



Dear Reader

We remain busy with a number of ongoing cases involving false-memory-type allegations some of which have entered the criminal justice system. I do have some good news to share with you: two of our members have recently been informed that the police are taking no further action. This is particularly satisfying, but, as you are aware from your own experience, the overall situation remains far from satisfactory, with the accusers estranged and family relationships strained to the point of breaking point. Of course, the latter would not be improved if the accused were languishing in a prison cell. Thus, the remit of the BFMS (which Roger Scotford started in 1993) in providing support and advice to our members in false-memory-type allegations remains as vital as ever. As you are aware, sadly, Roger is no longer with us. For the record, Roger gave his time and commitment to the BFMS gratis from its inception until 1998 when he retired; working intermittently as a consultant to the Society thereafter. Roger was a pioneer. An intelligent and resourceful man who used his own personal experience to form the BFMS, and to implement a telephone helpline service and to later set up a Scientific and Professional Advisory Board. Roger engaged with the nation media drawing attention to the inherent dangers of recovered memory therapy. Reading through an archive of old newsletters is illuminating. Roger was a regular contributor to *Newsnight* and he gave countless press interviews raising awareness of the Society. By 1997 the BFMS had been contacted by 850 families following an unprecedented number of allegations from adult accusers who claimed to have recovered previously buried memories of childhood sexual abuse. Roger was certainly alive to important developments relating to the so-called 'Memory Wars.' The December edition of our 1995 newsletter, quoted Dr Janet Boakes (a member of our Advisory Board) who accurately encapsulated the prevailing perception about recovered memories and the myth of traumatic repression:

Recovered memory therapy stands or falls with

the concept of repression. The notion that traumatic events can be forgotten for decades until triggered by current circumstances is generally accepted. However, there is no body of evidence to show that traumatic events are repressed. On the contrary, the indications are that highly disturbing events cannot be forgotten. Children who witnessed the murder of a parent, presumably a highly traumatic event, could not forget it. The same is true of war veterans, concentration camp survivors, and those involved in major disasters. Despite 60 years of attempts, efforts to study repression in the laboratory have failed to produce evidence in support ... Memory is known to be fallible, altered by the passage of time and subject to error and distortion. Memories recalled under hypnosis are unreliable and are not admitted as legal testimony.

Dr Boakes was a senior member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Roger was quick to seize upon her comments. In 1997, The Royal College of Psychiatrists Working Party issued a review article about recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. The Brandon Report (as it became known) was an authoritative review of the current knowledge of the reliability of recov-

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ered memories of child sexual abuse and their source. It confirmed that memory retrieval techniques are mired with danger:

Recovered memory therapy is not a single or unified therapy ... It is a label to describe practices of a heterogeneous group of clinicians who share a particular set of beliefs. They accept ... that present symptoms are caused by past traumatic sexual abuse and that the memory of these events has been lost to consciousness (and) that this lost material can be recovered and that the recovery of these memories is essential to the remediation of the patient's symptoms. Neither of these propositions has been proven.

Is it not astonishing that here we are, more than 20 years later, still battling to eradicate the enduring myth about repression and so-called recovered memories?

Between 1993 and 1998, in particular when we had caught the interest of the national media, the Society was enormously successful in raising awareness about our work. Roger, as ever, was at the cutting-edge of what, in retrospect, was a sustained campaign to challenge the fallacy of pseudo-science around the so-named memory wars. Roger's special place in our history will be considered in a tribute slot at our 2019 AGM and annual conference.

We remain active and up-beat however. The BFMS continues to raise awareness about the subject. I have recently given lengthy talks at Portsmouth and Warwick Universities. I have attended three separate events in the Palace of Westminster and in Portcullis House. The first of these events focused on Prisoners Maintaining Innocence; the latter two events concerned an all-party committee on miscarriages of justice. The BFMS was also mentioned in *Hansard* in December 2018 following a debate in the House of Lords.

At the time of going to press – and for two successive editions – I have sad news to announce. Dr James Ost, who first joined our Advisory Board in 2004, passed away, following a short and unexpected illness in February. His students – old and new – and colleagues – internal and external – have been totally devastated by this unexpected tragedy. Our thoughts remain with his family. James' dedicated contribution and commitment to the work of the BFMS will be considered in a tribute slot at our AGM and annual conference in April.

(Dr) Kevin Felstead

TRIBUTE TO ROGER SCOTFORD

In 1993 when I first started working with Roger I found a man who was wholly committed to his new, unchosen vocation – to help people caught up in a nightmare of accusation and destruction of family life. He was personally affected. Driven to put things right he researched what was happening and found that he was not alone. Starting with a trip to Philadelphia for a conference about false memories created in the consulting room, he discovered similarly affected 'grey haired' Americans. He returned to England determined to raise awareness of the dangers of using untested therapies on vulnerable people and to share this knowledge. He bravely engaged with the press and an article about him first appeared in *The Independent* in 1993, quickly followed by a magazine article; both gave him pseudonyms but shaded pictures of him were published. That took a lot of courage and anyone in a similar position will recognise the demands 'going public' placed on an individual and their family. There was a prompt and recurrent backlash. Undaunted, he worked tirelessly, without remuneration, 7 days a week, answering calls for help and putting himself in front of television cameras, on radio and talking to broadsheet journalists. His media career was in full swing and invitations to speak kept coming. He built an eminent scientific and academic advisory board and set up and ran the registered charity, British False Memory Society. He kept up this selfless devotion to the cause for 6 years after which he retired agreeing to act as a consultant.

He was an extraordinary man; a father who cared deeply about his whole family but in the absence of its restoration, in spite of his every effort, gave his all to help others to relieve at least some of their distress. Built on strong foundations the BFMS is now in its 25th year.

Madeline Greenhalgh

IN THE NEWS

Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA)

It never ceases to amaze me when the myth of SRA raises its ugly head. An online troll who made false allegations about SRA has been sentenced to 9 years imprisonment at Southwark Crown Court. The myth of SRA will just not go away – even though it is based on a convoluted

belief system which flies in the face of science. Sabine McNeill, 74, was convicted of harassment of four families after alleging that they were members of a satanic cult responsible for paedophilia, cannibalism and murder. In a sustained campaign of terror, following a moral panic about a devil-worshipping child abuse cult in Hampstead, Northwest London, parents and their children were placed in special measures by police, and forced to use pseudonyms, tracking devices and panic alarms. The families also had to take different routes to school, to avoid being harassed and intimidated by McNeill and her supporters. McNeill alleged that parents 'would put them (their children) to sleep by injecting them, slit their throats, cook the babies and eat them.' She claimed that people from all walks of life were members of the cult, including 18 teachers from a local primary school and that the children were abused in McDonalds and in hidden rooms at a church in Hampstead.

McNeill was convicted of four counts of harassment and six counts of breaching a restraining order. She was acquitted of 11 counts of breaching a restraining order. Judge Sally Cahill QC ruled 'that it was one of the most serious cases of stalking and breach of a restraining order that there could be ... They have had to move home ... the children will never, as things stand at the moment, be able to go online and put in their own names without seeing the vile filth that you have peddled over a series of years ... In my judgement, you are an arrogant, malicious, evil and manipulative woman.' Let us hope that her judgement draws a line in the sand of this moral panic surrounding untrue, ridiculous and fantastical allegations.

Is Our Criminal Justice System Fit for Purpose?

The criminal justice system was thrown into meltdown following a nationwide IT collapse which caused disruption to thousands of cases, according to a report by *The Times* newspaper.

