'Buddhism', 'Hinduism', etc., or even lists of sacred sites, but have such titles as 'Axials

and Disappearance', 'Deep Time', 'The Weight of an Excluded World', and so on. These themes are held together by reference to the Platonic *axis mundi*.

The cosmic pillar of Plato's axial, reverberating through world religions as it does, is – says Rhode – like a 'spaceship' or 'falling star' descending to earth to transfigure the site of its reception. The space of its landing may be defined by an array of dualities: such as that between Yin and Yang, sun and moon, male and female, water and fire, wrathful and peaceful faces of the Buddha, theological and artistic viewpoints, and the outside and inside of Plato's cave. Such rhythms both support and destroy the 'continuities of daily existence' and prepare the ground for death or breakdown in the shape of a revelation which pierces them and disturbs the composure of their routine vision. The pillar of light has analogies with the Taoist Unknowable Way, and finds representations in such Western myths as Jacob's ladder, or in the sacrificial posts of Vedic altars, or other Eastern representations of a 'luminous cranial cord', whose segments appear in turn in certain mandalas or the Buddhist *lotus sutra*, in stone-age markings in a secret recess of a cave at Les Combarelles, or in the unfolding terraces of the temple at Borobudur in Java. All feature in Rhode's account of 'the geometry of revelation' – an intersecting structure in which it is required that a situation of human 'error' be set up (if it does not exist already) in order to be re-formed.

Axiality, in Rhode's definition, marks our awareness of a source of knowledge (or light or music) which may be 'responded to but not known'. It is the 'space between' that 'activates revelation'. The axial threshold mediates between the worlds of Being and Becoming – the spindle that turns on the knees of Necessity. It is the ground from which religion, art and mathematics spin their semi-abstract structures: 'In Platonic speculation, geometric forms arise out of the fire of the *anima mundi*' (p. 134), and 'Out of the threshold of death and rebirth appears the geometric form' (p. 152). It is the threshold between Bionic '*O*' and the Kleinian 'combined object'. Thus Rhode relates the axial pillar (and its representation in sacrifice posts) to the primordial mound or stupa, with its evidence of man's conjectures about 'the nature of the interior':

> In psychoanalytic thought, this archaic time–space conception of the absolute as a meaning within an interior that cannot be accessed is represented by the idea firstly of the combined object and the idea secondly of an architectural representation of the combined object, which is the primal scene. (p. 62)

In this way, he suggests, Freud's primal scene rediscovers its ancient roots, subsequent rather than prior to the combined object itself. The light of the eternal or unknowable 'refracts prismatically into forms of the combined object' (p. 190), rather like the thousand Buddha-bodies or Buddha-fields. All these sensuous manifestations intimate 'the combining of objects that

arise out of a ground that is infinite' and (in Bionic terms) contribute to 'the resilience of the contact barrier' (p. 136):

> The ancient Greeks attributed geometry as a power to the male; they thought of semen as carrying a blueprint. But Vedic thinkers attribute the prerogative of creating geometric forms to the matrix and describe the linga and god-foetus as though they were united into one being in the matrix. Potency in this setting originates with *yin* rather than *yang* and with the moon rather than the sun. (p. 136)

Inevitably, the axial threshold is rarely crossed smoothly or comfortably, and hence is traditionally associated with jarring intimations of mortality, and – in primitive societies – with literal enactments of human or animal sacrifice. Rhode does occasionally refer to the more sinister implications of such pre-artistic representations, as in fetishism and the 'concrete equation' of dismembered bodies, or in the way the sacrifice-post as axial explicitly brings up 'issues of murder'. He just hints at the historic change from place of sacrifice to place of drama. In general, however, the structure of the book – which is like a personal dream-narrative – smoothes over distinctions of genre. Shiva, Parvati, Perseus, Lachesis, Sophocles' Oedipus, Shakespeare's Richard II, appear to exist on the same level of reality as each other and as the ancestral gods of sacrifice, or indeed as the stones which have acquired the significance of 'a poetic of the immeasurable . . . as though stones were noumena' (pp. 99–100). The effect of this is to intensify our sense of Rhode's personal vision, as the culmination of axial wanderings in which – perhaps like Oedipus himself in the chapter on 'Disturbing Gaits' – he is guided throughout by presiding poetic spirits such as Lao Tzu and Wang Bi, Eastern art historians such as Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch and indeed by his wife, to whom the book is dedicated. As he writes of Borobudur, the terraces are laid out:

