The logo for the Bristol Psychotherapy Association is a horizontal rectangular banner. It features a background of fine, light-colored dots on a dark grey gradient. The text "BRISTOL PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline, slanted slightly upwards from left to right.

BRISTOL PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

THE BRISTOL PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

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ABOUT THE BULLETIN

The Bulletin is produced three times a year, in January, April and September. The copy date for each edition is usually the first day of the preceding month, 1st December, 1st March and 1st August.

Advertising rates are £20 per page, £10 for half a page, cheques to be made payable to the BPA, and sent with the advertisement.

Advertising Copy: Copy should be "Camera Ready", which means well printed in black ink on white paper (Please, no pale or fuzzy photocopies). Copy can be reduced from A4 to A5, which is the size of the Bulletin pages, but advertisers should remember that reduction in the overall size of the advertisement also reduces the size of the type correspondingly. It should be sent to John Ruffle at 16 Mendip Road, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset BS23 3HA. Tel. 01934 612104, e-mail: john@vicpress01.freemove.co.uk (please send an attached file when sending copy via e-mail).

COPY FOR THE NEXT BULLETIN



The next edition of the Bulletin will be published in April 2008. Copy for this should reach the editor by 1st March 2008, preferably in Word format, either on a disk or as an e-mail attachment.

Please send your copy to John Ruffle at 16 Mendip Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 3HA (e-mail john@vicpress01.freemove.co.uk) Tel. 01934 612104.



West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy
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36 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AF
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The Training in Contemporary Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

This course in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, which commenced in 1990, leads to Associate Professional Membership of the West Midlands Institute of Psychotherapy and to registration with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy.

The requirements of the course include intensive personal therapy, which should start at least one year before and continue throughout the training, two supervised training cases, an experience of infant observation, a psychiatric placement and academic and clinical essays. There is a four-year programme of seminars, frequently conducted by members of the British Psychoanalytical Society. These take place in Birmingham at the Postgraduate Education Centre, City Hospital, on fifteen Saturdays a year. Work groups and case discussion groups are held on the same Saturdays.

The current fees are £643 per term. Students meet their own fees for therapy and for individual supervision.

Applications for admission are now being considered.

The course prospectus and the seminar programme
can be obtained from:

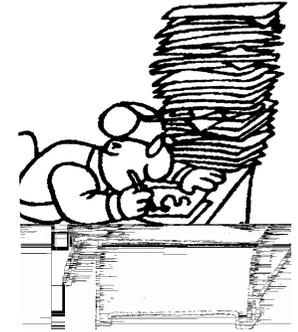
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Tel: 0793 925 5534 E-mail: tcpp@wmip.org

Committee Members: Rosie Hogg (Chair), Helen Flanagan,
Christine Pitt (Admissions Tutor), Anne Samson

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EDITORIAL

Therapy and Cultural Change



I was struck by David Mair's letter, "Valid ways of Relating" in the November edition of *Therapy Today*. In it, he challenges numerous assumptions about sexual relationships, in particular, the belief that heteronormative sexual relationships are a demonstration of the satisfactory resolution of the Oedipus complex.

Culturally, lifelong monogamous relationships are no longer the norm in Western society. Indeed, the norm has become serial monogamy, and for those who are not in committed relationships, it can be regarded as "normal" for them to engage in very short-term sexual relationships or to enjoy what has come to be known as "recreational sex" with a number of partners. This change has clearly been precipitated by the availability of forms of contraception that are, for the most part very reliable.

For me this is a challenge to the way in which I think about human behaviour and many of the psychological explorations which, as a therapist, I facilitate in my clients. It seems to me that it is all too easy to think in terms of theoretical understandings that are not closely enough (if at all) related to societal norms. For example, thinking again about the way in which sexuality is generally expressed in current Western society we would, according to traditional understanding, be bound to say that today, *most* people demonstrate an immature sexuality, due to unresolved oedipal issues. This may go some way towards explaining the plethora of relationship difficulties which we witness in today's world, but although the case for this has frequently been argued, I think there are also serious questions to be asked.

We have to bear in mind that although its proponents would have

Contd on Page 13

**BRISTOL PSYCHOTHERAPY
ASSOCIATION**
2007/08 – Winter/Spring/Summer Terms
PROGRAMME

Monday 21st January 2008

Title *Sitting in the Client's Chair*

Speaker **Anna Sands** is a writer of textbooks for students of English as a foreign language. Following two very different experiences of therapy (one harmful and one beneficial), she has written about the client's perspective in psychotherapy and is the author of 'Falling for Therapy ~ psychotherapy from a client's point of view'.

Monday 4th February

Title *The Resilience of Mother*

Speaker **Amélie Noack** is a Jungian Analyst and Group Analyst. She works in private practice with individuals and groups in Bristol and London, and has been involved in social dreaming in the UK and abroad.

