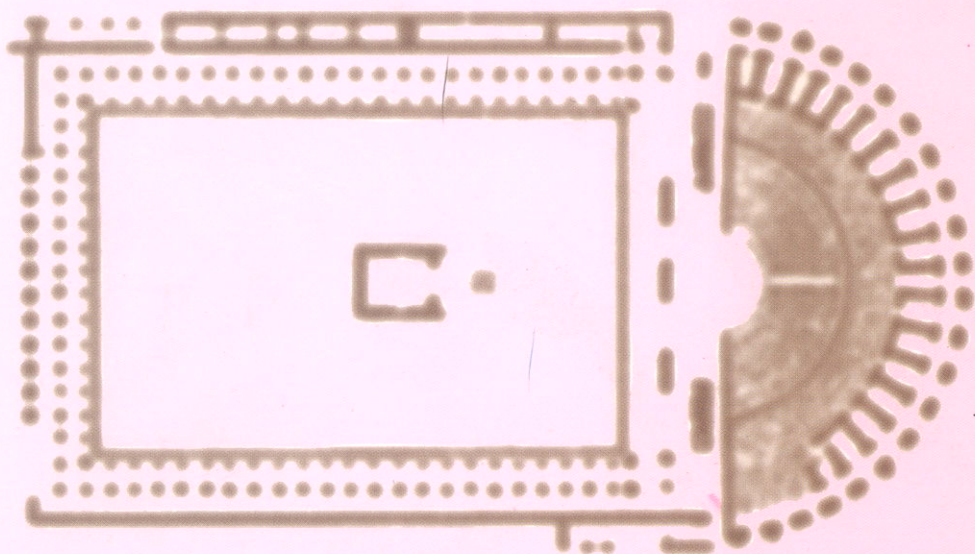


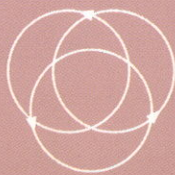


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Journal of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy  
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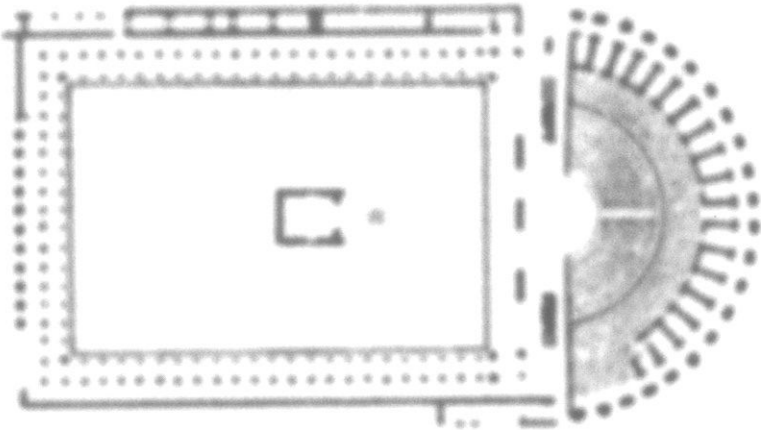


**IAGP**  
International Association  
for Group Psychotherapy  
and Group Processes

# forum

Journal of the International Association  
for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes

N. 3 - July 2009



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## Letter from the President

We are pleased to send you the second edition of Forum for the 2006-2009 term. Initially, we had hoped to do an issue of this yearbook each year but have only been able to produce two and hope this extended issue compensates.

First of all, I would like to thank our Editors Teresa von Sommaruga Howard and Lars Tauvon. All of the editorial work that they do on the journal is as volunteers and I want them both to know how much I appreciate the time and effort they have put in to produce this and our other Forum this term.

This is also my last letter to you as the President of IAGP. Recently someone asked me how I felt about finishing my term. Since I have been planning the General Assembly meeting for the Rome Conference, I have been reviewing my experience in this office. One of the most important things that I have learned as I have traveled and talked to people all over the world is how important IAGP is to so many people as a symbol and standard bearer in our field and how it provides a feeling of belonging with others who understand the excitement, the trials and the tribulations of being a group leader.

I have been very moved by the willingness of the members of the Executive committee and the Board of Directors to take time away from their work, spend their own money to travel to different continents, spend two days locked in airless hotel rooms all because they believe in the worth of this organization.

Clearly the IAGP as reflected by our name change and the proposed new ethics guidelines is in a time of transition, in a way we are a new organization and I think about the need for us to be open to the world of groups in many difference forms, not just traditional group psychotherapy and to continue to build on the changes we started making last term under Christer Sandahl's leadership. I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Forum and will be inspired to join in many other IAGP activities.

## Editorial Introduction

We are happy to present this extended edition of Forum just in time for the Seventeenth International Congress in Rome. The IAGP as it is now is the result of much devoted work over many years. Raymond Battegay, a man who has been there since the very beginning, outlines this history. Also included are articles built on presentations from earlier Congresses. In a paper read at the Pacific Rim Congress in Singapore in 2003, Felix de Mendelssohn in *Containment and Confrontation: A Psychosocial Model of Development* features Wildred Bion's concept of the 'container-contained'. Mendelssohn draws attention to the bodily associations of this model and also suggests that the group like is a body where capacity to confront and contain reality "enables us to see different sides of the same question without falling apart". Suman Khanna Aggarwai, a doctor in Ghandian philosophy and peace researcher contributes a shortened version of her passionate keynote lecture from São Paulo, 'Spirals of Mutuality: Love, Nonviolence and Service'. Perhaps her vision is also utopian but it is a serious challenge to humanity not to extinguish itself.

Another article on the theme of peace by Wilfried Graf discusses similarities and differences in emphasis between the Transcend Approach of the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung and J. L. Moreno's concept of Sociatry. The psychodramatist Leif Dag Blomkvist, inspired by the philosopher Hannah Arendt, describes the importance of Public Space as a genuinely human domain, a playground for diversity and a place for freedom of expression and spontaneity that has to be distinguished from Private Space. He refers to Freud as well as Moreno in his criticism of 'recognised' psychotherapy and maintains that group therapy should be a Public Space with a focus on the encounter.

We are publishing, by kind permission of his family, the first translation from Spanish into English, 'The History of the Operative Group Technique' by the late Enrique Pichon-Rivière. The Operative Group approach was born more than sixty years ago. Pichon-Rivière found himself having to train the patients to take over from the staff who were suddenly removed.

David Gutmann's article 'How to Explore Black and White in Colours', written with Christophe Verrier in both English and Spanish, describes his work in Cuba since 2001. There he has co-organised an annual conference on race issues in Cuban society with a local group, Color Cubano. The article gives a lively picture of the clash between historically based unconscious racial discrimination and a political system that denies its existence.

An article written in Portuguese by Luis Russo with Teresa von Sommeruga Howard first appeared in English in the last edition. It is another story of

managing cultural assumptions and recognising difference along the way to organising the small groups at the São Paulo Congress.

Finally we include three articles from Aotearoa New Zealand. Two of them focus on cultural and racial differences between Māori, the indigenous people, and Pakeha, colonising immigrants. Margot Solomon, a psychoanalytic therapist, writes about the use of large groups to address the resulting cultural difficulties. She maintains that the marginalisation of Māori was denied for a long time despite the evidence of social services, prison and mental health statistics to the contrary. Since the 1970's there has been growing concern that the Treaty of Waitangi, the historical document signed in 1840 by Māori with the Queen of England, was not being honoured as it should be. As a profession, New Zealand psychotherapists have made a commitment to honour the Treaty.

Margot Solomon describes her experience of the Community Kōrero a large group compulsory for all psychotherapy students in training at Auckland University of Technology, which she co-conducted with a Māori colleague for five years.

Stephen Gladstone tells his personal story as the son of a Pakeha family being adopted into a Māori family at 16 and now works in a psycho-educational and therapeutic programme in a prison. He describes how he relates Māori cultural concepts to his clinical work and tells three tragic life stories from criminals who were exposed to cruel violence and sexual abuse as children. Together these two articles convey painfully acquired knowledge about intercultural struggle that is not often reported.

The third article from New Zealand, 'From Relational Hunger to Intimacy' by Robyn Salisbury courageously links her personal history with her work as a sex therapist as she explores themes of ethical intimacy and erotic transference.

The Rome Congress takes place in a time when group psychotherapy is being challenged and questioned. In Sweden the only group analytic training has lost its right to license psychotherapists. It is our hope that the Congress will counter these threats and become a manifestation of the vitality of the international group movement, both with therapeutic and broader aims. We also hope that readers will find inspiration in these articles.

Finally, we would like to thank Marisol Filgueira Bouza and Gregorio Armañanzas Ros for their rapid-response support with Spanish translation and editorial work.

**Lars Tavon**  
**Teresa von Sommaruga Howard**  
**June 2009**

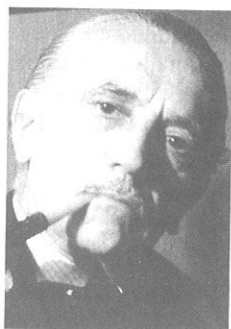
# History of the Operative Group Technique

## Historia de la Técnica de los Grupos Operativos

Enrique Pichon-Rivière (Argentina)

Translated by Pablo de Carvalho Godoy Castanho (Brazil)  
and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard (UK)

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Enrique José Pichon Rivière was born in 1907 in Geneva, Switzerland, the son of a French couple who moved to Argentina in 1909. Pichon Rivière grew up in rural and small town environments where he was heavily influenced by both the Guarani (Native Argentineans) and Argentinean culture. In 1926, at 19, he moved to Buenos Aires where he graduated from medical school in 1936. His practical experience in psychiatry started much earlier, along with his interest in Psychoanalysis and Kurt Lewin. In 1954 Pichon-Rivière was one of six founders of the Argentinean Psychoanalytical Association (APA) and in 1942 he also helped set up the Argentinean Association for Psychology and Group Psychotherapy (AAPPG). In 1967 he began the 'First Private School of Social Psychology', which still trains operative group coordinators. Pichon Rivière died in Buenos Aires in 1977 of heart failure.<sup>1</sup>

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### Resumen

Este es el primer artículo de Pichon-Rivière publicado en inglés que se conozca. Es el producto de un esfuerzo conjunto de la Federación Latinoamericana de Psicoterapia Grupal Analítica (FLAPAG) y FORUM - Revista de la Asociación Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo y Procesos Grupales, para dar a conocer mejor el trabajo de Pichon-Rivière a la comunidad de habla inglesa. Este texto es la transcripción de una clase impartida originalmente por el Dr. Enrique Pichon-Rivière el 13 de mayo de 1970. Se publicó por primera vez en la revista Temas de Psicología Social, año 4, número 3, Septiembre 1980, y después fue incluido en la segunda edición de 'El Proceso Grupal', Ediciones Nueva Visión, Buenos Aires, 1985. Ahora se publica aquí con la autorización de la familia de Pichon-Rivière a quienes estamos profundamente

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1 This CV is based on Veloso and Meirelles's biography on Pichon Rivière: "Seguir a aventura com Enrique Pichon-Rivière: uma biografia." São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo, 2007.

agradecidos. Traducido del original español, cotejado con la traducción francesa de Danièle Faugeras, por Pablo de Carvalho Godoy Castanho (FLAPAG) y Teresa von Sommaruga Howard (FORUM).

### Abstract

This is the first published article of Pichon-Rivière in English known to his estate. It is the product of a joint effort of the Latin-American Federation for Analytical Group Psychotherapy (FLAPAG) and FORUM — Journal of the International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes to make Pichon-Rivière's work better known to the English speaking community. The present text is the transcription of a class originally given by Dr. Enrique Pichon-Rivière on 13 May 1970. It was first published by *Temas de Psicología Social*, year 4, number 3, September 1980 and later incorporated into the second edition of '*El Proceso Grupal*' Ediciones Nueva Visión, Buenos Aires, 1985. It is published here with the authorization of the Pichon-Rivière family whom we thank deeply. Translated by Pablo de Carvalho Godoy Castanho (FLAPAG) and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard (FORUM) from the Spanish original collated against the French translation by Danièle Faugeras.

### Three Approaches to Groups

Today I will finish describing the theoretical aspects of operative groups. Operative groups are defined as *task-centered groups*. But why do we emphasize that? Because, generally speaking, groups are classified according to the focus of their approach. There are group techniques that focus on the individual. I refer to some of the so-called 'psychoanalytic or therapy groups', where the focus is on the *spokesperson*. I am critical of this approach because I believe it does not grasp the group situation in its totality; instead, interpretation is aimed at the person who enunciates a problem considering it a personal matter and disregarding other dimensions that contribute to the problem.

A second approach is the 'group centered group'. It focuses on the analysis of the group's own dynamics. This approach is inspired by the ideas of Kurt Lewin, who understands the group as a totality but it does not include the subject-group, 'verticality-horizontality' relationships, that originate in 'task centered groups'. I assume that task is essential to understanding group process. So, now there are three approaches: 1) centered on the individual; 2) centered on the group as a totality; 3) centered on the task, clarifying that the task is not the same as focusing on the group as a whole.

I am concerned with approaching the problems associated with the task, of learning and personal problems related to the task and learning through the task-centered group. What I hope we accomplish in this course is a learning

process that has a group dimension.<sup>2</sup> Here, the group proposes a task and this task is learning, or the re-working of the lessons. Once in a task group it is time to re-work, to re-learn or learn the contents of the lesson as a whole. That is accomplished in the group with the personal implications that are included in the process. I wish to highlight once more that there is a clear difference between individual-centered groups, group-centered groups and task-centered groups.

By centering on the task, groups become a useful instrument for any type of work. Here, the task is very likely started during the class, absorbed by you and re-worked during the group. Thus, all rules of learning as a total process are accomplished: a global learning that is total and fundamentally social.

## The Operative Group

What I have just said about the diversity of group approaches highlights the different character of the operative group. It is not centered on the group as a totality, but on the relationships that the group members sustain with the task. The fundamental link (*vínculo*) established - or to be established - is the relationship between a group and its members with the determined task. Thus, we leave a bit aside the personal problems of the individual-centered group and the global problems, (which are also understood as the sum of parts) of the individuals that enunciate personal aspects in a global form. The essential aim of the Operative Group is to differentiate what task is, what group is and what individual is.

The name 'Operative Group' comes from its origins. It is a name that I chose to reflect the fact that these groups were born in an environment of concrete tasks.

Around 1945, particular circumstances made it necessary for me to transform patients in my care into operators. All the infirmity personal had been removed. There were no nurses and there was no institutional help whatsoever so a solution had to be found very quickly.

The training of nurses was the key problem, and in a few days (one week), I could resume the task in my ward for adolescents. I had to count on the training of individuals (selected patients), by the means of a determined task: caring day and night for this young community who had been abandoned by a 'superior order'.

What is this approach? It consists of two fundamental aspects: The *mani-*

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<sup>2</sup> Pichon-Rivière refers here to the operative groups that the audience of this lecture usually attend as part of their learning process on this course. (Translator note)

*fest*, *explicit* aspect and the *implicit*, *latent* aspect. We are close here to the analytical technique which is in reality to *turn the unconscious, conscious*, in other words to make the implicit, explicit. From a technical point of view, we generally start from the explicit to discover the implicit intending to explicate it and then continuing on in a continuous spiraled movement.

That is how we define the task: it consists of the approach of the object of knowledge, which has an explicit or manifest level of approach. But, while working at this explicit level of the task or the theme, some difficulties emerge, such as gaps or breaks in the net of communication, sums of needs that arise as emerging signs of epistemological obstacles. The essential issue is that: during the explicit working with the task or the treatment of a topic there are usually difficulties (the typical difficulties or blanks or breaks in the net of communication) and degrees of exigencies which arise as signs, as emergents of what we call *epistemological obstacles or obstacles to acquiring any new knowledge*.<sup>3</sup>

*This obstacle or difficulty of approach indicates an attitude of resistance towards change*. We are getting close to the core of the problem now: the resistances against change are focused on the epistemological obstacle and our task is precisely to promote an operative change (change from a given situation to another in a group sense). To do that, we interpret the explicit, which we consider as the manifest, until something new emerges such as a new discovery or a new aspect of the disease. I mention disease remembering my original experience in the asylum. There the purpose and approach of psychoanalysis was somehow emulated because from the explicit we revealed the implicit so it could be taken as the new explicit in a continuous spiraled movement.

This obstacle, if we recognize that mental disease or social difficulty of any sort is always escorted by resistance to change, indicates an attitude of resistance towards change. But, in this case, we were working with psychotic patients so confronting the obstacle to healing was the direction of our task.

Frequently, the patient is not willing to be cured, but resists it. The patient creates a particular state: once in a psychotic situation, he does not change from it, consistently resisting any change. It is around this resistance that we consistently work.

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3 This will be later defined as an epistemological obstacle (Argentinean Editor's Note)

## Two Basic Fears

By analyzing the reason for this resistance to change and what change means to each person, we have learnt that there are two basic fears in all pathologies and in the initial stage of any task. The two basic fears are the fear of loss and the fear of attack. Patients experience fear at the prospect of losing what they have, their neurotic defenses. It means that at root there is a desire not to be cured, which becomes the essential enemy of therapy. Our operation was then to work with the fear of loss in case of change, because they were faced with a situation of change. Well, we had to understand why change had this meaning. The fear of loss was essentially related to the loss of the tools they had employed as patients to achieve a particular adaptation to the world. In this situation, the patient felt safe having learnt the 'work' of a patient. They did not want to change to another situation, which would create too much anxiety and so change was prevented.

This systematic analysis of the fear of loss reveals feelings and fears that change will take away previous achievements, as if the disease provided a safe place for the subject. On the other hand, the fear of attack, which is indeed what one could observe more directly, means that because change has happened, the feeling of loss creates a new situation to the patient (I refer here to the patients, because this analysis is the result of work with patients that can then be applied to any vector of knowledge) a new anxiety, a reason for the resistance to change which is the fear of attack. And the fear of attack consists of, or comes from the feeling of finding oneself without tools to deal with the new situation, and consequently feeling vulnerable. As patients loose their neurotic defenses, fear rises, becoming a resistance to change. This kind of patient calls then on all the resistances, all the neurotic resistances that can engender the resistance to the change situation, because he feels the lack of tools that could protect him after the change or at its beginning.

Therefore, the fear of loss is the feeling of losing what one already possesses and the fear of attack is the feeling of finding oneself hopelessly lost in a new environment, without the familiar tools of protection. We could review every pathology - from neurosis to psychosis - reading each one in terms of these two fears. They are the two basic fears and our understanding of them is the guide to almost all of our work.

The *task* consists in resolving the stereotypical and dilemmas that arise from the intensification of these anxieties in the learning situation. It happens not only in the treatment of psychotics, but also in the learning situation that has for us an important analogy with the first. The difficulty of being cured or the resistance to being cured is understood as a perturbation of learning. As

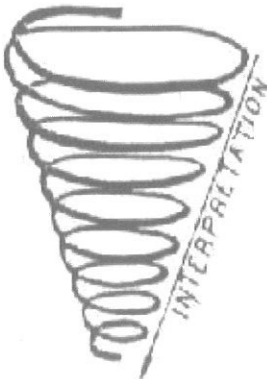
we face something new that has to be learned, we have to leave something else aside. That is the dilemma to be resolved: resolve these situations that are fixed, stereotyped, etc. and that we call *dilemmatic* not dialectical and that arise from the intensification of the anxieties of the learning process.

When one is learning, necessarily, even if unconsciously, we are leaving aside other views of the world or reality, or something else that can indeed be experienced as loss, and that gives the direction to our work. So, we make the operative group as much of a therapeutic group as any other technique because it allows learning. By abandoning prior defensive techniques, psychotic defenses for example, the person can learn new aspects of reality, which are concrete reality, and correct the prior vision of the environment.

### The Dialectical Spiral

The clarification process in a group tends to be dialectical; it challenges dilemmas that are characterized as situations that prevent change. They are dilemmatic because the problems are asked in a *dilemmatic* form as an option between 'yes' or 'no', where there is no possibility for a solution. They are opposed to situations with solutions that are *dialectical*, in which, through the interplay process the problem is handled until it is solved. The solution is a synthesis that turns into the starting point of a new dialectical situation. Once the conflict is solved by a synthesis, this synthesis becomes the new thesis that will generate an operation, because the new situation raises new contradictions.

Explicit



Implicit

The explicit is what we see, the manifest. From this perspective we can progressively advance downwards into a dialectal spiraled form, little by little, towards the bottom of the situation that we have marked. With this dialectical spiral we can get to the very core of where fear of change as resistance is located.

In terms of individual therapy, it is called 'negative therapeutic reaction' or the patient's resistance. Also in terms of therapy, we consider this resistance to be resolved whenever a rupture of the resistance to improve produces change in the patient's conduct and adaptation. This treatment or method of mobilizing the stereotyped or fixed nucleus, or inhibited learning, arises from the observation that in some moment of development we find a series of difficulties (studied by the theory of learning) that are manifest in common life, daily life and that need to be permanently re-seen as techniques that were absorbed in a given moment but that now, facing new exigencies, are not adequate nor operative any more.

With the group technique it so happens that everyone who is committed within the group contributes to the task, each based on their personal experiences, in their way of being and the interrelations among them. Eventually, they will achieve the passage from a stagnated or dilemmatic situation to a new situation of movement or a dialectical situation. The progress is thus possible and new problems are addressed, new aspects that lead people to learn more freely than before. As the stereotypes have been broken, the group and the subject can be in continuous progress.

In the schema, the explicit is seen first, the implicit, instead, is what corresponds to the zone of the unconscious. But we have to start with the explicit and reach the implicit through a constant spiral of analyzing which elements are at play and how they can break the rigid structure of the situation and reach the situation of progress and new challenge.

Generally speaking, that is the first group schema. We can say that the enounced task is the *unity of work* that makes possible the clarification of what is subjacent. The unity of work is also triangular; meaning it is generally the implicit. The interpretation overcomes the difficulty in approaching the object, another and other *interpretations* follow until the point of urgency is reached in which the explicit is next to what is still implicit. Our unity of work points at explaining the implicit. An interpretation is formulated about a moment of this situation and the apparition of a new aspect inside the inverted cone gives us a criterion for its operativeness. In other words, the basic unity of work is the perception and exploration of what the patient has said. That is approached with an interpretation that tends to put manifest or explicit the implicit aspects of the situation. A new element, that we call *new emergent*,

arises from the interpretation and is taken into the constant spiral with which we progressively reach the essential aspects of change. Because the purpose of the operative group is to achieve change, the level of change will depend on the individuals who are in treatment or learning.

## A Universal Approach

The operative group is universal because its technique makes it possible to approach any situation: learning, treatment and all therapeutic aspects that can happen in communities or institutionalized individuals for example.

In reality, the first schema comes from a group situation of alienated and institutionalized patients who were totally abandoned. It was there where, in less than a week, I could see that some of them were able to care for others thanks to a training based on operative techniques. So, due to this measure (a little absurd at the moment) the *operative group* was born as a *social technique* that made it possible for mental patients to be treated by their 'colleagues', with very little training in nursing, using group work.

Our starting point was their perspective as mental patients. I began to promote groups with them and through these groups they learnt that insight and alienation were coupled with nursing concepts. Regarding the other required tasks; they needed very little time to become what could be called the best nurses that I saw in my professional life.

This training was based on mutual understanding and very fast learning of nursing techniques. Thus, the operative group approach was born. As I was saying, it differs from other approaches because it is task-centered (in this case, the task was caring for their colleagues). In short time then, a week or a bit more, a social attitude had been extended from some to others at the facility: trips were planned, experimental discharges and the inclusion of the family group in the treatment were organized. The inclusion of the family group in the process allowed me to complete my conception of mental sickness as a social phenomenon. The family factors that determined the sickness, the diagnosis, the prognosis and the treatment of our patients became clear to me. Thus, prophylactic action could be carried out with other family members.

Through all these operations *planning* could be established to treat patients collectively. It includes a series of moments of the operation: a *strategy*, a *tactic a technique* and *logistics*.

Establishing a strategy in a group means establishing an angle to the situation. That is what the soccer coaches call 'the blackboard technique'. Unfortunately, players are not often included in the planning of the game or in

the drawing of the operation but they are the people who have to take it into concrete action. We included the patients in developing the group strategy. In the group sessions, sick people who received care worked together with those who cared for them.

### Three Vectors for Change

If we go over what I have said from the theoretical perspective of the unity of work, we could divide it into three vectors: *The Existent*, *The Interpretation* and *The New Emergent*.

The *existent* is the given situation of the group (which will be clarified by one or several spokespersons turning into the emergent at that point). A common way of being, thinking and considering problems is formed in the group by means of what appears in all, through everyone and by everyone's summation. The existent, then, is the first element.

The *interpretation* or the remark of the coordinator proposes a new perspective to the situation. Let us exemplify with our first experience. It means that by listening to the patient's opinions of themselves, the others, of the way they are treated and considered, of the visits they got, etc. a context is formed that we have just named the existent of the situation. That is produced by the intermediacy of the spokespeople inside the group. Once created, the situation can be experienced as a stagnation or not, the therapist of these groups (groups of patients) or the coordinator (learning groups), makes remarks, interprets the difficulties that are present and clarifies the difficulty in work groups (regardless of the field it is applied to: learning, therapy, working task) has a general character, a general formulation.

In such cases, once an interpretation falls in the field, a new emergent arises as a response. The new situation structures itself as a consequence of the coordinator's interpretation; provided it has been operative, meaning that it has reached what we call the urgency point. There is a moment in which a cut is produced in a group either because of stagnation or negative aspects related to the task, the coordinator should remark on what is happening on the spot. In so doing, the most likely outcome is that the situation is modified, just as we were seeing with the psychotic patients. There we saw how the remarks about certain attitudes towards each other, others and their families modified the situation and made them universal. It showed, there is an aspect or difficulty of resistance to change in everyone and that is the core of the problem.

## The Urgency Point

Difficulties with change call our attention to the situation where a patient does everything possible to avoid being cured (in psychoanalytic language it is called resistance, or, if more acute, 'negative therapeutic reaction'). Given this difficulty, we know that when the operation has been well understood and interpreted by the coordinator it touches precisely what we call the *urgency point*. The structure that has been dealt with does not have the same correlation, there are differential aspects, but what is important is that because of the proximity between the explicit and the implicit, the implicit turns into the explicit when the remark or the interpretation touches the source of resistance. Reaching the urgency point in therapy, or in a learning situation for example, either individual or group, reduces the difficulty and it makes the situation really operative because the task is always included within this difficulty.

The task centered group aims at the urgency points that will be operative according to a special configuration of the group. We had the same experience with our patients. A general change in the structure of the group is produced when the subjacent, the implicit (the unconscious generally speaking) touches the explicit through approaching the urgency point, thus resolving the very difficulty that is located within it. When the explicit and the implicit touch each other we say (in the vulgar language of our task) that a 'click' has been produced. And, the 'click' is precisely this coincidence of one situation to the other. The coincidence of the 'click' immediately implies a clarification of the difficulty and an attitude towards change, an attitude that could be better named as a change capacity or a considerable attenuation of the fear of attack that comes after the change.

We have already seen that the basic fears (which are always at work) are the fear of loss and the fear of attack. So, once a mental patient loses the possibility of maintaining a psychotic defense, situations of debility arise because the psychotic aspect or structure of a subject was operating as a defense against other dangerous situations lived by them. Thus a new fear emerges; the fear of attack for having lost the prior situation because the person is not equipped with a logical and operative defense against attack in the new situation. There is a permanent interplay between fear of losing the already known and the fear of attack of what is about to come. This interplay rules everything; these fears are essential universals to the task in operative groups, in psychotic situations or in any other disease. Generally speaking, we could define our task as a desperate fight with the person who wants to stay as they are and does not want to change.

So the patient does not want to change, but why? Because change causes

fear on the grounds that s/he does not have the tools to face a change. Therefore s/he stands still. By touching this point, the operative interpretation facilitates the draining of the non-explicit elements that form the obstacle we have been talking about today: the epistemological obstacle is a difficulty in approaching or assimilating new knowledge. Our task is to 'lessen' the difficulty to change by creating change situations through interpretation. The unity of work is constituted by the analysis of what the explicit and the interpretation are. The interpretation or remark in the true sense of the word means to transmit what the coordinator has perceived that exists in the group as a whole and that has not yet become explicit. The one who gives the solution or the direction is the one who arises as the spokesperson of the group, showing new directions for work and solutions to determined tasks.

## The New Emergent

The *new emergent* that arises is the result of the operation over the existent through interpretation. It is the new situation that structures itself as a consequence of the coordinator's intervention, remark or interpretation if it has been operative and aimed well. In fact, it will be an operative interpretation when there is a coincidence between what the coordinator has signaled and the existent in the group.

The proximity between the explicit and the implicit, phrased in Freudian terms, "turns the unconscious conscious". At this moment we say that the urgency point has been reached. The interpretation given at the urgency point has opened the possibility for change, triggered the tendency to change and the movement that begins to happen inside the group. Therefore, this rupture of the epistemological obstacle (which is the obstacle associated to the awareness of a determined subject) is the openness to new emergents, to the beginning of a change process.

The emergent appears as a sign of an implicit process; in other words, the sign of the process that was already subjacent and had to be made explicit. Turning the implicit explicit happens in this 'structuring' which means an always-open circuit. The word 'Gestaltung' means that. At the beginning of our task we employed the word 'Gestalt' frequently meaning structure or function. However, as we discovered the spiraled character of the process, which is a continuous process, it had to be given a distinct name. Even the Gestalt Psychologists, such as Kurt Lewin, started to use the term 'Gestaltung' related to the term Gestalt, meaning 'structuring'. The definition we could give the process is 'structuring', not structure because of the constant movements to

which it was submitted.

We define the group as Gestalt, as generally is said. For example, the Social Psychologists who focused on the group as a whole defined it as a Gestalt meaning something fixed and not dynamic. If we use the term 'Gestaltung' we turn this process into a structuring. It means that the process advances step-by-step in a determined direction. Therefore the term Gestaltung is the most accurate to signify that we are dealing with a mobile process, an open circuit and not a closed circuit, as one can understand from the term Gestalt.

The implicit process whose sign is the emergent is manifested by one or more spokespersons. The *spokesperson* is the group member who acts as a *vehicle* for this new quality that is the emergent. So, the spokesperson is the one capable of sensing and expressing a situation in which the group is participating because it is closer to his mind than to others'. All new characteristics arise from this structure, from this cluster that we call the operative group. It is operative because of the operation it realizes and it is useful in any field such as therapy, learning, work labor activity and so on.

Well, we finish here today with the concept of the new emergent. The only thing that still needs an explanation is the concept of *verticality and horizontality*. The spokesperson is the spokesperson of the vertical, but he is the spokesperson of the others (the horizontal) and thus it operates indeed. We feel the group activity when we capture something general that is happening in the group as a whole, but there is someone who is capable of explicating what is going on due to his personal activity, to his way of being, to his sensibility.

# Containment and Confrontation: A Psychosocial Model of Development

## Contención y Confrontación: un Modelo Psicosocial del Desarrollo

Felix de Mendelssohn (Austria)

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### Resumen

Este artículo, originalmente presentado en la 6ª Conferencia Pacific Rim de la IAGP celebrada en Singapur en Marzo de 2003, presenta un modelo de desarrollo psicosocial -el desarrollo de la vida psíquica individual en conjunción con la vida grupal en la esfera social y política. Se basa en el concepto de contención y función D-PS de Bion. Siguiendo su diferenciación de las relaciones posibles entre 'contenedor' y 'contenido' (esto es, quien ejerce y quien recibe la contención) <sup>1</sup>, podemos diseñar un modelo de interacción entre el grupo y el individuo que es dinámico y evolutivo, proporcionando una guía no solo para las intervenciones grupales analíticas sino para considerar los procesos grupales en ámbitos más amplios como la resolución de conflictos internacionales.

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1 Nota de la Traductora

## **Abstract**

This article originally given as a paper at the 6<sup>th</sup> IAGP Pacific Rim Conference in Singapore in March 2003, presents a model of psycho-social development – the development of individual psychic life in conjunction with group life in the social and political sphere. It is grounded in Bion's conceptualization of containment and PS – D function. Following his differentiation of the possible relationships between container and contained we can sketch a model of interaction between group and individual that is dynamic and developmental, providing a compass not only for group analytic interventions but for considering group processes in wider realms, such as international conflict resolution.

## **Introduction**

This clinical model, fundamental to the way I work, was developed in the stormy history of psychoanalysis, through a process of confrontation and containment, which is inevitable when new thoughts and concepts arise. The psychoanalytic tradition of which I feel a part derives from Freud via Melanie Klein to Wilfred Bion and Donald Meltzer. These are the main influences that have helped shape my clinical understanding and development. To be part of a tradition, at least in my Western mind-set, is also to wrestle with it, finding nourishment from it but also looking to escape its too rigid embraces by examining my own experience.

