

Limbus Lectures 2014

Totnes, Devon

www.limbus.org.uk

Liz Burns

March 1, 2014

Literary inspirations in therapeutic conversations: a systemic perspective

My life to date has been punctuated throughout by 'literary' inspirations, from getting my dad to 'read me Rupert' as a small child, to seeing the current political scene through the eyes of Thomas Cromwell in Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*. My personal and professional lives have been shaped and woven together alongside the work of writers, narrative- and image-makers of all sorts. I suggest that this is a propensity we all share, be we professionals, clients and/or just plain folks. It is an experience which emphasises the commonalities of human existence which are vital ingredients of therapeutic conversations.

'Narrative' is a fundamental way of describing the social construction of interpersonal realities over time. The term and related practices are recognised widely across art and science, and the importance of stories in shaping lives has been elaborated in many ways in recent years. I would like to emphasise here, however, the significance of what Virginia Woolf called 'moments of being'. I will illustrate some such 'moments' with personal and professional examples.

My work as a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist, with its emphasis on context, connection and relationship, has fostered this kind of thinking and has enabled me to explore the thesis that literature, in its broadest sense, mediates the interactions of daily life, and can be used intentionally to enrich therapeutic discourse.

Liz Burns is a family and systemic psychotherapist. Originally a social worker, she qualified as a family therapist in 1991 at the Institute of Family Therapy. Since then she has worked in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, and in independent practice. She was Consultant Family Therapist in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust. In 2009 she relocated to West Cornwall where she continues in private practice as a Family Therapist, supervisor, consultant and trainer. With a first degree in English, Liz has enjoyed a varied relationship with literature and the arts, culminating in research for a PhD enquiring into the place of literary reading in the personal/professional development of family therapists, both in training and in continuing professional work. Her book *Literature and Therapy: a Systemic View* (Karnac 2009) sets out some of the ideas she will discuss.

Nigel Smith

May 17, 2014

The Expertise of the non-Expert Position: Systemic Solution Focussed Therapy

Systemic psychotherapists who work from a solution focused perspective, claim that they take up a 'non- expert' position in relation to the client. Nigel will show that this was not always the case and that the stance has arisen more recently alongside the development of interest in post modern approaches to therapy. Nigel will argue for his view, that taking a non-expert position, requires a huge amount of expertise. In this talk he will be looking to develop these ideas through his own personal development, his therapeutic background of systemic psychotherapy and his particular interest in Solution Focused Therapy.

Nigel Smith is the Lead Family and Systemic Psychotherapist for the adult mental health services in Plymouth. He works for Plymouth Community Healthcare. He has a particular interest in Solution Focused Therapy. He runs the year-long Foundation Course in Solution Focused Therapy through Plymouth University. He also runs the AFT accredited Plymouth Foundation in Family Therapy Course, also through the University.

Graham Music

The Good Life: Altruism, Empathy & Experience

September 20, 2014

How altruistic and empathic tendencies are affected by bad experiences, but are helped by good parenting and psychotherapy'

This talk will examine how early experiences, secure attachments and good environments can lead to more altruistic, prosocial and empathic ways of acting while stress, trauma and neglect can lead to more aggression, callousness and antisocial behaviour. The presentation will bring together current research from neuroscience, developmental psychology and attachment, alongside clinical experience, and making use of video footage, will try to examine the links between feeling good and being good, and generally ponder 'The Good Life'

Graham Music PHD, is Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist at the Tavistock and Portman Clinics and an adult psychotherapist in private practice. His publications include Nurturing Natures, Attachment and Children's Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development (2011) and Affect and Emotion (2001), and next year he will publish 'The Good Life: Wellbeing and the new Science of Altruism, Selfishness and Immorality'. He has a particular interest in exploring the interface between developmental findings and clinical work. Formerly an Associate Clinical Director in the Tavistock child and family department, he has worked therapeutically with maltreated children for over two decades, and has developed and managed a range of services concerned with the aftermath of child maltreatment and neglect, particularly community based therapy services . He has recently been working clinically at the Portman with forensic cases. He organises trainings for therapists in CAMHS, leads on teaching on attachment, the brain and child development at the tavistock, and teaches and supervises on the Tavistock Child Psychotherapy Training and many trainings in Britain and abroad.