Trials have been delayed and adjourned; hundreds of courts have been affected. According to one informed observer, the system is now at breaking point. Defendants, police, prosecutors and lawyers have been adversely impacted after the main computer system crashed. In January, around 75,000 judges and lawyers were unable to access e-mail. According to the Secret Barrister, 'the entire digital infrastructure of the courts has been broken for days. Imagine the headlines if it were

the NHS. But it's only justice, so no one cares.' Chris Hanley QC, chair of the Criminal Bar Association, commented:

'Trials are being adjourned, the IT infrastructure is inaccessible in many places, electronic systems aren't working and barristers can't access vital documents court Wi-Fi and secure e-mails aren't working. The system is on its knees.'

Chris Grayling, currently the Minister for Transport, has been the subject of widespread criticism from legal commentators. Grayling was appointed as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice from 2012-2015. The new IT system was piloted under his watch. Grayling's disastrous legacy was seized on by Hanley:

'The unrealistic planning has all the hallmarks of a Grayling project ... He has repeated this trick everywhere he has been. We've seen it with the probation contract, private prisons and more recently the railways.

We are living with his destructive nihilistic legacy in all areas of legal aid and the courts.

This is a truly shambolic state of affairs. Our criminal justice system used to be the envy of the world. It has now imploded and descended into chaos.'

Funding Cuts Hit Magistrates' Courts

Funding cuts to the criminal justice since 2010 have resulted in the closure of over 50% of magistrates' courts in England and Wales, according to the Guardian newspaper. In net terms, 162 out of a total of 323 courts are now closed. In the period from March to September 2016, 47 Magistrates' Courts were closed. Many of these have been sold to raise funding for digital modernisation which has been rolled out by the Ministry of Justice. Crown courts, county courts and tribunals have also been hit. Over 90% of cases are dealt with in Magistrates' Courts. The closure of the courts is exacerbated by an unprecedented number of magistrates who have resigned over the last three years. One Conservative councillor in Lancashire who resigned in September 2016 after 20 years at the Bench described the role as a "soul-destroying production line." The chairman of the Magistrates Association, Malcom Richardson, is on the record as saying: "There is no evidence of a strategy for the use of magistrates. What are we for in the 21st century? ... Magistrates feel that they are not, and have not been, engaged with the determination of what that future looks like... The consequences of that for some ... particularly those who are getting towards retirement, is to

say, ‘why am I carrying on?’

In the 12-month period to March 2018, less than 10% of all crimes reported to police resulted in a charge or summons.

Appeal Judges Applaud Cardiff University Law Students Following a Successful Appeal to Quash Conviction for Sexual Assault

Gareth Jones was convicted in 2008 of a brutal sexual assault on an elderly woman and sentenced to nine years imprisonment (subsequently reduced to seven). Students from the Cardiff University Innocence Project, supervised by Dr Dennis Eady (who is known to the BFMS) successfully overturned the wrongful conviction, which was quashed in November 2018 by the Court of Appeal sitting in the Royal Courts of Justice. Dozens of students were involved in the appeal supported by former alumni who are now leading barristers. A number of expert witnesses also assisted with the successful appeal. Lord Justice Simon publicly acknowledged the outstanding work of the Innocence Project who he said had made a ‘significant contribution’ to overturning the conviction. Jones spent three and a half years in prison for a crime that he did not commit; he was also placed on the sex offenders register. In an interview with the BBC, he said ‘that’s when my life just crumbled. I felt like my heart had just been ripped out of me. I was shocked, all over the place. I’d done nothing wrong.’

Dr Dennis Eady, based in the School of Law and Politics, proclaimed: ‘We first became aware of Gareth’s case in 2012 through his long-term supporter Paula Morgan. It has taken six years of tireless work by students, Paula, and our supporters to review this case. Based on their findings the Court of Appeal has decided that this conviction is unsafe. We welcome their decision.’

The Cardiff Innocent Project was set up in 2006. In 2014, it was instrumental in overturning the murder conviction of Dwaine George who was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2002. It is the only Innocence Project in the UK to successfully overturn a wrongful conviction. In 2015 it was shortlisted for a Liberty Human Rights Award.

SPECIAL FEATURE

The Serious Risks of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Counselling

Different Concepts of the Unconscious not Revealed to the Public

The Epidemic

What can be salvaged from the disaster caused by ‘recovered’ memory therapy? Carol Tavris, who co-authored *Mistakes were Made (but not by me)*¹, which contains two chapters on memory and ‘bad science’, has said in a different context ‘If psychotherapists do not learn from their colossal mistakes, they will surely repeat them’².

After some 30 years, a comprehensive history of the repressed memory epidemic has now been written. *Memory Warp, How the Myth of Repressed Memory Arose and Refuses to Die*, by Mark Pendergrast, was published in America in 2017³. It is a most impressive work of research conducted over the last 20 years and builds on his previous book, published in the UK in 1997, called *Victims of Memory*⁴. The damage he describes in his second book over the whole period is truly shocking. In the Introduction Pendergrast writes,

I have updated my research on the subject. The book you hold in your hands is partly a social and cultural history of our recent past, documenting how this incredible juggernaut of pseudoscience and malpractice, which caused so much harm, came to be. But it also shows how these misguided theories continue to fester. They will inevitably cause another major outbreak and damage the lives of additional millions of people if we do not learn from the past.

A note at the bottom of the page reads, “For a longer, more academically oriented textbook on the subject, see my book *The Repressed Memory Epidemic. How It Happened and What We Need to Learn from It*”⁵.

Here, in this textbook’s Foreword R Christopher Barden writes,

The personal, familial, and social damage from RMT [Repressed Memory Therapy] and MPD [Multiple Personality Disorder] therapies constitute the worst epidemic of quackery in the history of the mental health system. The millions of persons harmed directly or indirectly by RMT and MPD therapies created a vast tsunami of suffering far beyond that of the estimated 50,000 victims of the cruel brain surgery known as lobotomy.

As this book documents, over a period of intense effort in more than 40 states through the 1990s, my colleagues and I were able to crush and shut down the once explosively expanding RMT and MPD industries. As a JD trial lawyer and a Ph.D research and clinical psychologist, I worked round-the-clock for years to organise a multidisciplinary movement to halt this epidemic, using litigation (mal-practice law-suits), legislation, education (including scientific research from world-renowned experts), regulation (licencing revocations), and prosecution (for health care fraud).

The Unconscious

What is it possible to ‘recover’ from the unconscious? What is this part of the mind we are not conscious of? There are other important people who have ideas on this subject besides Sigmund Freud. Guy Claxton has written ‘an intimate history of the unconscious’ called *The Wayward Mind*. He writes in the preface,

I don't know about you, but my mind has a mind of its own. It wanders off while I am trying to concentrate. It refuses to stop churning over the day while I am trying to get to sleep. At night it creates movies that range from the exceedingly tedious to the embarrassingly bizarre. It comes up with tunes and phrases that I did not intend, and often did not want. It tells me that someone has come into the room when I've got the headphones on and my eyes shut and I'm miles away – and often it's right. It forgets well-known names at crucial moments. It feels hurt or angry out of

all proportion. It is a real pain in the ass sometimes. But, apparently, it is the only mind I've got⁶.

He then continues to the reader:

Maybe yours confirms more neatly and obediently to the standard definition of what a mind is supposed to be: conscious, predictable, biddable, orderly. Maybe you have no wild flights of fancy, know nobody who's been unaccountably depressed, have no interest in hypnosis, mysticism.

And then, “*From the dawn of history, most people have been more like me than you*”.

The book traces the history of man’s ideas about the unconscious under its various names and

The failure of therapists to be aware of this deeper layer – its nature and how it reveals itself – may have direct relevance for the disaster of ‘recovered’ memory therapy.

points out that Freud was not the architect of the unconscious but its archaeologist.

When Claxton writes “my mind has a mind of its own” he may be saying something profound. C G Jung spent his professional life studying the

manifestations of the unconscious mind and working with them to help his patients. This article aims to remind readers that Jung discovered a deeper layer of the unconscious that Freud did not fully recognise. Jung saw this deeper level as containing powerful forces that therapists may ignore at their peril. The discovery may have significance in explaining what is happening to patients who are being treated by therapists who believe in the concept of the repression of traumatic memories in childhood.