I begin by briefly reviewing the basic paradigms that evolved through Freud's and Klein's work, before looking more closely at Wilfred Bion's simple but revolutionary concept of the 'container-contained' function and its wider applications, e.g. in parallel processes that occur within the intra-psychic life of the individual, the social life of the group and the political life of society-at-large.

Freud's basic model for the emergence of the ego is as a mental projection of the body's surface and contours. With the establishment of this primary body-ego, a boundary is created between the inner world and the outer world of the infant. In the process of development, which means here primarily adaptation to the external world, this internal world becomes the storehouse of unconscious conflicts, repressions and psychic regressions. For Freud, in the tradition of Western scientific medicine, the external world has primacy over the internal; the pleasure principle must accept the restraints and constraints of the reality principle. Our internal conflicts are the result of repressed infantile wishes and phantasies that could not find adequate expression and be worked through. Instead they got 'worked into' a neurotic symptom or complex. Apart from certain 'primal phantasies' that Freud seems to feel we might even be born with – such as seduction, castration, the primal scene of parental

copulation and the oceanic feeling of intra-uterine regression – everything in individual psychic development results in this model ultimately from *introjection*, from taking in aspects of the outside world and modifying them. But the goal, Freud suggests, is always to meet and possibly change the reality of the outside world.

Melanie Klein's work is a significant departure from Freud's model, which made it hard for the British Psychoanalytic Society to contain her innovative contributions at the time. Her studies of children's play revealed the often overwhelming dominance of *projection* in forming the infant's world. Through the mechanisms of projection and projective identification we are as infants initially as much concerned with ejecting and projecting painful and unpleasant experiences, and parts of the self, as with finding and enjoying the objects of our desires. This Kleinian model might seem closer to a Buddhist viewpoint in that here the purpose of psychic development is not so much (as with Freud) to locate and refine one's true desires, but rather to alleviate the inevitable occurrence of emotional pain and suffering. So here the inner world seems to take primacy over the outer. If the state of our internal objects is good and their relationships to one another are fruitful and creative, then we may project a better world outside us. If our internal world is damaged we can only cause damage and increase the pain and confusion in the external world. Klein's formulation of the universality of two positions in infantile development, the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position, suggested a new model for emotional development - from splitting, idealization and projection through to re-integration and reparation.

Using Klein's influence Wilfred Bion was able to move on still further in conceptualizing early infantile development, through his preoccupation with the analysis of psychosis and thought disturbances. His strikingly simple and elegant model of the 'container-function' constructs a theory of thinking, of learning from emotional experience and of fundamental correlates between the emotional life of the individual and the group. It also helps to close a gap between the Freudian and the Kleinian paradigms, in the open question of the primacy of the outer or of the inner world. Bion's model seems to function, in connecting the inner with the outer world, like a kind of Moebius strip, a circular ribbon with a twist in it where the outer surface and the inner surface of the ribbon reveal themselves as one and the same, though still of course remaining different. Another such metaphor, with great relevance to Bion's concepts as we shall see, is the structure of the digestive tract. This of course we consider in a usual sense to be the innermost part in our body, and yet, by being a hollow tract with apertures at mouth and anus, it is in fact a kind of folded-in 'outside' of the body, the reason why it is so easily susceptible to

bacterial attack.

## **Bion's idea of the Container-Contained**

I now want to elucidate more closely this concept of a function 'container-contained' operating in mental, emotional and social development. This ground may be familiar to many readers, but if we go over it again we may find some new insights.

Bion's first thoughts on the matter are as follows:

... the infant, filled with painful lumps of faeces, guilt, fears of impending death, chunks of greed, meanness and urine, evacuates these bad objects into the breast that is not there. As it does so the good object turns the no-breast (mouth) into a breast, the faeces and urine into milk, the fears of impending death and anxiety into vitality and confidence, the greed and meanness into feelings of love and generosity and the infant sucks its bad property, now translated into goodness, back again. As an abstraction to match this model I propose an apparatus ..... that consists of a container and a contained (Bion 1963, p.31).

The basic idea appears to be metabolic, a metaphor of the digestive system and the alimentary tract as a way of expelling and re-digesting painful bits of emotional life. In his book *Learning from Experience* (1961) Bion discusses in more detail *how* the 'good object', initially the mother, effects these transformations of bad into good, or at least tolerable, experiences. She does it through her 'reverie', a kind of daydream-activity in which the projected contents from the infant's inner world are held in the container of the mother's pre-conscious mind. There she can associate to them, do some sort of 'daydream-thinking' about them, and return them in a modified form to the child, with a kind of good meaning (for instance, as 'gifts') which makes them more tolerable for the infant to re-introject. This process of maternal 'reverie' or 'alpha-function', as Bion called it, is the initial container for the child's unbearable experiences.

In this way the child is able to have such raw, previously unprocessed experiences - Bion calls them 'beta elements' - transformed and available as potential thoughts or dream images ('alpha-elements') out of which it could evolve its own dream narratives and thought processes. Although the infant can now have thoughts, it does not yet have an apparatus for thinking with them. This

would mean not only internalising the thoughts the mother has returned to her infant, but also her whole thinking function, her reverie or alpha-function, her basic container for thinking. Perhaps we could imagine this 'inner apparatus for thinking' at first for the infant as a kind of internalised mouth-breast with a metabolic function. Now the infant could begin to think thoughts, construct dream narratives, myths and symbolic play scenarios. Bion conceptualized the 'Grid' in which he constructs a theoretical container for mental development, in general terms, and as a tool for assessing what has been happening in the analytic session.

This model is not only a highly abstract representation of the development of mental life but it is also very physical in its origins, very much taken from the bodily functions that are the infant's first experiences of self, of drinking milk, excreting faeces, and then of phantasies about the penis in the vagina, the baby in the mother etc. up to the content of phantasies in the mother's head or the meaning contained in the father's words.

Much of this construct is highly relevant in the treatment of specific disturbances such as eating disorders. Henri Rey at the Maudsley Hospital London has worked for many years in group therapy with severely anorexic or bulimic adolescent girls (in his model, anorexia is fundamentally a very high-powered, even fatal defence against the underlying bulimia). The young women all seem to share a common set of phantasies revolving around the idea of a baby contained in the mother's womb, in which the mother could devour, ingest and anally expel the baby like used food - or the baby could eat the mother up or poison her from inside. In these phantasies one party was bound to destroy the other. We shall come back again to this idea of a parasitic and destructive relationship between container and contained.

## Physiological models for the container-function

But let us take a look at other physiological models for the container-function, based on sensory perception, which Bion has suggested:

1) the *respiratory* system is often chosen as the prime physical container for meditation practice in various religious disciplines. 'prana' becomes a respiratory model for 'vedana', or processes of feeling, and for 'citta', the Heart-Mind, the development of feeling-thinking which Bion also, it seems to me, is proposing. Equally, we could consider asthmatic attacks meaningfully as a - possibly even fatal - breakdown of a respiratory model for the ability to contain 'feeling-thinking'.

The sense of smell, linked to the respiratory process, is perhaps fully op-

erative from the moment of birth or even before. Smells can be overwhelming and the preverbal memories they arouse often seem, at least for a moment, to contain or possess us, our whole beings, rather than the other way round.

2) While genuine 'transformations' – by this Bion means transformations in meaningfulness, on to a new level of appreciation – in the breathing cycle are usually only observed by meditators, performing artists or clinicians, such transformations in the *auditive* container are readily observable to anyone, as when sound turns to speech or noise to music and back again.

3) The exploration of possible transformations in the container of the *visual* system I will leave up to your imagination. Indeed the imagination is itself a supreme container for visual contents of all kinds.

4) And, the sense of touch. This is vital for establishing a boundary, a body-ego, which is the precondition for any container to be found at all. When there is a confused relationship between container and contained, the sense of touch helps to establish a boundary between two objects. Such a boundary is not made clear from the container-contained relationship alone. Before the most primitive single-celled organism can operate its metabolism, it must first develop a membrane or boundary between outside and inside.

Bion mentions the paradoxical effect that *tactile* proximity is in fact less intimate than sensory proximity in 1), 2) and 3). Psychotic patients can often have genital sexual intercourse without experiencing any confusion, but they will show serious confusion in 1) 2) and 3).

## Bion's PS-D

I have now introduced the idea that another mechanism must be involved, which helps to find the container in the first place and in some way regulates the functioning of container-contained as it cannot simply operate of its own accord. Bion formulated this second mechanism in terms of his Kleinian training as PS-D.

Just as there is an oscillating exchange between ingestion and expulsion in the container-contained system, there is also an oscillatory process between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive poles of experience. PS is a necessary process of evacuation, splitting, projection and idealization of centrifugal dispersion and fragmentation where the borders are cut up into ever smaller pieces until, unchecked, they could cease to operate at all. D is a centripetal process of integrating the split-off and projected parts via a firm boundary between self and other, creating a place where depression, but also reflection and introspection, concern for the other, remorse and reparation, become pos-

sible. Bion's conception sees us, and the patient in the clinical session, in a dynamic process of oscillation between these two poles. One can observe this same oscillation in group work when a group becomes very free, associative and creative with its projections but also appears to fragment into unrelated individuals with a mounting level of anxiety until spontaneously they turn into a group bound together by a common preoccupation, usually linked to shame or guilt of some kind, with individual members often feeling squashed or left out by the rest. Bion suggests the idea of 'patience' for PS and of 'security' for D as basic preoccupations of the analyst's mind when responding to these two poles.

## **The Importance of Confrontation**

Clarifying all this Post-Kleinian metapsychology would require another lecture. Instead I have chosen to select one simple aspect of PS-D, which I call, for convenience, 'Confrontation' as a working mechanism for finding a Container and for counteracting subsequent confusions that may arise between container and contained. To take an example from politics: When the container, Yugoslavia, broke up and its contents, the various nations and peoples fell to war, violent confusion between the container and contained resulted finally in a NATO military operation of confrontation, with the aim of finding a container for Kosovo. Of course 'containment' is a classic paradigm in strategic military theory as well as in psychotherapy.

In clinical work, social phobias such as agoraphobia and claustrophobia can be understood as unconscious identifications with objects inside or outside of a container. The person feels either stuck inside and unable to get out, or stranded outside and unable to be included. Such extreme states of mind can lead to pathological acting-out in treatment, which dissolves the borders of the therapeutic situation. We can usually observe that when the acting-out is confronted and brought back into the analysis, the first results are catastrophic symptoms. Bion notes that confrontation is an essential part of analysis and is usually resisted by schizophrenic defences. Violence, the use of force, makes true confrontation impossible, since both sides of the confrontation are obliterated by bloodshed.

Now let us consider briefly the possible relationships between container and contained, that is to say basic relational structures between say a nipple in a baby's mouth, a penis in a vagina, an individual in a group, a word in a sentence or a stick in one's hand, etc. The possibilities in each case may seem infinite, as they indeed are, but Bion delineates three basic models.

1. 'Commensal' – the word means from the Latin, 'sitting together at the same table'. For instance, the hosts (container) and the guests (contained) stop talking so much to each other and just enjoy the food together, or I sit in the audience and we all enjoy the concert.
2. 'Symbiotic' – here there is exchange and mutual nourishment between container and contained, though this will involve some kind of confrontation. A creative artist, doctor, or scientist (contained) might benefit his community and receive support from it (container), but usually not without confrontations.
3. 'Parasitic' – a politician (contained) might use his position in a government party (container) to steer it toward corrupt practices which are eventually exposed and lead to the downfall of both.

We must take into account various transformations of 'Commensal', 'Symbiotic' and 'Parasitic' into each other and back again, as these are dynamic relationships, especially in commercial enterprises. Consider for instance international drug trafficking. At first the opium, or coca-growing farmers, and the mafia take little notice of each other but both of them profit commensally from the same product. Then the mafia begin to take over whole plantations and the farmers enter into a symbiotic relationship with this new container, which seems to work well for a while with each directly nourishing the other. After a time the problem is that the parasitism inherent in the destructive qualities of their product and the marketing methods used, inevitably lead to outside government pressure or even military attack. Even if such an attack does not happen, internal civil war will usually break out among the drug barons and as a result all are at risk of destruction. We might wish to apply this metaphor to large sections of the business and commercial world operating on a global level.

As group therapists we can think clinically about these three basic relationships in our own work. The individual in the group, the thought in one's mind, the group within the institution – such a contained can feel good in its container, not just content but perhaps also experience a sense of creativity there. Or it can feel not contained enough, lost, disoriented and disconnected, in danger of being left to itself unsupported, or even forcibly expelled. It can also feel over-contained, in danger of disappearing inside the container, sucked in and swallowed whole, or squashed and crushed from all sides. Then again the container – the group, the mind, the institution for example – can feel happy about its content and encourage its growth, or it can feel attacked, poisoned or

disrupted by it, or simply consistently ignore the contribution it has to make.

So one task of the group-therapist, an aspect of his or her alpha-function we might say, is to experience being both the contained – being a member of the group or putting a new thought into the institution – as well as being a container for the group's ability to work and for one's own mind also to think about the issues and conflicts within the institution and the outside world. Some patients and groups may feel contained, locked-in and imprisoned by the therapist's mind especially if they consider the analyst to desire something for them – their welfare or their 'being cured'. And, Bion warns against considering the method of psychoanalysis or group analysis as a container for the whole mental condition. On the contrary, he calls the method a 'probe'.

Parasitic relationships need to be interpreted swiftly and worked through slowly. Commensal relationships can simply be relaxing and profitable as when we sit in our group and listen with interest to what is going on without interacting ourselves. But perhaps if this goes on for too long it becomes too relaxing and needs to be confronted since symbiotic relationships are what really inspire the group and the individual members to move things on developmentally. Of course, when an adolescent, watching TV peacefully with his family, suddenly confronts the parents with some new thought or action, this could lead to a destructive (parasitic) development or to a creative (symbiotic) exchange. In the second case each would have to be prepared to accept something nourishing - 'food for thought', as Bion puts it, from the other.

What the confrontation does in essence is to set up a boundary, between you and me, between them and us, since only with such a boundary can conflicts become contained. Nothing could be more seductive, more frightening or more confusing for a group member than to lose that boundary and to feel himself merge with the group. Although having such an experience might be revealing, even ecstatic, if it is prolonged without confrontation it can lead to delusion or psychosis. This might seem a subtle aspect, for example, of Zen Buddhist practice of the teacher testing the individual's 'koan', in order to differentiate between genuine insight and delusion or psychosis.

A new thought in one's mind, an inspired utterance in a group, the appearance of a genius in a scientific, religious or artistic community usually leads to confusion and controversy over the question – is this utterly mad, or is it extremely valuable? In his later book *Attention and Interpretation* Bion discusses the question of the genius in the group. For him the genius is a person who could be capable of managing psychotic mechanisms for life and growth instead of for destructive ends. Jesus as a religious leader, Dostoevsky as a writer, Einstein as a scientist might be examples. Whether such an example is taken up and developed further or declared worthless and insane depends on

the Establishment, the ruling religious, scientific or academic clique within the society.

Bion points out that Memory is a container for past experience but we have no comparable container for the future, this exists only in our imagination. In the analytic session the therapist also has to let go of and lose his memory, which just contains the past, in order not to lose his powers of attention and observation to the present. In this way 'forgetting' in daily life is not just absent-mindedness or repression, it can be vitally necessary in order to appreciate what is going on here and now.

We have to rid ourselves of worn-out containers that are made only of received wisdoms and handed-down ideologies in order to confront our present experience and construct our own new container for what we note and observe. We cling to our past in the memory container for two reasons - either from possessive love, in wanting to hold on to our past pleasures, or from resentment, in wanting to store up ammunition for future fights.

Sometimes the contained, the idea or feeling as a content of our memory, might even be something like a malignant tumour or cancerous growth. Such development does not occur through nourishment by love but through splitting and proliferating. One idea gets split into more and more different ideas which are still all the same idea, basically greedy, envious and denigrating, as for instance in pornography or propaganda. The matrix of this development is composed not of envy and gratitude (Klein) but of envy and greed.

Wherever the container-contained function starts to fail, become confused or poisonous, confrontation is needed to clarify and establish safe boundaries again. This seems to be, in a primitive sense, the US position on Iraq. Confrontation can get out of hand, become excessive and lead to further splitting and endless confrontations. Then it becomes very difficult indeed to contain anything at all, not even the enemy by using classic military strategy, since terrorist networks cannot be contained in this way. This is a state of crisis generating acute anxiety. We may try to contain this anxiety through a kind of 'carrying on living normally' and this may be to a certain extent successful but it might also turn out to be an intensely delusional externalised pseudo-container, which could break down at any moment.

The current global political crisis seems to demonstrate much of what I have been trying to say. As in the Yugoslavian crisis, but now on an inter-continental level, political containers such as NATO, the European Union or the United Nations are split, damaged and confused. There is all sorts of talk about alliances and coalitions but we aren't sure who wants to be included where and who wants to be excluded. The confrontation is escalating daily. (*Note: this paper was written in 2003, just before the outbreak of the Iraq*

war). How could we respond to this personally? Within this paradigm, we would need to confront, and not deny, the reality and also try to contain the anxiety and confusion by having and maintaining a space in one's mind that is still able to think about it. Socially, we may well need a family or a group of friends and colleagues for whom we have concern and who are concerned for us, apart from wider networks in which we could play some kind of constructive part and who might help or support us if our smaller social container is threatened or disrupted.

## **The Group as a Body**

Returning to the origins of containment theory in the direct physical experience of the infant and to the question of doing therapy with groups, it can help to keep the body in mind (and not just the mind in the body!). By this I mean that groups are like bodies, since bodies are themselves groups. In some languages as in the German 'Körperschaft' or the Sanskrit and Pali 'Kaya' the same term is used for both.

A group association has internal organs with specific functions like the body. In therapy groups some members will function like the heart, the brain, the kidneys or the eyes of the whole group. They may perform this function well, badly or not at all. We can see that when they perform their functions well, this is good for the group (when the organs of the body function harmoniously we talk of physical health). However it may not be so good for the individual members of such a group to be pressed constantly into the service of one function, of being a seeing-eye dog for the group, its waste disposal or its thinking brain. So it can be a long and difficult process, involving necessary confrontations, before these functions can begin to move around among group members, who may thus start to develop new capabilities.

In addition, we should remain mindful of Bion's proposal that "man is a group animal, constantly at war with his own 'groupishness'". This innate tension between the individual and the group – already suggested by Freud in his first theory of drives – means that for Bion the hardest task in life is to be able to fully part of the life of the group without surrendering one's own individual sense of identity, comparable only to the task of the infant during nursing, of taking part in the richness of the mother's breast without losing the sense of self.

Group therapy is about learning to experience healthy group life, a presumably utopian but nevertheless apprehensible condition that might resolve these tensions – we can sometimes have transient and transcendent experiences of it

- where the group and the individual members manage the complex processes of confrontation and containment with elegance and finesse but also with passion, commitment and kindness.

When individuals in a group function healthily and creatively together a common experience is set up that each individual in the group can then internalize in their own way. A 'group introject' of individual voices and characters can be internalized and established in one's mind who are able to converse with each other. This enables us to see different sides of the same question without falling apart. This simple-sounding ability is in fact a hard-won and long-lasting achievement and an important factor in group psychotherapy and in the management of international conflict.

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## Spirals of Mutuality: Love, Nonviolence and Service

## Espirales de Mutualidad: Amor, No-violencia y Servicio

Suman Khanna Aggarwal (India)

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### Resumen

En esta versión abreviada de su conferencia pronunciada en el Congreso de la IAGP de São Paulo en Julio de 2006, Suman Khanna Aggarwal reflexiona sobre la idea de que el bienestar de cada individuo o grupo está indisolublemente entrelazado con el de los otros y de que la paz es la meta común de todas las personas y todos los grupos. Como todos somos individuos con puntos de vista diferentes, el conflicto es inevitable en todos los niveles de la interacción humana. El conflicto en sí mismo no es un problema. El problema es el método para la resolución de los conflictos. Puede ser violento (malo) o no violento (bueno). Por lo tanto, es importante comprender por qué hay que utilizar la no-violencia para resolver los conflictos. Gandhi sugiere que "La Ley de la No-Violencia es la Ley del Amor y la Ley de Nuestras Especies". Este trabajo analiza lo que constituye amor y aplica este análisis a la no-violencia.

### Abstract

In this shortened version of her plenary lecture given at the IAGP Conference in Sao Paulo in July 2006, Suman Khanna Aggarwal reflects on the idea that the welfare of every single individual or group is indissolubly intertwined with that of others and that *peace* is the common goal of all people and all groups. Since we are all individuals who have differing points of view, conflict often occurs at all levels of human interaction though conflict per se is not a problem; the problem is the method of **conflict resolution** which can be either **violent** (bad) or **nonviolent** (good). It is thus important to understand **why** we must **choose nonviolence** to resolve conflict. Gandhi

maintains we must choose it because, ‘**The Law of Nonviolence which is The Law of Love is the Law of Our Species**’. This lecture analyses what constitutes love and transfers this analysis to nonviolence. Once we see how they are related we can start connecting effectively with others.

## Introduction

One cannot immediately begin by living at peace with one and all. One has to go through a *tortuous process of widening and ennobling* our interests and attitudes. This is why I speak of *spirals* of mutuality. The very first turn of this ascent is being at peace with oneself. This requires us to rein in natural tendencies to anger, jealousy, conceit, and undue acquisitiveness,

A little higher up, one has to temper the I-You dichotomy, which should not be too difficult for one who is at peace with oneself. In a family, for example, which is a natural interrelationship, every truly outgoing act is at once a quiet intake of peace – a mother’s love for her children, a husband’s love for his wife, is a quiet inner sustenance. Trouble arises only when any member of the family sets out to seek his or her own happiness in utter indifference to the interests of other members of the family.

Yet beyond its natural and fairly easy beginnings in the family circle, it is not easy to cultivate selflessness. Various inborn tendencies inhibit progress, and in provocative situations, we all tend to get angry easily. Anger clouds our judgment and makes for thoughtless violence. This is where *ahimsā* or nonviolence comes in.

## What is *ahimsā*?

The literal meaning of *ahimsā* means absence of *himsā*, or violence, abstinence. It means the practice or state of choosing *not* to do or take something. It requires an active effort of will. It is not easy to abstain from overeating when the food is finger-licking tasty. When one has been struck, it requires an effort of will to restrain oneself from hitting back. Anger, or even irritation, is a loss of inner tranquillity. To be at peace with oneself is to be happy. But not everyone regards happiness as a value. There are many angry zealots today who *revel* in killing innocents. Even sports superstars, when enraged, may exult in butting their head against an opponent’s chest. Yet inner quiet is a basic need. This is why our ancient Indian Scriptures overwhelmingly value *shānti* or peace over happiness and why Gandhi is overawed as he contemplates the measureless and edifying reaches of *ahimsā* as a discipline:

... Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *ahimsā* (non-violence). But it is its least expression<sup>1</sup> ...to me it (*ahimsā*) has a world of meaning and takes me into realms much higher, infinitely higher than the realm to which I would go, if I merely understood by *ahimsā* non-killing<sup>2</sup>

What Gandhi is saying cannot be understood except in the light of actual righteous living. To abstain from killing (which is the literal meaning of *ahimsā*) one must not allow oneself to become angry. Anger stems from many factors - impatience, attachment, and perhaps the most formidable of all, an exaggerated sense of self-importance (or conceit). These all interrelate and relate to, and are accelerated by, the context in real life. A person who is *vain*, a bit too confident of, and so attached to, their own opinions, and is unaccustomed to giving a *patient* hearing to what others have to say is liable to get angry easily. *Attachment* to, what one sees as, the merited fruits of one's endeavour makes one impatient for their realisation giving rise to anger or, at least, irritation. This is why the *Gita*, which is India's most widely read book of ethico-religious guidance, recommends non-attachment (or *anāsakti*) to consequences. One cannot of course be *indifferent* to consequences. All rational action visualizes and aims at a probable outcome. What we are advised is only to avoid *getting obsessed with* the thought of ultimate success, simply because the best of us cannot quite control the consequences of what we do.

Above everything else, *ahimsā* calls for reverence for life. It comes easily to those who look on life as the supreme gift of His Grace. This is perhaps 'the world of [esoteric] meaning' which Gandhi sees in the actual practice of *ahimsā*, - a meaning which is far removed from its literal meaning; which enables us to make sense of Gandhi's affirmation that, as a result of his assiduous commitment to prayer, he has finally become incapable of hating anyone.

For us (lesser mortals) the point is that the discipline of *ahimsā* calls for a multidirectional regulation of our being and conduct. We are a bundle of diverse and even conflicting forces. Love and hate, attachment and aversion, assertiveness and self-abasement all give us the introspective power to see it all as well as the will and wisdom to shape ourselves, as Human Beings, into the tranquil, yet dynamic personality that *ahimsā* demands. This is why Gandhi

1 Shriman Narayan (ed.) The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1968, Vol. 4, p. 218

2 M.K. Gandhi, The Law of Love, edited by Anand T. Higorani, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1970, p.17

looks on *ahimsā* as the singular Law of our Species. Nonviolence is the Law of our Species as violence is the Law of the Brute<sup>3</sup>. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the Law and its application in practice to his personal life.<sup>4</sup> Nor is nonviolence in any way an impossible ideal. It is operative already.

The [very] fact that there are so many people still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the fact of arms but on the force of Truth or Love...History (of war) is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of Love.<sup>5</sup>

Generally speaking, humankind would prefer to use nonviolence in interpersonal dealings. Very few people make a deliberate decision to practise nonviolence in their daily lives as Gandhi did. In fact, *ahimsā* or nonviolence is not only one of the eleven vows that he took and practised devotedly in every facet of life but also a vow that he valued as highly as truth.

### Why is nonviolence the right choice for humankind?

Gandhi says, Choose nonviolence because it is 'The Law of Our Species'. Laws are of two major kinds: those that operate automatically, quite without any effort on our part, and those that have been devised that we should follow. When Gandhi speaks of *ahimsā* – nonviolence – as the law of our species what he means is that *himsā*, or aggressiveness, is as much a part of our native equipment as loving those who are close to us. As human beings we try to see that our conduct is determined by love instead of aggressivity. It is a conscious effort to choose love (*ahimsā*) rather than anger that can only be made by human beings as *ahimsā* is a law that is uniquely relevant to humankind.

The desirability of being nonviolent is unquestionable. Suppose there is a man who is, by and large a loving husband and father but has a terrible temper and therefore easily gets angry and resorts to slapping his wife or beating his children. Since he is basically a good man, he may feel very remorseful after every violent outburst. But will not his wife and children be justified in expecting him to control his temper? And, on the other hand, would it be fair, on his part to keep saying he *cannot change* by blaming it all on his *nature*? The

3 M.K. Gandhi, The Law of Love, p. 54

4 Ibid, p. 3

5 Ibid, pp. 10-11

answer is that he should *at least try* to control his temper. Losing one's temper in a provocative situation may be natural but it does not befit a being that is not an animal by virtue of the human capacity for self-discipline.

It is unfortunate that people commonly suppose that violence or aggression is native to human nature while forgetting *that nonviolence is equally so*. It is overlooked that human nature is full of opposites: love **and** hate, compassion **and** cruelty, kindness **and** unkindness, altruism **and** selfishness, generosity **and** meanness, forgiveness **and** revenge and so on. No wonder then that Gandhi does not label nonviolence as the *nature* but the *Law* of our Species - the right value for us as human beings.

Unlike the laws of physics, our dual nature is often put aside; but what is obviously desirable does not cease to be so just because of our indifference to it. The law of nonviolence defines our humanness and so the more we adhere to nonviolence, the more human we become. Is it not the basic purpose of human life to try to better ourselves, and better our relationships with fellow beings? Does not every religion declare that the whole purpose of life is to try to control our lower nature by drawing on our higher Selves? The logic of human experience, its basic dualities, seems to favour *ahimsā* – non-violence. What is Love? How can nonviolence be equated with love?

Gandhi says quite freely: "The Law of Nonviolence which is the Law of Love is The Law of our Species." Although it is obviously opposed to violence, how can nonviolence be equated with love? A chance visit to Mother Teresa's home for unwanted children provided the first step to understanding this linkage. When infants are abandoned at birth, left in a dustbin or in a corner, where the nuns often found them before taking them into their Home, the infant would not feed or behave like a normal baby just because he (or she) had probably *lost the desire to live because no one had loved it!* This condition is called 'Mother Sickness'. The desire to live is inseparable from the, largely unconscious, need to be loved. Love indeed seems to be the primal need of life. In the case of happily married couples who have shared their lives for three or four decades, it often happens that when one of the partners dies, the other also passes away within a matter of months or even days because the reciprocity of love is no longer possible. Of all the relations that keep us happily alive and desiring to live, love is the very quintessence.

But how are love and nonviolence one and the same? We could perhaps say that the components of love and nonviolence are similar. Whether it be in a secular social relationship or a human-God one, love necessarily comprises the following basic attitudes: **trust, intense, impassioned altruistic**

**concern, putting the ‘other’ before self, readiness for sacrifice, vast source of empowerment, never taking advantage of the weakness of the ‘other’, valuing all the possible means for keeping and quickening relationships.**

Trust is the basis of a meaningful relationship whether it is in the everyday world or with God. When a husband tells his wife that he will pick her up from the airport the wife trusts he will be there! When Gandhi says, “As my faith in God grew, I tore up my life insurance policy because for me it betrayed a lack of trust in God!” his reasoning is clear, “If I really believe in His Providence, why should I worry about my family’s welfare after my death? If I do, it would clearly betoken a lack of faith.” Mother Teresa would never cease believing that, “Jesus will provide.” In The Gita the Lord Himself assures; “He who trusts me ...I bear *the burden of* getting him what he needs.” The Bible emphasizes the value of faith, even if it is as tiny as a mustard seed, for meeting mountainous challenges.

Intense, impassioned, altruistic concern distinguishes true love from attachment by putting more value on the loved one’s welfare than on merely keeping the loved one close. Genuine love is far more a matter of caring for and giving space to the other than of self-seeking. It is very natural to give gifts to the person one loves but putting the ‘other’ before self readies one for sacrifice. The ultimate gift that one can give another is the most precious thing one has – one’s life. Gandhi says, “It requires greater courage to die than to kill.”

Love empowers. Psychological studies show that a heightened sense of security leads to better performance levels and the realization of one’s potential. None of us is perfect. We all have our strengths and weaknesses. Genuine affection accepts the other in totality and does not take undue advantage of the other’s vulnerability.

The four Cs - Connection, Communication, Compassion and Celebration are essential for keeping and deepening relationships but it is so difficult to love someone unconditionally. The question that is usually uppermost in one’s mind is, “What can I get? What is in it for me?” Unconditional love thinks only in terms of giving. “Giving till it hurts” as Mother Teresa put it! Thus the equation of nonviolence with love is easy to explain. Firstly, whatever we love we tend to be with or dwell upon; so love always makes for enduring solicitude. Secondly, as Plato said, beauty elicits love and as the great American philosopher, Santayana, added, “love discovers beauty in quite unexpected regions”. And so, we can understand Gandhi’s self-effacing service to lepers and make sense of Mother Teresa’s (seemingly) bewildering utterance:

Is my heart so clean that I can see the face of God...in that...naked

one, that one suffering from leprosy, that dying one? This is what we must pray for. <sup>6</sup>

## The linkage between love or nonviolence and trust

What is noteworthy is the linkage of love or nonviolence with trust. In violence, it is obvious that **mistrust** is a breeding-ground. In international relations, distrust is the fear that an alien country may attack us. This makes Nation States resort to arming themselves in order to deter military/nuclear attack from other countries. The price that we pay for this international mistrust and the consequent mechanism of deterrence is ruinous: a global military expenditure of USD 2000 per minute; a daily death of 35,000 children (UNICEF figure); ecological imbalance caused by military, industrial waste and nuclear weapon testing; and a constant threat of an Accidental Nuclear War. What is more, developed countries devote over USD 500 billion to military defence but only USD 47 billion to aid the development of poorer countries; incomes of the richest fifth of the world average 50 times the income of the poorest fifth; developing countries have eight times as many soldiers as civilian doctors; the price of one ballistic submarine (USD 1.45 billion) would double the education budgets of 18 poor countries with 130 million children and the cost of one nuclear submarine - USD 2 billion - would reforest the earth substantially.