> . . . in order to have the traveller feel the existence of a threshold within the axial of circumambulation, the crossing of which signifies a passing through death as a stage in being reborn. Only by undergoing the rigours of walking along the terraces is the traveller made ready for the open spaces that reveal the presence of the heavens. (p. 145)

One might suggest that the book is itself one of those geometric forms born from a terraced threshold of psychoanalytic theoretical constructs. The traveller on this axial journey partakes of a universal myth whose human roots are in the mother–infant gaze. Rhode begins with this correspondence, and towards the end of the journey of his book he returns to it and confirms its body-centred cosmology:

> An infant may see in its mother's gaze a diamond thunderbolt travelling through oceanic waters, and it may come to think of the axial joints of its mother's body as spirals, or as eyes, or as angels. (p. 183)

Such things are the sources of much of the religious iconography that he encounters in his travels, and that transcend the East–West theological divide; and, at the end of his investigation, Rhode reviews the Platonic myths in terms of a family history which is both that of individuals and of the human family as a whole:

> Parents and grandparents, who are surely the originators of the six characters in search of an author, regain their authority by means of the prism that has them return to the present as rays of light in refraction. The axial by which they undergo this change does not have the meaning of a terrestrial axial. Personality is no longer of consequence. Within the cave, forgotten ancestors assume the shape of animals, or of angels, or of some drift among the stars. (p. 192)

Our philosophical roots are themselves such unknowable ancestors, whose life and earliest reincarnations continue to return and be reinterpreted in the context of our own personal journey. And in the rich evocativeness of Rhode's book, many ancestral spiritual systems may be said to have found an author.

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The Freudian Moment by Christopher Bollas. Published by Karnac, London, 2007; 102 pp; £16.99 paperback.

In *The Freudian Moment* Christopher Bollas continues his ongoing inquiry into the analytic process and the nature of analytic technique. He has always been a careful and sensitive reader of Freud, as alert to his shortcomings as to his genius. In this book he locates the central and fundamental tenet of Freud's work in the means by which the analyst enables the patient's process of free association. He is at pains to emphasize this because he perceives that it is becoming marginalized in contemporary analytic discourse. If we forgo due attention to it, then, he believes, we have strayed a long way from the classical method that Freud took care to outline. To my mind, this is a very worthwhile thesis, and anything that encourages clinicians to read, or reread, Freud is good news.

The book is made up of five chapters. The first two consist of interviews with Christopher Bollas carried out by Vincenzo Bonaminio, an Italian training analyst, who also writes the introduction. Chapter 3 is a reprint of a paper published in the *Psychoanalytic Review* in 2006. Chapter 4 'What is Theory?' is a talk given by Bollas at the International Federation of Psychoanalytic Education's (IFPE) Annual Conference in 2006. Chapter 5 is

reprinted from a book edited by André Green in 2006, *Les Voies Nouvelles de la Thérapeutique Psychoanalytique*.

What is striking is that all these interviews, talks and essays took place over one year, 2006, which amply demonstrates what a prolific writer and thinker Bollas is. And I note from checking his publications on Amazon that he has just published another book, *The Infinite Question*. Whilst *The Freudian Moment* is eloquent and readable, as is always the case with this author, it also feels condensed and yet, on occasion, repetitive. This may be partly due to the format of interviews and talks, which are less closely argued than papers, and to ongoing preoccupations which resurface, such as the two paragraphs from the encyclopaedia articles of Freud's, which make their appearance in both the first and fourth chapters. He makes reference to his own specific concepts, such as 'genera' and 'introjective identification' without elaboration except a reference to his previous texts. And his discussion of pluralism, which I will return to, feels foreshortened.

