

Pat Boran, one of Ireland's most noted literary figures, has curated this wonderful collection of Irish prose, poetry and short plays in support of Shine. His eloquent introduction emphasises that the point of the book is not to be therapeutic but to help raise awareness of Shine's work. He describes how, during the initial phases of the book's development, he and John Saunders, CEO of Shine, agreed that the anthology should not be limited to writing about mental health, *per se*, but should, through a broad collection of contemporary Irish literature, present mental ill health as inseparable from the important issues that matter to us as a society. This decision, to my mind, is key to the real gift of this book: it chronicles some of the most significant emotional and psychological experiences of life, forging a familiarity and commonality that transcends the sometimes indistinct boundaries between mental illness and well-being.

This is a book to dip in and out of. The contributions are assembled in alphabetical order according to the authors' surnames and comprise a combination of new and previously published works. I found it somewhat disconcerting, initially, to jump from poem to short story to diary excerpt to stage scene; but my pace was necessarily slowed by the need for reflection and digestion after many of the pieces. A remarkably impressive list of contributing authors includes Colm Toibin, Kevin Barry, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Gabriel Rosenstock, Michael D. Higgins, Colum McCann and Paul Durcan. The breadth of the collection encompasses love, grief, regret, adjustment, ageing, self-doubt, addiction, guilt, fear, kinship and so on. The alphabetical order means that, as in life, there is sometimes a jarring juxtaposition of themes and emotions. An extract from Mike McCormack's 'Solar Bones' describes a son recalling his father's descent into decrepitude due to grief and illness while the next page contains 'Good Vibes', a short, playful verse that delights in life's accidental moments of fun. Universal themes are explored from disparate and sometimes opposing views. A childhood memory is a source of guilt and secret shame in 'The Aviary' while Dermot Bolger clings to the memory of a former girlfriend which evokes for him moments of the greatest intimacy and love. For the author of 'The Notebook of Maeve Maguire', memory serves as comfort upon receiving news of her father's death while a character with dementia in the same piece serves to question the reliability of memory at all.

Appropriately, there is no shying away from darker or more sensitive subject matter. Philip Casey's 'Cruelty' is an extraordinarily succinct indictment of the lifelong ramifications of childhood trauma. Ireland's erstwhile asylum system and the secrecy and silence that accompanied it are regularly referenced. Paul Durcan contemplates suicide while Pdraig J. Daly mourns a friend who took his own life. Emigration, addiction and emotional isolation are explored, though never gratuitously;

as Pat Boran writes, 'the contributions, though typically gentle and careful, are charged with that urge to break the silence', an uncomfortable but necessary feat in a country struggling to understand how to process and come to terms with many aspects of its past.

If I had a criticism of the collection it would be the relative absence of recovery themes and the lack of reflection upon the capacity for growth and learning as a result of emotional or psychological adversity. Treatment is occasionally mentioned, most notably in 'Leaving St. Elizabeth's' which portrays a nightmarish experience of electroconvulsive therapy and 'Black Dogs' in which the protagonist is undergoing therapy. But I would have been interested in a perspective of what recovery entailed, what was learned from the process, whether it affected a new understanding of the self or had an impact on a person's sense of mastery or future outlook.

Hope is by no means absent, however. Gabriel Fitzmarice writes:

That after last night's thunder comes the rain,  
Things that were will spring to life again

Thanks to the craftsmanship and generosity of some of Ireland's finest writers, 'Shine On' is a body of work that reminds us of the capacity that we have to empathise with one another, assist in each other's distress and share in their joy. In an extract from Lia Mills' diary, written as she awaited surgery for oral cancer, she reflects that 'whatever fears, worries or wild ambition we harbour, we go through the same motions'. There is hope in this, indeed.

### Conflicts of Interest

None.

CLODAGH POWER

*Research Fellow, MIRA Memory Clinic, St. James's Hospital,  
Dublin, Ireland*  
(Email: powercl@tcd.ie)

*First published online 21 June 2017*

*Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 35 (2018).  
doi:10.1017/ipm.2017.32

*Journey Through the Brain: A Colouring Book*. Edited by Harold G Coward (pp. 51 of 218; ISBN 9780791499917) SUNY Press: New York, 1985

Colouring has long been known as a way to unwind and entertain. However, its benefits extend far beyond just passing the time in primary school classes. Swiss Psychiatrist Carl Jung is well known to have used the drawing and colouring of Mandalas – circular patterns from Eastern traditions – as both a diagnostic and therapeutic device. Based on the fact that unconnected

individuals so often constructed similar patterns, Jung concluded that there was a 'transconscious disposition in every individual' (Harold, 1985) to produce the same symbols in different places at different times. He therefore saw Mandalas, and colouring, as a way of accessing the Collective Unconscious.