The failure of therapists to be aware of this deeper layer – its nature and how it reveals itself – may have direct relevance for the disaster of ‘recovered’ memory therapy. When therapists and counsellors work with manifestations of the contents of the unconscious - dreams and fantasies - they may be stirring up in their patients and clients more than they realise.

Jung (1875-1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist. From the start of his professional career he was researching the unconscious quite independently from Freud. Then in 1903 he read Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* and discovered how “it all lined up with my own ideas⁷”. In 1907 the two men met and “talked virtually without a pause for

thirteen hours". But from the beginning Jung had reservations about some of Freud's findings, particularly in connection with the issue of repression and sexual trauma. However, he joined the psychoanalytic movement and became a prominent figure in it, so much so that Freud came to visualise him as becoming heir to the movement. For a number of years, the two men exchanged ideas in numerous letters. But when Jung wrote his book *Symbols of Transformation*⁸ in 1912, he knew a break with Freud was probably inevitable. And indeed, it happened - and it was bitter.

Early Days for the Science of the Psyche

The eminent Jungian psychotherapist and writer, Edward Edinger, says in the introduction to his book *Anatomy of the Psyche*,

*The process of psychotherapy, when it goes at all deep, sets into motion profound and mysterious happenings. It is very easy for both patient and therapist to lose their way. This is why narrow and inadequate theories of the psyche are clung to so desperately - at least they provide some sense of orientation*⁹.

These are the opening statements of the Introduction. They are very honest assertions. Whether psychotherapists know it or not, they carry great significance for all therapists who work with the contents of the unconscious.

Jung felt the science of the human psyche was still in its infancy and what he was doing in his work was laying a few foundation stones. He wrote in 1944:

*It is my conviction that the investigation of the psyche is the science of the future. Psychology is the youngest of the sciences and is only at the beginning of its development. It is, however the science we need most*¹⁰.

But some of his foundation stones represent a radical break from Freudian concepts, and it is surprising that in the discussions about memory, and the argument surrounding repressed memories, his name is never mentioned.

The subject of patients inventing sexual trauma while in therapy appears in a discussion between Jung and Freud and is recorded in a memoir of Jung by E A Bennett, a close friend. It is most enlightening.

On one occasion Jung questioned Freud about his eleven cases of hysteria, all of

*whom, it was believed, had suffered sexual trauma as children. At that time Freud thought the trauma had caused the hysteria. 'But', Jung said, 'hysterics make up these things; they want to interest you. They find out what interests you and invent the trauma, and you believe it. But the important thing is whether the incident is true or not.' Freud thought there might be something in this and told him he had once treated a girl, the daughter of a friend. He could find no evidence of sexual trauma in childhood, but he persisted, and finally the girl invented a sexual trauma of rape by her father at the age of four. Freud said the incident could not be true, because he knew the girl's father: he was his friend, and such a thing could never have happened. So, he concluded that the girl had made it up. 'But', said Jung, 'what of the other cases? Did you know the fathers of these patients? If they had been your friends, it might have turned out that these stories weren't true either but had been invented by the patients to fit your theory'*¹¹.

From this passage we can see that for Jung it is all-important to know whether certain acts of abuse happened or not.

He recognises the fact that there is a 'personal' unconscious, but he felt Freud never completed the work of investigation of this inner realm. He felt it was left to him to continue the work, and he found a deeper layer of a very different nature to the 'personal unconscious'. Consistently scattered throughout his written works are references to a dangerous aspect of the unconscious, and how, on certain occasions, it is quite inappropriate for therapists to work with it.

A Dual Risk

Added to this Jung sees our consciousness, sometimes referred to as ego consciousness, as being fragile. It can easily be injured. To explain this, he points out that anthropologists have noticed that in some tribes it is assumed that a man has a number of souls. He writes:

...this belief expresses the feeling of some primitive individuals that they each consist of several linked but distinct units. This means that the individual's psyche is far from being safely synthesized; on the contrary, it threatens to fragment only too easily under the onslaught of unchecked emotions.

He continues:

While the situation is familiar to us from the studies of anthropologists, it is not so irrelevant to our own advanced civilization as it might seem. We too can become dissociated and lose our identity. We can be possessed and altered by moods or become unreasonable and unable to recall important facts about ourselves or others, so that people ask: "What the devil has got into you?"¹².

These statements must ring bells for parents who have been falsely accused of sexual abuse by an adult child in therapy.

Jung developed the concept of the 'complex', a semi-autonomous part of consciousness, a sort of part-self, which can sometimes take over our consciousness so that we do not do what we mean to do. In a serious case of this phenomenon we can talk about 'dissociation' when there is an actual 'split' in the personality and a loss of identity.

Here is another passage from Jung which reiterates these thoughts about the fragility of our consciousness. But this time he combines them with a statement about the unconscious because of course the two are linked. He is talking about the importance of the understanding and attitude of the patient in therapy who is investigating her or his dreams.

As a psychiatrist, accustomed to dealing with patients who are in danger of being overwhelmed by unconscious contents, I knew that it was of the utmost importance, from the therapeutic point of view, to strengthen as far as possible the conscious position and powers of understanding, so that something is there to intercept and integrate the contents that are breaking through into consciousness. These contents are not necessarily destructive in themselves, but are ambivalent, and it depends entirely on the constitution of the intercepting consciousness whether they will turn out to be a curse or a blessing¹³.

A therapist believing in the repression of memories of trauma may be working on the basis of a too limited view of the unconscious. A patient, sometimes knocked off their balance by the strange and confusing manifestations of the unconscious, and lowering their consciousness in order to recover childhood feelings and memories, encouraged by their therapist, can lose their

footing in reality. They can then develop ideas both delusional and exaggerated, and this can happen very quickly.

In her memoir of Jung, Barbara Hannah reports that later in life he emphasised:

....it is impossible to face the strange world of the unconscious unless the foundations of consciousness are well and truly laid...

In later years he always said that people should be well and truly rooted in the conscious world before they try to explore the unconscious, that such an anchor is indispensable¹⁴.

The Collective Unconscious

What Jung is saying about the structure of the psyche is that deep down we have a kind of second intelligence to that of our normal intelligence. This can seem incredible to many people in our modern times. But many of us have gone to bed thinking of some problem and on waking up have found an answer: it is as if our dreams have somehow played a part. Jung claims that we are normally unaware of these hidden resources of the mind, but we should remember that these resources include forces which can, on occasions, become activated.

As we know, certain writers, artists, musicians, can produce works that are felt to be inspired. P L Travers said in an interview,

I wonder where my ideas come from: from instinct or prior knowledge of some sort, or what. I am not a mental or analytical person, it's all a mystery to me, a question of listening¹⁵.

For the poet W B Yeats there was a 'mysterious tide in the depths of our being' which he called the Great Mind or the Great Memory. Our *personal* memories he calls our *little* memories and they "are but a part of some Great Memory that renews the world and men's thoughts age after age, and...our thoughts are not, as we suppose, the deep, but a little foam upon the deep¹⁶."

The dimension of the unconscious below the personal unconscious Jung called the collective unconscious. Edward Edinger writes:

Jung's most basic and far-reaching discovery is the collective unconscious or archetypal psyche. Through his researches, we now know that the individual psyche is not just a product of personal expe-

rience. It also has a pre-personal or transpersonal dimension which is manifested in universal patterns and images such as are found in all the world's religions and mythologies¹⁷.

The mention of 'religions and mythologies' shows that if we are to grasp anything about this area of our mind we have to move away from any Freudian concept of the unconscious which is mostly limited to repressed unacceptable contents of our conscious, personal life. With Jung, we are in the domain of living forces, instinctive patterns of behaviour shared by all human beings. He called these forces archetypes and they have the characteristic of being both numinous and transcendent.