Vincenzo Bonaminio, who has written before about Bollas, is a searching interviewer, able to push for definition from Bollas when he is in danger of becoming overly allusive. There are some dynamic exchanges between them which open up ideas for readers' further consideration. As is often the case with interviews as texts, there are also passages that feel staged, but on balance I felt engaged, entertained and exasperated at various moments, and in varying degrees. As an additional bonus: the sumptuously coloured cover illustration, reminiscent of Kandinsky's early paintings, is credited to Bollas. There really is a rich diversity of talent here.

What, then, is the 'Freudian Moment'? For Bollas the arrival of psychoanalysis itself was transformative for the Western mind. Freud's invention fulfilled a search that had been going on for thousands of years for a means of containing the anxieties of being human. The 'Freudian Moment' is the realization of this need. Bollas refers to it as a phylogenic preconception (*pace* Bion), formalizing the reporting and receiving of the dream. That its discovery is coincident with the development of the means of mass destruction makes it, apparently, an evolutionary accomplishment born of necessity. This is a characteristically grand statement from Bollas. On one hand, it is true that Freud bought something unique into being with the creation of the psychoanalytic method; on the other, the history of the means human beings have found for containing anxieties up until that point and beyond (religion, politics, philosophy) go unmentioned.

The thesis that shapes the book continues with an examination of, and, in part, a plea for a return to, some of Freud's earliest conceptions of psychoanalytic method, the process of free association and evenly suspended attention. This is what Bollas designates the maternal order, locating the maternal in Freud's elaboration of the lively and dynamic unconscious – so different from Freud's later conceptualization of the id. He cites two paragraphs in Freud's (1923a) 'Two encyclopaedia articles', already cited in his previous

two books. I will quote the second of these, since it goes to the heart of his thesis:

> [T]he analytic physician . . . was to surrender himself to his own unconscious activity, in a state of evenly suspended attention, to avoid so far as possible reflection and the construction of conscious expectations, not to try to fix anything he had heard particularly in his memory, and by these means to catch the drift of the patient's unconscious with his own unconscious. (p. 13 [Freud, 1923a, p. 239])

Bollas uses this quote to locate his disquiet with current trends in analysis, both in England and in America, where his supervisors 'had an agenda. I was meant to be very alert and highly determined to find what they reckoned I should find. The idea that I was to listen without reflection, memory or anticipation was off the map' (p. 14). The criticisms extend robustly: 'If the analyst has it in mind that he or she is going to interpret the transference in the here and now, then they are not practising psychoanalysis even remotely related to the Freudian proposal' (p. 14). And later: 'The *tacit assumptions* of many psychoanalysts reveal an abandonment of belief in unconscious processes' (p. 15, his italics).

Every now and then a sense of authorial fury breaks through the text. Here is Bollas decrying the impoverishment of analytic debate: 'Instead of a clash of ideas there is "intellectual genocide" (see Bollas, 1992). One group falsifies another's ideas, and engages in a type of clan warfare. Significant ideas cease to be signifiers and instead become signs' (p. 4). However, it is clear that he is not immune from this himself. Perhaps all that one can note is that we are all prey to 'clan warfare' and that, given half a chance, we will traduce another's ideas in order to triumph over them, rather than engage in the more time-consuming and uncertain process of serious debate.

Bollas emphasizes the importance of being with the seemingly random or formless quality of the patient's associations before making interpretations, despite the pressure to speak or organize meaning. Both analyst and patient may want, and expect, sense and meaning to emerge. For the analyst this can be through an over-reliance on established theory; the analysis confirms the truth of the theory, but the patient too believes that the analyst will make sense of his symptom/life/experience and give meaning.

In fact Bollas makes an eloquent case for privileging process over meaning. As he describes it, analysis is essentially about a mysterious and uncertain attempt to engage, and enlarge, the capacities of the analysand's unconscious mind. Interpretations that may emerge should set in train succeeding psychic material; everything is always breaking up to allow new trains of thought to emerge. It is this allowing of an ongoing process of thought transformation that builds the unconscious mind. He quotes Freud:

'The Ucs is alive and capable of development and maintains a number of other relations with the Pcs, among them co-operation' (Freud, 1915e, p. 190). The attention to the narrative sequence that is implicit in the patient's free associations is the very thing, he says, that we are most in danger of jeopardizing, either through premature interpretation or interpretations within the same paradigm.

