

Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Eastern Thought

John Suler (SUNY Press, 1993)

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This book explores the convergence of psychoanalysis and Asian thought. It explores key theoretical issues. What role does paradox play in psychological transformations? How can the oriental emphasis on attaining "no-self" be reconciled with the western emphasis on achieving an integrated self? The book also inquires into pragmatic questions concerning the nature of psychological change and the practice of psychotherapy. The Taoist *I Ching* is explored as a framework for understanding the therapeutic process. Principles from martial arts philosophy and strategy are applied to clinical work. Combining theoretical analyses, case studies, empirical data, literary references, and anecdotes, this book is intended for researchers as well as clinicians, and beginning students as well as scholars.

1. Introduction: Chasing Two Rabbits?

- how contemporary psychoanalysis (object relations theory, self psychology) compares to Zen and Taoism - defining "psychoanalysis" and "eastern thought" - methods for integrating eastern and western ideas - obstacles to this pursuit - the need for this pursuit

2. East Meets West

- the history of how psychoanalysis converged with eastern thought - the self/object relationships between these eastern and western disciplines - common historical themes concerning psychoanalysis and eastern thought

3. Self and No-Self

- the western emphasis on attaining "self" - the eastern emphasis on attaining "no-self" - various models for resolving this apparent disparity between east and west - facets of selfhood and no-self - the interpenetration of self and no-self

4. Paradox

-the role of paradox in psychological and spiritual transformations
- the Zen koan - paradoxes within the intrapsychic world - the self/other paradox - paradox as pointers - the paradox of the willing self - beyond the realm of paradox

5. Words, Images, Things

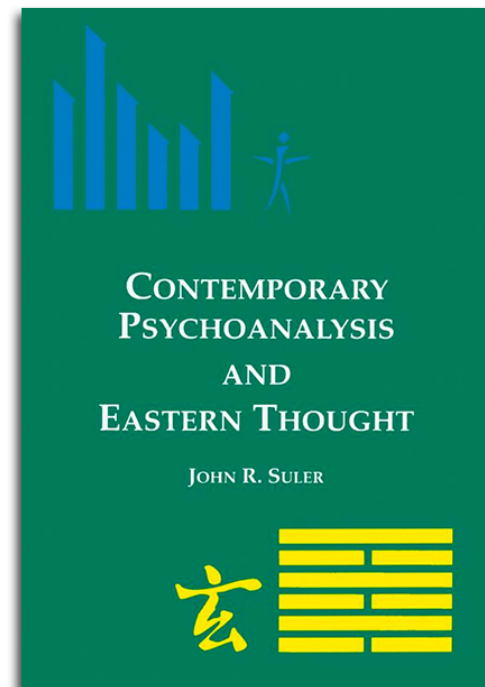
- the role of representational systems (verbal, imagistic, enactive) in spiritual growth - the limitations of language and concepts - mental imagery as transitional space in spiritual growth - the dynamics of form and formlessness - grasping the ungraspable

6. Meditative Consciousness

- the intrapsychic mechanisms and types of meditation - the liabilities and therapeutics of meditation - the clinician's contemplative experience - meditation in life context - the relationships and complementarity between psychotherapy and meditation

7. Students, Teachers, and Their Relationship

- strengths and pathology in spiritual students - strengths and pathology in spiritual teachers - crazy wisdom
- the psychodynamics of the student/teacher relationship



8. The Therapist as Warrior

- comparing psychotherapy to the martial arts - the warrior philosophy - basic martial art concepts applied to psychotherapy - the dynamics of hard and soft techniques - the clinician's and warrior's selfobject connection to a transcendent realm

9. Tai Chi Images: The Tao of Psychotherapy

- relating the I Ching imagery system to psychotherapy - the meanings of the yin/yang symbol applied to psychotherapy - the eight trigrams and psychotherapy - Taoist qualities of psychological transformations

10. Vision Quest

- the roots of the vision quest practice in eastern spirituality - the vision quest as a model of psychic transformation - the psychodynamics of wandering, signs, and visions

Conclusion: The Future of East Meeting West