

Further Reading on Creativity and Play

We are delighted to offer the following recommendation of *Further Reading on this topic* from Joan Chodorow - **The Symbolic Impetus: How Creative Fantasy Motivates Development** (See full reference below) Joan has also provided us with an excellent review of the book, especially for the DTAA Quarterly. DTAA members will remember Joan as our keynote speaker at the DTAA conference in the year 2000, in Melbourne. She needs no introduction as a well known Jungian analyst, dance therapist (ADTR), author and international lecturer.

The book is all about the ongoing, interwoven relationship of emotion, play, imagination, and creativity. Stewart's systematic study looks at psychological and symbolic development throughout infancy, childhood and adolescence from the perspective of normal development, stage-specific disturbances and corresponding issues in psychotherapy. Identifying the typical fantasies of each stage, he investigates the symbols that shape development and healing. For those of us who are engaged with questions around the early beginnings of symbol formation via movement and bodily experience, he traces the twin pathways of development (social and individual), for example, the infant's sheer delight in movement interaction with others, and self-motion when alone:

"This is the beginning of that primal joy at 'being oneself' which will hopefully accompany one throughout the life cycle" (p. 61) The world of baby games is described, both interactive and played alone, then the continuing development of symbolic play, the imaginary companion as personification of both ego ideal and shadow, then the

fantasies of symbolic community around 6-11 years, and then engagement with culture heroes and heroines, and adolescent identity via the age-old cultural forms. In adolescence, "The emergence of both a new symbolic mode and a new symbolic instrument of assimilation are dramatic, but they exhibit the same invariant three-step sequence in the differentiation of consciousness that we have observed in our discussion at the ... previous stages of development: recognition of other, awareness of self, and a new view of the world" (p. 148).

The author links Winnicott's primitive agonies (going to pieces, falling forever, having no relation to the body, complete isolation, having no orientation) to the affects of crisis and survival (anger-rage, fear-terror, sadness-anguish, contempt/shame, disgust/humiliation, surprise-startle), linking them also to the life stimulus around crisis and agonal states and corresponding modes of parental behavior (pp. 18-49). Evocative descriptions by Piaget, Erikson, Neumann, Jung, Winnicott, Fraiberg, Stern, Bowlby, Searles, and others bring the concepts alive. Interwoven with descriptions are the related mythic images and myths from many cultural traditions.

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Reference

Stewart, C. (2001) *The Symbolic Impetus: How Creative Fantasy Motivates Development*. London: Free Association Books, (2001). (The paperback ISBN is 1-85343-535-X. Website is www.fa-b.com)