The paradigm that he takes most issue with in this book, aimed at the British and European market, is the contemporary Kleinian model. In it, he believes, too much emphasis is placed on actively interpretive engagement with the patient at the expense of the patient's process of free association. Particular criticism is reserved for a tendency to focus on interpretation of the here and now transference: 'While transference is an order that takes place *all* the time, the fact that *it is there* does not mean that it should subsume into itself all other orders' (p. 51).

Tracing some of the conundrums in the developments and contradictions in Freud's theorizing leads Bollas to point out 'the hazards of theory formation and both the reach and limits of theory' (p. 75). He argues that 'different theories constitute different perceptual categories', 'they are forms of perception' (p. 77) and 'when practised they become ethical decisions' with 'varying degrees of depth potential' (pp. 78, 80). His argument is related to the idea of pluralism and his claim to be a pluralist. 'For me the question is not whether one is a pluralist or not. The question is whether one is a pluralist or a totalitarian' (p. 7). This seems to be rather a drastic definition; most psychoanalytic therapists would hope not to be totalitarians, but most would probably acknowledge working within a predominant paradigm. For Bollas: 'It is an ethical obligation, in my view, for all psychoanalysts to immerse themselves in the theoretical orientation of the major schools of psychoanalysis: Freudian, Kleinian, Hartmanian, Kohutian, Bionian, Winnicottian and Lacanian' (p. 82). For practitioners working in the UK and Europe, Hartmanian and Kohutian supervisors may be thin on the ground; there is no doubt that here Bollas has the advantage of having trained as an analyst in London, but worked worldwide.

For some there will be irreconcilable differences between the major schools of psychoanalysis which no amount of immersion will oblate. Even from my local perspective object relations, and the receptivity and interpretive mind-set that accompany it, must be radically different from a Lacanian perspective if either are to have justice done to them. For many Freud's elaboration of the death drive and his final emphasis on the conflict between Eros and Thanatos have remained not only unpalatable but problematic. Object relations differs substantially from Freud's model of the instincts as the constituent force in human development since it assumes, in different degrees, combinations of the actual as well as the imagined relations with others as constitutive.

In considering, and advocating, pluralism the recognition of the difference between these schools is barely touched on. Nor is the complex issue of whether they are to be integrated or approached in an additive way, and in any case the categories of difference are too broadly specified. However, in its slightly polemical way this book is accomplished and worth reading. It reveals Bollas, always a passionate and articulate analyst, fulminating against what he sees as a deathly *status quo* in analytic thinking, while he continues his exploration of unconscious articulation.

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Who Is It That Can Tell Me Who I Am? The Journal of a Psychotherapist by Jane Haynes. Published by Karnac, London, 2009; 323 pp; £7.99.

I am still not sure, after re-reading it, for whom this book was written. Having seen it reviewed in the week-end papers, I was pleased to know that ideas about psychotherapy by a practitioner were reaching a wider audience – but also apprehensive about 'the secrets of the consulting room' being shared with this audience.

I find that my ambivalence persists. The book was originally self-published, and brought to the attention of the publishing world by the judges of the PEN/Ackerley Prize. The somewhat eulogistic Preface by the author's friend, Hilary Mantel, describes her as 'a fellow-practitioner in the art of narrative' (p. xii), which gives the book a literary endorsement; and states that 'anyone who comes to her book with an open mind and heart will see that the practice of psychotherapy she describes here is open, flexible and humanistic' (p. xx).

This answers the further question of what this book, divided into several parts, is about. It is about the profession of psychotherapy: the author's experience of having it, then of practising it, and then of her patients' experience of having it. The final section describes the harrowing experience of her son-in-law's murder by racists: one senses that Jane Haynes wanted to

share this experience, and her partial recovery from it, more widely than private grief allowed. But it does feel like an appendage to the rest of the book.