Now, important though they are, these numerical details may not touch us readily. But the thought of human cost of this orgy of deterrence should make every human heart writhe in agony. Every soldier killed at the front is the son of a mother, the husband of a wife, the father of a child, or the brother of a sister; and it is precisely these persons, these paragons of selfless love, who are condemned to whole lives of doleful memories by this demon of war. Whether these women are Russian, American, Indian or of any other nationality, their pain at losing their loved ones in war in every case is excruciating. Our failure to see this is no complement to our humaneness as Gandhi suggested.

It is a sign of spiritual atrophy to support an unjust system such as war. <sup>7</sup>

Even in a purely mundane sense, if the ravages of war are all taken into

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<sup>6</sup> Mother Teresa, *Everything Start from Prayer*, Full Circle Publishing, Delhi, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2001, p.84

<sup>7</sup> Shanti Sahyog Brochure, 2006, Back page

account, war will appear to be a colossal folly. The trouble today is that very little attention has been paid, so far, to the understanding and healing potential of nonviolence. Violence is preferred to nonviolence too impatiently. While nation states collectively spend the (afore-mentioned) staggering amount of USD two million per minute on acquiring the skills and means of waging WAR, not even USD one per minute is spent on a systematic study of nonviolent tactics. In the present situation, therefore, it is unfair to pit nonviolence against violence with a view to determine their comparative effectiveness. To ask: 'Can nonviolence succeed in the Israel/Palestine conflict?' is as foolish as asking if a person can win the Wimbledon Championship without learning to play tennis! On the other hand, if the importance of studying, teaching and researching nonviolence as a science is recognized, future generations will be equipped with the necessary tools and skills of nonviolent conflict resolution and so may be able to abjure war totally. Gandhi looks upon *Satyāgraha* (Nonviolent Resistance) as a definite science.

### What is Gandhi's overall view of conflict?

Conflict can be roughly defined as a difference of opinion or a clash of interests. We are all individuals, or separate centres of thought, belief, and attitudes; and are therefore very likely to differ in our individual views. As Gandhi would put it, our individual grasp of the truth of any matter is, as a rule, only relative. So we cannot wholly rule out the possibility of conflict at all levels of human interaction - personal, professional and political. However, **conflict** per se is not the problem; in itself it is **neutral**, neither good nor bad. It is only the **methods of conflict resolution** that can be **violent or nonviolent**. Relations between individuals groups and nations naturally snap when we use violence to resolve conflict. So it is high time that humankind focused on learning the ways of nonviolent conflict resolution and Nation States opted for Nonviolent Defence. But, then, if the path of armed preparedness is to be totally abjured, how is one to defend one's country against a possible invasion? The ready answer is: by means of Nonviolent Defence.

### Nonviolent Defence

As far back as 1956, at a richly attended Congress in Germany (July 29), fifty-one holders of the Nobel Prize called on all nations to abjure the use of force because, 'science has given to mankind the means to destroy itself'. Now those who wield political power are surely quite alive to the threat of

nuclear weapons; but because it is never easy to shake off age-old habits of thought and behaviour, there has to be a massive, popular, worldwide upsurge in favour of nonviolence if those who hold the reins of power today are to be actually made to abjure violence and war. Such an absolute and highly desirable renunciation is possible only if all of us, in every part of the world, initiate a powerful movement for politically legitimising Nonviolent Conflict Resolution by giving a place to Nonviolent Defence in our national defence structures globally. The concept of such defence is based on the oft-neglected aspect of Gandhi's view of nonviolence as a **science** and not as a feeling or fleeting emotion.

Gandhi regards nonviolence as a science because it requires detailed, analytic study and is a well-graded way of mind-body training. It is, in this context, pertinent to note that several Universities in Europe, USA and Canada have recently established Departments of Peace Studies that undertake the teaching and study of nonviolence as an academic discipline.

Academic and individual effort must be buttressed with official support. So, we believe that the best tribute that Nation States can pay to Gandhi is to **politically legitimise** what he devoted his whole life to – namely **nonviolent conflict resolution**. Introducing Nonviolent Defence alongside Armed Defence can make a start towards this end in our Military Defence structures worldwide.

This will be consistent with the U.N. policies as, **The Preamble to the UN Charter** declares: 'We, the people of the United Nations determined ...to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,' and **Article 18 of the UN Convention on Human Rights** openly says: 'Each Individual has the right to ... freedom of conscience.' Now, if this were true, the following would be demanded of democratic Nation States of the world:

1. That without quite abandoning the current preparations for Military Defence, a parallel Nonviolent Defence system overseen by a Nonviolent Defence Ministry be soon brought into being;
2. That every citizen be granted freedom to be trained, if they so desire, in Nonviolent Defence rather than in Armed Defence;
3. That every citizen, who is wedded to nonviolence be granted freedom to pay their Defence Tax to Nonviolent Defence rather than to Armed Defence.

If half the tax payers all over the world opted for Nonviolent Defence, USD 1 million per minute would become readily available for training in this desirable alternative to war. The current global military expenditure is around

USD 2 million per minute and increasing by the day.

If the value of studying, teaching and researching in nonviolence (as a science) is recognized today, future generations will, in time, be equipped with the necessary tools and skills of nonviolent conflict resolution and so may be able to bring about a total abrogation of war; a crying need as Gandhi rightly insists:

In politics the vast possibilities of nonviolence are yet unexplored... It may be long before the law of love (nonviolence) is recognized in international affairs. The machineries of governments stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the Ministry of Defence will have two wings: Military Ministry and Nonviolence Ministry. Nonviolence Training Colleges will be set up to provide training in nonviolent tactics, alongside the Military Defence Colleges which train in using armaments and warfare. Nonviolence Academies will also be structured to provide a six-month course in nonviolent conflict resolution that would be mandatory for every student passing out of high school, so that whole generations are gradually trained in the Science of Nonviolence. If there can be compulsory conscription of citizens for waging war, would it not be democratic that they be given freedom to opt for training in Nonviolent Defence. Gene Sharp points out that,

Just as in studies of war, one can learn from unsuccessful campaigns how to increase combat effectiveness, similarly there is a multitude of socially and politically significant instances of nonviolent action, which, if carefully studied and analysed, shed important light on the political potential of nonviolent action. Even in a world based on the assumption of the necessity of violent struggle, nonviolent action has won significant victories. It is, therefore, reasonable to explore whether its political applicability might be expanded.<sup>9</sup>

The pressure for such a radical change must come from us all. The individual must be made aware of how violence has made insidious inroads into almost every region of individual and social life. Only then can a *general* dis-

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8 Shanti Sahyog Newsletter, May-June 1995, Vol. 1, No. 1

9 Gene Sharp, *Social Power and Political Freedom*, Porter Sargent Publishers, USA, 1973, p. 220

taste for violence be developed but when will this pious resolve be translated into action? After all the children in South Lebanon have been wiped out of existence? Is it an index of our humaneness that, as the attending doctors in Lebanon complain, some of these little bodies have 'become featureless as if they had been taken out of an oven', making surgical repair very difficult? <sup>10</sup> Does our conscience need anything more horrendous for adjuring violence totally?

**Such appeals are not my only purpose. For humankind to survive today should make a Global Experiment in Democracy to Outlaw War!** <sup>11</sup>

### Relationship between Love and Nonviolence and Service

We have seen, in our own day, two glorious exemplars of *ahimsā* as all-embracing love: Gandhi and Mother Teresa. The peaks are always solitary, more or less, but they also beckon ascent; and where they take a human form they make the rise look credible. It should now be easy to see the point in Gandhi's utterance:

Action is my domain, and...all my action is actuated by the spirit of service <sup>12</sup> ... My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes **the service of humanity.** <sup>13</sup>

A simple Biblical parable brings out how it is up to the individual to look upon his life's work as a service to humankind: Three labourers were breaking stones. When they were asked as to what they were doing, the first one answered grumpily: 'Breaking stones, obviously.' The second one's reply was just as sulky: 'Working for my daily bread.' But the third one wore a beatific

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<sup>10</sup> The Hindu, 3.8.06

<sup>11</sup> Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*:  
Part One: *Power and Struggle*  
Part Two: *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*

Part Three: *The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action*, Horizon Extending Books, Porter Sargent, Boston, 1973. Also see, Gene Sharp: *National Security Through Civilian-Based Defence*, Association for Transarmament Studies, 3636 Lafayette Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68131, 1970

<sup>12</sup> Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 39

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48

look as he said happily: ‘Oh! I am building a cathedral!’ Even from the everyday point of view, Gandhi’s express objective, the need to serve, is not bizarre. The elements and the flora and fauna of Nature are of ceaseless help or service to us, demanding nothing in return except their safe upkeep - *for our welfare*. Nor is mutuality of caring extrinsic to *human* nature.

We are all open to suffering and no sane person likes to suffer except in the course of willingly trying to alleviate the sufferings of others. Does it not then become our obvious duty to come together for relieving human suffering? Moreover, I repeat, suffering for the sake of others is at once inner replenishment, *an inner fullness of being*, which can only be felt, not seen or shown. This indeed is why persons like Gandhi and Mother Teresa never felt the pinch of want, in spite of being materially quite poor. As Mother Teresa, speaking on behalf of her unique Kolkata Home for the Dying, says:

We have nothing to live on, yet we live splendidly; nothing to walk on, yet we walk fearlessly; nothing to lean on, but yet we lean on God confidently...<sup>14</sup>

This ability to get ahead happily with but minimum possessions releases material resources for others; reduces the gulf between the rich and the poor; and so eliminates a powerful cause of social friction. It is true that Will Buffet’s commitment to transfer as much as eighty-five per cent of his assets to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has set a new benchmark for socially focused charity. But such munificence is not likely to hit the problem of material want at its very root. To provide enough for some of those who are needy is one thing; **to dissuade people in general from amassing what they do not really need** is quite another; and unless the acquisitive tendency is duly checked by one and all, social cohesion will continue to be threatened. Incidentally, in Indian ethico-religious thought this discipline has been specified as *aparigraha*.

This focus should be on the *common ethical core of all religions*. Gandhi was admittedly inspired by the Sermon on the Mount, and he would revel in praying for such a descent of His Grace that all could somehow come to see that the Hindu word *Ishwar* and the Muslim word Allah relate to the selfsame surpassing Reality. Mother Teresa’s statement is a virtual paradigm of religious catholicity:

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14 Mother Teresa, *Everything Starts From Prayer*, Full Circle Publishing, Delhi, 2001, p. 122

I've always said that we should help a Hindu become a better Hindu, a Muslim become a better Muslim, a Catholic become a better Catholic. <sup>15</sup>

My own view is that **authentic religiousness** is a very potent force for bringing and keeping humanity together. Religion is not the only helpful factor here. There is philosophy too. It liberates the mind and makes for open-mindedness.

### **The Spiral of Mutuality – Groups: Connecting Individuals, Communities and Cultures'**

A brief word on Culture: Culture signifies customs, ideas, and values of a particular civilization, society, or social group. A cultured individual is one who is open-minded and possesses a proper sense of values, say, of the difference between good and bad, right and wrong. Above all, he or she must be committed to Truth. The practice of every principle has to be *true* to what it enjoins and commitment to what appears to be unmistakably true in every matter makes one *steadfast* in holding on to the right path, whatever its specific demands. So **truth** is both a criterion and an anchor of righteous living. It is thus the most important value for *everyone, everywhere*. *Ahimsā* – **non-violence** - comes next. This is, in brief, the reason why Gandhi put so much emphasis on Truth and Nonviolence. Nonviolence is a crying need of the day. There is no other way to unify humanity on a firm basis.

Be that as it may, the multiplying orgies of violence serve only to bring us closer to beasts and Gandhi's words deserve very close attention:

It is [surely] a sign of spiritual atrophy to support an unjust system such as war. You may not be able to change the system at once, but you can surely choose not to co-operate with it at once. <sup>16</sup>

The habit of nonviolent behaviour must be cultivated from the very beginning of life. A peaceful family is the first upward turn in the spiral of mutuality. Happy groups and communities are but easy extensions of the loving, accommodating attitude. Cultures become forces for good or for greed and violence according to how they follow or deviate from the path of mutual tol-

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15 Mother Teresa, *Everything Starts From Prayer*, Full Circle Publishing, Delhi, 2001, p. XI

16 Shanti Sahyog Newsletter, May-June 1995, Vol. 1, No.1

erance. The apex of cultural growth can only be the solemn resolve of Nation States not to keep preparing to kill each other. *Ahimsā* is truly the crowning need of the day, simply because there is unbridled violence everywhere; and because we refuse to see its sheer meaninglessness. A single day's newspaper can highlight it all: 'Sri Lanka on the brink of civil war'; the Iranian President, Ahmadinejad, issues the clarion call, 'Eliminate Israel'; 'Hizbollah missiles pound Israel'; and a picture showing Israeli soldiers comforting each other at the grave-site of a colleague, - have all figured in one single edition of a prestigious daily of India. <sup>17</sup> Gandhi's words seem like a panacea for our times:

I feel in the innermost recesses of my heart, after a political experience extending over an unbroken period of close upon thirty-five years, that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that, perhaps, it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way to a starving world. <sup>18</sup>

One can only wonder if humanity can yet manage to survive. Technology has surely overcome space-time remoteness; but to unify hearts, and to hold them as one, we need the healing balm of *ahimsā* - nonviolence. I see no better way to close than to turn to Mother Teresa again:

You and I have been created for greater things. We have not been created to just pass through this life without aim. *And that greater aim is to love and be loved.* <sup>19</sup>

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17 The Hindu, New Delhi, 4.8.06

18 R.K. Prabhu & U.R. Rao Ed., *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1969, p. 155

19 Mother Teresa, *Everything Starts from Prayer*, Full Circle Publishing, Delhi, 2001, p. 12

# **Sociometry, Peace Research and Creative Conflict Transformation: An invitation to an encounter between J. L. Moreno and Johan Galtung<sup>1</sup>**

## **Sociometría, Investigación sobre la Paz y Transformación Creativa de Conflictos: invitación a un encuentro entre J.L. Moreno y Johan Galtung**

**Wilfried Graf (Austria) translated by Augustin Nicolescou<sup>2</sup>**



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### **Resumen**

En su trabajo fundamental “Who Shall Survive” (1934), Moreno expresa su esperanza de que la sociometría preparará en último término el terreno para una “Ciencia de la Paz”. Sobre esta base, el autor quiere invitar al lector a encontrarse con la sociometría, la sociatría y el sociodrama (especialmente las contribuciones de J.L. Moreno) por una parte, y la investigación sobre la paz y la transformación de conflictos (especialmente las contribuciones de Johan Galtung) por otra. En la primera parte

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2 Note: This is a draft translation of the original article published in German in the journal *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie*. Please contact the author before quoting the translation.

de este artículo, se re-examina a J.L. Moreno como precursor de la investigación sobre la paz. La segunda parte contiene un debate sobre las similitudes y diferencias entre J.L. Moreno, como fundador de la sociometría y el psicodrama, y Johan Galtung, como fundador de la investigación sobre la paz. La tercera parte perfila la posibilidad de acercar ambos enfoques en busca de un método de transformación creativa de los conflictos, asesoría sobre conflictos y mediación.

### Abstract

In his seminal work 'Who Shall Survive' (1934), Moreno expresses his hope that sociometry will ultimately prepare the ground for a 'Science of Peace'. On this basis, the author invites the reader to a meeting between sociometry, sociatry, and sociodrama, (especially the contributions of J. L. Moreno) on the one hand, and peace research and conflict transformation (especially the contributions of Johan Galtung) on the other. In the first part of this article, J. L. Moreno is re-examined as an early pioneer of peace research. The second part is a discussion of the similarities and differences between J. L. Moreno, as the founder of sociometry and psychodrama, and Johan Galtung, as the founder of peace research. The third part outlines the possibility of bringing together both approaches for a method of creative conflict transformation, conflict counseling, and mediation.

### Moreno as a Peace Researcher

Moreno belongs to a group of Jewish philosophers including Buber, Canetti and Broch, who, in the early twentieth century, approached the problem of peace through a creative encounter between science and mysticism. They developed a diagnosis and prognosis of 'mass delusion', as well as a therapy based on a method of dialogue that was surprisingly up to date, although it has been long disregarded by modern peace research. Nevertheless, in 1985 the Austrian Institute for Peace Research and Peace Education implemented a research project on 'the social psychology of peace' using Moreno's psychodramatic methods (Graf, Ottomeyer 1986). Moreno writes in the second edition of *Who Shall Survive* (1953), under the heading *Conclusion: A Science of Peace*,

There is a trend in sociology towards a 'clinical sociology' and 'sociatry', in anthropology towards 'anthrotherapy', in theology towards 'theotherapy'. Sociometry sits at the controls, watching the trends and seeing to it that the trend does not go astray in the prejudiced waters of 'the applied'. Beyond all therapy there is a trust growing that the new objectivity of sociometry that enables us to measure and predict will continue to till the soil for a 'science of peace' (p. 695).

Moreno's work includes

a study of divinity, a study of people, a study of society, which many people take to be unconnected, but [for Moreno] all three belong together (Hutter 39).

His project of a science of peace can easily be found throughout his entire paradigm and cannot be restricted to the field of sociometry. We discover it in his therapeutic philosophy (creativity, spontaneity, tele), social theory (sociometry, sociodynamics, sociatry) and therapeutic methodology (psychodrama, sociodrama, and axiodrama).

### *Therapeutic Philosophy (Creativity, Spontaneity, Tele)*

Moreno's philosophy concerns the cosmic, societal and human dialectic of creativity and spontaneity assuming that humankind represents a complex unit of diversity interlaced and held together by the forces of the tele.<sup>3</sup> Already in 1934, Moreno writes in his first edition of *Who Shall Survive*, "A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less of an objective than the whole of mankind". What then did Moreno understand by therapy? Ferdinand Buer says, "Mutual support is what Moreno means by therapy. This definition is in agreement with the tradition of anarchical socialism focused on mutualism, rather than the tradition of clinical medicine" (1991, p. 47). Buer also emphasises its connection to the tradition of American Pragmatism (1999, 37).

It is important to truly understand this alternative meaning of therapy because it translates into current concepts like self-development, self-help, and mutual liberation. Freudians, Marxists and Gestaltists have objected to the idea of a therapeutic society (Buer 1993, 75-122). But for Moreno it is a practical philosophy for liberation, a therapy for self-therapy, a help for self-help, not stuck in the 'here and now' but encompassing all time dimensions of present, past and future. His point is unequivocally that conflicts are not to be managed on the surface. They must be creatively transformed on the basis of encounter and dialogue.

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3 Tele is Moreno's term for what might variously be called 'rapport' in its broadest sense, or the category of (generally) reciprocated interpersonal attractions and repulsions.

## Therapeutic Social Theory (Sociometry, Sociodynamics, Sociatry)

Moreno's therapeutic social theory covers a complex interconnection of sociometry, sociodynamics and sociatry. *Sociometry* has been generally used to comprise all three. I would prefer *sociatry* as a more adequate general term.<sup>4</sup> Sociometry, in the narrower sense, is a method, used to measure, simulate and visualize the deep structures of the social relations. It is a

situational research [...] that examines the social microstructure and replaces the ideal of objectivity, which is ultimately neither obtainable nor desirable, by the question of the subjective insider's view of the people concerned (Hutter 294).

Sociometric analysis helps to understand sociodynamics. Sociatry's objective is a therapy of the social relations in a society. Moreno writes,

Sociatry is a healing sociometry, the science of social healing. It is therefore a matter of ailing societies in contrast to social psychiatry, which has to do with the impact of society on ailing individuals. A sociatrist is a therapist who is proficient in sociatry (Moreno, 1957: 37).

Sociometry aims for social conflict research and conflict transformation with methods of participatory action research that enable scenic understanding and dialogical learning. It strives for a nonviolent conflict resolution, with the vision of a sociometric reorganization of society.

### *Therapeutic Methodology (Psychodrama, Sociodrama and Axiodrama)*

In Moreno's methodology, psychodrama represents only *one of the dimensions*, which aim for a creative, as well as spontaneous, reorganization of roles, structures and cultures. Psychodrama deals with intra- and inter-personal conflict, sociodrama with social conflict, and axiodrama with cultural conflict.

This comprehensive approach of Moreno remains incomplete; it took a back seat in his own praxis and did not really prevail after his death. He was also partly unable to free himself from the positivistic reductionism and biolo-

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4 When 'Sociometry and psychodrama' is mentioned in the text, the terms are meant to refer to the entire 'Moreno-System'. In other words, it includes the philosophy of creativity, as well as socio-dynamics, sociatry, as well as socio-drama and axiodrama.

gistic misunderstandings of sociology in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The therapeutic philosophy of creativity was kept up by many psychodramatists either as a moribund cultural conserve or misunderstood as a private religion and replaced with more 'profane' or more 'scientific' paradigms (psychoanalysis, system theory, constructivism). Sociometry was often reduced to a purely quantitative, statistical concept of measurability of social relations. And psychodrama was reduced to psychotherapy. Even so, the creative integral spirit of psychodrama and sociometry did not disappear completely. The therapeutic philosophy of Moreno has been comprehensively reconstructed, particularly in the works of Buer (1999), Hutter (2002) and Schacht (2003).

In order to reinvent and to rethink Moreno's comprehensive approach in the present time – *after* postmodernism – the dimensions of psychodrama, sociodrama and axiodrama, would have to be reintegrated. Here, however, I only wish to point out the *potential* significance of Moreno's corpus for the fields of peace research and conflict transformation. And conversely, through a dialogue with *modern* peace research, Moreno's vision of a therapeutic reorganization of society and world order could be understood in a new way. Therefore, Johan Galtung's approach, with his key notions of 'actors', 'structure', and 'culture', strikes me as particularly suited for a new interpretation of J. L. Moreno's approach and vice-versa.

## Galtung's Transcend Method

According to Galtung, it appears that

the world is governed by drama that takes place at the MACRO-level, even at the global level. There is drama within countries, between classes of which they are composed; there is drama between the countries. ... But how can one express all this as something that takes place in the mind and the soul of a handful of persons, say, in a family, in a school, an office, or maybe a little town? ... One needs a stage that at least takes in scenes from the First, the Second, the Third and the Fourth worlds and if at all possible from several of the four classes in all places. (Galtung, 1988: 202).

The Norwegian peace researcher, Johan Galtung, has been engaged in more than 45 conflicts around the world, over a period of more than forty years. While Moreno focused primarily on the micro and meso levels of conflict, Galtung focuses primarily on the macro and mega levels of conflict within and

between nations, states, regions and civilizations, dealing with these conflicts primarily by means of dialogical methods (Galtung, 1998). Both have a 'secret' spiritual core within the framework of a secular, post-modern and multi-culturally oriented cosmology that is the key to make their systems accessible. For Moreno, it is the Jewish mystics (Hutter), for Galtung, it is Gandhi.

Like Moreno, Galtung also differentiates between the surface level and the deep structure of a conflict constellation, and makes a point of bringing into awareness the discrepancies between the surface level and the deep structure. Moreno researched the sociometric matrix with the contradictions and dynamics of attraction, repulsion and neutrality in inter-personal and societal relations. Galtung, inspired by a Taoist-Buddhist epistemology, explicitly incorporates two additional possibilities, which can be implicitly found in Moreno's work as well: the compromise between attraction and repulsion, which usually remains unsatisfactory, as well as transcendence, the creative negation of the contradiction between attraction and repulsion (Galtung, 1998).

Through his paradigm of microgroups Moreno virtually replaces the Marxist macrocosm with a Shakespearian microcosm, seeing the macro-sociological ideologies of Marxism or Liberalism thus enhanced. But, as Buer (1999) and Ottomeyer (1987) have shown there remains a deficit with Moreno when going from the micro-sociological to the macro-sociological. Hutter also questions this claim of Moreno, because he is not able to adequately grasp the qualitative leap from the sociometric micro-level to macrosociological and economic phenomena.

It is very characteristic of the monetary-administrative system – becoming too complex in the Modern era – that it operates beyond the life worldly structures of roles and relations, thereby impairing or even destroying the latter. (302).

Galtung's complex theory of violence and peace could perhaps allow us to better grasp the qualitative jump from the microsociological to the macrosociological level (Galtung 2000). Conversely, with Galtung, the psychological dimension often remains underexposed.

### *Direct, Structural and Cultural Violence*

Like Moreno, Galtung would like to overcome both Marxism's reductionism on the economic system, as well as the reductionism of Liberalism on the political system. Galtung's approach, like Moreno's sociatry, is based on

a philosophy of creativity and, also like Moreno, he aims for a sociatric re-organization of society and world order, by dismantling direct, structural and cultural violence, as well as by developing direct, structural and cultural peace (Galtung, 1998).

Direct violence is an event; structural violence is a process with ups and downs; cultural violence is a constant, which remains essentially unchanged due to the slow transformation of fundamental aspects of cultures over a long period of time. Galtung likens the time frame of the three forms of violence to the theory of earthquakes. An earthquake is an event (direct violence), the movement of the tectonic plates is a process (structural violence), and the existence of fault lines between the plates is a rather permanent condition (cultural violence).

Based on Galtung's approach, social conflict constellations can be analysed and dealt with along three levels:

1. individuals or social actors (their subjective intentions, behaviour patterns, and interactions, influenced by the deeper underlying basic human needs)
2. social-structural conditions (the concrete contradictions between the apparently incompatible goals of the actors, influenced by the deeper, underlying, patterns of social relationships, and collective contradictions)
3. cultural conditions (the subjective assumptions, attitudes, and patterns of thinking of the actors, influenced by the deeper, underlying, inter-subjective, cultural assumptions, attitudes and patterns of thinking)

### *The Civilisational Unconscious*

Galtung refers to the deeper dimensions of a collective and unconscious socio-cultural cosmology, which influences the behavior of the actors, the social structures and the culture. He makes the assumption that large parts of conflict factors are rooted in these deeper dimensions of culture, society and human behavior, in the 'collective unconscious' of deep cultures, deep structures and basic needs. Galtung speaks of a 'collective unconscious' as well as of a 'collective subconscious.'

In order to avoid confusion, I would suggest using collective *un- or pre-*conscious, as Galtung's concepts tend to be closer to those of Freud's collective unconscious. It does not refer to the unconscious in the Jungian sense, as it does not deal with trans-cultural archetypes on the individual level common

to all human beings. It is about making conscious a collective unconscious which, in contrast to Jung's collective unconscious is historically, socially and culturally influenced and changeable. Again, there is a connection to Moreno, who understood the unconscious as a co-unconscious between people, society and the cosmos. Galtung introduces an anthropological unconscious (basic human needs), a social unconscious (latent contradictions and social structures, the so-called deep structure) and a cultural unconscious (implicit attitudes, and assumptions, implicit cultural meanings, the so-called deep culture). Does this not sound like Moreno's co-unconscious in a complex conflict constellation between actors, structures, cultures? One could also speak of a 'civilisational unconscious', in order to distinguish Galtung's concept from other concepts of the collective unconscious.

### *Social Deep Structures*

Galtung differentiates between eight basic social structures or fault lines:

Nature: Human vs. Nature (species-ism);

Gender: Male vs. Female (sexism);

Generation: Old vs. Middle-aged vs. Young (ageism);

Skin color: Light vs. Dark (racism);

Class: Powerful vs. Powerless, (class-ism), which includes:

Political power, who decides over/represses whom

Military power, who forces/kills whom

Economic power, who exploits whom

Cultural power, who conditions/alienates whom

Normal vs. Deviant, (stigmatization)

Nation/Culture: Dominant vs. Dominated (nationalism, fundamentalism)

Geography: Center vs. Periphery, (centralism)

Galtung's social fault lines result from dynamics, similar to the ones Moreno finds in microstructures (attraction, repulsion, neutrality). He examines unconscious sociometric patterns or syndromes within and between the macro-sociological deep structures, which makes it possible to make the deep structural grammar and sociodrama conscious on the surface level. It would be an exciting challenge for sociometric and socio-dramatic action research to link Moreno's sociometric microstructures with Galtung's macro-sociological deep structures.

### *Deep Cultural Assumptions*

The social relationship patterns on the deep structural level correspond to cultural patterns of meaning, collective pre- and unconscious (cognitive) patterns of thinking and (emotive) patterns of feeling, which (de)motivate and (de)legitimate the deep structural, mostly asymmetric, power relations. Galtung refers to deep culture, by which he means the automated, forgotten, or displaced assumptions and attitudes residing in the collective unconscious, on which individuals and groups fall back when faced with deep conflict and crisis. These are the raw materials for 'axio-dramatic' dynamics of escalation and polarization, which are fueled by fundamentalist policies of elites. Such deep cultural patterns of meaning can be identified within all areas of culture (religion and ideology, language and art, empirical and formal science), and they are used to legitimate direct or structural violence.

### *The Transcend Approach*

Against the background of a specific theory of violence and peace and his worldwide experience, Galtung, over the past fifteen years, has developed an approach for conflict transformation, peace building and reconciliation that seeks to overcome the limits and deficits of mainstream approaches to civilian conflict transformation.<sup>5</sup> The Transcend approach does not differ very much from other approaches regarding the practical methods for counseling, moderation, facilitation, mediation, negotiation, etc. These are necessarily commonalities on this level. Transcend is, above all, integratively oriented, which means that it combines actor-oriented, structure-oriented, and culture-oriented methods. Essential to this method is a specific philosophical, scientific, and methodological approach. Transcend is guided firstly by a philosophy of peace ('peace by peaceful means,' inspired by Gandhi's *Satyagraha*), secondly, by a peace theory (derived from a theory of structural and cultural violence) and thirdly, by a practice of (deep) dialogues, in order to get from the surface level to the 'collective unconscious' deep dimension of a conflict constellation.

In the Transcend approach, conflicts are addressed through a dialogical,

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<sup>5</sup> In the setting of the first training in Vienna, the Transcend approach was further developed into a "Six Step Process" geared especially towards mediation and conflict counseling. Since 2005 trainings in the "Six-Step Process" have been offered in Germany ([www.transcend-germany.de](http://www.transcend-germany.de)).

interactive manner, together with all parties. The Transcend Dialogue does not begin with a 'round table' Each conflict party is worked with separately for a while, in order to prepare them for later negotiations or mediation. It aims to help the parties to help themselves, using peaceful means. Galtung puts forward that non-violent conflict interventions and creative proposals by a third party are needed once a certain stage of escalation has been reached in order to transform hardened conflicts. Transcend conflict counselors consciously assist in elaborating creative proposals, and when needed, also bring in international experts. It is often necessary to work with the conflict parties separately for some time, particularly when dealing with deep structural and cultural dimensions.

The Transcend approach places conflict work along a spectrum going from violence prevention (rather than conflict preventions), to conflict transformation, to peace building and reconciliation. Therefore it means not only prevention of violence and deconstruction of different forms of violence, but also the construction of a culture of nonviolence, empathy and creativity. It is not necessary to wait for the conflict parties to be ready to negotiate voluntarily and in a spirit of mutual trust. In general, the work starts with one particular conflict party interested in possible solutions, while maintaining from the outset a perspective of sustainable conflict transformation for all conflict parties. In asymmetrical conflict constellations, an "empowerment" of the weaker conflict party is generally necessary at the beginning.

The Transcend approach begins with the structural and cultural causes of violence and war rather than with intervention, negotiation or mediation and in each phase goes from preventive to therapeutic conflict interventions. Alongside socio-economic inequalities and political discrimination, the cultural imprint of the social collective belongs here. Transcend points deliberately to the necessity for equitable, problem-oriented communication and general understanding between different social groups, classes, nations, and civilizations. Most other methods of civilian conflict transformation limit themselves primarily to the level of direct violence. At best, this may bring about a compromise in order to end the direct violence. Usually, the basic problem is not resolved, but rather swept under the carpet. That is hardly a condition for a lasting peace.

Transcend aims for a sustainable solution perspective overcoming the contradictions of the conflict parties and transcending the incompatibility of goals through a creative bridging solution. The method tries to find the perspective for a solution that goes beyond that of a simple compromise. The bridging can only be reached if at least one of the conflict parties succeeds in recognizing the unconscious patterns that have contributed to the spiral of violence. The

dialogue between a conflict party and independent conflict counselors may initiate this recognition to accomplish a transformation of the violent or destructive 'illegitimate' aspects of the party's own conflict strategy.

In its implementation, the Transcend approach must, ideally, keep in mind and work on four levels:

1. the deliberate, but not necessarily disclosed strategies of all conflict parties;
2. the sociopsychological level of the relationships between the conflict parties;
3. the individual pre- and unconscious of the conflict parties;
4. lastly, the collective pre- and unconscious which may or may not coincide - depending on whether both parties come from the same culture or not.

### *Basic Human Needs*

Galtung defines two material and two immaterial basic needs, which are equally important. These are Survival, Wellbeing, Identity and Freedom. One has to find out which of these are threatened and which are prioritized or suppressed and if these basic needs can be negatively affected by structural and cultural violence. This perspective helps to discover alternative solutions.

