

SOUL ON THE COUCH: SPIRITUALITY, RELIGION AND MORALITY IN CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOANALYSIS. (1997). Edited by Charles Spezzano & Gerald J. Gargiulo. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press. 256 pp.

THE SOUL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY: RECAPTURING THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN THE THERAPEUTIC ENCOUNTER. (1998). Carlton Cornett. New York: Free Press. 176 pp.

Whatever our opinions about the motivation behind the resurgence of national interest in spirituality, it is clear that it is a subject that is receiving a great deal of focus. Numerous books have been published highlighting some aspect of spirituality running the gamut from new age to age-old eastern religions. Two recent books represent some of the best of the group that pertains to clinical work: *Soul on the Couch: Spirituality, Religion, and Morality in Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, edited by Charles Spezzano and Gerald J. Gargiulo, and *The Soul of Psychotherapy: Recapturing the Spiritual Dimension in the Therapeutic Encounter*, by Carlton Cornett.

Soul on the Couch offers both a philosophical and theoretical look at spirituality and contemporary psychoanalysis. As a collection of essays, the strengths of the volume lie in the diversity of voices that represent different perspectives. For example, chapter 1 by Gargiulo sets a beginning tone by bemoaning the fact that psychoanalysis has focused relentlessly on individuation and an "autonomous I" which has often obscured the focus on "the other". However, Gargiulo reminds us that our theoretical heritage has always emphasized "love and work" which dictates the goal of an effective analysis is to move beyond "yourself" and find a "self" in others.

Reflecting a more specific theological perspective are two chapters which discuss psychoanalysis and Jewish spirituality. Daniel J. Rothenberg discusses thoroughly the "points of contact" between the psychoanalysis and Jewish spirituality and Stephen Friedlander offers a personal account of having a bar mitzvah at the age of 44. The Friedlander chapter is more "user-friendly" as it is self-reflective and reads as a case history.

Stephen Knowlauch's chapter on "The patient who was touched by and knew nothing about God" is a compelling demonstration of the important self-

object functions religion can serve. I was reminded of an earlier book by Volney Gay *Understanding the Occult: Fragmentation and Repair of the Self* (1989). What is helpful about the book by Gay is one of his preliminary statements that in discussing how religion and spirituality can serve psychological functions, the discussion should not be taken to minimize the existence of, or importance of spiritual matters or God. So often in these kinds of theoretical discussions there is a reductionistic quality to the subject that implies, as Freud did, that spirituality and religion are strictly human creations serving individual and cultural needs. While it is indeed true that persons and societies are served by religion and spirituality, it is not the only "truth." Overall, the Spezzano volume effectively demonstrates the lack of definitive answers to the spiritual questions, however, the individual theoretical/philosophical monologues are at times wearing and border on being reductionistic.

Three chapters are particularly noteworthy. Jeffrey B. Rubin writes a bold chapter entitled "Psychoanalysis is Self-centered". By utilizing a case illustration of a Buddhist meditator, Rubin is able to demonstrate effectively that psychoanalysis alone is insufficient to facilitate ethical, "non-self-centered subjectivity." Except for the recent emphasis on others in the intersubjectivity school, much of psychoanalytic history has focused on others as need-gratifying objects. In his opinion, "the greater self-acceptance and lessened narcissism that often develops as a result of analytic treatment exists without the larger perspective fostered by spiritual perspectives, wherein one's own experience is viewed as a *part* of a more encompassing reality. A psychoanalytic view of morality based on an individualistic sense of self leads to a morality rooted in the neglect of the other, which does not provide an adequate framework for ethics." Of course, as a clinical social worker I cannot help thinking that if there had been more of a two-way dialogue between social work and psychoanalysis, the history of focus on the self may have been different. Perhaps the heart of who we are as a profession lies with a focus on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and the "polis".

One other strong point about the Rubin chapter as a strength of the text as a whole, is his struggle to avoid either pathologizing religious phenomena or idealizing Buddhism to the extent that it is shielded from being examined clinically. This clinical stance seems the most refreshing and hopeful perspective in avoiding what characterizes many spiritual books: the "orientocentrism" that deifies "the East" and denigrates "the West." Rubin is quick to point out that while Buddhism can enhance psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis benefits Buddhism as well. This is particularly evident with his client, in examining closer the concept of spiritual nonattachment to determine if it is protecting a "sense of nonentitlement, self-abasement, and self-sabotage." Rubin also proposes that while some authors (e.g., Engler, 1986) have elevated the concept of non-self-centeredness as being above self-centeredness, he believes, by drawing on Ogden (1991), that the state of self-focus and non-self-focus are "interpenetrating aspects of human experiences; they are alternating positions of being". Both positions are necessary. Consequently, one of our human dilemmas is to find a way to manage the tension between the two. The goal being, perhaps, not a balance, but an integration of the self and the not-self. In a similar vein, Joseph Bobrow continues this discussion in his chapter on "Coming to Life: The Creative Intercourse of Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism" by emphasizing that the goal of Buddhism is not eliminating the ego. While we must have or create a self, we must also be able to lose that self.