**Monday 3rd March [Joint Meeting with Jung
Lectures at the Randall Room]**

Title *Paradoxes of Palestine: How the Palestine/Israel conflict can embody inner dynamics.*

14th June

Melanie Higgins

Forgiveness – Archetypal and Personal Dynamics.

Venue: The Upper Room, Redland Park United Reformed Church, Whiteladies Road, Bristol

10.30am – 12.45pm

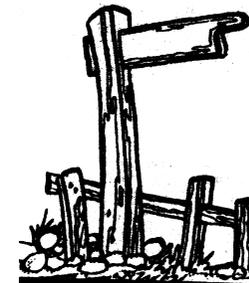
Cost: Members **£8**, Non-Members **£10**, Concessions **£5**

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C.G.JUNG PUBLIC LECTURES 2007/08

12th January

Pamela Trimble

Chiron — The Image of the wounded Healer—an astrological exploration of the meaning and symbolism of the archetypal pattern that underpins the healing professions

9th February

Jeremy Naydler

Technology and the Soul – The survival of psyche in the age of intelligent machines.

3rd March

N.B. This is a joint lecture with BPA and will be held on a Monday evening at The Randall Room. See BPA Programme for details.

Linda Patterson

Paradoxes of Palestine: How the Palestine/ Israel conflict can embody inner dynamics.

12th April

Julian David

Jung and Nature.

10th May

To be announced.

Speaker **Linda Patterson** Patterson trained at the Severnside Institute for Psychotherapy. She recently spent two weeks in Palestine "accompanying" Palestinian farmers during the olive harvest. Accompanying is an act of witness in situations where injustices may occur, as happens in Palestine. It might be said that the Palestine/ Israel conflict epitomises all conflicts, and that thoughtfulness about it can shed light on ways forward. Linda has a private practice in Bath and works with the Avon Counselling and Psychotherapy Service in Bristol. She is a member of Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility.

Saturday 12th April — A Day Workshop which must be booked separately in advance.

Title

An Integrative Perspective on Co-creation in the Therapeutic Relationship.

Speaker

Maria Gilbert is a UKCP registered Integrative Psycho therapist, a Chartered Clinical Psychologist and a BACP accredited supervisor. She is joint head of the Integrative Psychotherapy, Integrative Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy and Supervision Department at Metanoia Institute.

Monday 19th May

Title

I am integrative – but what does this mean? Creating a flexible model through reflection on practice.

Speaker

Els van Ooijen is a psychotherapist in private practice and senior lecturer at the University of Wales, Newport.

Monday 2nd June

Title 'The rest is silence' - working psychoanalytically with patients who are facing death.

Speaker **Mark Budden** is a member of the Severnside Institute for Psychotherapy. In addition to his private practice as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and supervisor he is the clinical manager of The Harbour, a Bristol charity providing counselling and psychotherapy to people affected by a life-threatening illness.

NB All meetings are at The Randall Room, All Saints Church at the Pembroke Road end of Alma Vale Road, Clifton [up 10 steps with lift then available]. Evening meetings start at 7.30pm and end at 9.00.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I read John's editorial after a week full of people, events, awareness and tragedy – life in fact.

Friends from an old life visited. We shared memories and present joys and cares with them, realising that in discussing our children we bring together history, anguish, fear for the future and pride in the recognition that maybe, after all, we were 'good enough'.

A hasty turn around to prepare ourselves for an Indonesian visitor; a young bright, well-educated woman. Questions flowed to and fro, astonishment, delight, puzzlement and affection left us exhausted but exhilarated, mindful of the energy of a generation throughout the world that has very different perspectives. A generation fuelled by a grasp of technological possibility that moves at a furious pace and barely tolerates our ignorance or slow understanding.

Meanwhile a wonderful conversation with a much-missed son and a shocking encounter with a friend whose partner has been diagnosed with inoperable cancer. Words totally inadequate, emotions myriad.

Bristol Psychotherapy Association

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The Manager *(please insert the name and address of your bank)*

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Your subscription for 2008 is now due.

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Please send your subscription now direct to the treasurer at the address shown opposite or complete the standing order form on the opposite page and send that to the treasurer.

The Subscription period is 1st January to 31st December each year.

Please note there is an increase in the subscription rate for 2008. At the last AGM the rate was increased to **£35**.

Rate: £35.00 annually paid by cheque or cash

Please return this form with your payment if paying by cheque.

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I enclose a cheque for **£.35.00** to cover my 2008 membership of the Bristol Psychotherapy Association.

A sunny autumn day and an overheard comment about the seasons. Looking out across fields I notice the increase in yellow and gold since I last looked and find it possible to welcome the turn of the year as nature closes down to hibernate – the promise of spring as yet far out of reach.

