

tions should not be taken as an overtly negative criticism: it has mapped out (some of) the terrain and, if for this alone, demands our acknowledgement and respect.

I recommend this text to all 'explorers' and look forward to future advancements in dialogue between cognitive and phenomenological psychologies. If such are forthcoming, as I expect they will - indeed, must - be, they will be enhanced significantly by the ground-work that Clinical Phenomenology and Cognitive Psychology has provided.

**Ernesto Spinelli**

**\*When Nietzsche Wept, A Novel of Obsession by Irvin D. Yalom, Penguin Books (1994) 306pp.**

Coming to Yalom's *When Nietzsche Wept* by way of *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* and *Existential Psychotherapy*, it is difficult not to feel some slight shock on beginning to read his latest volume. We have, though, had portents of Yalom's progression towards fiction in the shape of the oridly titled *Love's Executioner* - a work which has always seemed at least equal parts fact and fiction. Yalom readily confirms this suspicion with the full title (often passed over unseen) *and Other Tales of Psychotherapy*. This epithet appears little removed from *A Novel of Obsession* which completes the title of this last work.

Though not an entirely new animal, this book does represent a deeper and more sustained attempt to explore the genesis of therapy by means of the imagination and, as such, gives us pause for thought. There have been a number of such creatures let loose in recent years, some memorable, some not. Among them Susan Lund's *Raptus: A Novel About Beethoven* comes to mind as a treatment of the world of music, and Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* and *Chatterton* are eloquent on the realms of architecture and literature, respectively. This sub-genre is not, though, as new a development as might be thought. Yalom has hitched his star to an approach which, at least in the sense of comic imitation, can be traced back to antiquity. Aristophanes employed parodic devices, while *The Rape of the Lock* (mock epic), *Don Quixote* (mock picaresque), and *Northanger Abbey* (mock Gothic) continued the tradition.

In the late-nineteenth century pastiche, an off-shoot of parody, became popular. Such exercises in the stylistic imitation of specific writers permitted literary criticism via another means than direct analysis. Turn of the century literature also included transposed autobiography such as D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, a combina-

tion of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century *Bildungsroman* and elements of psychoanalytical autobiography. This development led to an amalgam of pastiche, biography and fiction to produce something that yet awaits a name in English (or American) literary criticism - although A.S. Byatt uses the epithet 'Romance' for her novel *Possession* - but which is in French termed a *biographie romancée*, loosely translated a biography in novel form, and which might, conversely, be called a novel with a biographical framework. A popular example of such a 'Romance' is Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, in part a critique of Flaubert's writing, a pastiche of his style, (Barnes's remoulds the *Dictionary of Received Ideas* which appears at the end of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*), and a novel about academic research.

Both *Flaubert's Parrot* and *Possession* are self-referential - they are literature about writing, literature the concern of which is the analysis of literature, and they have metafictional elements; they are books which are written with a certain self-conscious craftsmanship - and pursue a philosophical conceit such that they cannot be described as self-contained works of prose fiction, but are shaped in part by things which lie outside the covers of the book. They are also, therefore, works of literature which straddle genre and which break down traditional boundaries between academe and the novelist in a way which provides a new dimension to the concept of the theoretician-practitioner. While it is important to recall that Freud was awarded the Nobel Prize not for science but for literature this is, to some extent, incidental since he did not set out to write literature. To paraphrase some comments which I made in the fifth edition of this Journal, Freud found himself in a rather uncomfortable position with regard to literature. He presented the view (see Volume Seven of the Standard Edition) that the author was an obdurate neurotic who, by his creative work, keeps himself from breakdown, but also from any real cure. The writer, then, is a socially-validated day-dreamer. Instead of altering his character he perpetuates and publishes his phantasies. But it is evident that Freud himself is not exempt from such creative work, as we find from a reading of his early psychoanalytic writing *Studies on Hysteria*:

*Like other neuropathologists I was trained to employ local diagnoses and electroprognosis, and it still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science.*

If we apply the points made above to *When Nietzsche Wept* then for literary criticism we can read Psychotherapeutic theories, and for philosophical conceits we can read psychological flights of fancy. We are left with the problem: how should a book such as this describe itself - fiction or non-fiction? A.S. Byatt is careful to include a foreword in which she quotes Nathaniel Hawthorne in his Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*:

*When a writer calls a work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former -while a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart - has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation...*

A. S. Byatt is clear that *Possession* is not meant to be read as a critical study of Browning and Rosetti, but if her characters have a remarkable number of shared characteristics with them, and write in a similar style, the reader can draw his/her own conclusion. Yalom's novel of obsession takes full advantage of the opportunity to avoid plagiarism, pay tribute and speculate freely in the manner of a 'Romance'. The back cover speaks of his ability to 'bring to life' not only Nietzsche and Breuer, but also 'Anna O' (thus introducing the interesting notion of a fiction of a fiction - we might ask where, if anywhere, the 'real' Anna might be found), and the young Sigmund Freud. Perhaps this is the exception which proves the rule, where a mere mortal breathes life into his creation and escapes punishment for hubris. In the case of Frankenstein's monster the joins between the disparate parts are all too obvious. Here the discord is considerably less noticeable. It is a tribute to Yalom's easy style that even with so many important characters (or people - it is difficult to know how to refer to them) to manoeuvre on and off the page, he never lurches into the Pythonesque. The prose itself is probably too simple and fast-paced to improve with re-reading, it is probably for the same reason that it is compulsive on first reading. If this should seem dismissive, compare any page of Yalom with one of Byatt: the former

parades information past the reader apace, while the latter is clever, witty and complex in an entirely more rounded and satisfying way. Having said which, the information Yalom displays is evidence of meticulous research, whether the subject is a late-nineteenth century prescription for 'pulmonary compromise' or the food which might have been served in the Freud household. Yalom's intention is clearly to popularize rather than bowdlerize the birth of therapy. We can only speculate on the reaction which Freud or Nietzsche would have had to this venture, but perhaps in this post-modern world that is another book. *Freud: the Opera* and *Nietzsche: the Musical* cannot be too far over the horizon, and who would wish to carp at such initiatives - the only proviso being that they should spur us to go to the original works rather than replace them, which in doing so would decimate the Western canon.

**Simon Du Plock**

**\*Morag Myself or Mother Hen: In Search of a Therapist. Edited by Moira Walker. Buckingham: Open University Press. 1995 164pp £12.99**

This book is written and edited by experienced therapists providing the reader with practical insight into six different therapeutic approaches.

One real life situation is described in detail and analysed and commented on. These accounts provide the reader with direct access to the thinking and personal styles of each practitioner. They also give the reader a wide and informed appreciation of the enormous range of ways in which therapy may approach a particular situation.

The way in which this information was gathered into a volume is intriguing and telling. This client was originally interviewed by Michael Jacobs. Once her participation in the project was confirmed she received a copy of the transcript. With her approval it was then sent to the six therapists. The therapists were told that having read the material they would have the opportunity to ask further questions of the client through the editors. Moira Walker then met with Morag "at least twice at most four times" conducting interviews which took several hours. "Many thousands of words were transcribed with the agreement of the client before being sent off to the individual therapists." As the therapists returned their assessments of the clients along with their account of how they would work with her, the material was given to the client to read. When all six assessments had been received the client met with the editor to discuss the content of the final chapter together before the editor wrote it.