While creating one's own Mandala is a traditionally religious or spiritual practice, especially within the Eastern Philosophy of Buddhism, colouring in of a pre-drawn design has gained popularity as a Mindfulness exercise in the Western world. There are now many books in the market with various themes and patterns. Online bookseller Amazon has an entire section dedicated to 'Adult Colouring', and there are copious testimonials about their stress-relieving properties. For example, Lisa Halpern MPP, director of Recovery Services at Vinfen (a non-profit organisation in Cambridge Massachusetts offering Psychiatric and Support services to people with Mental Illness) was diagnosed with Schizophrenia as a graduate student in Harvard University. Halpern advocates brain training as a component of a recovery-focussed model of care. Specifically, she has used Colouring and other brain-training activities to target the negative symptoms of Schizophrenia which her Clozapine treatment does not alleviate (Friedrich, 2014).

Colouring books have also generated interest in academic circles, and there have been a handful of studies into their use in a variety of medical settings. The potential benefits range from relaxation and occupation to education. Colouring books have been used as part of Art Therapy programmes in Geriatric and Psychiatric units, and to teach children about diagnostic imaging procedures in order to alleviate their anticipatory anxiety (*Journal of Child Health Care*, 2009; *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 2015).

*Journey Through the Brain* is a very beautifully presented book, which marries Neuroanatomical and Neuropsychiatric teaching with intricate and interesting patterns. There is a pleasing variety of complexity of pattern. The 'Brain Circuitry' picture offers a tortuous image of interconnected wires representing sulci and gyri, for those days when one wants to spend hours meticulously poring over a page. At the other end of the spectrum is the more impressionistic image of the 'Biomarker Sea' for when one is looking for a simpler, shorter colouring break from the stresses of the day.

The book was developed by a team in The Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland (RCSI) in order to 'spark young people's interest in the science of the brain'. The text accompanying the drawings is pitched to young adults at a level that is easy to understand, but not condescending. It presents key information about the brain in language that is accessible, and the corresponding illustrations help make complex concepts such as DNA/RNA transcription comprehensible and tangible.

The 'Brain Map' presents wonderfully imaginative drawings figuratively representing the anatomical location of various brain structures and functions (such as the Library in the Temporal Lobe and Observatory in the Occipital Lobe). For clinicians working in Psychiatric or Neurological fields it will not provide new information, but it does give excellent metaphorical representations of concepts which could help inform psychoeducation sessions with patients and families.

The Creators of the book have written guidelines for teachers on how to use the book, for example, as a resource from which to develop a class or workshop on the brain. There is also an accompanying document with additional information on the structures and processes described in the book which is free to download from the RCSI website. The book was developed with funding from the Health Research Board, and is available to download for free from the RCSI website. However, the physical book itself is beautifully bound in a cover which has embossed gold detailing and pictorial representations of interconnecting molecules. Furthermore, the quality of the paper in the published version is much higher than typical printing paper, making it a more pleasurable colouring experience. The hard copy version costs E10 and profits from its sale go to the Peter McVerry Trust and Pieta House. I would certainly recommend it as a gift for budding young neuro-scientists and stressed Psychiatry non-consultant hospital doctors alike!

#### Conflicts of Interest

Dr Roisin Plunkett works as a part time Clinical Lecturer in Psychiatry in RCSI. She did not receive any incentives or supports, financial or otherwise, for writing this review.

#### References

- Cohen-Mansfield J, Marx MS, Dakheel-Ali M, Thein K (2015). The use and utility of specific nonpharmacological interventions for behavioral symptoms in dementia: an exploratory study. *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* **23**, 160–170.
- Friedrich MJ (2014). Medical News & Perspectives July 2. Researchers Focus on Recovery in Schizophrenia (<http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1883332>). Accessed 6 June 2017.
- Harold GC (1985). *Jung and Eastern Thought*. State University of New York Press: Albany, New York, 51 pp.
- Johnson AJ, Steele J, Russell GB, Moran R, Fredericks KP, Jennings SG (2009). Decreasing pediatric patient anxiety about radiology imaging tests: prospective evaluation of an educational intervention. *Journal of Child Health Care* **13**, 370–382.

ROISIN PLUNKETT  
Registrar in Psychiatry, Crumlin Mental Health Services,  
Tallaght Hospital, Dublin, Ireland  
(Email: plunker@tcd.ie)

First published online 2 August 2018