A gift of apples and another of pears. Gathering in the last of the tomatoes and spotting a few rose buds still to open. A supermarket trip and a new pair of winter shoes. A rude driver and yet another newspaper article on climate change.

A brief encounter with a lady of 95, spry and beautifully dressed, but so frail that any puff of wind could blow her away. My little neighbour of 2 delighting in her birthday and seizing with glee the book I present.

Maybe John has a point. Life is what we work with, what we know. People are our concern and our delight. If we retreat to our heads in the belief that there we must reside in order to be a therapist, we miss the obvious. Life doesn't wait while we read it up; we can study it daily and sometimes our access to is overwhelming, but it continues whatever. If we fail to notice the detail perhaps we miss a constant source of learning. Relationship is us, with others, with our world, with our clients.

Meanwhile next week I'm off to this really interesting workshop.....

Penny Wells

ED. We welcome letters and contributions from the membership of BPA.

BOOK REVIEWS

Milton H. Erickson

- **Jeffrey K. Zeig and W. Michael Munion: London, Sage Books (1999) 147pp**

The Client Who Changed Me: stories of therapist personal transformation

- **Jeffrey A. Kottler and Jon Carlson: Hove, Routledge (2005) 221pp**



For years I've been drawn to the phenomenon of Milton Erickson. I've been aware of his influence on the

development of hypnotherapy as well as on that of a number of other distinct therapeutic traditions, including family therapy, mind-body work, solution-focused therapy and NLP. I've read some books about him and his work and have been, by turns, fascinated, frustrated and disappointed. But then I'm someone who struggles with written case histories – I prefer videos and DVDs because of the rich array of material they provide, even though editing still sometimes interferes with the raw data.

The first of these two books caught my attention as I was browsing through the psychology section of a local bookshop. When I turned to the conclusion I found this –

“He was an exceptional model of eclecticism, willing to use almost anything that might be helpful. He attempted to individualise treatment to suit the patient rather than attempting to fit the patient into the mould of the therapist's theory or favourite method. He was concerned with what worked and not with what fit or didn't fit into this or that model of therapy.”

(p.125)

I was intrigued. In this book Zeig and Munion present Milton Erickson as someone whose life experience gave him a distinctive viewpoint on the field of counselling and psychotherapy -

“(T)he ...essence of Erickson's work and contribution is inextricably intertwined with his character structure, which is evident in how he dealt with the exigencies of his own life.” (p.3)

They elaborate with a metaphor –

“Consider the flight of an eagle documented on film. The beauty and power of the bird is captured; the process of flight is observable, as its external anatomy. In the end, however, the spontaneity and endless interaction of beast and environment is lost. Similarly, theoretical formulations about Erickson's work do not capture his essence.” (p.4)

The biographical chapter is densely written. It makes reference to the various disabilities Erickson faced (“He suffered from a common form of colour blindness, was ‘tone deaf’ and was unable to recognise or produce

Continued from page 3

claimed to be objective in the formulation of Freudian oedipal theory, they actually operated in a culture where the Judaeo-Christian ethic was normative,. They could not fail, at some level, even if unwillingly, to have been influenced by this.

Clearly our psychological theorising and research needs to be carried out with a very careful eye on the normative culture of the day, because true objectivity is a fantasy which can never be realised. We are always influenced by culture, either consciously or unconsciously. If it is to be useful, our thinking needs to be informed by what is happening culturally, or it is unlikely to be of any practical use. Divorced from culture, even the most critical research can lead us down cul-de-sacs which can only hamper clearer understanding.

The big question that remains to be asked is, “How do we judge what is ‘Immature’ ”? Is such judgment to be made on the basis of whether or not behaviour fits a particular psychological theory, or whether it fits in with the perceived social norm of a particular period in time? The question might also be asked, “Is it in any way useful to make that judgement anyhow?”. It is probably an irrelevant issue unless those who are judged to be “Immature” are themselves concerned about the level of maturity that they have reached.

This is important in relation to all our work with clients, because however skilled we may become at “bracketing off” our personal views and beliefs, they are bound to influence what we do, even if only in subtle and unconscious ways. In this instance, it is particularly the case when working with people who have relationship issues.





DAY WORKSHOP

with

MARIA GILBERT

"An Integrative Perspective on Co-creation in the Therapeutic Relationship"

Saturday 12th April 2008

Cost, including lunch, £55 for members, £65 for non-members

BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Maria Gilbert is a UKCP registered Integrative Psycho therapist, a Chartered Clinical Psychologist and a BACP accredited supervisor. She is joint head of the Integrative Psychotherapy, Integrative Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy and Supervision Department at Metanoia Institute.

Bristol Psychotherapy Association
DAY WORKSHOP

Name

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Please book a place for me on the Day Workshop on 12th April. I enclose £55/£65* (Cheques payable to Bristol Psychotherapy Association) - *Please delete as applicable.

