Day Conference: Saturday 24th January 2015 Bedfordshire MK44 3AL

Reading the Signs: Psychotherapy and our Cultural Predicament

WHAT DOES IT MEAN that bees are disappearing en masse? As psychotherapists, we may be excellent at reading the signs of a client’s mood or trauma but what of our culture? What does it mean that suicide rates in young people increase or that slavery is a current issue? To read these signs is not to look for an explanation. It is to understand them as symptoms.

Our Western culture could be characterised as ‘narcissistic’, ‘escapist’, ‘delusory’ and ‘sick’. We train our children to be consumers from infancy; we have industrialised our food and destroyed countless animal and plant species. We watch nightly news spectacle of cities devastated by bombs, migrants fleeing these terrors alongside ads for toothpaste.

We seem to have become dissociated from the horrors that surround us. Any psychological reading of this malaise would see collective folly. Why do we not recognise our own madness? Should therapists continue to attend mostly to an individual’s wounding and ignore this wider perspective?

“...along with the individual psyche as the patient, the western ego itself is the designated patient that is presently involved in the healing process.” – Jerome Bernstein

This one-day conference will explore our cultural predicament and the ways in which counselling and psychotherapy can engage the psyche at social, political and cultural levels.

We will explore this predicament initially through sharing our dreams; we will draw on our capacity to look for unknown signs, and read the story within stories. Following the presentations, there will be a choice of workshops in the afternoon session.

Morning presentations: Reading the Signs

Chris Robertson and Richard Wainwright

Chair for this session will be Joan Crawford, a registered psychotherapist and a trainer and supervisor at Re-Vision. She co-organised the 2008 EFPP Summer School, Between Hope and Anguish: the Soul’s Challenge in a time of Planetary Crisis. She is a facilitator of Be The Change Symposium, addressing issues of environmental sustainability, social justice and spiritual fulfilment.

Cultural shadow: where the hopeless becomes transformational

Chris Robertson

“The liveliness and durability of cultures require that there is space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on.” – Lewis Hyde

Using Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein story as a re-reading of the Prometheus myth, my talk will focus on the forces that operate at the shadowy borders of our culture.

These will include both those that control and constrain our behaviour, such as cultural complexes and cults, and those currently taboo perspectives, which, if included, could re-vitalise our culture.

We will travel into these borderlands to imagine what is in the shadow of our consumer/industrial culture especially in relation to the creative and destructive elements of fire.

This journey will involve recognising trauma
Morning presentations: Reading the Signs (continued)

within a cultural perspective and opening to the healing potential that may be in the shadow of the monster that our collective society has created.

Chris Robertson has been a psychotherapist and trainer since 1978 and is co-founder of Re-Vision. He contributed the chapter ‘Dangerous Margins’ to the Ecopsychology anthology Vital Signs, is co-author of Emotions and Needs and of several articles including ‘The Numinous Psyche’ (IJP) and Hungry Ghosts (Self & Society). He is co-creator of the workshop Borderlands and the Wisdom of Uncertainty, which in 1989 became the subject of a BBC documentary.

Social Dreaming Matrix

Presented by Antonia Boll & Nuala Flynn

Social Dreaming is a way in which dreams can be understood on a social and collective level as well as the individual. The dreams are not interpreted but simply shared, followed by a reflective dialogue. Beginning the conference like this may reveal how we are dreaming the theme of the weekend, Reading the Signs, and other social themes. Through this experience we may become aware of new ideas or threads emerging.

Nuala Flynn is a Re-Vision psychotherapist with an MA in Imaginal Studies. She has a lifelong interest in dreams and offers dream groups, supervision and workshops.

Antonia Boll is a Re-Vision Elder, having worked on staff for 19 years, and is a member of the Association of Jungian Analysts.

Reading the Times and Remembering the World

Richard Wainwright

“The psyche is not isolated from history, and psychology takes place not only in a small room between two people walled off from the historical scene. History is in the room.” — James Hillman

My talk will explore the impact of collective dissociation, to which we are all vulnerable, with regard to the inter-weave of History and Politics, Remembering and Forgetting. It will provide examples of how an individual can experience what looks like a ‘psychotic episode’ in the process of remembering what has been collectively forgotten. Such an experience can take the form of a memory of the future. My talk will be informed by my experience of being in Kiev (Ukraine) when the Maidan revolution erupted.

There is perhaps no such creature as an individual who transcends their time, only the fantasy of such an individual, which doesn’t mean that people from different times can’t address each other. With this in mind the presentation will not be confined exclusively to Ukraine. We shall remain in touch with the main theme of collective dissociation.

Richard Wainwright is a Jungian Analyst (AJA) and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist (FPC) practising in London. He has also been supervising and teaching with the Kiev Developing group since 2008. Having given many presentations internationally on relationships between theatre and analysis he is at last preparing a book drawing on his experiences of practice in both. He has contributed chapters to the mainly AJA based books on Supervision and Alchemy edited by Dale Mathers.

Afternoon session: Workshops

A. Cultural Shadow

with Chris Robertson

How can we read the signs that emerge in the consulting room as not only belonging to personal history? In this workshop we will use personal examples of belonging to groups, tribes and nations as an experiential exploration of different levels of shadow — including the unconscious dynamic of culture that so often controls us both within and outside of the consulting room. There will be space to reflect on how we hear a client’s story at these different levels and how we might engage as wounded healers and psychotherapists in reading cultural signs.