The fact that her own childhood, as recounted in the first section, was such a painful and neglectful one testifies to the skill and devotion of her beloved therapist, a Jungian analyst whom she saw for 13 years, until his sudden death. She addresses him throughout as 'you', which gives a very personal tone to the writing, to the extent of leaving the reader feeling like an intruder into a kind of private prayer. She was clearly in love, and suggests that he was too, calling their relationship at some point a '*folie à deux*'. The rather florid style conveys the enraptured quality of this relationship: 'Whenever I reached for your hand and briefly, very briefly, cradled its pale warmness in mine, something strange happened. I had the experience of becoming male and your tentative hand seemed to me like the feathered breast of a turtle-dove' (p. 79).

Later in the book there is a suggestion that her analyst was too involved with her to allow for any other ending than his death. It seems there is some anger behind this idealization, both of her analyst and of herself in the relationship, but it is never really explored. As a practitioner, Haynes states that her best therapeutic outcomes with patients have been after a period of two to four years. She clearly values the human qualities of her analyst, and has embedded them in her practice. But the rules of abstinence, which he tried to observe, do give her trouble, and much of the book is a challenge to classical psychoanalysis and some Jungian practices. 'Of course you need a corrective emotional experience, of course you need me to behave differently from your mad father' (p. 59), he says, and her practice bears this out.

There is much to agree with in this challenge: her insistence on 'equality rather than symmetry of purpose' between patient and therapist, which allows her to disclose and demonstrate aspects of her personality and private life; her distaste for the practice of not answering questions; her sense that working in the transference may only be appropriate for certain patients; her acceptance of the external reality of the patient's life, rather than the privileging of the inner world which is so often demeaning to him. She also feels that some neurotic elements can be hidden from the therapist, and that close friends' and family's reactions need to be part of the picture.

As illustration of this approach, she has published, with her patients' permission, some of their accounts of their therapy with her. While the ethical questions surrounding this have been addressed (how might those patients whom she has not asked to contribute feel, for example), they seem to have been willing to participate, and to read what she has written about them. This would be a valuable exercise, were it not for the rather sentimental, idealizing and poetic tone that infects her writing, and sometimes theirs. One chapter, for example, is entitled 'She Sat with Dark Eyes and Her Fingers Touching', which rephrases more poetically the patient's 'She sat

with her elbows on the arm rest of her chair, her fingertips touched together in an open cage and looked at me with her dark eyes' (p. 186). There is very little that is negative in these accounts, reflecting Haynes's rejection of the more austere aspects of analysis; and were it not for the romanticizing and sometimes sentimental nature of the prose, one might not need to go looking for hidden hostilities. Winnicott's view that aggression is the hidden side of sentimentality is relevant here.

The chapter entitled rather jauntily 'Miss Suicide Shops at Tesco and Finds a Phoenix' is rather more nuanced, as Haynes feels she was wrong not to intervene in the patient's attempted suicide, from which she was rescued by the chance intervention of a chambermaid, thus underlining the importance of external reality. But her description of the patient jars: 'If I try to imagine your totem animal I think of one of those superb Arab stallions that belong to the Hungarian school; something about the arrogant toss of your head set upon its pliant stalk' (p. 221). The use of the vocative, as in the earlier sections about her therapist, creates an unwelcome sense of collusion.

Haynes rather disingenuously claims '*not to idealize my practice*' (p. 261) in describing her accessibility to her patients. In presenting her personal engagement in contrast to more traditional approaches, she writes: 'My tools are modesty, patience, imagination, a good memory, curiosity that has been sublimated into a skilled, appropriately empathic listening technique' (p. 129). This would be more acceptable, and indeed more modest, if it were a description of the kind of therapist she would like to be; but stated in this way it situates her as the only one who has thought about such things, rather than as a representative of an increasingly pluralist strand in psychotherapy (see Knox, 2009).

