

NAT Reading list

In and Beyond the Clinic Year (4): Illness as metaphor: the 'I' in the world.

Day 1 - Madness and civilization: Thinking of health and illness in cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

Suzanne Maiello: Maiello, S. (2008) Encounter With a Traditional Healer Western and African Therapeutic Approaches in Dialogue. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 53:241-260 Available on [PEP Web](#)

When we think of civilisation, it is convenient to think of a clear relationship between technology and progress. However, for all our Western understanding of the brain and the mind, we as clinicians are always faced with the profound mystery of ourselves and each other.

This paper offers a fascinating commentary on how our theories of the mind and therapeutic efficacy are embedded in specific cultural contexts, and that there is much to be gained from different cultural paradigms; in this case the work of a traditional South African healer.

Different emphases on the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication and symbolisation are highlighted in an indigenous setting, providing a powerful healing space far removed from the Western medical model, with its pharmaceutical and neurobiological hegemonies.

Marica Rytovaara: Rytovaara, M. (2015) Demons, Voices and Virtual Realities in Adolescence-an Exploration of Zeitgeist, Culture and Cultural Complexes. *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 60:179-197 Available on [PEP Web](#)

This paper explores the liminality of various encounters between adolescence and art; how virtual spaces created in computer games, film and social media are modern iterations of “the other side”, a digital afterlife populated with “analogous imaginary beings, such as zombies, vampires, angels and demons” locked in an archetypal battle between good and evil.

Psychotic states are considered as transitional objects within the borderlands of the therapeutic encounter, and clinical vignettes are used to pose the question of whether one should try to understand the demons from the other side, in the service of individuation.

Whitaker, R. (2019). Ch 6. Modern Day Alchemy. *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill*. pp 141-160 [Click here to download](#)

A brief chapter in this important book outlines the discovery of neuroleptic medications that emerged into the oppressive mid-twentieth century atmosphere of electroshock treatments, insulin coma therapy and lobotomy; all used to control and control the mentally ill. Drugs that were known all along to create illness through inhibiting dopamine function were lionised for the treatment of schizophrenia, evidence was suppressed and altered in the pursuit of profit, leading to the creation of a medication-induced syndrome in many ways worse than the conditions these “wonder drugs” were used to treat.

Jung, C. G., & Hull, R. F. C. (2023). The content of the psychoses. In *Collected Works of CG Jung, Volume 3: The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease* (pp 158-178/paras 320-387). Routledge. [Click here to download](#)

In this early essay, delivered as a lecture in 1908, Jung is at pains to emphasise his scepticism that dementia praecox (soon to be renamed schizophrenia) is a disease of the brain, and makes a related point, which is to argue that mental illness is not so far removed from common (sane) humanity as it is asserted to be. He writes how ‘in insanity... we are looking at the foundations of our own being, the matrix of those vital problems on which we are all engaged’. In an example, Jung movingly makes sense of a former dressmaker’s ‘baroque jumble of words’ by finding in them a meaningful relation to her former life before she was ill. A further and deeper point in the essay, which hints at future Jung, is that we tend to see ‘only the ruin of these people in *this* world’ but miss ‘things that are being played out on the dark side of the soul’.

Laing, R.D. & Esterson, A. (1964). Family Three: The Churches. *Sanity Madness and the Family*, Routledge. pp 53-88 [Click here to download](#)

In every case of confirmation bias, investigators find what they are looking for – but they do find it. ‘Sanity Madness and the Family’ is such an example. The purpose of this research project, written at the height of what came to be known as the anti-psychiatry movement, was to expose how schizophrenia could be rendered intelligible as ‘social praxis’. For our purposes it may be linked to Jung’s ‘The Contents of the Psychosis’ - written fifty-six years and two world wars earlier - in which Jung aims to rescue schizophrenia from the alienating explanations of ‘cortical grey matter’ and to revision it within the context of the human situation. The difference, and what is so vivid and powerful about these transcripts and commentaries, is that Laing and Esterson show something of the living dynamics of that human situation within the family.

Extra reading:

Michel Foucault: "Madness and Civilisation" *This book is in the library*
Robert Whittaker: "Mad in America"? *This book is in the library*