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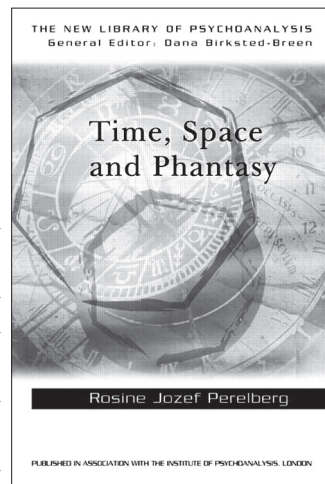
**Time, Space and Phantasy**

by Rosine Jozef Perelberg

London: Routledge, 2008, 221 pp.

Rosine Perelberg’s *Time, Space and Phantasy* has an appropriate title in that it explores fundamental psychoanalytical tenets of how a child learns of time and space, and the hallucinatory wishes that arise when an absence has been noted. Perelberg comes to psychoanalysis from social anthropology and utilizes her earlier training with a point of view that brings with it an interesting cultural bent. Indeed, 2 of the 11 chapters in this book (chapters 1 and 9) deal with anthropological phenomena and phantasies around time and space, and chapter 7 examines these issues through the novelistic study of the great Latin American author Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Chapter 2 of this well-written and thoughtful psychoanalytic book deals with the central theme that governs Perelberg’s thinking throughout this work. The concept of the *après coup* is examined extensively in a work that alternates between theoretical-clinical concepts such as dreams, identification, and identity (chapters 3, 5, and 7) and writing of a totally clinical nature (chapters 4, 6, and 8). Before examining Perelberg’s considerations around *après coup*, it is worth noting that the clinical mate-



rial presented here shows the thoughtfulness and dedication of a British analyst who, to quote Jacobs, “uses the self” very well in moving from the clinical dilemmas she faces and her theoretical understanding of what the patient is experiencing. Her clinical vignettes are extensive and illustrate her attempts to explicate her own views on psychoanalytical approaches to space, time, and phantasy.

In this same chapter, the author lays the groundwork for her detailed elucidation of the concept of *après coup* by examining how the essence of this idea permeates the work of Freud. She speaks of repetition, irreversibility, and oscillation as three concepts of time, all existing in Freud’s formulations about the psychic apparatus. Perelberg demonstrates that Freud uses the development of the individual (e.g., fixation points, the structuring of the individual psyche—such as the appearance of id, ego, and super-ego—and repression) as a backdrop for how alterations of memory, such as reorganization of time frames and distortions, take place in the human mind.

Freud (1926) suggested that most of the repression that we deal with in our therapeutic work is repression by deferred action (*après coup*). By this he meant that experiences, impressions and memory traces may be revised at a later date, when the individual reaches a new stage of maturation. (p. 26)

Here Perelberg demonstrates that memory is located in different spaces and at different times in the mind. The author shows how the concept of *après coup* for Freud is an interaction between memory and phantasy, where phantasies constantly reshape memories retrospectively. Here Perelberg’s own explanation of *après coup* appears: “There are at least seven dimensions—development, regression, fixation, repetition compulsion, the return of the repressed, the timelessness of the unconscious, and *après coup*—like a heptagon in movement” (p. 32).

The author goes to great pains to illustrate that this central concept, borrowed from the French psychoanalytic literature, operates tacitly in all psychoanalytic work. This is particularly well illustrated in chapter 7, where she examines how *après coup* permeates the debate arising in the “controversial discussions” at the British Psycho-Analytic Society between Freudian and Kleinian analysts of the 1940s. Here Perelberg makes a distinction between “descriptive *après coup*,” which in the French literature means retrospective signification in the moment-to-moment progress of a session, and “dynamic *après coup*,” by which she means all the previously mentioned formulations of Freud. This review cannot do justice to the