If the average general reader is less suspicious of idealization than the average psychotherapist, then this book will offer an attractive take on therapeutic work, and perhaps dispel the myth of the Blank Screen and the cold, impersonal analyst. For this we should probably be thankful.

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Child Psychotherapy and Research edited by Nick Midgley, Jan Anderson, Eve Grainger, Tanja Nesic-Vuckovic and Cathy Urwin. Published by Routledge, Hove, 2009; 232 pp; £22.99 paperback.

The psychoanalytic professions appear to be under more threat and attack at present than at any other time. With the advent of IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) diminishing resource bases and pressure from government to deliver evidence-based or NICE-approved treatments, it is imperative that the professions rise to the challenge to present evidence of effectiveness in clear and unambiguous ways. The recent meta-analysis of the effectiveness of long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy by Leichsenring and Rabung (2008) showed that long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy was a *more* effective treatment for complex mental disorders than other shorter forms of psychotherapy. This was a highly significant publication in a prestigious non-psychoanalytic journal and can be used to make the case that there is evidence for the effectiveness of this type of treatment. This new book also helps in the cause for psychoanalytic child psychotherapy, as it brings together a wide range of papers and summaries of research studies undertaken in the field from around the world. However, as Peter Hobson in the preface states: '. . . there are profound scientific challenges in specifying, measuring and making manifest the developmental processes that are at work to influence emotional development, for good or ill' (p. xv).

There is a tension within the book as to whether this can be achieved without losing what Alvarez and Lee in their chapter called 'The "Nuance" of the Encounter in the Consulting Room in the Service of Replicable Evidence'. The book seems to be aimed at audiences external to the profession and those within and as such is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the breadth of child psychotherapy outcome and process research as well as helping 'make the case' for this type of treatment.

The introductory chapter by the editors addresses comprehensively the challenges of evaluating psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The tyranny of the hierarchy of evidence with RCTs (Random Controlled Trials) as the gold standard is examined and a strong case made for its limitations. However, it remains the only show in town that NICE takes seriously, despite protestations from many quarters to the contrary and, in order to survive, we have to play this game. We know that the limitations of this type of research, that often excludes co-morbidity or use recruited samples, skew the findings and limit their translation to ordinary clinical populations but NICE still use these RCTs to develop their guidelines and, if Layard's proposals to implement an IAPT programme for children is taken seriously, then only NICE-approved treatments will be funded. The good news is that NICE has funded

a large-scale study of psychotherapy with children with depression, the IMPACT study, which provides us with both a challenge and opportunity to participate in a properly funded RCT, albeit for 28 sessions and 7 parent support sessions. In the government's agenda this is long-term treatment. The introductory chapter does highlight 'the challenge to provide research methods that do justice to complex developmental processes in ways that will enrich theory and understanding, with implications for practice and technique' (p. 5). This is crucial as research should provide these functions as well as make the case, and not just be some dry activity carried out by academics.

The book is structured to address the theoretical and political issues in the first part and the nature of the therapeutic process in the second. Part 3 concerns evaluation and outcome whilst Part 4 attempts to attempts to show how child psychotherapy research interacts with other disciplines.

Bion's concept of multiple vertices or the need for different points of view in order to achieve dimensionality came to mind throughout the book. With the development of child psychotherapy trainings now largely becoming clinical doctorates with graduates hopefully at home with research methodologies and a capacity to critically evaluate evidence, the future looks brighter in so far as developing a comprehensive research and evidence-based profession. One would hope this will reduce the disabling effect of the often quoted objection that investigating psychotherapy will distort what is important in the very act of studying it. Peter Fonagy makes the case for this very strongly in his comprehensive chapter on 'What Is Child Psychotherapy Research?' He states that we are entitled to expect that the clinicians' work will be influenced by research including *evidence* from other disciplines like neuroscience. Similarly, there needs to be cross-fertilization from our clinical theorizing and practice to enrich other disciplines. The psychotherapists' concern with subjective experience or psychoanalysis as the 'science of subjectivity' has a vital role to play in society. However, we need to communicate what we do and what goes on in the consulting room in a language 'less dependent on the personal experience of psychotherapy' and, if we do, then 'we find that those who are not normally exposed to it appreciate, understand and benefit from ideas first distilled in the cauldron of the analytic encounter' (p. 26). Whatever we may think are the aims of psychoanalytic work, publicly funded psychotherapy services expect patients to improve symptomatically. I do agree with him, working as I do as a commissioner for Child Mental Health services and having served on numerous high-level governmental bodies, that 'without intense research on the effectiveness of the method deeply rooted in and shaped by psychological models of pathology, the long-term survival of this orientation is not assured' (p. 29). His conclusion is salutary and is illustrated in the following chapters that:

> Researchers in child psychotherapy must be willing to work in a professional no-mans' land, their motives regarded as suspect or even treacherous both by clinicians, who regard attempts to establish an evidence base as misguided, and by workers in experimental psychology . They will have to work harder than most, like children trying to prove their loyalty to two separated parents. (p. 30)

I was heartened in the chapter 'What Do Child Psychotherapists Know?' by Rustin who has pioneered the use of qualitative methods of research into child psychotherapy where he recognizes that:

> Research into the outcomes and effectiveness of treatment is particular urgent, because in today's evidence-based culture of health care, commissioners demand data to substantiate claims for the value of psychotherapy, and are sometimes unwilling to accept professional advice unsupported by statistical evidence. (p. 43)

But research has another function in its wider form and he goes on to say that:

> Clinicians expecting to work with individual patients, although they need to know about significant research on different categories of patients and their treatment outcomes, need a more particular kind of knowledge as well. This takes the form of a virtual library of relevant conceptions, theories and cases, so that when the unknown appears, they have to hand the discriminations with which to think about it. Such primary knowledge has a level of delicacy (see Alvarez and Lee on 'nuance' later in the book) and specificity that managers and policy makers can justifiably leave to the practitioners to master. (p. 46)

The following chapters on process research in child psychotherapy make a significant start at doing just this – to try and help clinicians improve clinical practice and develop theory to make sense of their observations. Janet Philps's chapter 'Mapping Process in Child Psychotherapy' does attempt to translate the personal conviction of the value of therapy for public scrutiny. However, despite its excellent intention, like Bion's grid, I doubt that clinicians will feel the methods she proposes will be able to capture the often ineffable nature of the work. Philps does recognize the problem and attempts to triangulate statistical methods with qualitative ones in the hope that these multiple veritices would enable more refined communication to others about what we do. A similar aim to bridge the gap between clinicians and researchers and to generalize research knowledge into practice is attempted in the next chapter on the Child Psychotherapy Q-Set by Schneider, Pruetzel-Thomas and Midgley. This method attempts to retain the subtleties and the unknowable aspects of psychotherapy to try and learn from experience as Bion recommends as the basis of true learning, as opposed to learning about experience. The conclusions reached from this research are interesting in that with all the emphasis nowadays on manual-

ized treatments which attempt to capture the 'ideal type of treatment', the researchers showed that there was no clear association between this ideal and the actual practice of clinicians. But once again this Q-Set methodology does provide another vertex from which psychotherapeutic work can be viewed.

It was moving to read the study by Moran and Fonagy where they use ground-breaking physiological outcome measures to show the effectiveness of psychoanalytic therapy on an adolescent with brittle diabetes. The chapter shows how a single case study so favoured by psychotherapists, when properly conceived, can carry a lot of weight. Carlberg's chapter on 'Exploring Change Processes in Psychodynamic Child Psychotherapy' was impressive. He concentrates on turning points in psychotherapy as the focus of study, which seemed relevant to where we are as a profession at the moment. Like the other chapters in this part of the book he too attempts to find a way to capture the change process in child psychotherapy. This is, as we know, a gradual process but the paper shows how participation in this study enhanced the therapeutic capacity of the therapists. It contradicts the assumption, described above, that participation in research will somehow corrupt or interfere with the psychotherapeutic process

The next part of the book raises issues about how the effectiveness of treatment can be meaningfully assessed. The study by Boston, Lush and Grainger on 'Psychotherapy with Fostered, Adopted and 'In Care' Children' was highly innovative in its time, whilst Trowell, Rhode and Joffe's hugely influential study on 'Childhood Depression' enabled the rare event of psychoanalytic child psychotherapy being included in the NICE guidance on children with depression.