Please send your booking form and remittance to Anna Rose, 19 Cornwallis Crescent, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4PJ Tel 0117 9731857 e-mail.rose@fire-rose.co.uk

musical rhythms. He was dyslexic to at least some degree.”) and gives details of a number of formative childhood experiences prior to contracting polio when he was 17. This nearly killed him, but, once it was clear he would live, he launched himself into a recovery programme based on tenacity, strength of will, curiosity, observation and attention to detail.

Determined from the age of eight that he wanted to become a doctor, whilst an undergraduate Erickson became interested in hypnosis. He rapidly developed his own thinking, holding fast to the notion that the subject of hypnosis is not a passive automaton but an active participant. In order to find out whether there was any scientific evidence of hypnosis causing harm, he undertook an extensive review of the extant literature and during the later 1930s and the 1940s acquired a reputation as a dedicated researcher, whilst at the same time continuing to challenge himself to develop his observational abilities.

Zeig and Munion identify the guiding principle in Erickson’s work as *utilization*, which they define as “the readiness to respond constructively to any aspect of the patient’s life and experience”. Utilization is “predicated on the notion that the most powerful and effective interventions have their origin *within* the patient and his unique circumstances.” As a clinician, Erickson’s use of hypnosis can be seen as a method for enabling his patients to gain access to the full range of their inner resources. As a researcher, his use of hypnosis was more wide-ranging – but then Erickson was an intensely curious individual.

This book comes as part of a series edited by Windy Dryden and is written to a tight format. The five chapters cover his life; the guiding principles underpinning his practice; methods and techniques he advanced; criticisms and rebuttals; and an assessment of his legacy. I found it relatively easy jumping backwards and forwards between these different sections, following the line of my own interest.

Zeig and Munion list a number of criticisms frequently made of Milton Erickson’s approach – the paucity of research; the difficulty of learning the approach; the absence of straightforward guidelines for inexperienced practitioners; claims that the approach is manipulative, directive and/or superficial; assertions that Erickson is a cult figure or that the therapist must be charismatic, so that only Erickson could do what he did; and that the approach only works with certain patient populations and that the

therapist needs a lot of patients to make a living. They argue that, while each of these criticisms is both valid and invalid, they miss the point. The more interesting questions are whether, or to what extent, we can learn from Milton Erickson. In this respect, I loved the quotation that heads the chapter on technique –

“I invent a new theory and a new approach for each individual” (p.47)

This may sound grandiose, but the essential point can be made rather differently by saying that, just as reviews of research findings reveal how relatively little we know about how therapy works, so an examination of the work of Milton Erickson underscores how much more there is to know. He challenges us all to pay close, detailed attention to our own experience of ourselves and of our interactions with our clients – and to learn from them.

Kottler and Carlson have written a book that illustrates what can be gained by doing just that. They interviewed 23 well-known American therapists about the clients who had caused them to change the most –

“We are talking about once-in-a-lifetime transformations that therapists are still working to integrate into their lives”. (p.5)

Each is the subject of a separate chapter. Interestingly, at least three choose to talk about their first ever client. Is it too far-fetched to wonder whether as therapists we may be somewhat more open to learning from our clients before we settle into the rigidities and false certainties of a professional role?

These therapists were all challenged by their clients to expand their horizons. Sometimes this led to taking on a new professional role. Sometimes it also led to changes in relationships within their families or with their friends. All ended up working differently, though the lessons they learnt may not be universally applicable – for some it was a question of learning to do more, while for others the most profound learning was to do with doing less. For a number it was about (re)discovering the value of relating in depth. One therapist found out that, on occasion, it is necessary to break boundaries, while another learnt to hold firmly on to them.

Several talk about greater self-acceptance and some mention the importance of challenging received wisdom. One therapist puts it this way –

“Ethical codes presume that all learning is one-directional... We know that is not true. There are times when the therapist, or the teacher, learns even more than the client or student. Throughout Asia, this is fully acknowledged – the expert is also a student. Whereas in our culture we do everything we can to prevent dual relationships, there are other parts of the world where it would be unethical not to be engaged in such a reciprocal relationship.” (p.159)

Another therapist comments with reference to a different situation -

“That was the defining moment in my career. I no longer believed the things I had been taught, just because they came from so-called experts.”

Yet another -

“felt that, more than any of his supervisors, any of the books he’d read, any of the colleagues he’d consulted, any of the training seminars he attended, in some ways more than his own analysis, Judy had taught him what it means to be a therapist.” (p.109)

A fourth supplies a truly Ericksonian quotation -

“It doesn’t matter what I did with this family. When you have imaginative people, and you get their creativity flowing, whatever you do with them is going to end up with something better.” (p.83)

which perhaps makes for as good a place to end as any.

Arthur Musgrave