

# BOOK REVIEW

## *A Concert for Four Hemispheres in Psychotherapy*

by Teresa Robles, Ph.D.  
New York: Vantage Press, 1995  
516 W. 34th St., New York, NY 10001  
173 pp, \$16.95

This short book, *A Concert for Four Hemispheres in Psychotherapy*, is a well written narrative account of the integration of Ericksonian approaches to the practice of psychotherapy. It is the first of a series of monographs written in Spanish (*Concierto para cuatro cerebros in psicoterapia*, 1990), and the only one that has been translated to date. The translation is extremely well done, retaining just enough of the linguistic elements of Spanish to give a poetic and pleasing style.

The orientation of the book is mental health: establishing, reinforcing, and/or regaining it. Robles begins with an overview of process of construction of individual reality. The second chapter deals with the right and left hemispheres of the brain and the motor and sensory processes. This chapter, authored by Jorge Abia, M.D., contains an overview of current medical perspectives on activities and processing of information within the brain. Like the first chapter, these overviews are not in depth, but provide the reader with a frame of reference and a general understanding of ideas that are often presented in a much more complex form.

The heart of the work, dealing with the reconstruction of reality, presents Robles' own ideas of how Ericksonian approaches, the use of hypnosis, and a systems framework can be applied to individual circumstances. The descriptions are anecdotal but with clear generalizability of concepts. Robles quickly covers the introductory level information and leads gently into sophisticated concepts. A chapter on symbolic work is so rich in metaphorical application that it will challenge even seasoned practitioners in its skillful use of imagery and fluid ideas. This book is especially good in its broad applicability. The ideas are presented simply and succinctly making them useful for beginning Ericksonian students yet contain metaphorical messages and insights that provide fertile material for more advanced practitioners.

I have had the pleasure of attending live presentations by Robles on this topic. She has several qualities that make her work unique, and that are vividly apparent in her presentations. These include personal hypnotic skill, the trait of high hypnotizability, a commitment to the ethical and positive advancement of the use of hypnosis as a tool to advance mental health, and a humble sensitivity to the needs of the subject. These qualities, while not as vivid in this media, still are present and provide a tone of optimism and positivism — even an elusive artistic simplicity. For example, "Wakes can be left in the sea and left again as many times as necessary; this corresponds to the dynamics of the unconscious, which is always flowing, always transforming itself." (p. 127)

Robles' vivid introduction of ideas is consistently followed by straightforward verbal explanations. Most ideas are illustrated with concrete examples of the clinical application of the concepts. Samples or suggestions as to how these ideas can be integrated into practice are included in many sections.

The last part of *A Concert for Four Hemispheres in Psychotherapy* is a case example. The 22-page case report seems a somewhat unlikely format for concluding an instructional work. In this way, however, perhaps she stimulates the reader to move on from the realm of study to the realm of practice. Robles' concise work speaks for itself — simply, succinctly and with excellence.

### Reviewed by:

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Winter 1996



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## The Milton H. Erickson Foundation NEWSLETTER

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