The retrospective study from the Anna Freud Centre by Schachter and Target on 'The Adult Outcome of Child Psychoanalysis' makes interesting reading. The findings 'underscore the importance of a differential approach to treatment based on the patient's primary diagnosis and age, suggesting that psychoanalysis is not necessarily the treatment of choice for all individuals' (p. 145).

As uncomfortable as this may seem, we have to face the possibility that in some cases we can do harm to our patients from this treatment method or, at least, not do too much good. To be able to differentiate when this will be the case is crucially important as one would expect in any medical intervention, and this justifies this type of research. It reinforces the need for long-term follow-up of patients. Cathy Urwin's chapter on 'The Hopes and Expectations for Treatment Approach' again attempts to try and provide a framework for evaluating the clinical effectiveness in child psychotherapy. It is a worthy attempt as it involves parent, child and clinician collaboratively developing meaningful outcome measures for treatment. It has strong resonance with the increasingly accepted goal-based outcome measures which

are being used in Child Mental Health Services often successfully by child psychotherapists.

The final part of the book on interdisciplinary connections through research has some extremely interesting work reported in it. As mentioned (several times above) Alvarez and Lee attempt to work from multiple vertices to paradoxically try and systematically capture the nuance and delicacy of psychoanalytic child psychotherapy in a single case study with an autistic child. They tackle the thorny issue of video recording sessions and how intrusive this can feel with a third eye in the room. The chapter beautifully illustrates the conflict between the scientific method and the psychotherapeutic one, with a refreshing honesty. The study shows how research can not only study existing methods and ideas but generate new ones. Once more the clinician reported how participation in scientific research heightened her sensitivity and led to greater precision in her psychoanalytic thinking about the nuances in the treatment. This theme which runs throughout the book will hopefully reassure doubters with pre-existing prejudices about the value of the participation in research to enhance their clinical and theoretical capabilities. Jan Anderson's chapter on 'The Mythic Significance of Risk-Taking Behaviour', reprinted from the *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, whilst very informative, does not seem to fit within this part of the book. It does not address interdisciplinary connections and seems more appropriately placed within a psychotherapy journal. The following chapter on the Story Stem Assessment Profile by Hodges, Steeles, Kaniuk, Hillman and Asquith vividly shows the richness of interdisciplinary cooperation. This chapter shows just what can be done when a child psychotherapist's knowledge is systematized within an easy to use and well-accepted methodology, to capture the individuality of child's communications which can then be systematically analysed. The story stem technique is replicable and transparent and can be standardized so that 'it makes evident the basis on which judgements about the child are made' (p. 203). The technique gives equal weight to verbal and nonverbal responses and can be incorporated seamlessly into clinical practice. The method allows the nuance to be captured in a 'fine grained' way, and the chapter illustrates once more the value of research in clinical practice. What a breath of fresh air this chapter is even though the subject matter is distressing.

The final chapter by Mayes and Thomas on 'Social Neuroscience and the Implications for Child Psychotherapy' is a fascinating chapter in its description of the role of mirror neurons in the brain but does not live up to its billing about the implications for psychotherapy. It is more useful to aid in the understanding of some neuroscience research useful for psychotherapy, but poor in its attempt to translate these findings into practice. It does emphasize the importance of containment or mentalization in the therapeutic process which is familiar to psychotherapists but does not successfully

enhance one's understanding of the neuroscientific vertex. To this extent it is an opportunity lost. Some of the language is difficult for non-scientific readers.

I hope I have managed to convey the breadth and scope of this important and timely book and would urge both adult and child psychotherapists to read it and digest its findings. One would also hope it manages to go some way to dispel prejudices about the irrelevance of research to clinical practice and rather show how binocular vision from multiple vertices enhances and gives greater depth to our understanding.

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