In the Transcend approach, the basic human needs are a frame of reference for the dialogical differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate goals. Firstly, in a dialogue process with each conflict party individually, the goals of the conflict parties are understood and reformulated in the light of the basic human needs, by which they are driven in the long run. Secondly, the goals are only recognized as legitimate, if the basic needs of the other parties are taken into consideration. Thirdly, the goal is the elaboration of a perspective for sustainable peace, a bridging formula, which integrates all of the legitimate goals of all of the conflict parties.

The Transcend approach tries to initiate many different solution perspectives for all levels. On the level of direct violence, it seeks to ensure respect and satisfy the basic needs of all conflict parties through the promotion of non-violence. On the level of structural violence it seeks to overcome the boundaries of the social fault lines through the promotion of creativity. And on the level of cultural violence, it seeks to transform the destructive aspects of the deep culture through the promotion of empathy (tele) in regard to the Others.

Similar to Moreno's sociatry and group therapy, Galtung's Transcend approach considers that one can find in the pre- and unconscious deep structures and deep cultures not only the destructive and escalatory patterns of relations'

meaning, but also the social and cultural alternatives and resources which can be rediscovered and made conscious through a common dialogue, in a process of dialogical counseling, and with methods of creative, scenic group work, with constellations and role-play, with role-taking and role-reversal.

### **Creative conflict transformation**

Ferdinand Buer has referred to the dialectic, which propagated Moreno's ideas beyond the psychotherapeutic field, and into social, pedagogical, cultural and spiritual fields.

This dissemination of psychodrama into the different social sectors certainly has something to do with the need in these sectors for a vital and life-giving method (Buer 1999, 228).

Conversely, this confrontation also influences psychodramatic theory and practice.

Here, psychodrama can integrate [with other methods], so that, at least for outsiders, it is no longer apparent." (Buer 1999: 228).

Buer outlines two dangers to be avoided when one applies psychodrama to new fields. Firstly, there is the risk of applying technical know how at the cost of the *spirit* of Moreno's approach. Secondly, there is a possibility of encapsulating psychodrama so that its application in conflict work remains purely private.

On the basis of Buer's distinction between format versus method (Buer 1999, 229) I would like to suggest a field of work, 'civilian conflict transformation' with psychodramatic methods; in brief, 'scenic conflict transformation'. To this end, I would like to invite psychodramatists to develop methods for conflict counseling and conflict mediation and to create links to other creative, solution oriented conflict transformation methods. This would be in the sense of a 'strategic' psychodrama (Williams 1991), and within the context of this contribution, in the sense of a solution-oriented conflict psychodrama and sociology.

In the meantime, there are a number of developments in sociometry (Puckner 2004) and psychodrama in the direction of conflict transformation, such as Ottomeyer's scenic-materialistic psychodrama (Ottomeyer 1987), Buer's 'Aufstellungsarbeit nach Moreno' within the scope of the approach of so-

ciometric action research (Buer 2005), H.C. Sabelli and L. Carlson-Sabelli's 'Prozess-Methode,' especially 'Diamonds of Opposites' (Carlson-Sabelli, Sabelli, Hale 1994), Anne Hale's sociometric cycles (ibid), Felix Kellermann's "Diversity Sociodrama" (Kellermann 1998), Angelika Groterath's "Interkulturelles Soziodrama" (Groterath 2005), and Adam Blatner's "Techniques for Resolving Conflicts" (2002). B. Fichtenhofer, K. Richter and T. Uh-Tückardt have outlined a "psychodrama in conflict transformation and mediation" which they have linked with the conflict management approach of F. Galsl, as well as G. Schwarz (Fichtenhofer, et. al. 2004). In her article *The Psychodrama of Mankind. Is it really Utopian?* Rosa Cukier links the updating of Moreno's utopia of a therapeutic world order with work of the psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan on large group identity, collective trauma and informal diplomacy (Cukier 1998).

In addition to such advances, developments and new linkages, I would like to call for the more micro-social, scenic, and process-oriented theories and methods of Moreno (and the further developments which were made) and the more macro-socially, systemically and solution-oriented theories and methods of Galtung to be brought together.

It would make sense to use the model of 'diagnosis – prognosis therapy' for this kind of expanded concept of sociotherapy. Peace research in the context of Moreno could then be as follows. First, assess the sociometric deep structures of groups (diagnosis). Second, examine their socio-dynamic development tendencies (prognosis). Third, stimulate proposals for a sociatric conflict resolution (therapy).

I would explicitly argue for a corresponding conflict transformation in international conflict constellations, especially through dialogical conflict counseling and conflict mediation, as well as through peace processes supported by civil-society. At present, the Transcend approach is being used in a dialogue project in support of the peace process in Sri Lanka, ongoing now for several years. It is similar to Vamik Volkan's Tree Model (Volkan 1999). A complex dialogue approach (in the first phase) is linked with a long-term dialogue lasting several years within and between the conflict parties (in the second phase), and with the goal of the elaboration of concrete solution-oriented proposals (Voykowitsch 2005). The idea is not to replace the official diplomatic efforts, but rather to supplement and possibly correct the traditional approaches and methods. In this process it has become evident that there is not only a need, but also the possibility for a civil society-based, informal dialogical method of international conflict resolution, especially in the areas of conflict transformation, peace building, violence prevention and reconciliation.

In Transcend projects, the first goal is to initiate a deep dialogue with each

of the conflict parties alone. In these dialogue projects sociodramatic role-plays are used. But more important here is the endeavor to use Moreno's sociometry and theory of creativity (in connection with Galtung's approach) as a theoretical interpretation tool for the process of dialogue and counseling. In the initial phase, it is important to understand the subjective goals of all conflict parties. At the same time, hidden actors should be identified, in order to integrate forgotten or hidden conflict parties.

In the deep dialogue phase, the goal is the development, differentiation and reformulation of the goals of each conflict party through a dialogical or scenic exploration of the deeper dimension (basic human needs, deep structures and deep cultures). In this phase the social power constellations and their historical alternatives first need to be uncovered, as well as the cultural impediments and resources, and the potentials for violence and peace. The goal here is to discover or develop legitimate goals for conflict parties, initially with the help of role-reversal (while working with each conflict party alone), as a preparation of a role-change (when meeting with the other conflict parties, and within the context of negotiations and/or mediation).

In the integration phase, the legitimate goals of all conflict parties are finally integrated into a sustainable solution. In the concluding phase, the new, adequate roles are concretely practised, and the creative meetings, negotiations or mediations with the other conflict parties are concretely prepared.

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## The Art of Psychodrama as a Public Space

### El arte del Psicodrama y de la Psicoterapia de Grupo como Espacio Público

Leif Dag Blomkvist (Germany)



#### Editor's note

Leif Dag Blomkvist (1949 – 2007) was the first Swede to complete psychodrama training at Beacon, NY and it was, according to Zerka Moreno, always regarded as his main source of inspiration. He introduced psychodrama in psychiatric work to Sweden, started the first Swedish Institute for Psychodrama Training and initiated the Nordic Board of Examiners. He was among the pioneers in the development of surrealist psychodrama. A brilliant teacher, he also produced a number of challenging articles and co-authored the book *Psychodrama, Surplus Reality and the Art of Healing* with Zerka Moreno. During the last twelve years he worked towards developing psychodrama in India. He died in April 2007 after a brief illness. Shortly before he became ill he sent this article to the editors of Forum.

#### Resumen

El artículo presenta el concepto del “Espacio Público” y remonta sus orígenes a la Polis de la antigua Atenas, inspirado por las escrituras del filósofo Hannah Arendt. El autor resalta que esto es un genuino dominio humano, diferente de las actividades orientadas a una meta, reproductivas, compartidas con los animales. Él subraya la importancia de distinguir el espacio público del espacio privado. Los seres humanos viven en ambos, ni unos ni otros pueden existir sin el otro, pero en general deben ser mantenidos separados y diferenciados. El autor atribuye al espacio público la libertad de la diversidad y de la expresión sin lealtades, para ver y ser visto y para actuar espontáneamente en cooperación con otros. Él cita nuevamente a Hanna Arendt, Sigmund Freud y J.L. Moreno en una llamada de atención contra una tendencia creciente a la conformidad y los “métodos reconocidos” en la práctica psicoterapéutica y propone la idea de la psicoterapia como un intercambio, un espacio público, entre dos o más personas con un foco en el encuentro entre ellas. Estas cualidades se alcanzan más fácilmente en psicoterapia de grupo y en psicodrama, donde se cuenta con el instrumento de la espontaneidad como objetivo.

## Abstract

This article, inspired by the writings of the philosopher Hannah Arendt, presents the concept of 'Public Space' and traces its origins to the practice in the Polis (City State) of ancient Athens. The author points out that Public Space is a genuinely human domain, different from goal-oriented, reproductive activities shared with animals. He underlines the importance of distinguishing public from private space. Humans live in both, neither can exist without the other, but as a rule they must be kept separate and differentiated. The author attributes to public space the freedom of diversity and expression without loyalties, to see and to be seen and to act spontaneously in cooperation with others. He recruits Hanna Arendt, Sigmund Freud and J. L. Moreno in an appeal against a rising trend to conformity and 'recognised' methods in psychotherapeutic practice and puts forward the idea of psychotherapy as an exchange, a public space, between two or more persons with a focus on the encounter between them. These qualities are most easily reached in group psychotherapy and in psychodrama, where spontaneity is the desired instrument.

## Introduction

The expression 'public space' and the word 'public' appear in daily language, used as a synonym for a community, society, official business, publicity, political parties, policies and so on but what *is*, in fact, public space? To answer the question we have to refer to the specific meaning of Hannah Arendt's political theory, which explains the relationship between political thought and political action. The central role of politics is to facilitate and perpetuate a good life and society and that can only be achieved if citizens create an atmosphere of public freedom in which they can engage in political activity and inquiry. It has its origin in the practice of the Polis of ancient Athens, where every citizen was offered a public and political space.

First we have to establish that public space has nothing to do with publicity, with career, acknowledgement or with working life in general, nor with the demarcation between work and family. The difficulty nowadays to draw a line between work life and public space creates confusion between private and public space. Originally profession and family both belonged to the private realm where work and production were primarily oriented towards the survival of the family.

This situation has changed today insofar as family members rarely work at the same workplace. Workplaces that support family livelihood nowadays are often at a great distance from home and are differentiated from family life. One can say that all activities ensuring survival and concentrating on the cycle of life belong to private concerns. They are all labelled by their ceaselessness and constant repetition: as soon as a goal is reached, a new cycle begins. When school is finished, a new grade starts. When one stage of work or fabrication

is terminated, a new one begins.

All these goal-oriented, reproductive activities belong to the realm of nature; they are manifestations of the basic needs of life and instincts. Human beings share these with animals. The idea that humans are social beings and that this is inherent in human nature was discovered 2000 years ago by the ancient Greeks and was taken up again later by J.J. Rousseau.

It is not that the Greek philosophers such as Plato or Aristotle were ignorant of, or unconcerned with, the fact that human beings cannot live outside the company of other human beings, but they did not count this condition among the *specifically* human characteristics; it was something human life had in common with animal life and for this reason alone it could not be *fundamentally* human. The natural, social companionship of the human species was considered to be a limitation imposed upon it by the needs of biological life, which are the same for the human animal as for other forms of animal life (Arendt, 1998.)

From the perspective of Mother Earth everything and everyone, notwithstanding race, continent or genus, is subordinated to the cycle of life, be they young, old, poor, or rich and this is exactly where the notion of public space comes into operation.

## What is Public Space?

Public space is a genuinely *human* domain; it belongs in the world, which is shared *only* by human beings and is not to be equated with Mother Earth. It is an area, not regulated by laws of nature and therefore incalculable. Unlike nature, the human species has the ability to step out of routines, behavioural patterns, and instincts. They can change habits, break routines, and do things differently from before. Humans can mediate themselves through books, edifices, inventions and so on, as well as through great deeds. Inasmuch as these products of an individual continue to exist in the world and his/her deeds are remembered, a human being is eternalized beyond his or her lifetime. He/she leaves a trail in the human world.

One of the most important traits of public space is to be seen by other human beings and to see others. Knowing that man/woman is mortal, one can make oneself immortal through great deeds and great works. The great Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are examples. On the other hand, public space doesn't demand that everyone be a Leonardo da Vinci. In fact the world, as public space, demands the multiplicity and diversity of people. The encounter with other men (and women) is the central feat in this space.

In Latin “to live” means: “inter hominess esse” (to be among human beings), while “to die,” means: “desinere inter hominess esse” (to stop being among human beings). Therefore, plurality is the law in public space; it is about *individuals* (human beings), not *an* individual (a single human being). The focus is on varying individuals with varying perspectives, not on sameness. In this world there exists inter-subjectivity with the weight on the word “*inter*.” We have all experienced that when *men* (and *women*) meet, things happen that nobody would have imagined.

In contrast to the activities in the realm of Mother Earth, the activities in public space that are called ‘acting’ are not primarily goal-oriented implying that the amalgamation and equalization of goal and sense are inaccurate in public space.

The growing meaninglessness of the modern world is perhaps nowhere more clearly foreshadowed than in this identification of meaning and end. Meaning, which can never be the aim of action, and yet, inevitably, will rise out of human deeds after the action itself has come to an end, was now pursued with the same machinery of intentions and of organised means as were the particular direct aims of concrete action - with the result that it was as though meaning itself had departed from the world of humans and humans were left with nothing else but an unending chain of purposes in whose progress the meaningfulness of all past achievements was constantly cancelled out by future goals and intention (Arendt, 1993).

In public space it is not possible to determine the beginning or the end of a chain of activities, because it depends on one’s current perspective. In this space the power of judgement of people is indispensable. Similar to taste, judgement is also a strictly individual matter. What one finds to be good or bad, beautiful or ugly is a very personal issue. It is impossible to say, “Viewed objectively sparereibs taste bad.” Instead, “Subjectively viewed, I personally find them distasteful,” and always includes the idea that someone else can have a contrary view. The focus is on respect for the opinion of the other. This is indispensable for the constitution of public space.

It could come to the foreground only after long experience in Polis life, which to an incredibly large extent consisted of citizens talking with one another. In this incessant talk the Greeks discovered that the world we have in common is usually regarded from an infinite number of different standpoints, to which correspond the most di-

verse points of view. In a sheer inexhaustible flow of arguments, as the Sophists presented them to the citizenry of Athens, the Greeks learned to exchange their own viewpoints, their own 'opinions' - the way the world appeared and opened up to them - with those of their fellow citizens. Greeks learned to *understand* - not to understand one another as individual persons - but to look upon the same world from one another's standpoint, to see the same in very different and frequently opposing, aspects." (Arendt, 1993).

In public space there can never be just one truth, one opinion or one sense. One always has to take into consideration the multiplicity of every human being. Understanding means to see the perspective of the other, independent from feelings of sympathy or abhorrence. The obligation to understand is not built on intimacy. Loyalty, fraternity, love, obedience, hate or enmity, pose limitations on understanding the perspective of the other. The rule that you like what a person says if you also like him or her does not apply here.

Hannah Arendt once said that the fact that she is a Jew did not imply that she agreed with every action of the state of Israel. From that perspective, loyalty towards the family and one's own private or social interests can all forestall judgments. J. L. Moreno formulated that a truly spontaneous person has inner discipline. We must assume that ability to judge is included in spontaneity and action.

### **The notion of spontaneity in public space**

In public space there is a difference between the person who acts and the action per se. To be able to forgive we must be aware of this difference. Human beings are aware that their actions can lead to unforeseeable results and even catastrophic consequences. That the future is never guaranteed, also describes freedom of action. The ability to reconcile and to forgive makes it possible for human beings to continue to live together, because unfortunate happenings and their consequences can be terminated and something new started. Spontaneity is always in the here-and-now and therefore carries the beginning of something new.

Moreno defined spontaneity as an adequate reaction to a new situation. Hannah Arendt designates spontaneity as the human capacity to start something new, to break routines. Spontaneity is always inherent in action and instead of focusing on subjective feelings and needs it requires heedfulness and sensitivity with regard to the world and one's fellows. Seen from a public

perspective, spontaneity means to do things for the sake of public space - not for one's own needs - taking the other into account is equally important.

'Sponte', the root of the word spontaneity, means 'out of free will'. But in contrast to the conditions in private space, in public space the focus refers to fellow human beings and their views of life. Therefore, to feel free to act may not be the aim of subjective wellbeing, it may even be the opposite and yet still fulfil the claim that the action arose out of free will. In the Western World freedom is often defined as freedom of choice yet such freedom demonstrates the opposite. Action can only be exercised in a common world, with other humans. In this spontaneous action, in cooperation with others in deed and language, the personality is made visible!

In this interaction and through constant judgments and reactions, people ascribe and receive an identity; they are recognizable as single persons in their uniqueness. The individual is given a 'Persona' and a personality is attributed to it. This personality arises in the microstructure of human relations in public space and not in the private realm. Even a child will show certain characteristic traits such as rambunctious or calm, dreamy or sprightly that the family will register. But these are individual traits of character. A personality, on the other hand, develops just as the Self, out of many interactions and over a long period of time and is grounded in the complexity connected with thinking, judging and acting. Hannah Arendt underlined that we were all born as "homo sapiens" and became persons only through life.

Thinking and remembering, we said, is the human way of striking roots, of taking one's place in the world into which we all arrive as strangers. What we usually call a person or a personality, as distinguished from a mere human being or a nobody, actually grows out of this root-striking process of thinking. In this sense, I said it is almost a redundancy to speak of a moral personality; a person, to be sure, can still be good-natured or ill-natured, his inclinations can be generous or stingy, he may be aggressive or compliant, open or secretive; he may be given to all sorts of vices just as he may be born intelligent or stupid, beautiful or ugly, friendly or rather unkind. All this has little to do with the matters which concern us here. If he is a thinking being, rooted in his thoughts and memories, and hence knowing that he has to live with himself, there will be limits to what he can permit himself to do, and these limits will not be imposed on him from the outside, but will be self-set (Arendt, 2002)

## Public versus private space

In order to live in reality people must feel free to be seen. If, for instance, a colleague in a team agrees to carry out a task, he/she usually does not like, he/she acts with respect in recognition of the team. Accepting affirmation is just as important as his/her ambivalence. In public space emphasis is as much on being seen and heard, as on seeing and hearing and to have respect for the others. Thus public space can be dangerous because everyone is recognized by their deeds and taken seriously. In clinical practice patients wish to be taken seriously. But very often this wish is only a cliché; the person really expects more tolerance and an easy life. These patients may not keep their promises or they may show destructive behaviour towards themselves and others. They may be ruthless or full of self-pity. In public space, if people act this way, they are likely to be called a liar or a sissy, etc..

In private space one is protected from remarks, judgments, critique, and comparisons. Private space means: Not to be seen. For this reason many people limit themselves to private space out of rage, cowardice, love, or fear. They don't show, they don't say and they remain in their imagination. They act in such a way never to be de-privatised. In public space everyone can be identified and is recognisable to others. Yet one has to choose between *showing* oneself and displaying oneself. When an opera-singer gives a performance, she shows herself to the public. She presents herself, her voice is heard and one sees her in the role she plays. She is seen and heard by the public. Yet, that doesn't mean that she reveals herself. She acts out a *dramatis persona* and plays a role. She can feel the public as a mass but she doesn't see any individual. When one is being interviewed for a work situation, one may feel anxious and try hard to show one's best points so it is difficult to experience spontaneity or freedom. Feeling shackled and driven only by the wish to get the new job, one tries to answer questions well and diplomatically not to reveal oneself. One wears a mask in such situations. In this sense, one remains in the private space, even if, like the famous opera singer, one is known worldwide.

There are nowadays among the diagnoses of psychic disorders 'fear of accomplishment', or 'social phobia' that can develop to such an extent that in extreme cases the patient is no longer able to cope with the demands of everyday life. Perhaps under the pressure of our marketing society it would be better for people not to reveal themselves. One would be better adapting and becoming cliché-like. Persons who criticize openly in school, on the street, or in business, and who develop their own judgment, are often accused of lacking social competence or of being inflexible. On the other hand, if people

are afraid of revealing themselves, they may drift into a state of speechlessness and lose their public spirit and capacity to think independently.

### **The political significance of common sense**

The connection between the ‘particular’ and the ‘common’ or shared is either by understanding and reconciliation or rebellion and tyranny. I can come to terms with the common, that is, with the existence of other people, the general conditions, which were extant when I was born, the events that happen, only by *understanding* them. That is the political significance of common sense: the sense by which I perceive the common is by understanding. As such, understanding is either prescribed by rules, under which everything can be subsumed, or free (creative) imagination. Without imagination, understanding is possible only as long as customs (general rules of behaviour) rule everything.

The breakdown of common sense as the ordinary means of understanding is identical with the loss of the sphere common to us all, identical with loneliness and rejection of one’s own particularity. The more ordinary a person is, the lonelier, because understanding outside of common sense demands the extraordinary effort of imagination. One of the symptoms of loneliness of the ordinary person is talking in clichés’, which is a preliminary form of speechlessness (Arendt, 2002 - 1).

### **The trend to conformity in psychotherapeutic practice**

It is regrettable that many people nowadays attend courses to learn to express themselves more adroitly, to improve their social image and social competence. They also go to diverse forms of psychotherapy to solve problems even if there is a risk of withdrawing even further into private space and are led to believe that this psychological condition, a desert, is normal.

Modern psychology is desert psychology: when we lose the faculty to judge - to suffer and condemn - we begin to think that there is something wrong with us if we cannot live under the conditions of desert life. Insofar as psychology tries to ‘help’ us, it helps us ‘adjust’ to those conditions, taking away our only hope, namely that we, who are not of the desert though we live in it, are able

to transform it into a human world. Psychology turns everything topsy-turvy: precisely because we suffer under desert conditions we are still human and still intact; the danger lies in becoming true inhabitants of the desert and feeling at home in it (Arendt, 2005).

If psychology and psychotherapy are used in that fashion they will cultivate a culture of inhumanness. The current view is that psychotherapy and group-psychotherapy are only methods of treatment. In many countries certain therapeutic methods are 'recognised', others are not that is often measured by effectiveness and the adjustment of the client to so-called normal life. Clients have to conform to certain criteria of adjustment to the 'normal' world. Freud himself might not have recognized psychoanalysis as a method of treatment. Freud's motto was: psychoanalysis for the sake of psychoanalysis. Freud was never especially enthusiastic to develop a method for treatment of mental illness; he was rather sceptical about it. He saw the significance of psychoanalysis as an encounter and study of the unknown and the unconscious.

'Everybody thinks,' Freud went on, 'that I stand by the scientific character of my work and that my principal scope lies in curing mental maladies. This is a terrible error that has prevailed for years and that I have been unable to set right. I am a scientist by necessity, and not by vocation. I am really by nature an artist. And of this there lies an irrefutable proof, which is that in all countries into which psychoanalysis has penetrated it has been better understood and applied by writers and artists than by doctors. My books, in fact, more resemble works of imagination than treaties on pathology' (Hillman, 1983).

Moreno suggested in a lecture that Sigmund Freud wrote beautiful science fiction. Maybe Freud would have agreed. When psychotherapy is practised in an unconditional way rather than as a goal oriented treatment, one might assume that there is a public space between client and therapist, a space where the client is free of the needs and duties that are private matters. It is difficult to write an article that brings to the foreground the public qualities of psychotherapy and group psychotherapy at the same time as all forms of psychotherapy are seen as purely private matters. Confidentiality and 'the right of refusing testimony in court' exist and have been constantly defended.

## Psychotherapy as a public space

Psychotherapy can also be regarded as an exchange between two or more persons with a focus on the encounter between them. This dimension is more clearly evident in psychodrama and group psychotherapy. In individual therapy the exchange and encounter are regulated by therapeutic rules that limit their actions as well as the public space between them.

In group psychotherapy these rules cannot be maintained; they have to be modified. Moreno, the pioneer of group-psychotherapy, maintained that every group member is a therapeutic agent for every other member of the group and contributes to the plurality of perspectives experienced. Moreno also maintained that the awareness of the group is always greater than the sum of the awareness of all the individuals. From this perspective one can say: "Encounter for the sake of encounter". It must not be forgotten that Moreno, in his very first group therapeutic work with prostitutes in Vienna, never had a predetermined goal. He never tried to dissuade the women from prostitution and even though they were sceptical in the beginning, they quickly realised that there were advantages in getting together in the group.

At first they warmed up very slowly, fearful of persecution, but when they saw the purpose and some benefit for them, they began to open up more. They first noticed superficial results, for example, we were able to get a lawyer for them to represent them in court, a doctor to treat them and a hospital to admit them. But gradually they recognized the deeper value of the meetings, that they could help each other..... But, we began to see then that 'one individual could become a therapeutic agent of the other' and the potentialities of a group psychotherapy on the reality level crystallised in our mind.

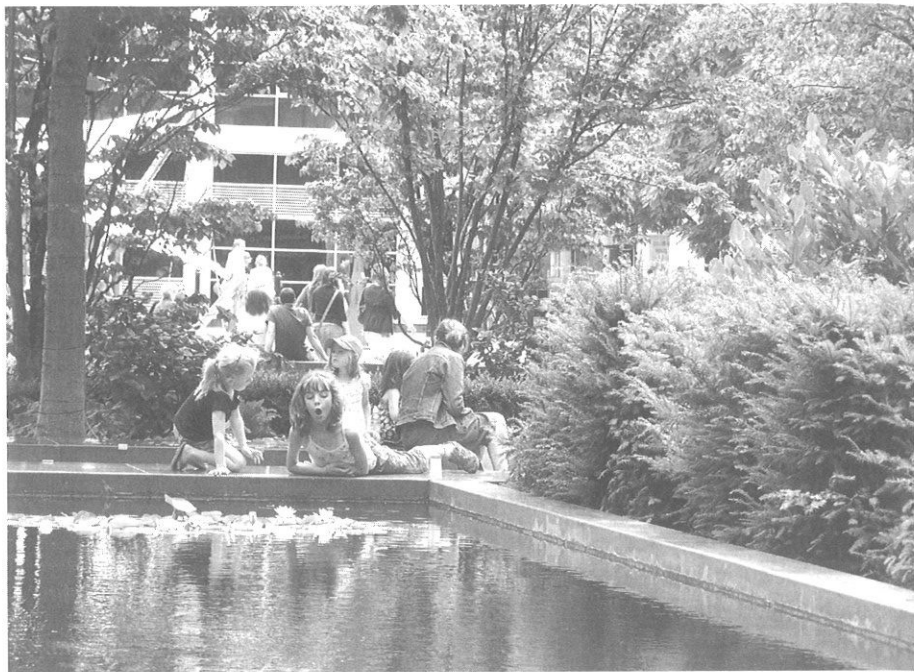
When a client is treated within the framework of individual therapy, he is alone with the doctor; his ego is the only focus, he has a name, and his psyche is highly valued private property. But in group psychotherapy there is a tendency towards anonymity of membership; the boundaries between the egos weaken; the group as a whole becomes the important thing (Moreno, 1953).

In that sense the group is a public space. The focus is on encounter, not on a specific result. When people talk about their lives, they might display but not reveal themselves in order to obtain sympathy or special attention or to install

a specific image of themselves. When this occurs with respect to their past, it can end in a kind of competition about who had the worst youth. To reveal oneself does not mean to bring out the darkest sides of the blackest corner of one's heart. Self-revelation is always related to being understood, in the present and in the encounter with those involved. Adequacy is experienced as spontaneity, or as Arendt puts it, "to act in concert" or as Moreno addressed it, "being in a spontaneous state". That means that one has to pay attention to what one says as well as being aware of how others absorb it. The ancient Greeks divided human existence into public and private. These two worlds are in contradiction with each other and can never be brought together but neither can one exist without the other. Humans live in both worlds, but usually they are kept separate and differentiated. Public space, the human world, has to be known with its special characteristics and has to be acknowledged and cared for. A life outside of public space can be made possible by orienting oneself only according to one's needs, desires and instincts, at the same time abdicating all that the Greeks considered to be the hallmark of genuine human existence. Living a life in private space means to choose a world without time and without death. It is a world that will look the same today as it looked yesterday.

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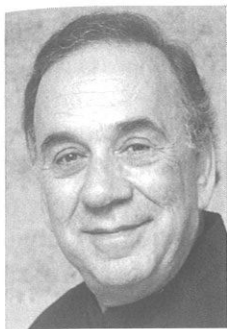


In a London public space, children find a place for reverie.

# How to Explore Black and White in Colours

David Gutmann with Christophe Verrier (France)

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## Abstract

This paper is based on the workshop *Diversidad, Relaciones Raciales y Transformación* organized by *Color Cubano* (La Havana, Cuba) and *The International Forum for Social Innovation (IFSI)*, based in Paris, France, which took place over four days in November 2006 in *The National Council of the Houses of Culture* in Havana, Cuba. It was organised to provide an opportunity to begin to understand the difficulty of recognizing, touching and interpreting racially discriminatory processes within an institutional setting, in a political system that promotes voluntary equality. As with everywhere else in the world, the act of uncovering hidden dynamics based on unconscious processes triggers strong resistances.

## Origins of the Workshop

Since its inception, this workshop has been fascinating. It has also been very challenging working with Cuban colleagues, in Cuba, on issues that have been the core of IFSI work over the past thirty years. These issues include the promotion of leadership and authority in social systems, *Institutional Transformation* including its political dimension, and learning from experience in innovation and transformation in a country driven by a Revolution.

Our cooperation began concretely in 2001 with the CIPS<sup>1</sup>. Since then an annual working conference, partly international, has been organised almost every year. The last, called *Liderazgo, Participación and Transformación*<sup>2</sup>, was co-organised in April 2007 in Cuba by the University of Havana in the Faculty of Psychology and IFSI, with the support of Gesta and Fordes<sup>3</sup>.

Some years ago, Gisela Arandia founded, and still leads, an association called *Color Cubano*, which aims to work on problems of racial relations in Cuban society. She and her daughter took part in the workshop in April 2006 and, as a black woman, she understood how this process of intervention could tackle in a critical way the understanding and the transformation of racial relations in Cuba. Taking into account the conscious as well as the unconscious dimensions of the issue, it could help participants of a workshop to work out their own relation to issues of race and to transform their practice of racial relations in the Cuban society.

This idea led her to initiate a partnership between *Color Cubano* and IFSI around the possibility of creating a specific workshop on this theme. To facilitate this new venture, Gisela Arandia and her daughter continued to extend their training in IFSI approaches by taking part as participants in various working conferences: *The Passion Of Entrepreneurship* organized near Bologna by Istituto di Studi di Medicina Omeopatica, ISMO (with the support of IFSI), Italy, in June 2006; *F.L.A.M. (Femininity, Leadership, Authority and Masculinity)*, held by IFSI in Saint-Raphaël, France and the *Praxis International Network* meeting in Paris, in October 2006. As a result of this on-going cooperation between *Color Cubano* and IFSI, a new workshop, *Diversidad, Relaciones Raciales y Transformación*, was organised.

## The Organising Institutions

*The International Forum for Social Innovation (IFSI)* is based in Paris, France and gives itself the task of facilitating social innovation as a way of contributing to the *institutional transformation* of organisations. These include both religious and secular public and private companies, public administrations, associations, teaching and educational institutions. IFSI considers

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1 CIPS: El Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociológicas (Ministry of Labour). These three institutions are based in La Havana, Cuba.

2 Leadership, Participation and Transformación.

3 GESTA: Centro de Gestión Empresarial, Superación Técnica y Administrativa (Ministry of the Steel and Mechanical Industries). FORDES: Centro Coordinador para la Formación y el Desarrollo del Capital Humano (Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Systems).

institutions as *living systems* that need to transform in order to exist. This transformation concerns authority figures, leadership, transformation of the system-in-the-mind<sup>4</sup>, and many other crucial elements which have been explored in various events organised in IFSI.

Since 1978, IFSI has organized in France an annual international working conference on the theme of Authority, Leadership and Transformation. In 2005, it became the TransformaCtion® conference. Over many years, IFSI has also been developing and conducting conferences in many different countries (Australia, Belgium, the West Indies, Catalonia in Spain, Cuba, Finland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Palestinian Authority, Peru, United Kingdom, Ukraine and USA), in partnership with universities and other organisations, on similar and complementary themes. Since 2001, it has been running, in partnership with the Business School, University of Glamorgan UK, and then with the Business School of the University of Hull UK, a training programme for managers and consultants, under the name *Leading Consultation (M. Phil, Ph.D.)*.

In January 2004, IFSI developed a new international annual conference on the theme of *Femininity, Leadership, Authority and Masculinity*: the FLAM conference.

