

## **About Art Psychotherapy and Irene Champernowne.**

'Art Therapy as an Adjunct to Psychotherapy' (1968) and 'Art and Therapy: An Uneasy Partnership' (1971) are two papers by Irene Champernowne which shed fascinating lights on the debates taking place at a formative period in British art therapy, in which Edwards was much involved, (including a period as chair of the British Association of Art Therapists, BAAT), and refers to in the book. Irene was the Jungian analyst whose inspirational leadership, along with her husband Gilbert's pragmatism, made the formative, for Edwards and for British Art therapy, Withymead experiment in art and therapy happen. The Withymead community, (like Insider Art, based in Exeter, Devon, UK), was one of the first, most extensive and sustained early developments of the arts as psychotherapy, between 1942 until 1967, Its story is well told in 'Withymead, A Jungian Community for the Healing Arts', (Anthony Stevens, Coventure, 1986), all though not everyone, including Edwards, quite shared some of Steven's perspectives.

As well as these two papers by Champernowne we are also pleased to present a Withymead 'Prospectus' from 1964. The arts studios are honoured here as 'for most (people at the Centre)... the vital key to health'.

Not surprisingly given that at the time there were no formal training's for art psychotherapists in the UK, both Champernowne papers revolve around a dynamic between the art therapists and psychotherapist as being different people. Now the art therapist is in effect dual trained as both artist and psychotherapist. This certainly does not make the issues she explores altogether redundant however. Positions that are lean towards 'psychotherapy' or 'identity' are still very much in play not only within the profession but within the thoughts and feelings of many practitioners! It could also be argued that they lot of the territory defined here as 'art therapy' is also finding new expression, as 'Arts and Health', and having to learn a lot of the same lessons all over again.

In this light Irene saw the difference between 'psychotherapy' and 'art therapy' (then?) and 'arts in health' (now?) as in the depths of the relationships involved, as well as their aims. She wrote:

But therapy is more than passing time - it is healing in depth and if Therapy is to become harnessed to-a partner called Art there is a great danger that Art will override the partnership, for perhaps for some it has a more exciting and greater appeal. It has results to show and does not necessarily force the "teacher" or "therapist" into the often uncomfortable deep involvement with sick or suffering individuals which true therapy certainly must.

Champernowne struggles to resolve these ongoing and complex dynamics, not always elegantly. In some ways, she seems to be stuck with Jung's own deep ambivalence about whether art and therapy can ever be the same thing at the same time. Nevertheless she does achieve some real syntheses, especially at the end of 'Art and Therapy: An Uneasy Partnership' when she writes movingly about a joint enterprise between artist and therapist identities in becoming 'Artists in the Art of Living'. Edwards reported Irene as saying that 'so many of you artists lead such un-artistic lives'. She does not underestimate the pains, and indeed risks, of creativity.

But, following Jung, and like Edwards after her, Champernowne sees the arts as indispensable tools of meaning-making, writing that

Man does not groan in dark despair over the pains of meaningful creation, only over meaninglessness

Together these documents not only provide helpful background to Edwards book, but shed light on where debates in current art therapy/ arts and health practice have their roots.

The material here, compared with Edwards book, also makes it clear how much more complex Edwards' thinking became than that of his mentor, though often preoccupied with the same issues.

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