The notion and category of the 'numinous' has largely been lost in our modern secular society where it is foreign to the understanding of many people. But it is possible therapists may fail to heed this vital category of experience at great cost: it is a failure to understand the full nature of psychic reality.

The word numinous was used by Rudolf Otto in his book *The Idea of the Holy*. He wrote:

....I adopt a word coined from the Latin numen. Omen has given us ominous, and there is no reason why from numen we should not similarly form a word 'numinous'¹⁸.

The Latin word *numen* translates as 'the might of the deity'. Jung always maintained that healing through psychotherapy ultimately involved a spiritual dimension coming into being in a person's life. In psychotherapy the numinous can be described as an inner experience, an experience accompanied by feelings of awe, and sometimes fear, the recognition of transpersonal values contained within the unconscious, "the perceiving of an originally hidden transcendent reality"¹⁹. A numinous experience always brings about an alteration of consciousness and will remain indelible in a person's mind.

Treatment: The Challenge

These are big statements. In describing these forces as numinous Jung is saying we should approach them with respect because they can destroy as well as heal. In a culture that ignores them, archetypal forces will express themselves negatively rather than positively. That is why Jung says they are ambivalent, and why to relate to them correctly we have to learn the language of the symbolism and images through which they are manifested. Interpretation is all-important,

and caution is needed,

Our actual knowledge of the unconscious shows that it is a natural phenomenon and that, like Nature herself, it is at least neutral. It contains all aspects of human nature – light and dark, beautiful and ugly, good and evil, profound and silly. The study of individual, as well as collective, symbolism is an enormous task, and one that has not yet been mastered²⁰.

David Tacey, an international authority on Jungian psychology, writes:

If we subject (these symbols) to the familiar Freudian reading, the sacred potential of the symbols will be obliterated, and we reduce everything to sexual acts and human genitalia²¹.

An aspect of Tacey's books that makes them particularly important for the layman is that he writes from an independent standpoint. He is not a therapist, and he speaks of the risks of therapy and the paradoxical nature of the human psyche. He writes of "...the swirling depths which underlie our existence and constitute our hidden nature."²²

On the question of spirituality, he writes,

Today, with so much ignorance and sentimentality attached to the spiritual domain, it is relatively easy to pass off pathology as spirituality.

And in connection with spirituality he speaks of "...the possibility of delusion or regression so that,

We can easily confuse mental disorder with an experience of the spirit²³.

These are pertinent remarks in view of Mark Pendergrast's chapter 8 in *Memory Warp* on 'Survivorship as Religion'. Here he writes,

...one of the primary appeals of the repressed memory Survivor movement was that it served as a substitute religion in an era of shifting values, uncertainty and confusion²⁴.

Jung's therapeutic process aims to widen our personality, to transform consciousness. He famously said we may not be able to cure a neurosis, but it is possible a neurosis may cure us.

The question of the nature of the unconscious is

an exceptionally important issue. On it depends how our dreams are approached and interpreted: read wrongly their whole meaning may be lost. Dreams may sometimes be pointing to a transpersonal reality, and always to give them a literal, personal interpretation may, on occasions, be wholly inappropriate. Jung maintained that sometimes they may have nothing to do with a person's conscious personality and to make out that certain dreams do is completely misleading.

...there are dreams in whose contents no relationship to consciousness can be detected, and whose whole activity is located in the unconscious. Everything – the motive of the dream and its activity – springs from the unconscious and cannot be derived from consciousness. When you want to “force” such a dream and make it into a derivative of consciousness, you simply violate the dreaming of the dream, resulting in complete nonsense²⁵.

Edinger describes the approach to the ‘activated’ unconscious in the following way.

The sea is an image of the collective unconscious, the infinite mother nature out of which all life comes. Depending on the conscious attitude with which it is approached, it can be the source of treasures and new life, or it can be the womb of non-being that swallows up the weak, regressive ego. Whenever the activated unconscious is being faced, the conscious attitude is of crucial importance. An earnest, responsible attitude is imperative, for to approach the activated unconscious with a passive, escapist intent can be courting psychic suicide. It is the difference between diving into water purposefully or falling into it backward²⁶.

Young People at Greater Risk

Teenagers, and young people in their twenties, are usually attempting to find a degree of independence from their parents. They will be carving out a life for themselves. Some, if they feel they have problems to resolve, may enter therapy. If they ‘click’ with a therapist they find, he/she is likely to become an important person to them and a positive transference is likely to be formed. That means there will be a projection of a positive nature on to the therapist. The therapist may become a sort of substitute parent figure, perhaps making up for some qualities one or other of the patient's actual parents lacked. This can be a healing experience, but everything depends on

how well the therapist handles the positive transference. In time the transference should be dissolved, and the projections withdrawn. This is all-important.

It is invariably something of a disaster if a therapist encourages the formation of a too strong positive transference, accompanied by over-dependency, for this makes it harder in time for the patient to come to see the therapist in realistic terms. It can amount to an abuse of the therapeutic relationship. If this ‘coming down to earth’ does not take place, part of the patient's personality will remain in an infantile state and will not mature.

There may of course be occasions when it is quite inappropriate for patients to work with the unconscious. Jung writes,

There are very many cases in which the conscious material is in need of being digested, and in those cases, it would be quite futile to call up the unconscious content. I can call to mind now a case where an analysis released the unconscious under wrong conditions, and with the most unfortunate results²⁷.

Jung was particularly wary of ‘calling up the unconscious’ with young people. It was because in most cases their personality and identity was not yet fully formed and established. Young people were still discovering their gifts and their interests. In the context of therapy, before looking for what had been repressed, it was often their conscious personality that needed to be strengthened. They needed to gain a certain amount of self-knowledge and:

.... this presupposes a good deal of experience of life and a certain amount of maturity. Young people who are very far from knowing who they really are, would run a great risk if they obscured their knowledge of themselves still further by letting ‘the dark night of the soul’ pour into their immature, labile consciousness²⁸.

Strong feelings may act as an important guide for us in life, but they can also at times mislead us. Psychotherapy has shown us the importance of feelings and this has been a beneficial influence. But certain areas of psychotherapeutic practice, and RMT is one of them, see feelings as sacrosanct, and patients are led to believe that they must be relied upon. This can be both dangerous and wrong.

In an interview with Mircea Eliade, the great historian of religions, at the Eranos Conference, near Ascona, in 1952 Jung said, "*The collective unconscious is more dangerous than dynamite, but there are ways of handling it without too many risks*"²⁹.

In practice it is of central importance in Jungian psychology to understand the 'wholly other' nature of this inner realm of our psyche. Consciousness and psyche are not identical. Failure to understand this leaves the conscious personality, the ego, vulnerable to infection by these inner forces which can result in neurotic delusions, even a psychosis. In treatment either the conscious personality assimilates contents of the unconscious, resulting in a positive increase in consciousness, or is assimilated by the contents themselves. In the latter case a state of possession can occur resulting in feelings of great potency - yet feelings which are inappropriate and destructive.

The Winds of the Spirit

Barbara Hannah, as we have quoted, has reminded us how Jung said that "*people should be well and truly rooted in the conscious world before they try to explore the unconscious, that such an anchor was indispensable*".

The earth, the solid ground, in this statement acts as a symbol for 'the conscious world' in which we must be well and truly rooted. For a ship riding out a storm, the chain and anchor, and contact with the seabed, give it the safety from being cast adrift and at the mercy of the winds and the waves.