*Color Cubano* is a working group that aims to create the conditions for a cultural, political and social dialogue to enhance the national consensus by providing a place for reflection and analysis to make recommendations for improved race relations in Cuba. For more than five years, this project has worked intensively to encourage a coherent debate on the theme of racism, racial discrimination and prejudice with the aim of raising awareness about social inequalities that still exist today. The name, *Color Cubano* was used by the national poet Nicolás Guillén in 1939 in the prologue of his book *Songoro Consongo*.

By leading this dialogue *Color Cubano* has been able to give a voice to the diversity of criteria that can transform discrimination based on skin colour. This theoretical process also involved academic experts and identified some of the manifestations that have survived the impact of the revolution and which, in certain sectors of Cuban society, have even *extended* their influ-

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4 Here is a possible definition of system-in-the-mind (SIM). SIM is the systemic construction – the system – through which every individual represents, in an unconscious way if it is not worked through, his (her) environment. This construction at least influences – but often determines – his (her) relationships, behaviour, decisions, vision of himself (herself) and place in the universe. SIM comes directly from the person's history and his (her) relationships with his original institutions (family, school, ...). It structures the individual and conditions his (her) relationships with institutions in the here and now.

ence in both hidden and open ways. In its first essence, this project claims to encourage the emancipating quest in its most historical and libertarian form. At the same time, it points towards the reinforcement of a nation united, in an inclusive way, able to face new challenges imposed by the neo liberal model.

The basic objectives of this group start from an intellectual and political viewpoint that tends to structure the struggle against racism by defining *racism* as a manifestation that opposes the principles of the revolution and social justice promoted since 1959. In this way, the group hopes to promote a cultural process that will help to open possibilities for a debate that will reinforce these ideological and cultural alliances in order to show the urgent necessity of accepting this problem in its entirety and the dangers that continuing to neglect it would bring. The group has evaluated, in a responsible manner, the incompatibility between any kind of racism and the socialist proposal that Cuba is building. It has also evaluated the way in which all these manifestations of racism dramatically destroy the political fabric and weaken any possibility of equality. The focal point of this group opens various directions.

Initially, their objectives were directed to those writers and artists who insisted on analysing racism as an ethical process that is in opposition to any process of liberation. From this premise, the group worked on using opportunities opened by this artistic vanguard to draw the attention of the general public to the need to confront the problem.

Concurrent with this intellectual approach, *Color Cubano* gave special attention to the community project *Concha Macoyú La California* created in 1995 which was the initial inspiration for a proposal to explore racism. Since then, we have been able to show various examples of practical progress in the black community.

Considering the three perspectives involved, writers and artists, academics and the community project, the group encouraged participative discussions as a way of gathering a sample of the state of opinion on the theme over a large spectrum in which various voices converged. This on-going debate allowed the group to access views representing the various opinions that exist today in Cuban society about the need to confront racism, discrimination and racial prejudice. It was a way of thinking diametrically opposed to revolutionary ideology.

From this perspective, and in a modest way, *Color Cubano* also elaborated critical reflections and recommendations in order to find the appropriate processes for reaching racial equality in Cuba. Its work has had a significant impact in Cuba as well as in various events organised abroad. Now, the immediate aim focuses not only on facilitating debate but also on the creation of proposals for inquiries and recommendations for building, through partici-

paion, an action plan useful for the Party and the Government who are always looking to improve equality in Cuban society.

The *Consejo Nacional Casas de Cultura* (The National Council of Houses of Culture) is part of the network of Cuban institutions registered to the Minister of Culture. It is able to achieve academic and methodological consultation throughout the entire country. The system of Houses of Culture is integrated into a national council, which includes fourteen provincial centres, one municipal centre and 328 houses of culture. Its aim is to promote access to culture and to provide the whole population with services and cultural experiences to sustain a healthy use of free time, all this despite social imbalances between various territories. It also promotes cultural work in schools, urban districts and communities. The fundamental idea is to offer workshops in the appreciation and creation of the arts including sculpture, dance, music, theatre and literature. As a result of this work, since the beginning of the 'Triumph of the Revolution' in 1959, the country has gained huge numbers of amateur artists as part of the state contribution to both individual and collective human development in Cuba.

## The Context in Cuba

### *A Huge Process of Mixing*

As with most of the European colonies in the Caribbean, the island of Cuba was 'discovered' by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and carries memories of the indigenous population, Taínos and Karibs, who were killed over a period of a few years by the Conquistadores. Then the triangular trade provided black slaves from Africa who were mastered by white European colonials from Spain. This process lasted from 1513 till 1886 when slavery was abolished. Cuba remained a Spanish colony until 1898 when it became nominally independent under the United States which reserved the right to intervene in its affairs until 1934. From 1935 the dictator, Fulgencio Batista dominated Cuba until he was overthrown by Fidel Castro in January 1959. The Castro Revolution took control of the country by launching an egalitarian communist system. Today, more than half, 51%, of the 11 million people in Cuba are mixed parentage, 37% are white and 11% black.

### *The Promotion of an Egalitarian System*

*Color Cubano's* contribution has been very significant. As with everywhere else in the world, Cuban society seems to present an official appearance and another that is hidden and more difficult to touch. Here, the appearance is very specific because of the tremendous efforts of the communist system to promote equality. Any discrimination is forbidden. The condition of women is promoted. The percentage of children in education is very high. The reputation of the Cuban health system particularly in public health is uncontested. But the reality shows that racism and prejudice have survived the 'revolutionary impact'. Social groups, apparently based on the colour of their skin, appear to share some common difficulties such as limited access to power, reduced positions in society and increased rates of imprisonment. We believe that, in any place in the world, the historical context of a country drives unconscious forces at work in its society. This seems to be particularly true in the Caribbean islands where history has included slavery, colonisation and domination. Also, the traditional difficulty of accepting differences among human beings deeply influences Cuban society. It is vitally important to have the ability to acknowledge these processes in order to work on them, as in the workshop. Not to do so creates a phenomenon of denial with all its consequences.

### *Ostracism Towards Foreigners*

One interesting aspect of this discussion might be around the concept of universality of human beings. In Cuba, whatever the reality of daily life is, the political system - in its constant quest for equity and equality - is clearly inspired by such concepts as the fight *against* racial discrimination and prejudice. Discrimination towards foreigners is very strong, very apparent in daily life: difficulties in relating outside institutional settings, no authorisation to share the same spaces (hotel, shops, etc). Despite this, discrimination is not necessarily based on racial criteria. The result might be the same when viewed on the basis of *any* idea of universalism that affects the whole country systematically.

### *A Difficult Working Environment*

In order for this workshop to occur at all two specific last minute obstacles had to be overcome. First of all the middle-aged Cuban man, initially hired

as Coordinator of Resources for the workshop, suddenly lost his permission to work, probably because he had also just been excluded from the Communist Party when it was discovered that he had applied for immigration to Canada. Then the workshop venue was cancelled at the last moment and a 'B plan' had to be rapidly found. Thankfully the National Council of Houses of Culture offered several rooms in its offices in Vedado, Havana but as they had to continue their work in the same building, the workshop had to be held in parallel with their daily activities. Our joint use of the building created several boundary problems between the two organisations. Their staff had to be accommodated somewhere else and that entailed huge problems of transportation exacerbated by the normal difficulties of daily life in Cuba.

It may also be that these difficulties were related to unconscious resistances to the workshop. As is usual, the workshop's capacity for revelation, for identifying and working on issues that are usually denied as taboos, seemed to have been anticipated by the system and so it developed a hidden but active resistance against it.

The final working conditions were difficult particularly because the available space was very limited. Participants were crammed into rooms that reminded us of the *barranqueros*. These are the makeshift districts in Havana where black and people of mixed backgrounds lived during colonisation and still exist today.

## The Working Approach

A four-day specific programme was developed for this workshop. As usual, participants were invited to take part in two kinds of sessions: the 'here-and-now' and 'reflection' sessions.

The 'here and now' provides participants with an institutional setting that they can use to explore and experience the themes of the workshop. This exploration is very practical and vibrant. It is done individually and/or institutionally, with or without the help of staff. It includes action, place and role, taken or projected, but also feelings, emotions and physical sensations that help to touch and discern individual and collective unconscious processes.

Working through these sessions, participants enact usually what is required of the situation, in interaction with the other participants; but also what comes from themselves, from their inner personal histories, for instance, systems-in-the mind repeated within the workshop, patterns inherited from childhood, from the family or other early institutions.

The 'reflection' sessions are designed to offer participants opportunities

to associate in a creative way; to discuss their experiences in order to be able to identify and interpret them through working hypotheses. As soon as a discovery is made or a piece of *learning from experience* is shared, participants are invited to transform their behaviour accordingly, using the workshop as a contained space that is particularly appropriate for such trials, attempts or new experiences.

This workshop was directly inspired by FLAM, created by Jacqueline Ternier-David and David Gutmann and the last-born international working conference of IFSI. The central themes were femininity, leadership, authority and masculinity in the institutional life. It is interesting to note that one of the intuitions of its founders was that nowadays social and institutional structures and systems may shift from a model built around a unique centre to another offering a poly-nuclear configuration. The place and the dynamics that each person negotiates within these centres will influence their institutional life and behaviour.

This intuition directly offered the structure for the first 'here and now' event, called the *Sistema Diversidad (Systematic Diversity)*. Its primary task was to study the experience of racial polarity in a large system and to understand the relationship dynamics created consciously and unconsciously among the participants within the system. The seating designed for this session was a line of chairs arranged in a continuing double spiral.

The second 'here and now' event was the *Sistema de Relaciones Raciales y Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas (System of Race Relations and Race Relations Application)*. It was also based on the experience, methodology and design of the FLAM. Institutional Event<sup>5</sup> in FLAM and Flam'n Co. It offered a space for learning by experience where participants were invited to liberate themselves from their traditional approaches to diversity, race relations and transformation. Participants created relationships and subsystems among themselves. Then they had to build a *form of representative government* that invited the expression, exploration and transformation of their usual approaches. The management next invited participants to create, by drawing lots, four sub-systems called *Diversity, Race, Relationships* and *Transformation*. Then it announced that a government would be composed using one representative from each subsystem. At this point, the government would take up the role of management of the session, elect its own president publicly while workshop staff would leave this role and become the team of advisers.

To associate and reflect on these experiences, participants were offered 'reflection' sessions such as *Plenary Sessions, Active Meditation Events, Trans-*

5 [www.ifs-iis-conferences.com](http://www.ifs-iis-conferences.com)

*formaCtion Analysis Groups* (or TAG) and a *Discernment Session* where they had to study their experiences in their various roles within the workshop in order to anticipate future transformations within both the workshop and their back home institutions.

The eight-member staff team for the workshop was composed on the basis of diversity. Besides David Gutmann, a white French Director, the staff included four Cuban women, two of mixed parentage, one black and one white, a Peruvian white woman, a Trinidadian black man, and a Spanish Catalan white man. The diversity appeared also in terms of age, from 26 to 66, and religion, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Agnostic.

Thirty-five participants, from 20 to 60 years old, registered for the workshop. They were all Cuban except for a black man from the United States. The membership represented very diverse parts of Cuban society, intellectuals, professors and students, workers, artists, painters, sculptors, poets, writers and rap singers. The majority of participants were black or of mixed parentage. There were no white men among the participants and the majority were women.

The primary task of the workshops was *to explore the relationship between diversity, racial relationships and their transformation through the experience of the workshop as a temporary learning institution.*

## **Challenges and Resistances of the Workshop**

What happened within the workshop was obviously very rich, interesting and moving. We have selected some parts of this complex institutional path that appear to us as the most significant.

### *The Leaving of the only Foreign Participant*

The only foreign participant left the workshop during the first day immediately after the Active Meditation Event. He did not say why and only shared his feeling of 'entering into a religious workshop'. He was a black man who was a professor in the United States staying for a while at the University of Havana. Beyond the various associations that this situation suggested such as discrimination against foreigners, the link with racial relationships in the United States and the focus on a black man, the most systemic hypothesis was to link his experience to the trajectory of another participant who was the only white woman in the Government.

The most revealing aspect was that she was sitting in a corner while her three black and mixed parentage Government colleagues were standing up. The Director interpreted her role as a 'white Queen with her black slaves'. Being unable to differentiate between the systemic projected role and the chosen role, she began a kind of strike, refusing to really participate in the following sessions in which she was merely present. This could reveal an attempt to explore from experience how a Cuban system deals with differentiation processes and a sense of privilege.

In another dimension of the workshop, the difficult material context of its realisation had not improved. One of the three coordinators, an older black Cuban woman, head of *Color Cubano* and co-founder of the workshop, appeared suddenly as the black good mother because of constant efforts that she had to deploy to maintain, with many contradictions, the boundaries between the workshop and the daily activity of the Council.

Perhaps a mirroring process appeared between staff and participants. In the staff team a white foreign Director paired with a black Cuban good mother, this couple having created the workshop. An inverse couple of a black foreign man and a white Cuban woman who were both unable to really deploy their authority within the system appeared among the participants. It was as if this couple was created by the membership as an answer to the huge impact that the staff of the workshop, representing also its primary task, had on them.

### *A Black Woman President*

During the *Sistema de Relaciones Raciales (System of Racial Relations)* and *Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas (Racial Relations Application)*, the membership chose four women as Government: two were black, one mixed blood and one white. Then, the Government publicly elected its blackest member as President.

Apparently, the system seemed to be very anxious not only to experience such a democratic process but also to discover its potency. Participants had many difficulties containing emotion and the process ended with physical attacks against staff during the last session. After this trauma, the next morning during the following *Sistema Diversidad (Diversity System)*, a black female dictator emerged from the system. She was then excluded from the session through a painful and difficult process.

This sequence was seen as representing strong ambivalence between political models. On the one hand, a democratic process is proposed and applied despite much resistance and hesitation. On the other, the model of a *repeat-*

*ed revolution* spontaneously emerges that is unable to create the conditions for the real transformation that is required. Ambivalence is also expressed through the repeated emergence of black female leaders that could be seen as an inverse image of Fidel Castro (a white man).

Workshop members initially elaborated a real progression by electing a fully interracial government composed entirely of women! Of course, women were in the majority in both the staff group and the membership. But, in a deeper way, this shift to women leaders might represent a desire to transform the traditional leadership by trying a totally unusual configuration to mirror the fact that interbreeding between races can only happen through women.

In this phase, workshop members were certainly influenced by the workshop title and aims, 'How to Explore Black and White in Colours' as well as their perceptions of the director, and the staff, with whom they might have looked for a special connection that did not exclude seduction and a certain 'politically correct' spirit. But such a 'zig' (progression) can frighten, even terrify and created then the conditions for a 'zag' (regression), which actually happened and lasted until almost the end of the workshop (except for the very last session).

A song chosen from a CD by the staff, 'My Way' sung by Frank Sinatra, triggered this last 'zag', and more particularly the physical attacks on the staff. In selecting this song, the staff aimed to openly draw members' attention to their tendency to take action based on repeating habits. 'My Way' is Frank Sinatra's English adaptation of a very well known French song called '*Comme d'habitude*', 'As Usual', written and sung by Claude François in 1967. Perhaps workshop members had (unconscious) knowledge of this staff intention to focus on members repeating habits. So members felt unveiled and consequently strongly irritated and furious, leading them to physically attack the staff! Only the director was not touched, not because of any impressive physical reason, but probably because members felt that he had to be preserved at all costs.

We believe that members desire to preserve the director came from the role he takes in this kind of conference. They were aware that the director is specifically linked to the unconscious (on behalf of the entire workshop) and ultimately represents its primary task, as well as its potentiality. He also keeps faith with the task.

This experience might reflect the uncertainty and anxiety created by the process of transition that will take place after the Castro brothers are no longer the leaders of Cuba. Does it anticipate the emergence of a black dictator (as happened in Haïti two centuries ago)? And does the leaving of the black North American Professor suggest that the only final solution for such a dictator is exile in the USA?

In terms of the spiritual dimension, the Director might be perceived as a white god coming from abroad, over the sea, with his black and mixed blood believers and a white servant, creating a new religion and mirroring Fidel Castro. Of course, in such a configuration, the staff would also be mirroring the *white Queen with her black slaves*.

### *Resistance Against Leadership and Authority*

The resistance to inventing a new form of government and to using the offered opportunity to create, make and take up roles of leaders in the context of the current Cuban system raised a lot of anxiety. Authority and leadership appeared as not necessarily wanted. Roles seemed to be taken with no enthusiasm. As a result, the government appeared depressed and inconsistent up to the point where the youngest representative took up her leadership and decided to mobilize her authority and experience in a challenging and constructive way.

In recreating a dictatorial system within the workshop, participants seemed to express, at least initially, a strong push towards repetition and huge denial of the opportunity that was offered to them. They even created the most unrealistic system as if they wanted to demonstrate that no other way of government could exist. This was expressed by the predominance of women in the Government as well as among the anti-task leaders who tried to restore the traditional Cuban political system. In contrast, male participants were much more hidden and silent although this is contrast to the reality in Cuba where the role of men is dominant particularly in politics.

In the last plenary event, the *Sesión de Discernimiento (the Session of Discernment)*, participants were asked to propose collectively a word that expressed their state of mind at this point in the workshop. The word chosen was *reto*, which means *challenge*. It is a word that testifies to the transformation that happened during the workshop. Helped by the clarification, hypotheses and interpretations made during the various reflection sessions, the participants' state of mind moved from resistance, anxiety, uncertainty and doubt to a clearer space where the issue of race relations could be, at least partly, uncovered, examined and worked out. The future was seen as a challenge but practical working plans emerged, including the creation of a webpage called RETOS where participants recorded and will continue to update their experiences.

### *The Pantheon Of Distinguished Women*

Five women emerged to carry determining roles over the course of the workshop. Did they represent the five main archetypes of Cuban women in power and/or authority? Or, did they express five facets of the same imaginary character?

The first woman to emerge was the only white person among the four women who became members of the government. Being associated to as a 'white Queen with her black slaves' and, as she alternated between an attitude of arrogance and sulkiness, she could represent the traditional power of women, and particularly white women. The second woman was the black dictator who imposed power and was finally excluded. The third was the black President of the government who was able to express her desire but who finally entered into a 'depression' from which she had much difficulty escaping. Gisela Arandia was the fourth. With her unwavering goodwill, as the black good mother who actually gave birth to the workshop, she assumed the role of go-between in mediating several conflicts, to the point of risking losing her own authority. Only her strong and deep desire to learn and to discover including helping the learning and discoveries of others, prevented her from falling and enabled her to continue her quest for social transformation. The fifth woman was Gisela Morales, the daughter of the Gisela Arandia. Carrying the mixing of races and colours, she finally proved able to take authority for herself and for the system, through many zig-zags and periods of rejection. Then, too, she was able to lead the system in the direction of discovery and learning.

How significant is this series of women? It is as if all the attempts made by all these women, white or black, 'failed' one after the other so as to lay the ground for the success of this last woman, Gisela Morales, who was concretely carrying the métissage.

### *The Director as the Gate to the Unconscious*

During the last *Sistema Diversidad*, (*Diversity System*) the Director felt a very potent push to be paired with the youngest black member of the Government. This inspired in him a deep intuition that led him to ask the participants who had a partner, husband or wife, of the 'opposite' colour. The answer was very significant. Only the three remaining participants of the government could match the criteria! This opened up a set of interpretations about the unconscious conditions that prompted the taking up of leadership. Out of thirty-five participants who knew little or nothing about each other, they unconsciously

'chose' only those who had an official companion of the other race for the government that would try to transform racial difficulties and prejudice.

But it also raises some new questions about the nature of the role of Director in this kind of workshop or working conference. The very difficult conditions surrounding this workshop, reproducing daily life in Cuba, as well as the constant presence of Cuban sensuality and creativity, led the staff, and particularly the Director, to use resources that are not often used in other circumstances. The rational and conscious levels were constrained and constraining, pushing the Director and staff in a more intuitive direction.

Maybe the first condition necessary is the capacity to consider the unconscious as the most beautiful and powerful available resource with which to foresee, understand and act. This path is a zigzag, never a straight line. A zigzag expresses the complexity, the difficulty of the process, the uncertainty, which can submerge things, the alternation between progression and regression, the required doubt and faith connected with succeeding.

Thus, the second condition is the capacity for staff members, and particularly the Director, to let themselves be invaded by the unconscious, invaded like a fortress made by his or her own resistances. The Director offers him or herself to the unconscious production of the institutional system but he or she can only do it by working on, and constantly weakening his or her own resistances.

We could even say that such a workshop or a working conference can be seen as a competition between the emergence of the resistances among participants and the work on inner resistances made by each staff member and particularly the Director.

Through this work, the Director obtains 'access' to the unconscious. He or she becomes the gate to the unconscious - or, maybe, only the porter at this gate. But then, he or she can help other staff participants, followed by the membership, to enter, to gain direct access not only to the institutional unconscious of the conference, but also to what it means for each of them, as a living part of the system, exercising a role. At the same time, the unconscious 'invades' the conference and its participants. The path of transformation results from the interaction of all these forces thanks to the processes of containment and pulsation. The aim is not to create a Director who expresses working hypotheses as the Pythia stated oracles in Delphi. Instead, it is to lead a path, followed by both staff members and the membership, so that each can discover how to *learn from experience*, including about unconscious processes.

## How to Explore Black and White in Colours?

Many questions remain open after this experience. For instance, what is the capacity of any political system to erase such unconscious processes as racial discrimination and prejudice through the rational and voluntary promotion of equality? This kind of question is not limited to the specific case of Cuba. It concerns any political action. What happens when political action is limited to rationality and denies the historical and unconscious roots of the issues that it proposes to improve? How can political action avoid being limited to superficial changes and engage in real transformations/ *transformaCtions*? After fifty years of the Castro system, the racial problem remains at the centre of Cuban society. Black and mixed parentage people seem to be the most eager, despite ambivalence, to explore it and to transform it. White people, and above all white men, seem to be the most resistant.

The workshop was a lead cast, even a thunderbolt which was able to enlighten and cleave through the current stratifications. The process of revelation, of *revelaCtion*, however painful, may have been the only way to avoid being an inmate of a present prison determining the future. The sudden appearance of the unconscious may be the most efficient element for shaking and questioning the SIMs<sup>6</sup>. The impact of the unconscious, struggling against the hold of the past on the present, brings surprise, joy and liberation not only in the psychic and spiritual dimensions but also politically.

When one finds the capacity to give space to unconscious forces, to express them without being too afraid, they free the future. To live this process in a managed and contained way is an opportunity to avoid repeating the past. *The relationship between conscious and unconscious cannot be seen in black and white*: it is a permanent back and forth between both which focuses at certain times on the conscious root and at others on the unconscious root. In this way, this workshop worked on democracy: the *liberty* to think, to feel and to act.

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6 See footnote 4.

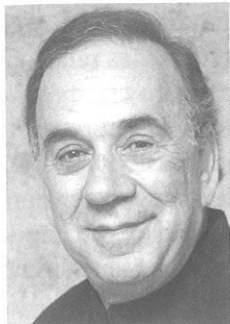


Our diverse working group.

# Inconsciente Y Política: Cómo Explorar Negro Y Blanco En Colores?

David Gutmann con Christophe Verrier (Francia)

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## Resumen

Este trabajo se basa en el taller 'Diversidad, Relaciones raciales y Transformación' organizado por Color Cubano (La Habana, Cuba) y el Foro Internacional de Innovación Social (IFSI), con sede en París, Francia, que se celebró a lo largo de cuatro días, en Noviembre 2006, en el Consejo Nacional de Casas de Cultura en La Habana, Cuba. Fue organizado para explorar las dificultades para reconocer, tocar e interpretar los procesos raciales discriminatorios en un contexto institucional, en un sistema político que promueve la igualdad voluntaria. Como ocurre en el resto del mundo, el acto de desvelar dinámicas ocultas basadas en procesos inconscientes desencadena fuertes resistencias.

## Orígenes del Taller

Desde el comienzo de nuestro interés por Cuba, se presenta como fascinante. Ha sido también un desafío el trabajar con colegas cubanos, dentro de Cuba, sobre los principales temas y cuestiones que son el corazón del trabajo de FIIS a lo largo de los últimos treinta años: la promoción del liderazgo y la autoridad en los sistemas sociales, la *Transformación Institucional*, incluyendo su dimensión política, aprender de la experiencia sobre innovación y transformación, en un país dirigido por la Revolución,...

La cooperación comenzó concretamente en el año 2001 con el CIPS<sup>1</sup> Se instituyó y organizó casi cada año un seminario experiencial anual, parcialmente internacional. La última edición, llamada *Liderazgo, Participación y Transformación* fue co-organizada en Abril del 2007 en Cuba por la Universidad de La Habana (Facultad de Psicología) y el FIIS, con el apoyo de Gesta y Fordes.<sup>2</sup>

Gisela Aranda fundó en Cuba hace algunos años, y aún lidera, *Color Cubano*, una asociación que busca trabajar con la problemática de las relaciones raciales en la sociedad Cubana. Ella y su hija tomaron parte en este taller en Abril del 2006 y, como mujeres negras, comprendieron cómo este proceso de intervención podría abordar de una manera crítica la comprensión y la transformación de las relaciones raciales en Cuba. Al considerar las dimensiones conscientes así como las inconscientes de la cuestión, podría ayudar a los miembros de un taller a trabajar su propia relación con las cuestiones relativas a la raza y transformar su práctica de relaciones raciales en la sociedad cubana.

Este punto de partida la llevó a plantear una cooperación entre *Color Cubano* y el *FIIS* en torno a la posibilidad de crear un taller específico sobre este tema. Para unirse a esta nueva aventura, Gisela Aranda y su hija tuvieron que aumentar su formación en el abordaje *FIIS* después de su participación inicial en La Habana en Abril del 2006. Tomaron parte como miembros en varios seminarios experienciales: *La Pasión del "Entrepreneurship"* organizado cerca de Bologna, Italia, por ISMO (con el apoyo de *FIIS*) en Junio del 2006; *F.L.A.M. (Feminidad, Liderazgo, Autoridad y Masculinidad)*, realizado por *FIIS* en Saint-Raphaël, Francia y la reunión del *Network de Praxis Internacional* llevada a cabo en París, en Octubre del 2006. Tras el resultado de la continua cooperación entre *Color Cubano* y *IFSI*, se organizó un nuevo taller, "Diversidad, Relaciones Raciales y Transformación".

## Las Instituciones Organizadoras

Este nuevo taller, llamado *Diversidad, Relaciones Raciales y Transformación*, fue organizado por *Color Cubano* y el *FIIS* en el *Consejo Nacional de Casas de Cultura* en La Habana, Cuba.

1 CIPS: El Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociológicas (Ministerio de Trabajo).

2 GESTA: Centro de Gestión Empresarial, Superación Técnica y Administrativa (Ministerio del Acero e Industrias Mecánicas). FORDES: Centro Coordinador para la Formación y Desarrollo del Capital Humano (Ministerio de Telecomunicaciones y Sistemas de Información)

**El Foro Internacional Para la Innovación Social (FIIS)** tiene su sede en París, Francia.

Ha asumido la tarea de facilitar la innovación social y de esta manera contribuir a la *transformación institucional* de organizaciones: compañías públicas o privadas, administración pública, asociaciones, instituciones de enseñanza o educacionales, ya sean religiosas o laicas...En realidad, FIIS considera a las instituciones como *sistemas vivientes* que, como tales, necesitan transformarse para poder existir. Esta transformación implica a las figuras de autoridad rol, liderazgo, transformación del sistema-en-la-mente<sup>3</sup>, y muchos elementos cruciales que se han explorado en varios eventos organizados en FIIS.

Desde 1978, FIIS ha organizado anualmente en Francia un seminario experiencial internacional sobre el tema de Autoridad, Liderazgo y Transformación. En el 2005, se convirtió en el seminario TransformaCtion® A lo largo de muchos años, FIIS también ha ido desarrollando y conduciendo seminarios en diferentes países (Australia, Autoridad Palestina, Bélgica, Cataluña (España), Cuba, Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, Finlandia, India, las Indias Occidentales, Israel, Italia, Perú, Reino Unido, Ucrania y Estados Unidos) en asociación con universidades y otras organizaciones, en temas similares o complementarios. Desde el 2001, ha estado dirigiendo, en cooperación con la Escuela de Negocios de la Universidad de Glamorgan (RU), y luego con la Escuela de Negocios de la Universidad de Hull (RU), un programa de entrenamiento para mángers y consultores: Leading Consultation (M.Phil, Ph.D).

En Enero del 2004, FIIS desarrolló una nueva conferencia anual internacional sobre el tema *Feminidad, Liderazgo, Autoridad y Masculinidad*: el seminario FLAM.

Dejemos que Gisela Aranda defina ella misma su asociación. Ella describe a **Color Cubano** como un grupo de trabajo que busca crear las condiciones para un diálogo cultural, político y social capaz de acrecentar el consenso nacional sobre la reflexión, análisis y recomendaciones sobre la problemática racial en Cuba. Este proyecto se ha desarrollado intensamente por más de cinco años. Ha realizado debates y acciones que han abordado de una manera coherente el tema del racismo, la discriminación racial y los prejuicios.

La propuesta ha sido liderar un diálogo capaz de expresar la diversidad de

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3 Esta es una posible definición de sistema-en-la-mente (SEM). SEM es una construcción sistémica —el sistema- mediante la cual cada individuo representa, de manera inconsciente si no es trabajada, su ambiente. Esta construcción por lo menos influencia —aunque a menudo determina— sus relaciones, comportamiento, decisiones, visión de sí mismo (sí misma) y lugar en el universo. SEM proviene directamente de la historia de la persona y sus relaciones con sus instituciones originarias (familia, escuela...). Estructura al individuo y condiciona sus relaciones con instituciones en el aquí y ahora.

criterios que transforman el color de la piel en desigualdades sociales que aún existen hoy día.

Este proceso de teorización involucró a famosos expertos académicos. Rápidamente identificó algunas de las manifestaciones que aún sobreviven al impacto revolucionario y que, en ciertos sectores de la sociedad, incluso han extendido su influencia de manera oculta o abierta. En su primera esencia este proyecto demanda la búsqueda de la emancipación en su vocación más histórica y libertaria; al mismo tiempo, apunta al reforzamiento de la nación unida, de una manera inclusiva, de cara a los nuevos retos impuestos por el modelo neo liberal.

Los objetivos más profundos de este grupo comienzan a partir de un concepto político e intelectual que tiende a estructurar la lucha contra el racismo definiéndolo como una manifestación opuesta a los principios de la revolución y la justicia social promovida desde 1959.

De esta manera, la meta es promover un proceso cultural que ayude a abrir posibilidades para un debate que refuerce estas alianzas ideológicas y culturales de manera que se pueda mostrar la urgente necesidad de aceptar esta problemática en su total magnitud y los peligros que traería el descuidar este tema otra vez más.

El grupo ha evaluado, de una manera responsable, la incompatibilidad entre cualquier tipo de racismo y la propuesta socialista que Cuba está construyendo; y cómo estas manifestaciones deterioran el tejido político de una forma dramática y debilitan cualquier posibilidad de igualdad. El punto focal de este grupo abre varias direcciones.

Inicialmente, los objetivos fueron dirigidos a los escritores y artistas insistiendo en analizar el racismo como un proceso ético que se opone a cualquier proceso de liberación. A partir de esta propuesta, el grupo se centró en usar las oportunidades abiertas por la vanguardia artística para captar la atención de la opinión pública sobre la confrontación de la problemática.

Unido a este acercamiento, *Color Cubano* dedicó una atención especial al proyecto comunitario *Concha Macoyú La California* creado en 1995, que fue la inspiración inicial para una propuesta de *explorar el racismo*. Desde entonces, hemos podido ver varios ejemplos prácticos de progreso en la comunidad negra.

Entre estos progresos —tres escenarios: los escritores y artistas, el mundo académico y el proyecto comunitario— el grupo favoreció las discusiones participativas que reunían una muestra del estado de la opinión sobre el tema en un amplio espectro en el que convergían varias voces. Este debate permanente permitió alcanzar visiones que representaban los diversos estados de opinión que existen hoy en la sociedad cubana sobre la necesidad de confrontar el

racismo, la discriminación y los prejuicios raciales, como una forma de pensar opuesta a la ideología revolucionaria.

Desde esta perspectiva, de una manera modesta, *Color Cubano* también elaboró reflexiones críticas y recomendaciones para poder encontrar los procesos apropiados para alcanzar una mejor equidad racial en el país. Como síntesis de sus aspiraciones, uno puede decir que su trabajo ha tenido un impacto significativo en Cuba así como en varios eventos organizados en el extranjero en los que, por mucho tiempo, la Isla no ha tenido una representatividad significativa en esta temática.