Joel Greifinger's chapter offers a much needed "moral account of psychoanalytic therapy" which builds on the social-constructivist school to protest the

history of an objective "subject" (therapist) that evaluates an "object" (patient). He also provides a needed critique of the postmodern approaches as they appear to idealize themselves as being more authentic because they acknowledge their own "inauthenticity."

Perhaps one critique of this volume is the lack of a feminist perspective that could build on these concepts of both having a self and being a self that is connected to and related to others and the broader social arena. While Stephen Mitchell's relational work (1988, 1993, etc.) is drawn on, where are the voices of the numerous female clinicians and theoreticians that have been championing the cause of a broader view of self than one that is simply "individuated?" The emphasis on eastern practices does permit a look at a broader definition of self in a manner that Alan Roland has been proposing: a concept of self that is a "we-self" (1996). Perhaps the broadening of the psychoanalytic perspective to allow for the possibility of the richness of a spiritual life that does not have to be a reaction formation against innate aggression, for example, might allow the field to move beyond the narcissism of thinking only psychoanalysts have invented the subjective and moral field in which we practice. Social workers have been championing this integration for decades.

While Carlton Cornett does describe the multiple ideas about spirituality from Freud to Jung to postmodernists, the strength of his text lies in his clinical illustrations. He uses clinical illustrations to describe a variety of spiritual conflicts, for example, the search for security in moral absolutes, love and hatred as spiritual corollaries of ambivalence, and the influence of parents in spiritual development. This approach is somewhat reminiscent of Paul Fleishman's work, *The Healing Zone* (1989). The clients represented in these chapters are spoken of with great compassion which is typical of Cornett's writing (1992, 1995, etc). He devotes one chapter to countertransference and the therapist's values, but woven into all of the illustrations are his struggles to listen and respond in a more attuned way. Cornett makes a clear case for what would have been missed with each of his clients had he not opened the door to the topic of God, spirituality, and religious belief. In the chapter on "Spiritually attuned psychotherapeutic technique," Cornett makes a similar point to that of Rubin in the Spezzano & Gargiulo text in terms of redefining "neutrality" with Isay's (1993) concept of "active, nonjudgmental curiosity". Curiosity makes way for the unknown and mysterious aspects of spirituality and sets a tone that assists clients' ability to tolerate the unknown aspects of life. In moving towards comfort with ambiguity and uncertainty clients ironically gain in their ability to experience themselves as strong and vital. Bobrow (in Spezzano & Gargiulo) quotes Mitchell (1993) as saying "one of the great benefits of the analytic process is that the more the analysand can tolerate experiencing multiple versions of himself, the stronger, more resilient, and durable he experiences himself to be".

My only criticism of Cornett's work is ironically perhaps one of the strengths of what he has accomplished with this text. The techniques are not new and mysterious; they represent good clinical work. By not falling prey to the tendency of many texts to propose "The Definitive Answer" Carlton both lets the reader off the hook and frustrates the reader. The qualities inherent in solid practice will assist clinicians with moving into discussions of spirituality as their clients direct. What is important, however, is for the clinician to recognize her/his own vulnerabilities and biases about spirituality, which oftentimes may be a more complicated area than sex or politics! By the very definition, spirituality may be unexplainable. Our comfort with that aspect will certainly dictate how much our clients believe we can hear and understand of this aspect of their lives.

Griefflander's criticism of postmodernism comes to mind, however—when you are comfortable with ambiguity you have to guard against elevating that ambiguity as "the Truth."

The value in reading these texts is gaining both a philosophical and theoretical view of spirituality and seeing how spirituality can have an important place in our clinical work. As compliments to each other, these texts challenge the historical bias against spirituality as being "flaky" or not "scientific" and therefore not critical in treatment.

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NARCISSISTIC DISORDERS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT. (1998). Edited by Phyllis Beren. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc.

Phyllis Beren has assembled a talented cadre of clinicians/theoreticians from both sides of the Atlantic to explore the many complex clinical and theoretical issues related to the treatment of narcissism in children and adolescents. In her Introduction, Beren makes a powerful case for the need for such a collection of essays and detailed case material, citing the increasing tendency for children to be treated briefly and with medication. She attributes the diminished attention to the inner life of children, in part, to the expanded definition of attention deficit disorder that has recently included a wider range of behaviors. She warns that an overemphasis on the biological substrates of ADD has resulted in a decrease in attention to the "profound impact that relationships have upon every