Another metaphor which repeats this idea of separation, yet at the same time vital connection, is the Greek myth of the Cretan labyrinth. Theseus entered the labyrinth in order to kill the monster, the Minotaur, at the centre of it. Some psychotherapists see the labyrinth as a symbol for the dangerous and confusing aspect of the unconscious. The myth states that Ariadne gave Theseus a thread on a spool before he entered the labyrinth so that, as he found his way to the centre, it unravelled. This enabled him, after killing the monster, to follow the thread and find his way out again. Edinger writes:

*The labyrinth or maze is a symbol of the unconscious, particularly its dangerous aspect, which threatens confusion and disorientation. Theseus could dare to enter it only with the orientation of Ariadne's helpful thread*³⁰.

He then suggests that we may confront some of the contents of the unconscious "only when hold-

ing on to the guiding thread of human feeling-relatedness". This is a most interesting interpretation of Ariadne's thread as 'human feeling-relatedness' is exactly the quality lacking in many of the outbursts and statements of patients who have undergone repressed memory therapy.

The threatening nature of the deeper layers of the unconscious can be transformed if approached in the right way and with the right attitude. Then they work to our benefit and the patient experiences healing, meaning, and a feeling of fulfilment. Of the spiritual nature of this deeper layer with its archetypal powers David Tacey writes:

*Jung believed that spirit is a 'mighty daemon', morally neutral or even amoral. To him the sacred is elemental, vast, ominous and as unpredictable as the forces of nature*³¹.

The fact that his work and study was all to do with the unconscious, Jung had a unique experience of the nature of its psychic forces. It was over the period of the First World War, and he records what he went through in chapter 6 of his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*³²:

The unconscious contents could have driven me out of my wits. But my family, and the knowledge: I have a medical diploma from a Swiss university, I must help my patients, I have a wife and five children, I live at 228 Seestrasse in Kusnacht – these were actualities which made demands upon me and proved to me again and again that I really existed, that I was not a blank page whirling about in the winds of the spirit, like Nietzsche. Nietzsche had lost the ground under his feet because he possessed nothing more than the inner world of his thoughts – which incidentally possessed him more than he it. He was uprooted and hovered above the earth, and therefore he succumbed to exaggeration and irreality. For me, such irreality was the quintessence of horror, for I aimed, after all, at this world and this life.

Importance of the Issues

Jung disliked psychotherapy organisations. Joseph Wheelwright, who had trained with Jung in the 1930s and returned to America, told Jung that he was proposing to form an organisation made up of a group of analysts in California. Many years later in 1975, in a discussion about Jung on Radio 3, Wheelwright recorded:

He really abhorred organisations. He felt it was only a matter of time before the life and movement of creativity was frozen by the organisations³³.

As we have said, Jung believed the science of the psyche was still in its infancy. If the scientific basis on which psychotherapy is conducted is to be sound, and the science of the psyche is still in a stage of development, psychotherapy and counselling organisations, and regulators, need to hear serious third-party complaints. For information from the family of the patient can, on occasions, provide them with crucial facts. Without these, the profession may deprive itself of the information it needs that would tell it if something was going wrong, and so put itself, if necessary, in a position to prevent further damage. Listening is, after all, at the heart of the profession.

In other areas of medicine patients are warned of risks so that they can make the best judgement possible regarding treatment.

Conclusion

In the second half of the last century, psychotherapy underwent a considerable expansion. The great controversy surrounding memory that developed in the 1980s and 1990s, sometimes referred to as ‘the memory wars’, caused by the practice of recovered memory therapy, gave birth to an extensive amount of research. Some of this research was conducted by world-renowned scientists and clinicians. It resulted in the emergence of a new science and understanding about memory, as well as revealing the unscientific nature of repressed memory therapy.

But with the formation of the umbrella psychotherapy organisations there seems to have been a blurring of the different concepts of the unconscious.

In the early 70s Marie-Louise von Franz pointed out that Jung’s separation from Freud “quite unnecessarily aroused so much emotion that the objective issues involved have frequently been overlooked³⁴.”

Of the “objective issue” regarding the nature of the unconscious she has written:

We can ... say that the humanities, the natural sciences, religions, arts, as well as both the sociological and individual behaviour of human beings, appear in an entirely new light as a result of the discovery of the unconscious. Both the value we set upon our culture and the values we see in it, and perhaps, too, its very survival,

depend directly upon a “right” or “wrong” understanding of the unconscious³⁵.

Jung reminds us that mass psychic infections emanate from the deep unconscious. In 1934, between the two World Wars, he said in an interview,

The most tremendous danger that man has to face is the power of his ideas. No cosmic power on earth ever destroyed ten million men in four years. But man’s psyche did it. And it can do it again.

I am afraid of one thing only – the thoughts of people. I have means of defence against things.

I live here in my house happily with my family. But suppose they get the illusion that I am a devil. Can I be happy with them then? Can I be safe? All of us are subject to mass infections.

Mass infections are greater than man. And man is their victim. He shouts and parades and pretends that he is the leader, but really he is their victim. They are the uprush of earthly and spiritual forces from the depth of the psyche³⁶.

For parents who have been falsely accused of abuse by an adult child in psychotherapy, Jung’s contribution to psychology provides a basis for understanding the phenomenon of the uncanny, and deeply disturbing, change of personality and identity that an accusing person can undergo. Because of the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of having third party complaints properly heard, severely damaging treatment will continue without scrutiny.

What is particularly alarming in this situation is that the therapist cannot truly know the personality of the patient before such a fundamental change of character and attitude took place. This lack of knowledge on the part of the therapist is a deep and lasting tragedy for the patient, as well as being a source of great frustration and anguish for falsely accused parents.

We have listed some of the reasons why such a destructive form of treatment as repressed memory therapy could have survived for so long. David Tacey, describing how we live in a secular world elaborates,

We have lost wisdom and occupy ourselves with knowledge and information. We are unprepared for the assault of psychic forces, and our consciousness has no way of understanding what is happen-

ing. Hence ours is an age of anxiety, because the deepest parts of the self are not being satisfied³⁷.

At the end of his life Jung said he had tried to open people's eyes to the fact that man had a soul and that there is buried treasure in the field. That, perhaps, is what we can 'recover' from the unconscious. But it may not be easily won.

Retired Counsellor
BFMS Member

Notes

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MEMBERS' FORUM

Letter from Parents

In July 2005 we thought we were a perfectly normal middle-class family. Two daughters both university educated, professionally qualified and both had married within the last 18 months. Our younger daughter had experienced acute anxiety problems after moving down to London and spending most of her time on her own in a semi-basement flat. We advised her to seek a doctor's help but instead she went to an unregistered therapist. We think that as a result of consulting this therapist our lives were changed for ever more. Both daughters arrived one afternoon, and our younger daughter accused me of raping her twice at the ages of 6 and 12. We were left shocked, dumbfounded, confused and upset unable to think logically. We sat there for upwards of 3 hours trying to ascertain where the ridiculous notion had come from. I said immediately, "if that is what you think of your father we must go down to the local Police Station and seek an interview". This offer was declined. We sought to pragmatically explain the consequences, namely physical injury, emotional distress etc. They would neither alter nor rescind these allegations. They were also adamant that my wife was complicit and had covered up matters to protect me.

My wife said to my daughter, "You know if your husband is abusing your child". Sadly, we were at an impasse and their bitterness and resentment resulted in our parting in acrimonious circumstances. As I was still involved in my own business in the locality we told only close family and trusted friends of our plight. Thankfully, within twenty-four hours we were directed to BFMS where staff were kind, helpful and supportive in their advice. We were shocked how many other families were in similar situations.

We did not see our elder daughter for six months until we decided to write to her and say she had not made any accusations and there was no reason for her not to get in touch. Thankfully she rang and although we have never discussed matters in depth our relationship is reasonable. She had a baby 3 years later and we are involved in his life and even babysit!

At first, we made many attempts to contact the younger daughter by telephone, letters, cards, presents and even calling at her flat to try and see daughter made a complaint to the police and I was forced to sign a 'harassment order'.