Ahora, la meta inmediata se enfoca no sólo en el debate, sino también en la creación de propuestas de investigación y recomendaciones para construir de una manera participativa un plan de acción útil para el Partido y el Gobierno con miras al mejoramiento de la sociedad cubana en el tema de la equidad.

Las palabras *Color Cubano* fueron usadas por el poeta nacional Nicolás Guillén en 1939 en el prólogo de su libro *Songoro Cosongo*.

El **Consejo Nacional de Casas de Cultura** es una parte de la red de instituciones cubanas registradas en el Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Cuba. Esta institución realiza un trabajo de consultoría académica y metodológica en todo el país como parte de esta red. El sistema de Casas de Cultura está integrado en un Consejo Nacional, 14 centros provinciales, uno municipal y 328 casas de cultura.

El objetivo es promover el acceso de las personas a la cultura (que incluye la problemática social entre los diversos territorios), proveer a toda la población con servicios y oferta cultural y favorecer un uso saludable del tiempo libre. Privilegia el trabajo cultural en la escuela, los distritos urbanos y comunidades.

La condición fundamental para el trabajo de este sistema es ofrecer talleres de apreciación y creación de las varias manifestaciones artísticas tales como las artes plásticas, danza, música, teatro y literatura. Como resultado de este trabajo que se realiza desde el comienzo del triunfo de la Revolución en 1959, el país ha alcanzado un enorme desarrollo de artistas amateur como parte de la contribución del desarrollo humano individual y colectivo de todos los cubanos.

## El Contexto en Cuba

### *Un enorme proceso de mezcla*

Como la mayoría de colonias europeas en las Indias Occidentales, la tierra de Cuba, “descubierta” por Cristóbal Colón en 1492, lleva los recuerdos de los indios (Taínos y Caribes) que fueron muertos en pocos años por los Conquistadores. Posteriormente, el comercio triangular proveyó de esclavos negros a colonos blancos europeos de España. Este proceso duró desde 1513 hasta 1886 cuando se abolió la esclavitud. Cuba se independizó en 1989, pero estuvo bajo el control de Estados Unidos de Norteamérica hasta 1909. En Enero de 1959, la Revolución Castrista tomó el control del país dando inicio a un sistema igualitario comunista. Hoy, la mitad (51%) de los 11 millones de cubanos son mestizos; 37% son blancos y 11% negros.

### *La Promoción de un Sistema Igualitario*

La presentación de *Color Cubano* es muy significativa. Como en cualquier otro lugar del mundo, la sociedad cubana parece presentar un aspecto oficial y una parte escondida, más difícil de tocar. Aquí, la apariencia externa es muy específica debido a los tremendos esfuerzos del sistema comunista para promover la igualdad. Cualquier discriminación está prohibida. La condición de las mujeres es promovida. El porcentaje de niños escolarizados es muy alto. La reputación del sistema de salud cubano (particularmente en salud pública) está fuera de toda discusión.

Pero la realidad muestra que algunas manifestaciones de racismo y prejuicios sobreviven al “impacto revolucionario”. Grupos sociales aparentemente basados en el color de la piel pueden compartir algunas especificidades comunes: acceso al poder, lugar en la sociedad, proporción de presos.

Creemos que en cualquier lugar del mundo el contexto histórico genera fuerzas inconscientes en la sociedad. Esto parece especialmente cierto en las islas del Caribe donde la Historia ha sido muy violenta: esclavitud, colonización y dominación. Además, la tradicional dificultad para aceptar las diferencias entre los seres humanos influye profundamente la sociedad Cubana. Es de vital importancia tener la habilidad de reconocer estos procesos para poder trabajar en ellos como en el taller. No hacerlo abre un fenómeno de negación con todas sus consecuencias

### *Ostracismo hacia los extranjeros*

Un aspecto interesante de esta discusión podría estar entorno al concepto de la universalidad de los seres humanos. En Cuba, cualquiera sea la realidad de la vida diaria, el sistema político —en su búsqueda permanente de equidad e igualdad— puede claramente estar inspirado este concepto al pretender luchar contra las discriminaciones raciales y los prejuicios. Sin embargo, la discriminación hacia los extranjeros parece ser fuerte y obvia basada en la vida diaria: dificultades para relacionarse fuera de los marcos institucionales, no hay autorización para compartir los mismo espacios (hoteles, tiendas,...). A pesar que esta discriminación no está basada en criterios raciales, el resultado podría ser el mismo: un fuerte ataque contra cualquier idea de universalidad que afecta sistémicamente a todo el país.

### *Un ambiente de trabajo difícil*

Este taller también ha sido específico debido a las dificultades para ponerlo en marcha. Su organización tuvo que superar obstáculos permanentemente en los últimos momentos antes de su inicio. Por ejemplo, un hombre cubano de mediana edad, inicialmente contratado para el rol de Coordinador de Recursos del taller, perdió repentinamente su permiso para trabajar. Había sido excluido de su institución porque se había descubierto que había solicitado emigrar a Canadá.

Otro ejemplo sucedió en el último minuto: la cancelación de la disponibilidad de los espacios que se había planeado usar como local del taller. Se encontró un “plan B”, gracias a la ayuda de Consejo Nacional de Casas de Cultura que ofreció varias habitaciones en sus oficinas en Vedado, La Habana. Pero el taller tuvo que llevarse a cabo en paralelo con la actividad diaria del Consejo, creando varios problemas de fronteras entre ambos. Más aún, el staff fue alojado en otro lugar, muy distante, con tremendos problemas de transporte... Por supuesto, la vida diaria no es fácil en Cuba. Pero estas dificultades específicas pueden estar relacionadas con resistencias inconscientes al taller: como es habitual, su capacidad para revelar, identificar y trabajar problemas que son generalmente negados como tabúes, pareció ser anticipada por el sistema que desarrolló una resistencia escondida pero activa contra ella.

Las condiciones finales de trabajo fueron incómodas particularmente porque los espacios disponibles eran muy limitados. Como resultado, los miembros fueron apretados en estas habitaciones que recordaban los *barranqueros*, los distritos en La Habana donde los negros y gente mestiza vivían

durante la colonización y que aún existen hoy día.

## El Enfoque de Trabajo

Se concibió un programa de cuatro días para este taller. Como es habitual, se invitó a los miembros a participar en dos tipos de sesiones: las sesiones de aquí-ahora y las reflexivas.

Las primeras ofrecen a los miembros los espacios institucionales que pueden usar para explorar y experimentar los temas del taller. Esta exploración es muy práctica y vívida. Se hace individual y/o institucionalmente, con o sin el acompañamiento del staff. Incluye acciones, lugares, roles (tomados o proyectados), pero también sentimientos, emociones, sensaciones físicas que ayudan a tocar y discernir procesos inconscientes individuales o colectivos.

Al trabajar a lo largo de estas sesiones, los miembros ponen a menudo en acto lo que la situación requiere, en interacción con otros participantes; pero también lo que proviene de ellos mismos, de sus historias personales interiores (por ejemplo, sistemas-en-la-mente repetidos dentro del taller, patrones heredados de la niñez, de la familia o de otras instituciones tempranas...).

El segundo tipo de sesiones, dedicadas a la reflexión, están diseñadas para ofrecer a los miembros oportunidades para asociar de una manera creativa en torno a sus experiencias y así poder identificarlas e interpretarlas a través de hipótesis de trabajo. Tan pronto como se logra un descubrimiento o un *aprendizaje desde la experiencia*, los miembros son invitados a transformar su comportamiento en concordancia, usando el taller como un espacio especialmente apropiado para este tipo de ensayos, intentos o nuevas experiencias.

En este taller, debemos mencionar la inspiración directa de FLAM. Creada por Jacqueline Ternier-David y David Gutmann, esta conferencia experiencial internacional es el proyecto de nacimiento más reciente en FIIS<sup>4</sup>. El tema central es acerca de la feminidad, el liderazgo, la autoridad y la masculinidad en la vida institucional. Es interesante anotar que una de las intuiciones de sus fundadores fue que en la actualidad las estructuras y sistemas sociales e institucionales pueden cambiar de un modelo construido en torno a un centro único a otro que ofrece una configuración poli-nuclear. El lugar y las dinámicas que cada uno negocia hacia estos centros influyen en su vida y comportamientos institucionales.

Esta intuición ofreció directamente la estructura del primer evento de aquí y ahora -llamado *Sistema Diversidad*- cuya tarea primaria era estudiar la ex-

4 Para más información sobre FIIS, por favor consulte [www.ifs-i-fiis-conferences.com](http://www.ifs-i-fiis-conferences.com)

perencia de polaridad racial en un sistema grande de estudio y comprender la dinámica de las relaciones creadas consciente e inconscientemente entre los miembros dentro del sistema. La disposición específica de los asientos para esta sesión era una línea de sillas colocadas formando un diseño de doble espiral continua.

El segundo evento aquí y ahora era el *Sistema de Relaciones Raciales y Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas*. Estos dos tipos de sesiones relacionadas se basaban en el diseño, la metodología y la experiencia del Evento Institucional en F.L.A.M: F.L.A.M y Flam'n Co. Ofrecía un espacio de aprendizaje por experiencia en el que los participantes eran invitados a liberarse de sus representaciones tradicionales de diversidad, relaciones raciales y transformación.

Los miembros crearon relaciones y subsistemas entre ellos. Luego tuvieron que construir una *forma de gobierno representativo* que invite a la expresión, exploración y transformación de sus representaciones.

La dirección invitó a los miembros a crear, al azar, cuatro sub-sistemas llamados *Diversidad, Raza, Relación y Transformación*. Después anunció que se formaría un Gobierno compuesto por un representante de cada sub-sistema. En ese momento el gobierno tomaría el rol de dirección de la sesión, elegiría públicamente a su propio Presidente mientras que el staff dejaría este rol y se convertiría en el equipo de Asesores.

Para reflexionar y asociar sobre estas experiencias, se ofreció a los miembros algunas sesiones de reflexión tales como *Sesiones Plenarias, Evento de Meditación Activa, Grupo de Análisis de la Transformación* (o GAT) y una *Sesión de Discernimiento* en las que tenían que estudiar sus experiencias de los varios roles tomados dentro del taller para anticipar las transformaciones en el taller y en sus propias instituciones.

El staff de 8 miembros del taller fue compuesto en base a la diversidad: además de David Gutmann, un director blanco francés, el staff incluía a cuatro mujeres cubanas (dos de sangre mixta, una negra y una blanca), una mujer blanca peruana, un hombre negro trinitario y un hombre blanco español catalán. La diversidad también aparecía en términos de edad (de 26 a 66) y religión (católica, protestante, judía y agnóstica).

Treinta y cinco miembros, de 20 a 60 años, se inscribieron para el taller, todos cubanos, excepto un hombre negro de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica. La membresía representaba a muy diversas partes de la sociedad cubana, como intelectuales (profesores y estudiantes), trabajadores, artistas (pintores, escultores, poetas, escritores, cantantes de rap,...) La mayoría de los miembros era negra o de sangre mixta. No había algún hombre blanco entre los miembros. Había una mayoría de mujeres.

La tarea primaria del taller era *explorar la relación entre diversidad, rela-*

*ciones raciales y transformación a través de la experiencia dentro del taller tomado como una institución temporal de aprendizaje.*

## **El Curso Del Taller: Retos y Resistencias**

Lo que sucedió dentro del taller fue obviamente muy rico, interesante y movilizador. Hemos seleccionado alguna parte de esta compleja trayectoria institucional que nos parece más significativo.

### *La partida del único miembro extranjero*

Dejó el taller durante el primer día justo después del Evento de Meditación Activa. No dijo por qué y sólo compartió su sentimiento de “entrar en un taller religioso”. Era un hombre negro, profesor en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica que estaba por un tiempo en la Universidad de La Habana. Más allá de las varias asociaciones que esta situación sugirió (como: la discriminación contra los extranjeros, la conexión con la relación racial en los Estados Unidos, la focalización en un hombre negro...), la primera hipótesis más sistémica era conectarla con la trayectoria de otro miembro, que era la única mujer blanca del Gobierno.

El evento más revelador era que ella estaba sentada en una esquina mientras sus tres colegas del Gobierno – negras o mestizas- estaban paradas. La directora interpretó su rol como una “Reina blanca con sus esclavas negras”. Siendo incapaz de diferenciar el rol sistémico proyectado y el rol elegido, ella inició una especie de huelga, rehusando participar en las siguientes sesiones del taller en las que ella estaba con las justas presente. Esto podría revelar un intento de los participantes de explorar desde la experiencia cómo el sistema cubano maneja los procesos de diferenciación y la sensación de privilegios.

En otra dimensión del taller, el difícil contexto material de su realización no había mejorado. Una de los tres coordinadores era una mujer cubana negra mayor, cabeza de *Color Cubano* y co-fundadora del taller. Repentinamente apareció como la *buena madre negra* por dos razones: debido a los constantes esfuerzos que tuvo que desplegar para mantener, con muchas contradicciones, las fronteras entre el taller y la vida diaria del Consejo; también porque intentó muchas veces suavizar las relaciones informales entre los miembros y el staff.

Tal vez un proceso en espejo apareció entre el staff y los miembros: en el

staff, un director blanco extranjero hizo pareja con una buena madre negra cubana, siendo esta pareja la que había creado el taller; en los participantes apareció una pareja inversa de un miembro negro extranjero y una mujer cubana blanca, pero ambos incapaces realmente de desplegar su autoridad dentro del sistema. Como si esta pareja hubiese sido creada por los participantes como respuesta al tremendo impacto que el staff del taller (representando también su tarea primaria) desarrolló sobre ellos.

### *Una Presidenta negra (en oposición a una dictadora negra)*

Durante el *Sistema de Relaciones Raciales y Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas*, los participantes eligieron a cuatro mujeres como Gobierno: dos eran negras, una de sangre mezclada y una blanca. Luego, el Gobierno eligió en público a su miembro más negro como Presidente.

Aparentemente, el sistema parecía estar muy ansioso no sólo por estar experimentando tal proceso democrático, sino también por estar descubriendo su potencia. Los miembros tenían muchas dificultades para contener emociones y el proceso terminó en ataques físicos contra miembros del staff durante la última sesión.

Después de este trauma, la siguiente mañana, emergió del sistema una "dictadora" negra durante el siguiente *Sistema Diversidad*. Después ella fue excluida de la sesión por los otros miembros mediante un proceso pesado y difícil.

Esta secuencia fue vista como una fuerte ambivalencia entre modelos políticos. De un lado, se propone y aplica con muchas resistencias y dudas un proceso democrático. De otro, el modelo de una *revolución repetida* emergió espontáneamente, pero siendo incapaz de crear las condiciones de transformación real que se requiere. Además, se expresó cierta ambivalencia podría ser expresada a través de la repetida emergencia de líderes femeninos negros como la imagen inversa de Fidel Castro (un hombre blanco).

En otras palabras, los miembros elaboraron primero un verdadero progreso al elegir un gobierno completamente interracial. Más aún, ¡estaba compuesto sólo por mujeres! Por supuesto, había una mayoría de mujeres tanto en el staff como en la membresía. Pero, de una manera más profunda, esto podría representar un deseo de transformar el liderazgo tradicional intentando una configuración totalmente inusual, reflejando que el proceso de entrecruzamiento entre razas sólo puede darse a través de mujeres.

En esta fase, fueron ciertamente influenciados por el título y los propósitos del taller, así como de la manera en que podrían percibir y ver al director y al

staff en general. Podrían haber buscado una conexión con ellos de una manera que no excluía la seducción y ciertamente un espíritu “políticamente correcto”. Pero un ZIG tal (la progresión) puede asustar, aún aterrorizar, y crear entonces las condiciones para el ZAG (una regresión) que realmente sucedió y duró hasta casi el final del taller (excepto en las últimas sesiones).

Este ZAG, y más particularmente los ataques físicos al staff, fue iniciado por una canción de un CD elegida por el staff: ‘A mi manera’ por Frank Sinatra. Al elegir esta canción, el staff buscaba llamar abiertamente la atención de los miembros sobre su manera específica de actuar basada en repetir hábitos<sup>5</sup>.

Esta experiencia podría reflejar la incertidumbre y ansiedad creada por el proceso de transición que se producirá después de los hermanos Castro. Más aún, nuestra hipótesis es que el contenido inconsciente, que emerge de un taller así, puede reflejar lo que realmente sucederá en la escena política cubana en el futuro.

En otras palabras, ¿cuál es el significado de que una dictadora negra apreciara el día siguiente? Pensamos que podría anunciar que un general negro sucederá a los hermanos Castro después de su desaparición (reproduciendo lo que sucedió en Haití después de la descolonización<sup>6</sup>).

En la misma línea, podemos ahora ofrecer una interpretación adicional de la salida del miembro negro norteamericano. En realidad y simbólicamente, era el único miembro extranjero. Nuestra hipótesis es que la transformación de Cuba sólo sucederá con y a través de los cubanos residentes: ni los “gringos” (aún negros), ni los emigrantes cubanos tomarán parte en este proceso. Y cualquier intervención directa desde fuera que busque interferir el futuro de Cuba después de la desaparición de los líderes históricos estará condenada al fracaso. Aún los ataques físicos y psíquicos contra el staff podrían ser vistos de la misma manera.

Debemos recordar que el Che Guevara, siendo un ciudadano argentino, era el segundo el mando en el régimen castrista. Muy rápidamente quedó a cargo de exportar la Revolución fuera de Cuba, primero en África, y posteriormente

5 En realidad *A mi manera* es la adaptación de Frank Sinatra al inglés de una canción francesa muy famosa llamada *Comme d'habitude* [“Como siempre”] escrita y cantada por Claude François en 1967. Tal vez los miembros tenían el conocimiento (inconsciente) de esta información que refuerza la focalización hecha por el staff acerca de su manera de repetir hábitos.

6 Oficial de Toussaint-Louverture (el líder glorioso de la liberación haitiana del colonizador francés), el anteriormente esclavo Christophe es un general de Jean-Jacques Dessalines en la liberación de Haití en 1804. Después de un exitoso golpe contra Dessalines (1806), Christophe se convierte en Presidente y luego en el rey de la parte norte del país, conocido como el Rey Henri Primero o Henri-Christophe. Cf. Aimé Césaire, *La tragédie du roi Christophe*, 1963; Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World* (1949).

a Sudamérica, especialmente a Bolivia donde fue asesinado.

Más ampliamente, en cuanto a la dimensión espiritual, el director podría ser percibido como un dios blanco que llegaba del extranjero, al otro lado del mar, con sus creyentes negros y mestizos y dos sirvientes blancos, creando una nueva religión y reflejando a Fidel Castro. Por supuesto, en tal configuración, el staff también estaba reflejando a la *Reina blanca con sus esclavos negros*.

### *Resistencia contra el liderazgo y la autoridad*

La resistencia a inventar una nueva forma de gobierno y de usar la oportunidad ofrecida para crear, hacer y tomar roles de líder en el contexto del sistema cubano actual levantó mucha ansiedad. La autoridad y el liderazgo aparecieron como indeseables. Parecía que los roles eran tomados sin deseo alguno. Como resultado, el gobierno apareció como deprimido e inconsistente al punto que la representante más joven -que resultó ser la hija de la fundadora de *Color Cubano*- tomó su liderazgo y decidió movilizar su autoridad y experiencia de una manera retadora y constructiva.

Ella trató no solo de re-movilizar a sus tres compañeras del Gobierno, sino que también tomó una posición y un liderazgo decisivos en la última sesión de *Diversidad*, abriendo el camino a un descubrimiento y revelación impresionantes.

Al recrear un sistema dictatorial dentro del taller, los miembros parecían expresar -por lo menos en una gran parte del taller- una fuerte tendencia hacia la repetición y una enorme negación de la oportunidad que se les ofrecía.

Incluso crearon el sistema más irrealista como si quisieran demostrar que no podía existir otra forma de gobierno. Esto fue expresado por el predominio de mujeres tanto en el Gobierno como entre los líderes anti-tarea que trataron de restaurar el sistema político tradicional cubano. Por el contrario, los miembros hombres estuvieron más escondidos y silenciosos. Sin embargo, esta no es la realidad en Cuba donde el rol del hombre es predominante, particularmente en política.

Finalmente, el rol del staff, tanto en el rol de consultores (sesiones de reflexión) y "asesores" (sesiones *aquí y ahora*), junto con el impacto de la metodología y el rol de los miembros pro-tarea tuvieron un efecto determinante en todo el proceso.

En el último evento plenario, la *Sesión de Discernimiento*, se pidió a los miembros que propusieran colectivamente una palabra que expresara su estado mental en ese momento del taller.

El resultado fue la palabra *reto*. Esta palabra atestigua la transformación que se produjo durante el taller. Ayudado por las clarificaciones, hipótesis e interpretaciones hechas durante las varias sesiones de reflexión, el estado mental de los miembros se movió de resistencias, ansiedad, incertidumbre y dudas a un espacio más claro en el que la cuestión de las relaciones raciales pudo ser -por lo menos parcialmente- descubierto, examinado y trabajado. Viendo el futuro como un reto, surgieron planes de trabajo prácticos: los miembros crearon una página web llamada RETOS en la que grabaron sus experiencias y continuaron poniéndolas al día; también organizaron eventos recurrentes reuniendo a la mayoría de los miembros para poder continuar aplicando el aprendizaje del taller. Ahora, un año después, todavía acostumbran a encontrarse.

### *El Panteón de Mujeres Distinguidas*

En realidad, cinco mujeres aparecieron llevando roles determinantes para el curso del taller. ¿Representaban los cinco principales arquetipos de la mujer cubana en el poder y/o autoridad? ¿O expresaban las cinco facetas del mismo personaje imaginario?

La primera era la única persona blanca entre las cuatro mujeres del Gobierno. Habiendo sido asociada con la “Reina blanca con sus esclavas negras”, y alternando arrogancia y enfado, podría representar el poder tradicional de la mujer, y en particular de la mujer blanca. La segunda mujer era la negra dictadora que imponía poder, y que finalmente fue excluida. La tercera era la Presidenta negra del gobierno que era capaz de expresar su deseo, pero que finalmente entró en una “depresión”, para salir de la cual tuvo muchas dificultades. Gisela Arandia fue la cuarta. Con su permanente buena voluntad, como una *buena madre negra* que en realidad parió el taller, empujó el rol de intermediaria mediando en varios conflictos hasta el riesgo de perder su propia autoridad. Sólo su fuerte y profundo deseo de aprender y descubrir, pero también de ayudar los aprendizajes y descubrimientos de los otros, evitó que cayera. Por el contrario, ella pudo llevar adelante su búsqueda de transformación social. La quinta mujer fue Gisela Morales, la hija de la anterior. Llevando la mezcla de razas y colores, finalmente pudo ser capaz de tomar su autoridad por sí misma y por el sistema, a través de muchos zigzags y períodos de rechazo. Entonces, también fue capaz de liderar al sistema en la dirección de descubrimientos y aprendizaje.

¿Cuán significativa es esta serie de mujeres? Es como si los intentos hechos por mujeres blancas o negras “fallaban” uno tras el otro, preparando el éxito de la última que llevaba concretamente el *mestizaje*.

### *El director como una entrada al inconsciente*

Durante el último *Sistema Diversidad* el director blanco sintió un impulso muy potente a hacer pareja con la mujer negra más joven del Gobierno. Esto le inspiró una profunda intuición que lo llevó a preguntar a los miembros quiénes tenían una pareja, esposo o esposa del color “opuesto”. La respuesta fue muy significativa: sólo las tres integrantes restantes del Gobierno llenaban este criterio. Esto abrió un conjunto de interpretaciones sobre las condiciones inconscientes para tomar el liderazgo. De 35 miembros que no se conocían -o no se conocían mucho- entre sí, ellos “eligieron” inconscientemente para el Gobierno a las únicas que tenían un compañero oficial de la otra raza al tratar de transformar las diferencias raciales y prejuicios. La cuarta, por lo tanto, fue empujada a crear una pareja institucional con el director, “duplicando” la relación de trabajo inicial fundada por su madre negra.

Pero también levanta algunas nuevas preguntas sobre la naturaleza del rol de director en este tipo de taller o de seminarios experienciales. En realidad las condiciones muy difíciles con las que se hizo el taller (reproduciendo aquí la vida diaria en Cuba), así como la presencia constante de la sensualidad y la creatividad cubanas, condujo al staff, y particularmente al director, a usar recursos que no suelen ser usados en otras circunstancias. El nivel racional y consciente fue constreñido, empujando al director y al staff en otra dirección.

Tal vez la primera condición es la capacidad para considerar el inconsciente como el recurso disponible más bello y poderoso para prever, comprender y actuar. Este sendero es un zigzag, nunca una línea recta. El zigzag expresa la complejidad, la dificultad del proceso, la incertidumbre, la alternancia entre progresión y regresión, la duda necesaria y la fe en alcanzar el éxito.

Así, la segunda condición es la capacidad de un miembro del staff, y particularmente del director, de permitirse ser invadido (invadida) por el inconsciente. El director (la directora) se ofrece a la producción inconsciente del sistema institucional, pero sólo puede hacerlo trabajando, debilitando permanentemente sus propias resistencias.

A través de este trabajo, el director (directora) obtiene un “acceso” al inconsciente. El (ella) se convierte en la entrada al inconsciente. O, tal vez, sólo el portero de esta entrada, una especie de oficial de enlace... o podría alternar entre ambos.

Sin embargo, este rol es bastante pasivo. Aún cuando él (ella) deba tener la capacidad para tomar este rol, debe moverse a un costado. Si él (ella) es la entrada, éste es un rol muy pasivo. Si él (ella) es el portero de la entrada o el oficial de enlace, es más activo pero siempre lleno de humildad. La principal cualidad de un director (directora) es ser tocado por el inconsciente de tomar

el riesgo de dejar que se exprese.

Como el director (directora), no se trata de enfrentar la irrupción masiva del inconsciente, sino sólo de moverse a un costado. Estar en y dentro del inconsciente, tener la capacidad para pensar que uno puede perder el control de lo que está sucediendo, sabiendo que puede confiar en los dos procesos básicos: contención y pulsación. Entonces uno puede soltar, dejar el control y decirse que puede hacerlo y hacerlo en realidad. Efectivamente el peligro es ser sobrepasado, tragado, a menos que uno movilice estos dos elementos, contención y pulsación, con la ayuda del resto del staff.

Aunque esta experiencia tiene obviamente una dimensión espiritual, ésta no es una experiencia religiosa. El director (directora) no es un (una) intermediario entre el inconsciente considerado como una divinidad intocable e inalcanzable de un lado, y de otro la congregación de los creyentes. Él (ella) es un “passeur”, un “barquero”, a cargo de un trasbordador, pasivo o activo. Y los otros miembros del staff, además del director (directora), contribuyen a descargarlo (descargarla) de cualquier otra tarea.

Después, puede ayudar a los otros miembros del staff, seguidos por los participantes, a entrar, a tener un acceso directo no sólo al inconsciente institucional del seminario, sino también a lo que significa para cada uno de ellos como parte viviente del sistema, ejerciendo un rol. Al mismo tiempo, el inconsciente “invade” el seminario y sus participantes. El camino de la transformación resulta de la interacción de todas estas fuerzas, gracias a un auténtico proceso de contención y pulsación.

Efectivamente, la meta no es crear un director que exprese hipótesis de trabajo como la Pythia enunciaba oráculos en Delfos. Sino liderar un camino, seguido, por los miembros del staff y los participantes, donde cada uno pueda aprender a *aprender de la experiencia*, incluyendo acerca de los procesos inconscientes.

## ¿Cómo explorar Negro y Blanco en Colores?

Sin embargo, quedan muchas preguntas abiertas después de esta experiencia. Por ejemplo, ¿cuál es la capacidad de cualquier sistema político para borrar procesos inconscientes tales como la discriminación racial y los prejuicios a través de una promoción racional y voluntaria de la igualdad?

Este tipo de pregunta no se limita al caso específico de Cuba. Tiene que ver con cualquier acción política. ¿Qué es lo que sucede cuando una acción política se limita a la racionalidad, negando las raíces históricas e inconscientes de la cuestión que se propone mejorar? ¿Cómo puede la acción política

evitar ser limitada a cambios superficiales e involucrarse en verdaderas transformaciones / *transformaciones*?

Después que los últimos 50 años del sistema Castrista, la problemática racial permanece en el centro de la sociedad cubana. La gente negra y mestizo parecen ser los más deseosos de explorarla -con ambivalencia- y transformarla. La gente blanca -y sobre todo los hombres blancos- parecen ser los más resistentes. El taller ha constituido el lanzamiento de una iniciativa; ha sido un rayo que ha iluminado al mismo tiempo que se ha abierto paso a través las actuales estratificaciones. El proceso de revelación, de *revelación*, por más doloroso que sea, puede ser la única manera de no ser prisionero de una *prisión-presente* que determine el futuro.

La súbita aparición del inconsciente puede ser el elemento más eficiente para sacudir y cuestionar los sistemas en la mente existentes (SEMs<sup>7</sup>) para romper el círculo de su inmovilidad establecida. El impacto del inconsciente, pugnando contra la sujeción del pasado-presente, trae sorpresa, júbilo, liberación. Esto sucede en las dimensiones psíquicas y espirituales, pero también en la política. Cuando uno encuentra la capacidad para dar espacio a fuerzas inconscientes, para expresarlas sin sentir demasiado temor, ellas entregan el futuro: vivir este proceso en una experiencia manejada, contenida y pulsada es una oportunidad para evitar repetir el pasado -es decir actuar perdiendo y olvidando nuestra libertad y autoridad.

La relación entre consciente e inconsciente no puede ser vista en negro y blanco: es un permanente ir y venir entre ambos que focaliza en determinados momentos en la raíz consciente, y en otros momentos en la raíz inconsciente. Por esta razón debe ser vista en colores.

Sorprendentemente, ¿podríamos darle ahora otro significado al bien conocido concepto de transferencia! No sólo las proyecciones e introyecciones entre el staff y los miembros, sino también la habilidad para transferir el inconsciente en el mundo consciente, y viceversa.

De hecho, este taller trabajó sobre la DEMOCRACIA, i.e. la LIBERTAD para pensar, para sentir, y para actuar, la INICIATIVA para innovar y transformar.

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7 ver nota a pié de pág. No. 3

## El programa del taller

Nov 2006	Sap 4	Dom 5	Lun 6	Mar 7
09:00 – 10:00		Sistema Diversidad	Sistema Diversidad	Sistema Diversidad
		<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>
10:30 – 11:30		Sistema de Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas	Sistema Diversidad	Grupo de Análisis de la Transformación GAT
		<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>
12:00 – 13:00		Sistema de Relaciones Raciales	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales	Sesión de Discernimiento
	13h45 – 14:45 Opening Plenary	<i>Almuerzo</i>	<i>Almuerzo</i>	<i>Almuerzo</i>
15:00 – 16:00	Sistema Diversidad	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales		Grupo de Análisis de la Transformación GAT
	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	
16:30 – 17:30	Evento de Meditación Activa	Evento de Meditación Activa	Evento de Meditación Activa	
	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	<i>Pausa</i>	
18:00 – 19:00	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales Aplicadas	
	<i>Cenar</i>	<i>Cenar</i>	<i>Cenar</i>	
20:30 – 21:30	Sistema de Relaciones Raciales		Grupo de Análisis de la Transformación GAT	

# Pequenos Grupos em São Paulo: Um Choque Cultural?

## Small Groups at IAGP: A Cultural Clash?

Luis Russo (Brazil) Teresa von Sommaruga Howard (UK)

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Teresa von Sommaruga Howard é Arquiteta, Terapeuta Sistêmica e Psicoterapeuta Grupal com fundamentação grupo analítica, especializada no manejo de grandes grupos. É Consultora Organizacional no Reino Unido, Inglaterra, onde vive; sendo que também presta serviços em diversos países ao redor do mundo. É membro do Board internacional da Associação Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo - IAGP - e foi Secretária do Comitê Científico da Sociedade Grupo Analítica de Londres por 6 (seis) anos. Teresa concentra o foco de suas atividades no momento, no modo como as experiências sócio - culturais são afetadas por influências advindas do inconsciente na psique humana. Endereço eletrônico: Email: Teresa@JustDialogue.com.



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### Abstract

This paper describes our experience of organising small groups for all participants at the IAGP congress 'Connecting People, Communities and Cultures'. Not much is said about the very necessary pre-congress organisation. Instead our focus is on the logistics of actually managing this 'forgotten element' in the group therapy culture of Brazil and IAGP. To enable us to make more sense of our experience, we researched both the participants' and coordinators' experiences through an email questionnaire afterwards. Although it might have been possible to arrive at a list of recommenda-

tions for the future, we came to the conclusion that it was probably more important to try to describe the inevitable misunderstandings that occur when bridging across cultures so that others can learn from them. We hope that through this description, others willing to take on the task of organising small groups in a very large congress will feel supported by our experience. It appeared in English in the last edition of Forum.

