

Foreword

The adolescent girl who cuts herself in secret rituals, the teen-age boy who affiliates himself with a violence ridden gang, the fifteen-year-old girl who rages at her parents when moments before she had expressed sweet feelings toward them, the ones attracted to cultish religious groups, the ones preoccupied by thoughts of death and suicide, the bizarrely dressed and oddly pierced young people, the teen-agers held up in their rooms, watching endless hours of television . . . what does psychological theory have to offer us to help us understand and witness the disturbing manifestations of adolescence? Richard Frankel—trained in phenomenology and depth psychology—brilliantly exposes most of our current theories as reducing adolescence to a rehashing of the dynamics of early childhood. In this book he releases us from this reductive circling back as the only explanation of the adolescent and attempts, instead, to lay bare the archetypal landscape of adolescence itself.

Following Jung, he asks what is the teleology of this part of the life cycle. What is adolescence aiming toward? Is there anything in the often odd and dangerous, frequently idealistic, and spiritually probing behavior and attitudes of adolescents to respect, to nurture, to understand on its own terms? In this heterogeneous American culture that has eroded common custom, ritual, and expectation, is there a way for us to see adolescents fashioning—in guises that are often hard for us to recognize—their own transition rituals and offerings? Frankel asserts that much of what we witness with adolescents are their attempts—often desperate—at self-initiation; efforts to shatter their innocence through wounding; efforts to build their capacity to endure losses through the navigation of betrayals, separations, and symbolic deaths; efforts to express the purity of their idealistic visions of the possible. He argues that the extremes

of adolescence are intrinsic to it, and must be insighted on their own terms, not through the lenses of childhood or adulthood.

Those familiar with Jungian psychology know that Jung and post-Jungians have had little to offer clinicians regarding adolescence. Jung's developmental interests were largely confined to mid- and later life. Yet through Frankel's careful harvesting of the scattered insights into adolescence—provided by Jung, Hillman, Guggenbühl-Craig, Bosnak, Wickes, Allan—he is able to present a coherent, convincing alternative to the psychoanalytic visions which have dominated clinical thinking about adolescence. Having steeped himself in both clinical experience with adolescents and Jungian psychology, Frankel is able to expose and articulate those parts of Jung's thoughts that are invaluable when considering adolescence—for instance, the emphasis on *telos*, the encounter with the shadow, the ways in which adolescents engage the individuation process, the need for ritual in a culture that provides little ritual coherence, the function of trying on various personas in the search for an individual self. He succeeds in bringing adolescence out of a state of neglect in Jungian and post-Jungian psychology, showing us that it can be a fertile site for the application of Jungian theory and practice.

Winnicott is also included here as an insightful theorist of the adolescent psyche. His recognition of the value of non-compliance in adolescence for the unfolding of the personality is given voice throughout the book. Despite Winnicott's overt lack of respect for Jung, many depth psychologists work with a profound appreciation for both Jung and Winnicott. Frankel deftly weaves between Winnicott's astute sensitivity regarding adolescence and Jungian approaches, exposing their compatibility and capacity to mutually enrich each other.

Frankel's book has a therapeutic effect on the reader, as it helps us discern our own countertransference reactions to adolescents. It tutors those who want to understand adolescence to reconnect with their own transit through this tumultuous period. Our adult dreams point us back over and over again to adolescence and the puer side of ourselves. Frankel queries us: "What was born there that needs to be recalled and remembered?" As well, he helps us sort through our own "adult" emotional reactions that are overly quick to negate, deride, pathologize, and condescend to the expressions of adolescence, seeing through these as senex reactions deeply alienated from the spirit of youthfulness, the puer. Through building in

us a respect for the psychological work that is being done in adolescence, and by helping us see the barrier created by our own envy of youth's vision and energy, Frankel is able to help the reader step toward what he or she initially judged as outlandish, horrific, developmentally off-track.

I especially appreciate Frankel's affirmation of therapy with adolescents, and his careful outlining of the functions of a therapeutic relationship in adolescence such as internalizing the reflective voice of the therapist, witnessing and taking an active interest in the many aspects of the teen-ager's personality, modeling how to dialogue with and reflect upon them, helping the patient engage a crisis in a meaningful way so that its inherent potential for transformation can unfold, reflecting back to the adolescent the grace, beauty, and power of her engagement with the spirit of youth. Through careful and interesting clinical vignettes, he is able to tutor us in the kind of therapeutic insighting and presence that can make a difference to the adolescents we work with.

Frankel's work illustrates the fruits of a deconstructionist approach to psychological theory and practice. Apart from its manifest theme of adolescence, Frankel teaches us how to work with theory. As he works the theories of adolescence he lays bare the way in which psychological theory is a creative process of the culture, each theory revealing aspects of the phenomenon under study while concealing others, each carrying its own set of implicit values. To see adolescence in a way that allows us to manifest our caring toward the youth traversing it, he beckons us to see with clarity first from one vantage point, then from another—Freud, Jones, Anna Freud, Blos, Hillman, and so forth. Only in this way do our theories begin to serve the young people and their experience, rather than subjugating their experience to a monocular vision of our own. I am very moved by the fruits of Richard Frankel's sustained gaze on adolescence. He has not succumbed to segmenting theory from practice, the imaginal from the lived, the causal from the teleological, the deconstruction of theory from the construction of it. As you can see, I am happy to invite you into this book, and eager for its sensitivities to grow within the much needed relationships we form with adolescents.

Mary Watkins, Ph.D.
Pacific Graduate Institute
Santa Barbara, California