We had no further contact whatsoever for about two years until our sister-in-law managed to speak to our younger daughter and meet up with her. Our daughter was persuaded to meet her mother but only if our sister-in-law was present throughout the meeting. This was a very stressful and fraught meeting for my wife but after another one or two similar meetings our daughter seemed more relaxed and eventually agreed to see her mother on her own. These meetings continued spasmodically until we both felt we were making no real progress. We decided to seek the help of the BFMS who advised that we spoke with a psychologist known to the Society as having an interest in helping to restore families. We had a 3-hour meeting with the psychologist and were advised to immediately cut off any contact with our younger daughter in order to try and re-establish our rightful positions of father, mother and daughter. There followed a very difficult meeting for my wife and our daughter seemed shocked. We rigidly stuck to the policy and by this time our younger daughter had two children, neither of whom had we met.

We then had our first break and piece of luck in 11 years. We bumped into our daughter with her children, husband and in-laws in a local park. Her in-laws live within 3 miles of our house. I gave her a kiss and whilst she was uncomfortable she did not make a scene. We were both introduced to her children. We quickly left and decided to follow the advice to do nothing. After three months our daughter sent an email suggesting a meeting with the comment, "perhaps dad would like to come provided 'no heavies'". We nervously waited for our daughter to arrive but very quickly realised that she was still the kind, sweet, loving and caring daughter of 11 years ago. We have met subsequently and got on well. We just hope that slowly we can re-establish and effect a complete reconciliation.

In conclusion, our advice and please remember there are no rules, is keep away and let them return in their own time. It is, however, acknowledged that, in our case, our early contact with our daughter may have laid the foundation for our daughter's eventual preparedness to restore contact.

Without the support of both my wife, who has been brilliant throughout, I would have had a complete breakdown. This together with the BFMS who have who have continuously provided advice, sympathy and every assistance has enabled us to survive.

Do not give up.

Letter from an American Retractor

Hello FMSF,

It feels strange to be writing this email. When I first learned about the FMS Foundation in the 1990s, I hated you all. I believed you were all conspiring to protect "them" (the perpetrators) who'd caused my suffering and the suffering of my fellow "victims". I hated others too. Loftus, Ofshe... I thought them liars. I knew "The Truth" - which I learned so much later was pure delusion.

Now, I'm writing to thank you, all of you, for working to protect families and victims of harmful therapy.

My story is not unique. I came to therapy in 1992. I was 23 years old and in an abusive and sometimes violent marriage. My husband, to his credit, had sought therapy for what later turned out to be a psychotic disorder. His therapist asked him to have me attend a session. When the topic of his potentially leaving me came up, I became hysterical with panic. His therapist said, "You need to see a therapist yourself to find out why you need him so much". I thought if I did that, I could fix whatever was wrong with me and prevent my abusive husband from leaving.

In the first session, the therapist asked about my childhood relationship with my parents. After each thing I told her she would exclaim, "That's abuse!" This was horrifying. By the time she had exclaimed, "That's abuse!" five or six times, I was confused, frantic with anxiety, and unable to speak. She asked, "Are you disassociating (sic)?" It seemed as if she spoke very loudly and everything she said was accusatory. I had no idea what dissociation was but I knew from her tone it wasn't good. She then asked/stated the most damaging question/ proclamation anyone has ever uttered to me, "Are your parents in the occult?"

The rest of the story of my "treatment" is too long for an email. Besides, it is so similar to those I have read here and elsewhere, that it would be redundant. Let it suffice to say, it has cost me almost everything.

I am fortunate that I never confronted my parents although they probably suspect what I said about them. I will never forgive myself for how I hurt them. They have forgiven me for cutting them off for over ten years. Years lost for them, and for me.

I have built a career. Not the one I could have had, but I enjoy it. It is my primary focus. There is not much left of me otherwise. I love my family. They love me. It is complicated. We see each other frequently, but this, well, it can't be fixed. My friends from before this happened are long gone. They live lives more like the one I should have had. My friends from the time of that Living Hell have drifted. When we see each other infrequently, we don't speak much of this thing, but at some point, we fall silent. We look at each other. One of us says quietly, "How did this happen to us?" No one says anything. We shake our heads. Look away. It's time to go then. My friends now, don't know. They are few in number. I have so little in common with my peers. A couple of them know. I have tried to explain. They shift uncomfortably... Look away. Change the subject.

My ex-husband and I divorced during my first year in therapy. That was never discussed in my therapy sessions. Not then nor with subsequent therapists who focused only on my false memories which had by then turned to delusion. So, after all of the hospitalizations, crises and worsening illness, I have no idea how to have a romantic relationship. My first, the reason I went to therapy in the first place, was a disaster. Ironically, what I needed help with most has been made most likely unattainable by the "treatment" I received.

These therapists stole my young adulthood completely, and the damage has remained years beyond. I am turning 50 soon. I will be unlikely to partner or marry again. My relationships feel hollow. I struggle more than I let anyone know with things that come easily to most. I wrestle with questions about the therapists. Do they now know they were wrong? Do they know how much they hurt me? Do they care? Then there are the painful questions about myself. Why did I believe that? What is wrong with me? How could I do such a thing to my family? To myself? Of course, then the answers come. Because you are stupid. You are defective. Because you are a bad person. Because you deserve to suffer. At the risk of stating the obvious, I often consider suicide. The only thing that stops me is knowing I have hurt my family way too much already. I struggle with depression, anxiety, and guilt. Always the guilt.

Still Struggling

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BOOK REVIEWS

‘Memory Warp: How the Myth of Repressed Memory Arose and Refuses to Die’

By Mark Pendergrast

Upper Access Books, Vermont 2017,
ISBN 978-0942679-41-0

This book is meticulously researched, clearly written, lucid and analytical. It will remain the major reference work for future generations. To quote the author, ‘The book you hold in your hands is partly a social and cultural history of our recent past, documenting how this incredible juggernaut of pseudoscience and malpractice, which caused so much harm, came to be. But it also shows how these misguided theories continue to fester. They will inevitably cause another major outbreak and damage the lives of additional millions of people if we do not learn from the past.’

Pendergrast is a fearless historian. He writes with aplomb, displaying a sound grasp of the moral panic that has destroyed the lives of millions of families world-wide. On page 13, Pendergrast cites the example of a retractor who previously recovered memories and subsequently believed she possessed multiple personality disorder (MPD). She wrote:

‘It robs all women of all power and control over themselves. If I really hated women and wanted to keep them in a completely powerless and child-like state, the best way to do that would be to remove their faith and trust in their own minds and make them dependent.’ This will ring true with every family who has personal experience of false-memory-type allegations.

The author asserts, correctly, that recovered memory therapy is in fact indicative of a catastrophic failure of modern feminism. It is easy to overlook that in many, many cases women are disempowering and abusing women. This practise is in essence a menace to society. In the words of Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters, ‘if those who are concerned with victimization of women ignore this evidence, they run the risk of sacrificing the well-being and happiness of thousands of women and their families for the sake of the politically expedient assumption that recovered memory therapy cannot create false memo-

ries of abuse. To look away from the brutalization of patients in therapy is now nothing less than act of wilful blindness and betrayal.’

Memory Warp analyses the early origins of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF) which was set up in the US in 1992 following an unprecedented number of allegations by adult accusers who claimed to have ‘recovered’ memories of childhood abuse. The FMSF very quickly engaged with leading memory experts and clinical psychologists and established a Scientific and Professional Advisory Board.

In 1993, Roger Scotford – who had established links with the FMSF – set up the British False Memory Society (BFMS) following a wave of false-memory-type allegations in the UK. Both organisations were ‘vilified’ in an echo of the Salem witch hunts which had taken place in Massachusetts in 1692. The latter followed on from the witch hunts and executions which had taken place earlier across Europe.