### **Resumo**

Este artigo descreve nossa experiência ao organizar os Pequenos Grupos para todos os participantes do Congresso da IAGP “Conectando pessoas, Comunidades e Culturas”. Não se fala muito da necessária organização que antecede um congresso. Ao invés disso, nosso foco é na logística da administração deste “elemento esquecido” na cultura da terapia de grupo do e da IAGP. Para que nosso trabalho faça mais sentido, pesquisamos como se deu a experiência dos pequenos Grupos com os participantes e coordenadores através de um e-mail enviado posteriormente.

Embora possa ter sido possível chegarmos a uma lista de recomendações para o futuro, concluímos que era mais pertinente tentar relatar o que se pode aprender com os inevitáveis entendimentos equivocados que ocorrem entre todos os envolvidos de modo geral, quando se cria uma ponte cruzando culturas. Nós esperamos que através deste relato, outros colegas, dispostos a enfrentar tarefa semelhante de organizar pequenos Grupos num próximo Congresso Internacional possam encontrar um apoio em nossas experiências vividas.

### **A longa jornada**

No último congresso da IAGP em Istambul, Teresa encontrou-se com o então presidente da IAGP, dizendo-lhe que seria uma boa idéia organizar em pequenos grupos em caráter experimental para todos os participantes do próximo congresso em São Paulo. Como resultado de sua experiência no simpósio de grupanálise, ela aprendeu que estes grupos possibilitam uma experiência profunda. Eles também provêm aos participantes uma forma segura de inclusão com o turbulento e às vezes confuso desenvolvimento do congresso abrindo uma oportunidade única de trabalho, tanto no nível pessoal quanto no teórico, com diferentes coordenadores, de diferentes países, de diversos modos. Um ano depois, ela sugeriu a elaboração de um guia de orientação para a realização deste projeto, e poucos meses após estava trabalhando via email com Luis que voluntariamente se candidatou a partir do LOC (comitê de organização local, no Brasil. Juntos, Teresa e Luis desenvolveram a estrutura, mas ele cuidou da organização prática do projeto. Com o propósito de transpor a ponte existente entre a enorme lacuna geográfica, Teresa decidiu viajar alguns dias antes ao Brasil para ajudar nos arranjos necessários pouco antes do início do congresso. Esta era a intenção, mas como pudemos perceber, algumas vezes as intenções não se concretizam.

Mesmo antes do congresso começar, ‘Conectando pessoas, Comunidades e Culturas’, vivemos um pesadelo quase impossível de ser transposto. Forças poderosas existentes no mundo inteiro nos lembraram que, apesar das modernas viagens a jato, a América do Sul é ainda um lugar distante, distante de muitas formas. Para aqueles de nós que usualmente viajam ao redor do mundo, nós chegamos cansados e estressados. Para aqueles que nos esperavam no Brasil, nossa chegada não planejada foi confusa e desapontadora.

A viagem de Teresa serve como exemplo. Ela tinha um vô comparativamente curto de Nova York, mas que foi pleno de ações e dificuldades difíceis de se acreditar que ocorreriam. Uma experiência quase que surreal alertou-a de duas experiências mundiais que continuaram a ressoar durante o congresso e que foi muito profunda. Ela foi avisada dos problemas que estavam acontecendo com a linha aérea brasileira da Varig. Eles se achavam à beira da falência, mas seu agente de viagens lhe assegurou que ela chegaria ao Brasil de algum modo. E ela chegou, de algum modo!

Tudo começou quando quando ela tentou checar via internet a hora da saída de seu vô e descobriu que aquele vô não existia mais. Ela tentou entrar em contato com a companhia aérea, mas não encontrou ninguém que pudesse atendê-la, apenas mensagens gravadas sem as informações das quais ela precisava. Checando outra vez via internet, ela descobriu que seu vô havia sido substituído por um outro, com outro número (de vô), que sairia do aeroporto JFK.

No check in, Teresa foi informada que ao invés de um vô direto, ela deveria agora voar via Washington DC, mudar de vôs e chegar a São Paulo com três horas de atraso. Ah! Ela pensou, “depois de tudo, vou chegar lá!” E ficou relaxando na sala VIP das partidas do aeroporto, enviou um email para Luis avisando-o que seu vô tinha sido mudado, mas que ele não se preocupasse em encontrá-la, pois ela conseguiria um traslado do aeroporto para o congresso.

Quando Teresa foi adentrar no avião, ela foi informada que o vô se atrasaria em duas horas devido a tempestades, e que ela não conseguiria fazer uma conexão para São Paulo. Porém, lhe asseguraram que ela poderia ir na noite seguinte! Ela explicou que não seria possível atrasar-se por mais um dia, e que, então eles deveriam colocá-la em um vô direto de outra companhia aérea, mesmo que atrasado, ela conseguiria chegar a tempo. Esta alternativa acabou se tornando complicada também.

Quando tentou embarcar, Teresa descobriu que aquele vô estava superlotado, e ela teria que aguardar em uma longa fila de espera, onde algum passageiro poderia ceder seu lugar em troca de dinheiro. Finalmente um assento lhe foi disponibilizado, mas as bagagens dos passageiros que cederam seus

lugares levaram duas horas para serem descarregadas.

Quando tudo parecia resolvido, um dos pilotos ficou doente, e o vôo teve que ir primeiro para Atlanta, para que um outro piloto compusesse a equipe e a aeronave fosse abastecida de combustível suficiente para a viagem. A chegada de Teresa em São Paulo atrasou-se por mais de cinco horas.

Fazer contato com Luis também não foi tão simples. Ele havia sugerido de encontrá-la no aeroporto, para satisfazer sua curiosidade sobre alguém com quem ele conversou via email nos últimos dois anos! Parecia uma boa idéia, mas a chegada de Teresa às cinco horas da manhã pareceu ser demasiado cedo mesmo para aqueles que adoram levantar com o canto dos pássaros!

É possível que Teresa tenha intuído que o horário de sua chegada não ocorreria conforme o previsto, por isso sugeriu um encontro no hotel num horário que fosse viável a ambos. Com o propósito de ser um bom anfitrião e dar boas vindas, Luis foi ao aeroporto, não uma, mas duas vezes em busca de Teresa. Como ela não esperava encontrá-lo, contratou o serviço de traslado do aeroporto para o hotel. Apesar de seu nome não constar da lista, eles concordaram em transportá-la; porém, não lhe avisaram que Luis os contactou durante todo o dia em busca de notícias sobre ela. Luis ficou totalmente confuso quanto ao paradeiro de Teresa, em que lugar da Terra ela se encontrava.

Na chegada ao hotel, não havia mensagens para ela, mas como se achava bastante cansada da maratona que vivera, decidiu dormir até o dia seguinte. Assim sendo, com mente renovada, ela buscou um meio de fazer contato com o comitê de organização local (LOC) e por-se a par dos fatos que estavam ocorrendo. Foi um começo caótico para a tarefa que desenvolveríamos juntos.

Embora tivéssemos trabalhado juntos previamente via e-mail – fazendo o melhor que pudemos – durante os dois anos que antecederam o congresso construindo a estrutura dos pequenos grupos, a estruturação de nosso encontro inicial prefaciou o caos que continuaríamos a encontrar durante a semana toda.

## **Preparando-se para os grupos**

A atividade dos pequenos grupos foi inserida no programa do Congresso da seguinte maneira:

“Todas as manhãs durante o Congresso haverá a oportunidade de se iniciar o dia com um encontro em um pequeno grupo (pedimos que o grupo não contenha mais do que 15 participantes) durante uma hora e meia.. Um facilitador conduzirá o grupo de acordo com seu próprio referencial teórico, metodolo-

gia e idioma e esperamos que você participe do mesmo durante o Congresso. Para fazer parte de um pequeno grupo, é esperado que o mesmo lhe possibilite estabelecer conexões com o Congresso como um todo, encontrar pessoas de outros países e compartilhar impressões com novos colegas”.

Conversamos muito sobre a melhor maneira de organizar e manter os limites sobre tudo que dissesse respeito aos pequenos grupos com os Co-chairs do Congresso, Haim Weinberg e Heloísa Fleury. Apesar do grande esforço feito na organização criando um canal de comunicação virtual antes do Congresso visando facilitar a vida dos participantes na escolha de um pequeno grupo, mesmo até a data limite de inscrição no Congresso em si, pouquíssimas pessoas conseguiram aproveitar essa oportunidade. Desse modo, o melhor que pudemos fazer foi designar os participantes em cada grupo randomicamente.

Nossa primeira tarefa após as conversações mantidas foi nos certificarmos que todos os participantes do Congresso estivessem designados em todos os pequenos grupos. Para tanto, necessitávamos ter em mãos a lista de todos os participantes, que somente os funcionários da Eventus – Empresa contratada para a organização do Congresso – possuía.

Por alguma razão, que não fomos capazes de adivinhar, a Eventus mostrou-se reticente em nos fornecer uma cópia da lista e deixou-nos esperando pela mesma. Passamos o primeiro dia após a chegada de Teresa tentando empregar o tempo de que dispunhamos da forma mais criativa possível, procurando nos conhecermos melhor e aprendermos mutuamente de que modo nossas experiências pessoais e profissionais poderiam nos dar um terreno sólido para o trabalho com os pequenos grupos. Esse processo nos tomou a maior parte do dia. Nos planejamos também sobre como poderíamos proceder à checagem de todas as salas que seriam utilizadas e pensamos sobre como poderíamos incrementar e dar suporte ao encontro de integração dos coordenadores dos pequenos grupos.

Finalmente, às nove horas da noite, nos foi entregue a lista com todos os participantes. Para tanto, tínhamos somente até o meio dia do dia seguinte para incluímos e designarmos em torno de 1200 pessoas, muitos dos quais sequer conhecíamos, em 70 grupos. Foi um trabalho assustador!

Previamente pensamos em colocar 70 folhas de papel na parede com o nome de cada coordenador, idiomas falados e seu respectivo referencial teórico convidando a cada participante a escolher seu grupo de preferência, mas o participante oriundo do hemisfério norte necessita de um impedimento meticuloso para cada simples solução. Parecia que iria ficar muito caótico. Durante o evento em si, não evitamos o caos. Embora tivéssemos gasto muitas horas procurando fazer uma designação de forma cuidadosa, procurando equilibrar o melhor possível, idioma, gênero e nacionalidade, muitos participantes se

recusaram a participar de um grupo em que eles foram designados não por escolha deles mesmos.

Logo percebemos que as pessoas oriundas de países não europeus não estão habituadas com a idéia de serem designados para grupos que não escolheram, e reagiram a isso de modo agressivo. Administramos a situação da melhor forma que pudemos, obtendo pouco sucesso se olharmos a partir de uma perspectiva européia. Após o Congresso, como resultado de um pequeno projeto de pesquisa, descobrimos que alguns coordenadores sul americanos tiveram mais do que 25 participantes em seus pequenos grupos, contrastando com muitos coordenadores europeus que ficaram sem grupo.

### **Falta de Cooperação ou Choque Cultural?**

As dificuldades com a empresa responsável pela organização do Congresso - Eventus - perduraram durante o todo o Congresso. Na opinião de Luis, a comunicação com a Eventus foi difícil desde o início. Ele explicou que os contatos eram feitos sempre através de Heloísa Fleury com a chefe da Eventus. O problema era que essa chefe não respondia imediatamente às requisições feitas por Heloísa e nunca respondeu ao Luis, o que tornou o planejamento dos pequenos grupos extremamente difícil. Luis também sentiu que eles - da Eventus - não tentavam se comunicar com as pessoas de diferentes nacionalidades em outros idiomas. Ele sentiu que eles foram arrogantes com os estrangeiros.

A hipótese de Teresa é que este tipo de experiência não é incomum, especialmente quando são utilizadas empresas que não estão acostumadas com o nosso estilo de trabalho vivencial. Apesar de serem constantemente lembrados, eles continuaram a ignorar nossos pedidos de deixar as salas organizadas com as cadeiras dispostas em forma circular. Todas as manhãs nós encontraríamos as cadeiras colocadas em forma de fila, em linha reta de modo que quem sentasse ficaria olhando para a frente! Na segunda manhã, nós encontramos a maioria de nossas folhas com as orientações e respectiva lista dos participantes removidas das portas das salas dos grupos. Em alguns casos, as salas haviam sido trancadas, e em outros, as salas foram transformadas em depósito de materiais. Por alguma razão, a Eventus pensou que os grupos aconteceriam somente na primeira manhã. Na tentativa de minimizar o caos resultante, nós sempre ficávamos num lugar central, próximo ao stand da IAGP, prontos para ajudar. Na segunda manhã, Luis assumiu a onerosa tarefa de percorrer todas as 70 salas para se certificar de que as atividades dos pequenos grupos estivessem acontecendo.

Luis lembrou à Teresa que a Eventus nunca atualizou nossas listas. Quando estávamos estruturando os 70 grupos, na segunda feira à tarde, a chefe da Eventus lhe disse: ...”você deveriam permitir que os participantes fizessem suas escolhas livremente, ao acaso, desse modo não haverá problemas; e não se preocupem com o número de participantes nos pequenos grupos!”

Pelo fato deles terem esse ponto de vista, eles ignoraram a atualização de nossas listas e não deram suporte ao processo de inscrição. Agiram desse modo porque assumiram que sabiam o que fazer e não verificaram os arranjos com Heloísa, Luis ou Teresa.

Teresa imagina que houve dois choques culturais aqui, o modo de proceder dos oriundos do hemisfério norte “meticulosos com tempo e organização” e o modo de proceder dos oriundos do hemisfério sul “com um modo mais relaxado de tempo e organização”, mas ela também tem experiência em trabalhar com organizações de congressos em outros lugares e encontrou muitas similaridades.

Seja quando for, quando o congresso tem eventos vivenciais, sempre há dificuldades e ela pensa que isso é assim porque é um trabalho que está fora do referencial da experiência de empresas como a Eventus. Em seu referencial, congressos são uma série de conferências. Eles imaginam cadeiras dispostas em fila olhando para a frente e não em círculos, pois é como estão acostumados, de fato esperam pessoas entrando e saindo das sessões que escolheram. A idéia de qualquer compromisso com uma sessão particular é algo abstrato.

O que realmente importa é que essas diferenças culturais sejam levadas em conta em qualquer congresso futuro que contenha pequenos grupos em sua programação.

## **Dando um suporte aos Coordenadores dos Pequenos Grupos**

Como identificamos que seria essencial realizarmos um trabalho de apoio aos coordenadores em sua tarefa, organizamos dois encontros com informações básicas e sintetizadas, antes do início do congresso, e definimos uma supervisão diária de 45 minutos, realizada em conjunto pelos dois responsáveis pela atividade dos pequenos grupos, para todos os coordenadores, no horário do almoço. Nos pareceu que seria importante fazer uma explanação aos coordenadores sobre a tarefa que teriam pela frente, e mantermos o apoio ao andamento da atividade, proporcionando-lhes uma oportunidade de se sintonizarem com os temas que emergissem no contexto do grupo (de coordenadores).

Como em todos os congressos, encontrar um horário em que fosse possível reunir os coordenadores foi difícil. Havia uma pequena brecha entre o o final

do pré-congresso e antes do início do congresso em si; porém, nosso primeiro encontro para trocas de informações coincidiu com a sessão final de avaliação do pré-congresso, e não conseguimos adiar para mais tarde devido à cerimônia de abertura do congresso como um todo.

Embora os pequenos grupos fizessem parte da grade de eventos do congresso, eles foram comprimidos dentro da programação. Para uma logística bem sucedida em programações de congressos futuros, a inclusão dos pequenos grupos deve ser cuidadosamente considerada.

Como muitos dos coordenadores dos pequenos grupos estavam envolvidos com atividades do pré-congresso, nós tivemos que criar dois encontros para passagem de informações e integração dos coordenadores, um na noite anterior ao início do congresso para aqueles que não participaram do pré-congresso, e um outro, na manhã seguinte bem cedo – antes do início das atividades (do congresso). Objetivando um reforço para o apoio a ser dado aos coordenadores, traçamos diretrizes – em inglês e português – para definir a estrutura de trabalho incluindo os objetivos, horários, locais de encontro e número de sessões.

Os coordenadores foram incentivados a conduzir seus grupos conforme seu referencial teórico, metodologia, idioma(s), como também incluir atividades como Role playing, sessões abertas, e etc. Eles poderiam inclusive escolher o idioma que prefeririam utilizar na condução de seu grupo. Ingenuamente como agora parece ser, nós sugerimos que eles mantivessem seus limites em torno do grupo selecionado (não acrescentando mais participantes); porém, este direcionamento foi quase que totalmente ignorado.

Teresa considerou os dois encontros prévios com os coordenadores extremamente frustrantes. Ela imaginara um grupo onde todos os participantes estariam presentes desde o início, e que permaneceriam até o fim das atividades propostas, num ambiente calmo e relaxado.

Essa experiência foi sua introdução numa enorme diferença de expectativas culturais. Ela se deparou com um fluxo constante e incômodo de recém chegados adentrando a sala desde o início até o final, apesar dos informes sobre os horários de início da atividade terem sido previamente anunciados.

Mas, Luis, um psicodramatista brasileiro, não se incomodou com o fato. Para Teresa, não havia um ambiente adequado para o trabalho de grupo – visto as movimentações na sala no começo da atividade, fato que a deixou bastante ansiosa. Tornou-se cada vez mais áspera em suas colocações, ficando ainda mais desconfortável.

Uma coordenadora de pequeno grupo, brasileira, criticou-a (Teresa) em seu modo de conduzir um trabalho grupal, mostrando-se muito autoritária! Esta coordenadora relatou que tudo havia mudado em sua agenda da semana,

tal fato correspondeu com a experiência inicial de Teresa, que acabou lidando com os limites impostos pelos dados de realidade, e procurou agir a partir de então, de um modo diferente, mais apropriado à situação.

Em acréscimo, como frequentemente acontece nos congressos, as salas que utilizamos para os encontros com os coordenadores não estava arrumada de forma adequada ao trabalho que seria realizado. A acústica era horrível, era difícil ouvir e ser ouvido. A sala era também muito

Pequena e com um formato inadequado à atividade. Apesar de haver salas para todos os coordenadores de pequenos grupos, a sala para o encontro inicial de todos os coordenadores não foi devidamente providenciada. Tivemos que procurar por um espaço onde pudéssemos trabalhar com o grupo de coordenadores, e o que conseguimos não era bom o suficiente. Parecia que para termos o nosso encontro inicial com os coordenadores teríamos que adentrar em salas que tinham outras atividades em andamento – embora estivessem terminando a atividade – como se estivéssemos invadindo um espaço que não tínhamos. Este sentimento foi reforçado quando nos foi solicitado no último dia para liberarmos a sala que utilizávamos, para que outra atividade pudesse ser iniciada. Cada novo dia a sala tinha que ser arrumada novamente, colocando-se as cadeiras do modo que queríamos – em círculo – deixando algumas cadeiras vagas para os atrasados.

O encontro dos coordenadores durante o horário do almoço transformou-se num locus importante para o estabelecimento das relações do grupo. Luis e eu (Teresa) concordamos que nosso trabalho de preparação para esses encontros deu uma base para a estruturação dessas sessões de supervisão dos coordenadores.

Nós (Teresa e Luis) investimos um longo tempo elaborando juntos (via e-mail e durante o congresso) a construção deste projeto. Concomitantemente, Luis trabalhou com Pablo de Godói Castanho – que sempre esteve presente nos momentos em que foi necessário – no desenvolvimento de listas dos participantes via internet previamente à realização do congresso.

Através de todo este trabalho de trocas mútuas e compartilhamentos, começamos a criar um sentimento de pertencimento mútuo – a construção de um lugar psicológico – de sermos um grupo. Luis disse que o trabalho feito junto com Teresa o fez sentir-se como membro da IAGP, que isso era importante, considerando o fato de que ele fez parte do Comitê de organização Local.

Apesar de termos muitas diferenças, no mínimo ao que se referisse ao idioma e modalidades terapêuticas, nossas disponibilidades profissionais no manejo com essas diferenças, serviram como modelo de referência aos coordenadores e aos participantes.

Luis escreveu posteriormente à Teresa, dizendo: "...Quando você eu coordenamos os encontros com os coordenadores, percebi que nossas diferenças quanto ao referencial teórico de que dispunhamos, pôde ser empregado como um fator de complementaridade e facilitador do estabelecimento de conexões, desenvolvimento de nosso conhecimento e amizade. Nós não competíamos um com o outro, pelo contrário, trabalhávamos como uma equipe forte, permitindo um ao outro encarar de frente as dificuldades que surgiram".

Nós estávamos aptos a refletir sobre as possibilidades existentes, porque ambos consideramos o trabalho com pessoas de algumas nacionalidades e culturas diversas, fascinante; e apesar das dificuldades de entendimento quanto ao(s) idioma(s) conseguimos nos entender mutuamente.

Os encontros em si foram extremamente úteis apesar de todas as inevitáveis confusões e o caos decorrente. Uma questão que tivemos de nos ater constantemente, foi o problema atinente aos dois idiomas. Inicialmente, as pessoas que podiam tecer seus comentários em inglês eram maioria, até o momento em que Teresa começou a ponderar se havia deixado de levar em consideração a fala de brasileiros, por não conseguir se expressar em português o suficiente.

Depois de termos conversado sobre isso no grupo, Luis já tinha falado com alguns coordenadores brasileiros, e eles retornaram ao grupo.

Na resposta ao questionário, a maioria dos coordenadores colocou que gostou dos encontros no horário do almoço, e que o tempo dispendido para os encontros foi adequado. Mais ou menos metade do grupo que respondeu ao questionário, pensou que o horário de almoço foi apropriado e metade não. Nós também pedimos um feedback acerca de nosso papel como coordenadores. A maioria sentiu que nosso papel contribuiu para que o grupo fosse uma fonte de experiências frutíferas.

## **A experiência dos coordenadores de grupo**

Após o congresso, Luis e Teresa realizaram uma pequena pesquisa com todo o grupo de coordenadores e todos aqueles participantes que forneceram seus e-mails aos organizadores do congresso. Dos setenta coordenadores que se dispuseram a coordenar um grupo e forneceram seus respectivos e-mails, em torno de quarenta responderam.

Nós lhes pedimos para responder se um grupo havia realmente se formado em torno deles. Dos que responderam, trinta e dois coordenaram um grupo por mais que dois dias; porém, dois não. Quando perguntados se o grupo havia se mantido constante durante o transcorrer do congresso, quatorze disseram

que sim, e vinte disseram que não. Dezesete coordenadores tiveram de um a cinco participantes, quatorze tiveram de cinco a quinze participantes, e quatro coordenadores tiveram mais do que quinze participantes. Por alguma razão desconhecida, dois coordenadores não responderam a esta questão.

Nós pedimos aos coordenadores para relatarem sua experiência. Do lado positivo, eles gostaram da experiência multicultural e da possibilidade de um compartilhamento e intercâmbios criativos. Para muitos, foi a melhor atividade do congresso; porém, os encontros matutinos ocorriam muito cedo para muitas pessoas, enquanto que outras consideraram a ausência de muitos participantes, algo frustrante.

Quando perguntados sobre o que eles mais gostaram nesta experiência, alguns disseram que gostaram da liberdade de poder aplicar seu próprio referencial teórico. Outros gostaram da lealdade existente, da amizade e da possibilidade que as pessoas tiveram de usar (mostrar) seus recursos interiores de uma forma compromissada.

O(s) idioma(s) foi um desafio para todos. Um coordenador de pequeno grupo disse que “ela teve uma experiência rica e desafiadora”. Para ela, “a barreira do idioma não foi relevante conforme ela imaginava, mesmo que isso pudesse ser manejado de forma adequada às vezes, ainda assim foi causa de grandes dificuldades em outros momentos. O que realmente me pegou pelo lado positivo, foi o fato dos participantes estarem frequentemente agradecidos pela oportunidade de dar apoio ouvindo o que os demais falavam. Este processo foi na realidade realçado pelas diferenças de idioma, e o trabalho com a(s) linguagem(ens) se transformou em uma forma prática de comunicação emocional”. Outro coordenador disse, “...embora tenha sido um encontro multilingual, foi possível se sentir em casa, um lugar onde foi possível encontrar sentido e significado nas experiências do congresso”.

Insegurança por parte dos participantes estrangeiros reverberaram por toda parte, precipitadas pelas dificuldades com a Varig. Como explicou um coordenador: “Me tornei mais atento às necessidades emocionais dos participantes. Acredito que foi difícil para eles (e para mim) participar de encontros praticamente sem participantes (esvaziados), enquanto nos grupos de coordenadores brasileiros estavam praticamente lotados de participantes.

Eles se sentiram completamente rejeitados; dois brasileiros desistiram do grupo, uma brasileira recém chegada entrou na sala no terceiro dia, e a deixou assim que percebeu que o idioma Inglês seria falado tanto quanto o Português. Ela pareceu ofendida. Isso na verdade não parecia nada bom para os demais presentes... O que está errado conosco? O que está errado com ela?”

Quando perguntados sobre o criticismo, dissemos que alguns grupos estavam muito grandes, que não eram Pequenos Grupos, que estava caótico,

barulhento, desconfortável fisicamente, sentimentos de rejeição, insignificância e abandono por aqueles que escolheram não assistir (participar) de um Pequeno Grupo ou ignoraram os arranjos (organização) e escolheram outro grupo.

Alguns pequenos grupos se tornaram igualmente pequenos para serem viáveis e muitos deles foram incentivados a se juntar a outros grupos. Também soubemos que alguns coordenadores não coordenaram seus grupos até o final, porque os grupos se tornaram demasiado pequenos pelo fato de poucas pessoas aparecerem.

Para os coordenadores, a incerteza quanto ao tamanho e número de participantes no grupo foi frustrante. “No primeiro dia somente duas pessoas vieram, e no segundo dia chegou mais uma pessoa, então suspendemos o grupo e avisamos que poderiam juntar-se a um outro grupo”. Não funcionou conforme o planejado. Aqueles que eram mais conhecidos no Brasil obtiveram mais êxito. “Todos os participantes do meu grupo compareceram todos os quatro dias, exceto quando um ou dois deles participaram de alguma excursão por São Paulo, embora todos avisaram quando não estariam presentes”. “Cinco novas pessoas se juntaram ao grupo. Três foram incentivadas por seus amigos que estavam em meu grupo”, e um daqueles grupos que não foi adiante pelo fato de ninguém ter aparecido e outro porque os participantes de seu pequeno Grupo debandaram no segundo dia.

Quando um coordenador nos disse em um dos encontros entre os coordenadores no horário do almoço, que o modo como o congresso como um todo foi organizado era anti democrático e explicou que quem não estivesse na lista enviada por e-mail não “existia”, eu percebi como o nosso modo do grupo analítico de designar pessoas aos grupos poderia ser sentido como um ato de violência cultural.

Haviam diferenças de opinião e as diferenças de idioma criaram barreiras intoleráveis. Alguns pensaram que não poderiam lidar com isso, mas Pablo Castanho, que recentemente escreveu sobre o problema da linguagem (idioma) como resultado de sua experiência como coordenador de um Pequeno Grupo, teve um ponto de vista diferente.

“Tive a maioria de participantes brasileiros no grupo, um francês, um rapaz oriundo de Taiwan e outro que vivia em um país nórdico, mas que era natural do leste europeu. Poucos brasileiros falavam inglês e os estrangeiros tinham somente o inglês como idioma comum. Minhas intervenções foram feitas tanto em inglês quanto em português, mas eu não fazia tradução das falas de um participante para o outro, ao invés disso, vi a construção de estratégias criativas de comunicação como uma tarefa de grupo e tentei ajudar o grupo no modo de lidar com esse dado. Penso que foi no terceiro dia que o grupo estava

se comunicando muito bem.

Particularmente me lembro quando o rapaz de Taiwan foi interrompido uma vez por uma brasileira que disse: ...não faço idéia do que ele disse, mas minha opinião sobre o assunto é..., e então, repetiu sem perceber (saber) o que o taiwanês havia dito! Foi realmente impressionante o que ela pôde fazer com isso! E então, três brasileiros bateram à porta, um era coordenador de um pequeno Grupo e os outros dois eram participantes de um outro Pequeno Grupo, seus grupos se tornaram tão pequenos que eles decidiram se juntar a nós. Pedi ao nosso grupo permissão para a entrada deles.

Naquele momento, duas linhas diferentes de conversação foram estabelecidas; uma em português dando boas vindas aos recém chegados e outra em inglês, criticando a entrada dos novos! A atmosfera grupal tornou-se "pesada" e a comunicação não fluiu mais como antes.

Como tentei lidar com os sentimentos de intrusão e o desejo de boas vindas aos recém chegados, o participante francês nos trouxe uma imagem que ainda está viva em minha memória, os recém chegados eram como que refugiados vindos de um país "destruído" (seu grupo anterior?).

Isso nos ajudou a manejar os sentimentos existentes no grupo e facilitou a comunicação também. De todo modo, mesmo com diferentes idiomas como inglês e o português, a comunicação dentro do grupo foi possível pelo fato do grupo ter trabalhado suas emoções de forma bem integrada. Desde que ansiedade aumentou cada vez mais, as diferenças de linguagem com a divisão dos grupos poderiam ter impossibilitado a comunicação, mas isso não aconteceu.

## **Sugestões para o próximo Congresso**

Houveram muitas sugestões para o aprimoramento da organização dos pequenos Grupos para o próximo Congresso. Muitos sentiram que, apesar dos nossos esforços em transmitir e clarear os propósitos dos Pequenos Grupos, uma maior explanação seria necessária. Percebeu-se também que uma maior divulgação e incentivo ajudaria na participação das pessoas.

Ambas as sugestões possivelmente se originem do fato que esta atividade não tenha sido uma característica dos Congressos da IAGP por muito tempo, o que em si significa uma mudança na cultura que leva algum tempo para ser incorporada. É interessante notar que próximo a cada sugestão feita, já faziam parte do que anteriormente nos propusemos fazer e que não havia sido relatado porque a experiência era nova.

Houve uma sugestão que vale pena ser levada em conta para a realização de futuros eventos internacionais: talvez possamos ter dois coordenadores

para cada \pequeno Grupo, com diferentes idiomas e oriundos de diferentes países.

## Experiências dos participantes

Convidamos os participantes dos Pequenos Grupos a também responderem ao questionário (dos participantes). Enviamos 830 e-mails extraídos da lista dos congressistas. Destes, 172 não chegaram por diversas razões, sendo que recebemos 170 respostas.

A maioria das respostas foram de participantes que tinham o Português como idioma principal. É possível que a caixa de mensagens do e-mail de muitos dos participantes de língua inglesa não tenha aceito (reconhecido) o e-mail que enviamos com o questionário. Também sei que muitos não o receberam. Este não recebimento é outro exemplo da dificuldade profunda que enfrentamos na estrutura e sistematização do cruzamento dos diferentes idiomas e culturas.

Em torno de 80% dos congressistas que responderam, foram participantes dos Pequenos Grupos.

Aqueles que não participaram, tiveram muitas razões para isso, como outras coisa a fazer, desinteresse, não queriam trabalhar logo cedo pela manhã, enfrentaram problemas com seus vôos internacionais, não compreenderam a proposta dos Pequenos Grupos. Alguns participantes desistiram pelo fato de seu pequenos grupo ser muito pequeno.

O problema dos grupos terem um tamanho “muito pequeno ou “ muito grande”, reverberou através do congresso. Um participante relatou seu descontentamento sobre o fato da estrutura do grupo não ser firmemente mantida. “Quando algum coordenador de Pequeno Grupo não comparecia a seu próprio grupo, o grupo que eu participava recebia mais novos membros. Isso tornou meu grupo mais parecido com um Médio Grupo do que com um Pequeno Grupo”.

De fato, a maioria de todos os coordenadores de Pequenos Grupos compareceram à atividade; os participantes é que não apareciam, o que mostrava quão confuso grandes congressos podem se tornar!

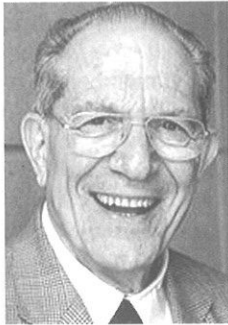
Alguns participantes escolheram não participar todos os dias por diversas razões, mas no mínimo sentiram que não estariam perdendo muita coisa caso não comparecessem.