B. Remembering the World

with Richard Wainwright

The workshop will follow on from my presentation and will explore how we experience the inter-weave of private and public pasts. Bearing in mind that we are less likely to be open to the present, less likely to read signs of the times in which we live if we are disconnected to memories of reading signs in the past: we shall pay attention not only to what we remember (and forget), but how we remember and forget at the intersections between story-telling, dreaming and gossip.

C. Dream Tending

with Nicky Marshall

One of the ways in which we can Read the Signs is through tending to our dreams, not simply as communication from our personal unconscious about our own psyche, but also as messages from the collective unconscious and Anima Mundi, soul of the world.

In this workshop we will think about the key principles of shifting our attention from dream images as personal material to tending to them as information about, and a call for attention from the collective story and from the other than human world. We will practice working in this way, tending to the dreams of one another and potentially seeing what is calling to us through our dreams at this time of crisis. Please come prepared to share and explore your dreams.

Nicky Marshall is a Re-Vision trained Psychotherapist and supervisor. She teaches on the 3rd year of the Counselling Diploma and on the Couples training. She is interested in gender psychology and how it relates to our sense of embodied self. She also co-runs a small-holding.

D. The Myth of Lady Wisdom

with Joan Crawford and Mary Small

An enactment of Proverbs 8 and 9:

Lady Wisdom has built a house.
Close to her neighbours Sanity, Knowledge and Discretion.
She has set a banquet and graced her table with flowers and silver.
She goes to the city and calls,
“You are confused and empty. I am better than trappings. Nothing you could wish for holds a candle to me.”

The myth tells the story of Lady Wisdom’s primordial existence and Her outrage at being banished from her rightful place in the world today. She has been usurped by cynical calculation, instant gratification and shallow self-interest. And yet, some are painfully aware of the loss of Her and are searching for her traces. They
Re-Vision is an educational charity set up in 1988 for the purpose of offering an integrative and transpersonal approach to counselling, grounded in good practice.

Re-Vision offers the following courses: Counselling Training, BACP accredited; Psychotherapy Training, UKCP accredited; Couples Therapy; Group Facilitation; Supervision Training; as well as personal and professional development programmes.

For further information, please contact: The Administrator, Re-Vision, 97 Brondesbury Road, London NW6 6RY
Tel: 020 8357 8881
info@re-vision.org.uk
www.re-vision.org.uk

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Afternoon session: Workshops (continued)

recognition that Her reinstatement is essential to heal the ills of our troubled world.

Using movement, voice work and process discussion, the workshop will explore the theme of losing and retrieving the voice of Wisdom in our life and practice.

Joan Crawford is Chair of Re-Vision, trainer and supervisor. She also trained as a dramatherapist. She is a facilitator of the Be The Change Symposium, addressing issues of environmental sustainability, social justice and spiritual fulfilment.

Mary Small is Director of Sesame Institute, Re-Vision trained psychotherapist and trainer on the Psychotherapy Diploma. Founder of Psyche and Soma – Soul-making through the Sesame Approach.

How to get there:

By car
The Training Centre, Wyboston Lakes, Bedfordshire MK44 3AL is just off the A1. See map at www.wybostonlakes.co.uk or call 0333 700 7666

By rail
The nearest rail station to Wyboston Lakes is St Neots, on the First Capital Connect on the Great Northern Line, a 50-minute train journey from London King’s Cross. St Neots & Sandy Train Stations are both 10 minutes’ drive away.

Contact Wyboston Lakes direct regarding hotel facilities if you would like accommodation at the venue before or after the conference. More details can be found on their website above.

E. Sex, porn, repression and obsession: what might lie between the prohibition of “Thou Shalt Not” and the compulsion of “I Must And Cannot Stop”?

with Mark Van Gogh and Sarah Van Gogh

Our media presents us each week with the tragic results of a mind/body split in stories of the organised child exploitation in Rotherham, the predatory career of Jimmy Savile, and the fate of young mothers and their babies in the Magdalen Laundries in Ireland, to name but a few.

Therapists report seeing more clients coming for help with a conflicted relationship with internet porn, difficulties with sexual intimacy, and a dis-ease with the nature of their desires.

Using the story of how an indignant Hera cursed the lovely Aphrodite so that she bore a disfigured son, Priapus, who had an outsized phallus, participants will explore the split in our collective psyche between prohibition and compulsion that characterises so many of our wounded behaviours around sex. The workshop will explore:

- what vital energies (or deities) may have been exiled into pornography
- what a middle way between repression and obsession in the field of the erotic might look like
- what this middle way might mean for our clients and for the wider collective.

Mark Van Gogh has been a UKCP psychotherapist, supervisor and trainer for many years. He also teaches on a tantra course.

Sarah Van Gogh is a BACP accredited counsellor, who works in private practice, is a tutor, and a counsellor for Survivors UK, supporting men who have experienced sexual violation.

Booking Form

Name: _____________________________
Address: _____________________________
Postcode: _____________________________
Tel: _____________________________
Email: _____________________________

Training organisation from which you graduated (if counsellor or psychotherapist):

Other profession or job title:

Please list preferred Workshop (ABCDE):
1st choice: ___ 2nd choice: ___ 3rd choice: ___

Fee: £105 per person including Lunch and Refreshments

Note: we are offering an early bird discounted fee of £95 for those booked and paid for before 15th December

☐ I enclose a cheque (payable to Re-Vision) for £105 or
☐ I have paid £105 via bank transfer to Re-Vision Ltd, Co-operative Bank, sort code 08-92-99, account no. 65301472 ref: WR/your name

Cancellation Policy 1 month prior to event: 75% refund; within 1 month: 50% refund; within a week: no refund.

Note: Numbers are strictly limited; early application is recommended