Pendergrast charts how ‘the American virus was carried by “experts” who ventured across the Atlantic to share their views with British colleagues.’ Significantly the recovered memory movement was provided with an injection of momentum by the publication of the ‘bible’ of the movement, the self-help guide, *The Courage to Heal*, first published in the US in 1988, and later in the UK in 1990. The book sold quickly – 750,000 copies by the summer of 1992. Authors Ellen Bass and Laura Davies issued a clarion call: ‘even if you cannot remember being abused, that does not mean that you were not abused’ (p. 22). If you think you were abused, and your life shows the symptoms, then you were; you are not responsible for proving that you were abused, (Ibid).’ asserted the authors.

Operating at an incredulous level of generality, the book outlines a checklist of symptoms with which abuse victims are encouraged to identify. The entire rationale of the text is venomous and based on a convoluted perspective which completely undermines real victims of childhood sexual abuse:

‘If you are unable to remember any specific instances like the ones mentioned above but still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did’ (p. 21).

‘If you don’t remember your abuse you are not alone. Many women don’t have memories, and some never get memories. This doesn’t mean they weren’t abused’ (p.81).

‘If you don’t have any memory of it, it can be hard to believe the abuse really happened. You may feel insecure about trusting your intuition and want “proof” of your abuse. This is a very natural desire, but it is not always one that can be met’ (p. 82).

‘If you maintained the fantasy that your childhood was “happy” then you have to grieve for the childhood you thought you had ... you must give up the idea that your parents had your best interest at heart ... If you have any loving feelings towards your abuser, you must reconcile that love with the fact that he abused you ... You may have to grieve over the fact that you don’t have any extended family for your children, that you’ll never receive an inheritance, that you don’t have family roots’ (p. 119).

These statements are foolish, dangerous and destructive. They do not empower women. How can you forget childhood sexual abuse? Victims may not remember every detail; as a survival strategy, they may choose to suppress the abuse, but they do NOT forget it. How on earth would we know anything about history if this ‘theory’ were true? Pendergrast cites (p.15) Richard McNally, a distinguished Professor of Psychology at Harvard University who argued: ‘The notion that traumatic events can be repressed in and later recovered is the most pernicious bit of folklore ever to infect psychology and psychiatry. It has provided the theoretical basis for ‘recovered memory therapy’ – the worst catastrophe to befall the mental health field since the lobotomy era.’ Yet in popular culture the notion of traumatic repression is endemic. Surveys conducted with members of the public, clinical psychologists and psychoanalysts reveal widespread acceptance that trauma can be repressed.

It remains a damning indictment upon contemporary society that families have been fractured and innocent men (mainly) and women have been arrested, charged, convicted and incarcerated based on a belief system that would bring shame on a medieval quack. In the hands of a therapist using suggestive questioning with cognitive biases such a formula is inherently dangerous. All recovery techniques are fraught with danger. In the words of Felicity Goodyear-Smith, ‘allegations made on the basis of memories recovered during therapy include recall of highly improbable events such as abuse of an infant, of full penetrative intercourse and sodomy as a pre-schooler that went undetected by caregivers, and of abuse within satanic cults, including ritualized murders, cannibalism and abortions. There is

substantial and robust research on the propensity of memory recovery to create sincerely believed pseudo memories (109)’ (quoted in *Wrongful Allegations of Sexual and Child Abuse*, edited by Ros Burnett, Oxford University Press, 2016). Chapter 4 is entitled *Multiple Personalities and Satanic Cults*. What I have always found particularly fascinating about this topic is the speed with which it carried from the US to the UK. The Ritual Abuse Information Network (Rains) was set up in Manchester in 1989. Initially there were five members; by 1993 there were approximately 120 members comprising of clinical psychologists, therapists, councillors, social workers and psychiatrists. *Wicked Beyond Belief* documentary, focusing on putative Satanic Ritual Abuse, was broadcast by Channel 4 in 1994. Hypnotic therapist, Vera Diamond, appeared on the programme and insisted that SRA was widespread in the UK. Following the broadcast, the British Association of Social Workers set up a helpline which received fantastical claims of impossible allegations, including ritualised murder. The myth became embedded in popular culture. Pendergrast cites the publication in 1994 of *The Filthy Lie*, by Helmut Karle, a psychologist employed at Guy’s Hospital, London, as a watershed: The book, ‘gave a tremendous boost to the recovered memory, hypnosis and MPD in England. It tells the dramatic story of Meggie Collins, a depressed obese middle-aged woman. At first, Karle hypnotized her in an attempt to help her to lose weight. Then, after the session, she supposedly told him, “When I was a little girl, my father interfered with me.” When he asked her about this revelation later, she repeatedly denied that incest had occurred or that she had said such a thing.’ But her therapist persisted and she later recovered extreme abuse memories, which included ‘gang orgies,’ and her therapist claimed to have discovered, under hypnosis, two alter egos. Subsequently Karle made a diagnosis of MPD and Collins was used as proof of the existence of repressed memories in the UK. In 1994, *Routledge* published *Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse*, edited by Valerie Sinason. Chapter 29 is entitled *Satanic cult practises*, written by Joan Coleman a founding member of RAINS; chapter 32 is entitled *Internal and external reality: establishing parameters*. It focuses on three case studies one of whom was Carol Felstead (deceased). In Carol’s medical records, Sinason describes Carol as ‘her first chronic sadistic-abuse patient.’ Simon Wesley, professor of psychological medicine at the Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College, London, described the book as ‘incredulous, superstitious, iatrogenic, illness-inducing, self-righteous incendiary garbage.’

Recovered memory therapy is an industry. This point is not lost on Pendergrast. With reference to the US, he writes:

‘The repressed –memory craze was a bonanza, not only for private therapists and inpatient psychiatric units, but for retreat centres, continuing-education instructors, and lawyers. As long as insurance companies continued to pay for questionable diagnoses of “post-traumatic stress disorder” or “dissociative identity disorder,” therapists could continue to milk the system. One father reported that his daughter’s therapy had cost \$300, 000 over the last five years. That was nothing compared to the three-quarters of a million dollars another woman spent on MPD therapy and hospitalization in just four years. Others spent well over a million dollars for “treatment that rendered them depressed, suicidal, and utterly dependent.’

In essence, this constituted consumer fraud. The last sentence of this quote cannot be over-estimated. The archive of the British False Memory Society is littered with files which portray a story of lives shattered by therapists fixated with an untenable belief in traumatic repression. Pendergrast points out that members of the public continue to overwhelmingly believe that traumatic events can be repressed. As do many psychotherapists. In their essay, *Beliefs About Memory, Childhood Abuse, And Hypnosis Among Clinicians, Legal Professionals, and The General Public*, Professor Chris French and Dr James Ost pinpoint that a jury’s misunderstanding about the way memory works can lead to potential miscarriage of justices. Memory does not function like a video recorder. However the general public’s belief about memory does not always accord with the science about memory. The same applies to clinicians and to legal professionals, as a number of international surveys have indicated. In sum, ‘The available evidence overwhelmingly supports the view that misconceptions regarding the true nature of memory are widely held not only by members of the public, but also by professionals working in clinical and legal contexts. The negative implications of this situation with respect to the possibility of miscarriages of justice are obvious. There is an urgent need for knowledge transfer from memory experts to other professionals, but, to date, this has met with only limited success’ (see Burnett, *Wrongful Allegations*, chapter 11).

Memory Warp deserves to be widely read. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the science of memory. For the falsely-accused, it is a must-read text. Impeccably written, it provides a

compelling insight into the mayhem caused by pseudoscience and false-memory-type allegations. Future generations will surely look back on this period in history with shock, horror and disbelief.

