

BOOK REVIEWS

The Jungians, by Thomas B. Kirsch. Routledge, London and Philadelphia, 2000, 276 pp., \$37.95.

This book, now 9 years out in publication, has deserved our review for some time. On the surface, it involves material that is probably oriented more toward psychodynamic historians and sociologists than to practitioners who want to expand their knowledge of theories of the psyche. However, much more is involved. For example, the book sheds important light on the history of the many disquieting myths and power/political positions that for years denied the integration of Jungian ideas into the corpus of psychodynamic theory. While it is on the formal level a detailed description of the development of the Jungian movement from its inception, on the informal level the book actually has much to offer to the practitioner who reads between its lines.

The Jungians is well written and informative especially as an historical resource, but it is not a reference book on Jungian theory. Indeed some prior knowledge of that theory would be helpful for the book to be thoroughly useful.

That being said, for those who are interested in detailed information on the history and development of analytical psychology (as Jung called his theoretical and clinical system) from its inception almost to the present day, together with the colorful and interesting personalities and interactions that have marked that development, this book is a fundamental resource. Thomas Kirsch, M.D. is an excellent writer, and because of family as well as personal background is in a central position to outline the history and development of the Jungian movement. He applies himself superbly to this task.

Those who are not well familiar with such development may be surprised to learn that it is a truly international phenomenon. Although born in Switzerland and in conjunction with the early development of Freud's psychoanalyses in Vienna, London, and elsewhere, this writing thoroughly covers the spread of Jungian activity from the triangle of Switzerland, Austria/Germany and England, into the United States and Canada, Italy, France and the smaller European countries, to Israel and on to Australia/New Zealand, Latin America, South Africa, Russia and the eastern European countries, and finally to its emergence in Asia.

The reader is educated between the informational lines toward setting aside a number of shibboleths that have grown around the myth and reality of Freudian-Jungian antagonism, although that intent is not central to the writing. Such shibboleths include ideas and fantasies regarding Jung's anti-Semitism, together with the accusation of "mysticism" and of behavioral as well as theoretical sloppiness. Such and associated rumors attest to the fact that even "objective" and "scientific"

practitioners of the mental health profession are definitely not immune to projections and externalizations of their own. Jungian theory and practice have long proved themselves of immense personal value to untold numbers of people, and that fact speaks to a necessary internal validity of the particular views of psychic reality that they embrace.

The book therefore makes a distinct contribution to a growing *psychodynamic viewpoint*, to which all theoretical systems can and do make at least some contribution. In this sense alone *The Jungians* puts its own muscle and sinew into a growing, new, and vibrant psychodynamics, which is sorely needed as a counterweight to what has become an overly impersonal neuro/biochemical model of the nature of human mental suffering. One is reminded by this model of the early psychodynamic description of the consulting room as a “surgical field”—by now generally discredited as conducive to healing.

As I have said, a prior and at least basic knowledge of Jung’s theoretical and clinical views that includes an awareness of their positioning in the body of psychological science would be very helpful in the context of reading this book. Some present readers may have that knowledge already. With apologies to them, a brief digression for those who do not might be helpful to reference a few places to start:

By this time in history, many thousands of pages have been written outlining Jung’s theoretical and clinical views, including of course Jung’s 20 or so volumes of formal writing, plus a dozen or so additional volumes of less available writing. Jung’s correspondence with Freud alone takes up several books of material and provides a historical context for his work—then when we add the written material about Jung’s ideas, the list of writings itself alone would probably take a volume or so. Getting an acquaintance with these ideas could be a staggering task. My own modest suggestions as to places to start are overly simplistic and could be disputed, but I will give them:

Jung’s own contribution to the seminal book *Man and His Symbols* (1969) gives an excellent though perhaps overly simple introduction for those unfamiliar with his thinking, and is still very much in print. My own articles, “Jungian School: Analytic Theory” and “Jungian School: Analytic Therapy” in Benjamin Wolman (Ed), *The Encyclopedia of Psychiatry, Psychology and Psychoanalysis* (1996) provide an introductory overview of the Jungian system and some additional introduction to the place of Jung’s thinking in regard to psychological science. Two of my personally favorite outlines of Jung’s thought (aside of course from compilations of his own writings) are Edward Whitmont’s *The Symbolic Quest* (1969), Wolfgang Hochheimer’s *The Psychotherapy of C.G. Jung* (1969), and *The Myth of Meaning* (1971), written by Jung’s personal secretary, Aniela Jaffé. Some of these may be out of print but can easily be referenced on the Internet. Other readers can find their own favorites.

I have already mentioned that the present book provides vital information toward quelling the destructive and confusing misinformation and speculations around the Freud-Jung split. For example, extensive amplification of the fact that a large percentage of early and subsequent Jungian analysts were and are German-Jewish brings an indirect counterweight to continuing accusations that Jung was anti-Semitic. These and related topics are woven into the information provided.

The detail in this book contributes a massive amount of material indirectly as well as directly applicable to a study of the development of the psychodynamic movement. For example, the chapter on analytical psychology in Britain, which includes comments on Jungian analyst Michael Fordham's integration of Jungian, Kleinian, and object-relations thought, brings additional meaning to the currently necessary fusion of the various psychodynamic ideas into one body of knowledge and practice.

The British example is only one of many. The descriptions of the personalities and their complex interactions that produced the evolution of the Jungian movement with implications for its integration into the larger psychodynamics are detailed and indeed fascinating. References to Jo Wheelwright, a seminal member of this Academy, should be of particular interest to our *Journal* readers.

The Jungians contributes significantly to the coming together of various ideas and approaches in the establishment of a psychodynamic viewpoint from which human mental suffering can be addressed. The need for that viewpoint is self-evident to balance against the current increasingly impersonal "scientific" perspective on the human condition. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in such coming together.

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