(Dr) Kevin Felstead

‘Every Blade of Grass’

by Richard Schaeffer

(2016. Pub. The Book Guild Ltd) ISBN 978-1-912083-75-6

‘Inspired by the shocking true story of a family’s subjection to trial by therapy’

A few years ago, our lives were catapulted into the world of false memory as a result of false allegations made against us. Since that day, I have read everything I could lay my hands on to help me try and understand what was happening to us, emotionally as a family and also, to help to guide us through the maelstrom of the legal maze that we found ourselves in. To date, that reading has all been of theoretical text, which I have devoured and from which I have learnt an immeasurable amount, but at times, felt strangely divorced from. This book, puts the subject in to a narrative form and it was all the more accessible for that, helping to hang the personal feelings and experiences on to the scaffold of all the theory that has become our way of defining the terrible events that have befallen us.

It offers the story of a young, educated woman (Anna) who finds herself at a low point in her life and is referred to psychotherapy. This referral and the subsequent use of recovered memory techniques by her therapist, plunges her and her family into the dark and tragic world of false allegations and results in the painful disintegration of her family.

The author ably puts this story into context, with the events slowly unfolding across all the characters involved. It charts the gradual decline of Anna into recovered memories brought out in therapy, the distancing from family and the impact that has on everyone concerned. Living their experiences with them in this way, helped to see things from other perspectives as well as the comfort of mirroring our own. The gradual exposure of the false memories and the subsequent realities

for all involved are very well crafted and I found myself nodding along and reading passages out to my husband as the words reflected much of our experience. My copy is heavy with highlighter pen marks and paper markers for quick referral to the sections that I/we may want to go back to regularly. We have!

Many of the therapeutic methods and approaches are discussed via the narrative and aptly defined as, '*a family's subjection to trial by therapy.*' The therapist (based on the practitioner that was involved) employed many of the techniques used on our family member and many of the phrased questions and approaches reported were almost a word for word transcription of those with which we are sadly only too familiar.

The strength of 'Every Blade of Grass' is its grounding in reality, inspired by actual events and following a family damaged by the therapeutic tools used.

In the foreword, Professor Lawrence Weiskrantz, recognises the value of this, 'Fictionalised, anonymous and compassionate account...of which the author has direct knowledge'.

The author is an experienced psychologist who has written many books and papers on psychology, education and health. It is a book that can be of help to families, members of the public and professionals working within the field of psychology and psychotherapy and also those who in their roles, encounter the conundrum of false memories that can result from recovered memory therapy. It will resonate with all of us that have found ourselves in the unenviable position of needing to navigate our way through hazards that such practices can inflict..

'This story offers a salutary reminder that permanent delusions about past abuse are a real possibility, and that therapists possess the tools to damage as well as to help the lives of their clients.' Katherine Mair retired clinical psychologist and author of *Abused by Therapy* (2013)

Jayne Williams

Diary Date

**BFMS AGM/Conference
6th April 2019
London
Email/call for booking form**

LEGAL FORUM

Warning: Why you need legal Representation

Claire Anderson – ABV Solicitors

As the result of a change in the regulations relating to police bail in April 2017, the Police are now choosing to invite a large number of suspects in an investigation to attend what is called a 'voluntary interview' or what the police call a 'caution plus 3' interview. This negates the need for formal arrest as a mutually suitable date and time is offered to the interviewee who is provided with exactly the same legal rights as an arrested person. This process is hugely advantageous to both the police and suspect as it avoids detention in a police cell and there is generally very little waiting time at the police station as the interview is scheduled. The difference is that the voluntary attendee is informed that he/she can leave at any time, although this may render the accused liable to arrest at a later date if the police have sufficient grounds. Given this more relaxed arrangement, a person invited for interview can sometimes feel less inclined to ask for a solicitor, whether it be the duty solicitor or a solicitor of choice.

The consequences of being interviewed by police without an experienced criminal solicitor can be dire. For example, many suspects have no concept of the consequence of an interview regarding an incident which they might consider was nothing more than horseplay. Take the man whose former partner complained to police that he had touched her fleetingly on the bottom (6 months before she made the complaint) whilst they were attending an event together. Police invited this 'suspect' for a voluntary interview. He considered there was no need for legal representation as he had done nothing wrong. He was quizzed about the touch extensively and, during questioning, the interviewing officer wrongly summarised what he had actually said in interview as being an admission. He then found himself being offered a police caution for Sexual Assault, which, he was told, if he refused the caution, would lead to a criminal prosecution. A man of previous good character with a record for sexual assault not to mention a requirement to sign the Sex Offenders Register would be catastrophic for him, and his career. He had in fact denied the touching alleged vehemently throughout the interview.

A review by myself of his interview disc revealed that no admission had been made whatsoever and that the interviewing officer must have told his

supervising officer that it had in order for him to be offered a caution. A caution cannot be offered without a clear admission to the allegation. This client had the foresight to instruct a solicitor post interview to seek advice on how he should proceed. He has been strongly advised not to accept a caution. Extensive representations were made to the Police re the lack of evidential and public interest criteria in this case to support a prosecution and we have therefore asked for an investigation into why the interviewing officer misreported the content of the interview to his supervising officer. The lesson here is always protect yourself by engaging not just a solicitor, but a pro-active one, if you face a voluntary interview. However confident you are that you can manage without one, words can be twisted and pressure can cause difficulties in articulation. Our job is to protect you. Let us do that.

TRIBUTES

Personal Tributes to Dr James Ost

James was an undergraduate when he first contacted the BFMS in Wiltshire, I think in about 1994. Even then his enthusiasm for the topics of false memory and retraction shone out. We grew into the subject together. As we know, he became an amazing source of academic knowledge around the topic, helping the BFMS and often its members directly, to educate and debunk the junk science around poor therapeutic practise. In 2004 he accepted an invitation to join the BFMS Scientific and Professional Advisory Board. Throughout the nearly three decades we have known him, his friendship, generosity of time and input were superb. We have been privileged to have known him and will miss him so much.

Madeline Greenhalgh, Director, British False Memory Society

*

Just learnt the news – forgive me – sharing my sorrow with you all. Sending a big group hug. Shocked beyond words. Farewell dear James. You will be sorely missed. A privilege to have known you.

Pamela Radcliffe, Barrister

*

James was loved and respected by all who knew him. He was a kind, extremely generous and compassionate man. James made time for every-

one and he always put other people first. I shall miss his friendship, calm demeanour and bright sense of humour. It has been a privilege to have known him. You will be missed James.

Dr Kevin Felstead – Director of Communications
BFMS

Losing James has hit so many people so very hard. That is not just because he was an amazingly gifted academic, which of course he was, but because he was such a thoroughly nice person. He was unfailingly kind and considerate to everyone – and his sense of humour was such that he was always great company. Memories always fade but his memory will live on for a very long time indeed in the hearts of all those who loved him.

Professor Christopher French

*

James, we're all trying to get our heads around losing you. I appreciated your friendship so much. It's lucky for me that I have so many lovely and funny memories of you. I'm going to make sure I think of you often and keep them alive.

Professor Fiona Gabbert

*

James was an amazing member of a close-knit scientific family: the memory distortion family. I loved the energy, enthusiasm, intelligence and even humour that he brought to our family. And he was one of the passionate good guys. A social justice warrior whom I am proud to call a colleague ... we will all miss him ...

Professor Elizabeth Loftus

*

Over the past decade since James and I met, we got together on countless occasions to discuss what were probably dozens of different research ideas, almost none of which came to fruition. But what did develop during this time was our friendship. That came effortlessly with James. He was enormous fun, with self-deprecating humour, a love of exchanging silly anecdotes, and for attempting hilarious – if appalling – impressions of other people. But beyond fun, James was one of the most generous, supportive, and humble people I've met. He made people feel valued and respected, precisely because he valued and respected people without question. Like his other colleagues and friends, I feel a huge sense of loss and sadness that James is no longer here. But I could not be more grateful to have had the opportunity to call him my friend.

Dr Rob Nash

Overseas False Memory Societies

Please feel free to write or phone if you have relatives in these countries who would like to receive local information.

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