Outra dificuldade foi que

# An Historic Overview of the IAPG: The Beginnings of IAGP and its Later Development

## Una Visión Histórica de la IAGP: Los Comienzos de la IAGP y los Posteriores Desarrollos.

Raymond Battagay (Switzerland)



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### Resumen

Este escrito nos da una breve visión histórica de la IAGP. Cuando el Primer *Congreso Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo* se organizó en Toronto, Canadá, en 1954, J.L. Moreno inició la formación del *Comité Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo*, que más tarde cambió su nombre a *Concejo Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo*. En el quinto Congreso Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo que se celebró en Zurich, Suiza, en 1973, el nombre fue cambiado de nuevo y nació la *Asociación Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo* (IAGP). Aproximadamente cada tres años desde esta fecha tiene lugar un Congreso Internacional en diferentes ciudades en todo el mundo. En la Reunión de la Junta Directiva que se celebró en el decimosexto Congreso Internacional, que se celebró en Sao Paulo, Brasil, en 2007, se decidió cambiar el nombre a *Asociación Internacional de Psicoterapia de Grupo y Procesos Grupales* para reflejar intereses más amplios de sus miembros. Será bajo este nombre que se celebrará el decimoséptimo Congreso Internacional en Roma. Además del principal Congreso Internacional, se han organizado también satisfactoriamente Congresos Regional del Anillo del Pacífico y Congresos Regionales del Mediterráneo, siempre atrayendo gran número de participantes. Desde 1973 un número de subgrupos se han formado para diferentes ramas de la Psicoterapia de Grupo y Procesos Grupales. El desarrollo de la IAGP ha sido posible solo por la comitiva de los miembros de la Junta

y los voluntarios.

### Abstract

This paper gives a brief historic overview of IAGP. When the first *International Congress of Group Psychotherapy* was held in Toronto, Canada, in 1954, J.L. Moreno initiated the formation of the *International Committee of Group Psychotherapy* whose name was later changed to the *International Council of Group Psychotherapy*. At the fifth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy held in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1973, the name was again changed and the *International Association of Group Psychotherapy* (IAGP) was born. Approximately every third year since that time an International Congress has taken place at different cities around the world. At the Board Meeting during the sixteenth International Congress held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2007, it was decided to change the name to the *International Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes* to reflect the larger interests of members. It will be under this name that the seventeenth International Congress will be held in Rome. In addition to the major International Congresses, Pacific Rim Regional Congresses and Regional Mediterranean Congresses have also been successfully organised, always attracting large numbers of participants. Since 1973 a number of subgroups have been formed for the different branches of Group Psychotherapy. The development of IAGP has been possible only because of the commitment of Board members and volunteers.

### The Early Congresses

The first Congress of Group Psychotherapy was initiated by J. L. Moreno in Toronto, Canada, August 12-20, 1954, in association with the Fifth International Congress of Health. There were over 300 attendees from Europe, North, Central and South America and Asia. At that Congress the International Committee for Group Psychotherapy was organised. It comprised 21 individuals from ten different countries who were charged with nurturing the collaboration of group workers internationally to plan the next international congress and prepare the way for the formation of an international organization.<sup>1</sup>

The Second International Congress of Group Psychotherapy (Stokvis, 1959) was held in Zurich, Switzerland, August 29-31, 1957, just after the International Congress of Psychotherapy, which had also been held in Zurich. The registration roll totalled 550, including 64 who had previously enrolled but were unable to attend and 15 persons who were only partly present. The

1 \*J. Bierer, UK; S.H. Foulkes, UK; H. Ezriel, UK; G. Heuyer, France; H. Hoff, M.D, Austria; \*W.C. Hulse, USA; L.J. Hut, Netherlands; E.E. Krapf, Argentina; S. Lébovici, France; K.R. Masani, India; \*J.L. Moreno, USA; F. Potts, Cuba; T. P. Rees, UK; E.J. Rosen, Canada; C.A. Seguin, Peru; \*S.R. Slavson, USA; A. Sunier, Netherlands; N. Waal, Norway; \*W. J. Warner, USA. Those names marked with an asterisk were on the Executive Committee of the International Committee of Group Psychotherapy.

registrations came from 34 different countries including Europe, North and South America, Australia and Asia.

As a young psychotherapist and group psychotherapist I was glad to meet Sam Slavson from New York, one of the most eminent group analysts of that time, at this conference. Sam was the founder of the American Group Psychotherapy Association and the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* in 1942 (of which I have been consulting editor since 1958). I also met J. L. Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, his wife Zerka, Wellmann J. Warner (USA), Berthold Stokvis (Netherlands), W.C. Hulse (USA), and Adolf Friedemann (Switzerland), as well as other well-known workers in the field such as S. H. Foulkes, one of the leaders of analytic group psychotherapy in the UK, Serge Lébovici, one of the eminent leaders of analytic group psychotherapy in France who also used psychodrama, and Joshua Bierer, the proponent of therapeutic social clubs in UK.

In Zurich, the International Committee of Group Psychotherapy, based on a proposal from Moreno, formed a provisional International Council of Group Psychotherapy to prepare for the International Society of Group Psychotherapy to become an organisation. The Council was to have three main functions that included: preparing a constitution for the projected International Association, defining the qualifications for membership and stimulating the development of organizations concerned with group psychotherapy throughout the world.<sup>2</sup>

At this Second International Congress of Group Psychotherapy in Zurich I was impressed by a general will to achieve international collaboration the personal tensions between the main protagonists within the American group psychotherapy scene. On the one hand there was Slavson, with his outstanding knowledge, his almost obsessional work drive, his strict observation of rules and techniques, his mastery in applying analytical principles to groups but also his sometimes, authoritarian attitude. On the other hand there was Moreno with his unlimited capacity for intuition, for dramatic acting out and enormous empathy but also his personal ambitions. These two men represented two different worlds that clashed. Moreno, with his manifold initiatives, was more active in the formation of an international body; Slavson was a more systematic worker in building up an international network of interested people in the field, which he did in combination with the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. But other researchers worked quietly and diligently

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<sup>2</sup> Official Report of the Second International Congress of Group Psychotherapy, in Stokvis, B. *Second International Congress of Group Psychotherapy*, Zurich, August 29 - 31, 1957, pp 591-596, S. Karger, Basel/New York, 1959.

within the International Society, especially Wellmann Warner from the US and Adolf Friedemann from Switzerland.

Work in the International Council continued. Moreno was the president. The first Vice-President was S. H. Foulkes, the second Vice-President, Serge Lébovici. Berthold Stokvis was Secretary and the Treasurer was Adolf Friedemann. Directors were Joshua Bierer, J.H. Schultz (the founder of autogenic training), Zerka Moreno and Wellman Warner. After the early death of Berthold Stokvis in 1963, I was asked to be an auxiliary secretary of the Council to help Adolf Friedemann in his task as Secretary, which he took over in addition to his office as Treasurer.<sup>3</sup>

### The Third and Fourth Congress

The Third International Congress of Group Psychotherapy took place in Milan, Italy, July 18-21, 1963. Thanks to the enormous efforts of Enzo Spaltro from Milan, this congress was a great success. Moreno, together with his wife Zerka, and in association with Friedemann and me, published the proceedings.<sup>4</sup> In this book Moreno was optimistic.

This volume clearly shows the growing tendency towards convergence between the various schools. The international trend dominates the field, even in the work of analytic orientation. Group Psychotherapy is striving to attain the status of a vigorous science in its own right. But in the work of many practitioners it is still immature and parasitic, leaning upon other disciplines for its concepts and terminology – psychoanalysis, group dynamics and existentialism, to name a few. The three mysticisms to be combated are: 1) psychoanalytic mysticism – the mysticism of the individual psyche as the sole source of group analysis; 2) group mysticism – when the group becomes a self-propelling entity independent of the individuals who comprise it; and 3) existential mysticism – when existential concepts are used instead of those gained through empirical investigation.

Moreno recognized that insight gained in the dual psychotherapeutic situation could not be blindly applied to the group situation and that the individual

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<sup>3</sup> On 8 January 1964.

<sup>4</sup> *Handbook of Group Psychotherapy* (Moreno et al., 1966)

in the group could not be neglected by addressing only the group as an entity. He also saw that a group ideology could never be as valuable as the knowledge gained through the empirical investigation of group psychotherapy.

At the Seventh International Congress for Psychotherapy in Wiesbaden, Germany, August 21-26, 1967, it was Sam Hadden and Alice Peters of the United States who organised a meeting 'to plan an international forum for discussion of the practice, research, training and problems of group psychotherapy in the respective countries of the participants' with the aim of promoting an international organization linked to the American Association. There was intense discussion and there were many tensions since some of the people wanted a more international association without any link to a national society.

The Fourth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy, organized by Raoul Schindler and his co-workers, took place in Vienna, Austria, September 16-21, 1968. Remarkably, the proceedings were readily available during the congress. The President of Austria, Dr. Franz Jonas, welcomed us. Group psychotherapy was recognized not only in the US and the UK but now also on the 'old continent'.

The International Council met for a Committee Meeting. Those present were among others, J. L. Moreno, W.J. Warner, G.K. Sturup, A. Friedemann, R. Sarro-Burbano, J. Bierer, Raoul Schindler, E. van Emde Boas, Zerka T. Moreno, Martensen Larsen, Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger, S. H. Foulkes, F. Knobloch. I took part as the assistant to Friedemann but other representatives of international organisations also attended the meeting. J. L. Moreno opened the proceedings and asked W. J. Warner to Chair. One could see that an enormous development had taken place. The International Council now had 130 members, spread over the entire globe. Stationery was printed that illustrated the extent of international participation. <sup>5</sup>At that meeting it was stressed that it would be unwise for the directors to make decisions alone without allowing the balance of the Council membership to voice their opinion. Any formal decision would be made by popular vote based on the discussion that day.

5 International Council of Group Psychotherapy

<p><b>Argentina</b> Dr. E. E. Krapf Dr. J. J. Morgan Dr. Arnaldo Rascovsky</p>	<p><b>Austria</b> Dr. F. Doleisch Dr. Hans Hoff Dr. Traugott Lindner Dr. L. Rosenmayr Dr. R. Schindler Dr.S. Schindler Dr. H. Strotzka</p>	<p><b>Belgium</b> Dr. G. Bastin Dr. René Dellaert</p>
<p><b>Australia</b> Dr. FW. Graham Dr. W.C. Wheeler</p>	<p><b>Bulgaria</b> Dr. Nikola Shipkovensky</p>	

<b>Brazil</b> Dr. W. Kemper Dr. Gilberto de Macedo Dr. Walderedo Ismael de Oliveira Dr. A.C. Pacheco e Silva Dr. David Zimmermann	<b>Canada</b> Dr. Miguel Prados Dr. E.J. Rosen	<b>Cuba</b> Dr. Jose Bustamante Dr. F. Potts
	<b>Ceylon</b> Dr. W.G. Wickremesinghe	<b>Czechoslovakia</b> Dr. F. Knobloch
<b>East Germany</b> Dr. B. Bauer Dr. Hans Szewczyk	<b>Chile</b> Dr. Ramon Ganzarain	<b>Denmark</b> Dr. C. Jorgensen Mr. O. Martensen-Larsen Dr. Paul Reiter Dr. G.K. Sturup
<b>France</b> Dr. Juliette Favez-Boutonnier Dr. René Diatkine Mme E. Kestenber Dr. Serge Lebovici Dr. Simone Blajan-Marcus Dr. Charles L. Pidoux Dr. Marcel Raclot Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger Dr. F. Tosquelles	<b>Egypt</b> Dr. S. M. Tawadros	<b>Greece</b> Dr. G.C. Lyketsos Dr. Anna Potamianou Dr. N.C. Rassidakis
<b>Hungary</b> Dr. Istvan Hardi Dr. Z. Boszormenyi	<b>Germany</b> Dr. R. Heiss Dr. E. Hohn Prof. Ernst Kretschmer Dr. D. Langen Dr. J.H. Schultz Dr. Hildebrand R. Teirich	<b>Iran</b> Dr. E. Tchehrazi
<b>Israel</b> Dr. H. Kreitler Dr. J. Schossberger	<b>India</b> Dr. Pandharinath H. Prah Dr. K.R. Masani	<b>Japan</b> Dr. Masaaki Kato Taro Ogawa
<b>Hawaii</b> Miss Rosie K. Chang	<b>Italy</b> Dr. Luigi Meschieri Dr. Giuan Franco Tedeschi	<b>New Zealand</b> Dr. Wallace Ironside Dr. R.W. Mediccott
<b>Mexico</b> Dr. Luis Feder	<b>Netherlands</b> Dr. C. van Emde Boas Dr. E. Carp Dr. G.W. Arendsen Hein Dr. L. Hut Dr. W. L. Meuring Dr. J. Spanjaard Dr. B. Stokvis Dr. Armand Sunier	<b>Norway</b> Dr. Finn Askevold Dr. Kjell von Krogh Mrs. Maison Mose Dr. Björn Urdal
<b>Malaysia</b> Dr. T.L. Green	<b>Philippines</b> Dr. Estefania Aldaba-Lim	<b>Puerto Rico</b> Dr. R. Fernandez Marina Dr. Luis Manuel Morales
<b>Peru</b> Dr. B. Caravedo Dr. C.A. Seguin	<b>Spain</b> Dr. Ramon Sarro-Burbano Dr. J.L. Marti Tusquets Dr. C. Ruiz Ogara Dr. R. Fernandez Marina Dr. Luis Manuel Morales	<b>Sweden</b> Dr. Hans Curman Dr. Goesta Harding Dr. Sven Larsson Nils Lindgren
<b>Portugal</b> Dr. V. Fontes Dr. Joao dos Santos		

Prof. Friedemann and Dr. Warner each prepared a constitution and Dr. Warner read his draft in English and Dr. Friedemann his draft in German. Dr. Foulkes translated Dr. Friedemann's version into English. It was suggested that the two constitutions be combined into to include the many overlapping points. I suggested that no one should be excluded from membership for not belonging to any national or international society and that membership should be open to all who are practising group psychotherapy.

S. H. Foulkes, originally from Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and forced to immigrate to England in the thirties, was, besides Slavson and Alexander Wolf in the US, one of the pioneers of group analysis. He was not only very active in the field of training young group analysts, but also very interested in establishing a constitution for the International Association of Group Psychotherapy. His wife, Elisabeth assisted him. He always wanted to build up an international exchange of qualified people. He founded the Group-Analytic Society (London) and had many disciples, among them Malcolm Pines, later the President of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy from 1980-1984.

The development of the constitution continued until the Fifth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy, which was held in Zurich, Switzerland, from August 19-24, 1973, organised mainly by Ambros Uchtenhagen (Zur-

<p><b>Switzerland</b>                      Dr. E. Bürren                      Dr. Harry Feldmann                      Dr. A. Friedemann                      Dr. Adolf Guggenbühl                      Craig                      Jakob. W. Hug                      Dr. Heinrich Meng</p>	<p><b>Taiwan</b>                      Dr. Eng-Kung Yeh</p>	<p><b>Turkey</b>                      Dr. Ihsan S. Aksel                      Dr. M. Sion</p>
<p><b>United Kingdom</b>                      Mrs.M.L.J. Abercrombie                      Dr. Joshua Bierer                      Dr. Donald Blair                      Dr. H. Ezriel                      Dr. S. H. Foulkes                      Dr. Maxwell Jones                      Dr. T. Main                      Dr. P.B. de Maré                      Dr. T. P. Rees</p>	<p><b>Thailand</b>                      Dr. Phon Sangsingkeo                      Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn</p> <p><b>USA</b>                      Dr. Robert S. Drews                      Dr. Helen Durkin                      Mr. James Enneis                      Dr. Martin Grotjahn                      Dr. Samuel B. Hadden                      Dr. Helen H. Jennings                      Dr. Maurice E. Linden                      Dr. David Mendell                      Dr. Jacob L. Moreno                      Mrs. Zerka T. Moreno                      Mr. S.R. Slavson                      Dr. Wellmann J. Warner                      Dr. Lewis Yablonsky</p>	<p><b>Union of South Africa</b>                      R.C. Albino                      Dr. L.S. Gillis</p> <p><b>USSR</b>                      Dr. D.D. Fedotov                      Dr. Aina G. Ambrumova</p> <p><b>Venezuela</b>                      Dr. Pedro Reyes                      Dr. Rafeal L. Araujo</p> <p><b>Yugoslavia</b>                      Dr. S. Betlheim                      Dr. Dimitrije Pivnicki                      Dr. Boroslav P. Stevanovic</p>

ich), assisted by Adolf Friedemann and me. Uchtenhagen did a marvellous job. Approximately 1300 people attended the Congress. <sup>6</sup> At this meeting the present International Association of Group Psychotherapy was founded by J. L. Moreno (USA), Zerka Moreno (USA), Adolf Friedemann, Raymond Battegay (both from Switzerland), Sam Hadden, Jay Fidler (both from USA), Malcolm Pines (GB), Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger (France), Roul Schindler (Austria), Anneliese Heigl-Evers, Grete Leutz, Heika Straub (all three from Germany). Sam Hadden chaired the meeting and the constitution was adopted. Moreno was able to attend the Congress, though already quite ill. He addressed a few words to the audience. After years of preparatory work it was a wonderful feeling to finally have a formal organization unifying group psychotherapists and theoretical workers from all over the world, *The International Association of Group Psychotherapy (IAGP)*. <sup>7</sup>

On May 14, 1974, J. L. Moreno died. His death represented a great loss for our association, for group psychotherapy and especially for psychodrama, which he had founded.

After plans failed to organize the next congress in Nice/France and in Madrid/Spain, the Sixth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held in Philadelphia, July 31 to August 5, 1977. The Programme Committee comprised Co-Chairs Jay Fidler (USA) and Malcolm Pines (London), the President, Sam Hadden (USA) and Treasurer, Zerka Moreno (USA).

Approximately 600 participants registered for this congress - not as many as hoped for because a month before the congress began there had been an outbreak of Legionnaire's Disease in Philadelphia, which had taken numerous lives. The programme was outstanding and contained symposia and section

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<sup>6</sup> *Proceedings of the Vth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy: Group Therapy and Social Environment* edited by S Ambros Uchtenhagen, Raymond Battegay and Adolf Friedemann. Hans Huber, Bern/Stuttgart/Vienna, 1975.

<sup>7</sup> The first Executive Board of the IAGP was composed, partly ad interim, by the following members: Honorary President: J.L. Moreno, USA; President: Samuel B. Hadden, USA; First Vice-President: Georg Vassiliou, Greece; Second Vice-President Anneliese Heigl-Evers, Germany; Treasurer: Zerka T. Moreno, USA; Secretary-General Adolf Friedemann, Switzerland; Hon. Asst. Exec. Secretaries: Anne Ancelin-Schutzenberger, France; Raymond Battegay, Switzerland; Executive Councillors: Conrad van Emde Boas, Holland; Malcom Pines, England; Raoul Schindler, Austria.

*Interim Board of Directors:* Joshua Bierer, England; Helen Durkin, USA; Jay Fidler, USA; William H. Holloway, USA; John J. O'Hearne, USA; David Mendell, USA; Vasso Vassiliou, Greece; Gretel Leutz, Germany; Heika Straub, Germany; S. H. Foulkes, England; Georg K. Sturup, Denmark; A. Uchtenhagen, Switzerland; Maxwell Jones, USA; William C. Powles, Canada; Luis Feder, Mexico; H. Collomb, Senegal; Eduardo Cortesao, Portugal; E. Franzke, Sweden; Rafael Moses, Israel; Klaus Hoeck, East Germany; Juan Obiols, Spain; Leyla Zileli, Turkey.

meetings on action, sociometry, composition and duration of group, nuances of the doubling technique in psychodrama, biofeedback training and group counselling, international discussion groups. In plenary sessions papers were read about group processes in youth cults, perspectives on the development of group psychotherapy in the last ten years in different countries across Europe and special focus groups. There was a congenial atmosphere at the Philadelphia congress allowing for much communication among colleagues.<sup>8</sup>

The Seventh International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held August 3-8, 1980, in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Congress Chair was Lise Rafaelsen (Copenhagen) and the Programme Committee Chair, Malcolm Pines. There were more than 1000 registered participants. The theme, *The Individual and the Group: Boundaries and Interrelations in Theory and in Practice*, was developed in plenary sessions by invited speakers, symposia and free papers on topics such as training, research and evaluation, deviant groups, self-help groups, family therapy, as well as workshops, demonstrations, experiential groups and international discussion groups.<sup>9</sup>

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8 At the General Assembly in Philadelphia the following members were elected to the Executive Board. President: Raymond Bategay, Switzerland; Past President: Samuel Hadden, USA; First Vice-President: George Vassiliou, Greece; Second Vice-President: Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger, France; Secretary-Treasurer: Jay W. Fidler, USA. The Executive elected Zerka T. Moreno, USA; Malcolm Pines, London; Ambros Uchtenhagen, Zurich as councillors. The Board of Directors were Helen E. Durkin, USA; Grete Leutz, Germany; John J. O'Hearne, USA, William E. Powles, Canada, Luis Feder, Mexico, William H. Holloway, USA; Henri Collomb, Senegal; Guilherme Ferreira, Portugal; Marti Tusquets, Spain; Raoul Schindler, Austria; David Mendell, USA; Guillermo Ferschut, Argentina; Fabrizio Napolitani, Italy; Paulo Marchon, Brazil; Johan Larsen, Netherlands; Didier Anzieu, France; Vladimir Hudolin, Yugoslavia; Murray Cox, England; Jakov Katwan, Germany; Pierre Weil, Brazil; Ada Abraham, Israel; A. S. Prado de Molina, Spain; Erich Franzke, Sweden; Mohammed Shaalan, Egypt; Carl Goldberg, USA; Juan Pundik, Spain; Hans M. Reijzer, Netherlands; Kohei Matsumura, Japan; Dean Elefthery, USA; Pierre Fontaine, Belgium. Three Committees were formed: the Advisory Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Membership Committee.

9 At the General Assembly, the following Executive Board was elected: Malcolm Pines, London was elected President. The Past President was Raymond Bategay, Switzerland. As the First Vice-President was Zerka Moreno, USA; as Second Vice-President Raoul Schindler, Austria; as Secretary-Treasurer, as before, Jay Fidler, USA; as Executive Councillors: Fabrizio Napolitani, Italy; Vladimir Hudolin, Yugoslavia; Grete Leutz, Germany. The Board of Directors was composed of Ada Abraham, Israel; Didier Anzieu, France; Giovanni Boria, Italy; Dr. Maxwell Clayton, Australia; Paolo Dias Correa, Brazil; Murray Cox, England; Luis Feder, Mexico; Guillermo Ferschut, Argentina; Pierre Fontaine, Belgium; Erich Franzke, Sweden; Francis W. Graham, Australia; Rollin Ives, USA; Ferdinand Knobloch, Canada; Karl König, Germany; Johan Larsen, Netherlands; J.L. Marti-Tusquets, Spain; Kohei Matsumura, Japan; Claude Pigott, France; William Powles, Canada; Marina Prado de Molina, Spain; Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark; Hans Reijzer, Netherlands, James Sacks, USA, Anne Schutzenberger, France, Alberto Serrano, USA; Ambros Uchtenhagen, Switzerland; George Vassiliou, Greece; Pierre Weil, Brazil; Marian B. Yeager, USA.

The *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Group Psychotherapy* were edited in two volumes by Malcolm Pines and Lise Rafaelsen with the title *The Individual and the Group: Boundaries and Interrelations* though the front pages failed to say that they represented the proceedings of the congress!<sup>10</sup>

Because of organisational problems, the Eighth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy could not be held as originally planned in 1983 but was held from April 22-27, 1984, in Mexico City. The Chair of the Organising Committee was Luis Feder, and Chair of the Programme Committee was Raymundo Macias, both of Mexico City assisted by Bernardo Blay Neto, Guillermo Ferschtut, Gretel Leutz, Elaine E. Goldman, Hindy Nobler, James M. Sacks, Claude Pigott, Alberto Serrano, Aaron Stein and J. Stewart Whiteley.

This congress gave us the opportunity to come to this part of the world for the first time. Our Secretary/Treasurer, Jay Fidler, did a lot to coordinate the efforts for this congress. Since Malcolm Pines was recovering from illness, as immediate Past President, I assumed this role again and chaired the first plenary session with Luis Feder and Raymundo Macias. There was a very rich scientific programme. Besides sub-plenaries, there were symposia and section meetings on psychoanalytic group psychotherapy, education and psychotherapy, the interplay between individual and group dynamics, different group conceptualizations, the relationship between empirical investigation and clinical research, theory and practice in group psychotherapy with borderline and narcissistic conditions. As there was a large international participation, Mexican colleagues were able to hear about different group approaches near to home. The papers read appeared in different journals afterwards as our very modest cash facilities did not make it possible to publish complete proceedings.<sup>11</sup> To

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10 Pines, M. and Rafaelsen, L. Ed (1982) *The Individual and the Group: Boundaries and Interrelations* Plenum Press: NY/London. Vol. 1 Basic Issues, The Family as Matrix of the Individual, Boundary Issues, Definitions of Boundaries, Clinical Perspectives, Therapeutic Community Perspectives and Practice, Psychoanalysis and Group Psychotherapy. Vol. 2 Clinical groups, group psychotherapy with children, adolescents, family and marital therapy, psychodrama, psychosis, training, and cultural aspects.

11 At the General Assembly the following Executive Board was elected: President Jay. W. Fidler, USA. Past President: Malcolm Pines; First Vice-President: Fabrizio Napolitani, Italy; Second Vice-President: Claude Pigott, France. Executive councillors elected were Luis Feder, Mexico; Guillermo Ferschtut, Argentina; Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark. It was decided that a regular Newsletter would be published so an editor was designated: Bo Sigrell, Sweden.

The new\* Board of Directors was elected: Günter Ammon, Germany; Fern Cramer-Azima, Canada; Bernardo Blay-Neto, Brazil; Juan Campos, Spain; Eugenija Cividini-Stranic, Yugoslavia; Ramon Ganzarain, Portugal; Raymundo Macias, Mexico; Roy MacKenzie, Canada; Hilarion Petzold, Germany; H.J.C. Ras, Netherlands; Nonna Slavinska-Holy, USA; Roger Snakkers, Belgium; Stuart Whiteley, England; Takashi Yamaguchi, Japan.

\* Members who were already in the Board are not mentioned.

plan the next congress an Arrangements Committee was formed with Eduard Klain (Yugoslavia) as chair. Eugenija Cividini-Stranic was nominated as chair of the Scientific Subcommittee.

The Ninth Congress of Group Psychotherapy in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, August 24-29, 1986 was, according to Grete Leutz's President's Message, published in the *Newsletter* Vol. 5, No. 2 November 1986, "This is the most international congress of this association. Participants from as far away as Argentina and Japan were enthusiastic enough to come in groups respectively of 50, and 35 members." And she added, "To you, dear congress participants (in total about 900), who in appreciation of this association have come from all over the world – from the Americas, Asia and Australia, from Africa, the Middle East and Europe – I wish to express on behalf of IAGP heartfelt thanks for your scientific and human contributions . . . The Chair of the program committee, Claude Pigott, and the committee members have collaborated in close cooperation with Eduard Klein and Ljiliana Moro of the Local Arrangements Committee to bring you so beautiful a program that it was difficult to choose."

In the opening ceremony Eduard Klein, President of the Organizing Committee (Croatia), the outgoing President, Jay Fidler, and the Mayor of Zagreb gave welcoming addresses. In the first plenary the next day, Claude Pigott spoke about *The Challenge of a Congress: The World as a Group*; J.W. Fidler about *The Ecology of IAGP* and E.J. Anthony about *Magic, Meaning, Motivation and Change within the Charmed Circle*. In the following plenaries, sub-plenaries, symposia, paper forums, roundtables, workshops and lectures focussed on a variety of themes that included *The Influence of African Myths in the Brazilian Group Psychotherapy* (B. Blay-Neto); *Where We Have Come from, Where We Are Going to?* (Leonardo Ancona, Raquel Berman, Howard Kibel, Grete Leutz, Claude Pigott, Malcolm Pines); *A Note on a New Paradigm about Anthropos and the Human Context* (George Vassiliou); *Narcissism as an Essential of Group Psychotherapy in a Fast Changing World* (Raymond Battegay).<sup>12</sup>

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12 In the General Assembly the following members were elected to the Executive Board: Grete Leutz, Germany (President), Jay Fidler, USA (Past President), Fern Cramer-Azima, Canada (President Elect), Alberto Serrano, USA (First Vice-President), Juan Campos, Spain (Second Vice-President), Giovanni Boria (Secretary-Treasurer), Italy. Executive Councillors: Bernardo Blay-Neto, Brazil, Ramon Ganzarain, USA; Eduard Klain, Yugoslavia. Eight Committees were confirmed: Membership Committee (Chair: Raquel Berman, Mexico), By-Laws Committee (Chair: Raymond Battegay, Switzerland), Nominating Committee (Chair: Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark), Site Selection Committee (Chair: Fern Cramer Azima, Canada), Local Arrangement Committee for the next Congress in Amsterdam (Chair: J.P. Jongerius, Netherlands). Program Committee (Chair: Stuart Whitely, United Kingdom), Institute Committee (Chair: Hans Reijzer, Netherlands), Liaison Committee (Chair: Yvonne Agazarian, USA,) Monica Zuretti, (Argentina).

## Becoming more Institutionalised

The reason for the existence of IAGP was repeatedly discussed at Board Meetings. Should it be a society that organises congresses or should it be a society that certifies people have the required qualifications to be group psychotherapists? It was always maintained that this association, by its structure, could not decide such questions. Rather, the IAGP must remain modest and restrict itself to organising congresses and to working with national or regional group psychotherapy societies in planning meetings to advance communication between group psychotherapists and group dynamics specialists throughout the world.

Since the beginnings of IAGP the election procedure has been under discussion. As it has been possible to hold elections only during the general assemblies at the congresses, it was difficult to ensure adequate representation. At the general assembly at the Copenhagen Congress it was agreed that elections should be by mail and the by-laws changed. The question of the establishment of a central office was also discussed. For many years Jay Fidler, with his assistant, Nancy Krivits, was honorary secretary/treasurer. Together they represented a nodal point of our network. Later, with secretaries or secretary/treasurers changing, there was no longer a permanent office. Since there were insufficient financial reserves, IAGP had to content itself with the office shifting all over the world wherever our secretaries or secretary/treasurers happened to live.

Most of the time IAGP was in a very precarious financial situation, dependent on profits from congresses and from membership fees. Suggestions about how to increase the membership (perhaps also membership fees) or to raise funds were frequent themes at board sessions. During these meetings we were always aware of the fact that the *Newsletter* was our most important communication link and the main benefit of membership between the congresses. We were very glad that Guillermo Ferschtut (Argentina), as Editor from 1981-1985 made successful efforts to develop it further. But we were also thankful

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During the election of the Board of Directors, an enormous change occurred: 24 members were elected after the same number had retired or had to retire because their term had ended. Here are the new members: Yvonne Agazarian, USA, Leonardo Ancona, Italy, Raquel Bermann, Mexico, Leif Braaten, Norway, Jorge Cappon, Mexico, C.L.M. Cornelissen, Netherlands, Guillermo Ferschtut, Argentina, Pierre Fontaine, Belgium, Joachim Gneist, Germany, Elaine Goldmann, USA, Werner Greve, Germany, Earl Hopper, UK, Heman Kesselmann, Argentina, Mario Marrone, UK, Ray Naar, USA, Ona Pela, Nigeria, Adülkadr Ozbek, Turkey, Claude Pigott, France, Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark, Max Rosenbaum, USA, John Salvendy, Canada, Raoul Schindler, Austria, Bo Sigrell, Sweden, Monica Zuretti, Argentina.

to Bo Sigrell (Sweden) who took over the editorship of our *Newsletter* in 1986.

Perhaps too much attention was paid to the by-laws. What input each member, and especially each member of the board, is ready to give to IAGP and to practice and research in group psychotherapy and group processes is perhaps much more important.

The First Pacific Rim Regional Congress of IAGP took place in Tokyo, Japan, 1987, October 9-11. It was co-organised by the Japanese Association of Group Psychotherapy by Prof. Masaaki Kato and his colleagues on the theme *Changes in the Individual During Group Psychotherapy*. It was an outstanding occasion to learn about group psychotherapy in Japan and especially about the fascinating work of Prof. K. Matsumura.

At a Board Meeting in Windsor (UK), Sept. 2-4, 1988, among other things we discussed a new category of membership for persons who have contributed meritorious services to our organisation through long and active involvement with our organisational activities. A title proposed was 'Meritorious Members' which was later replaced by the term 'Distinguished Fellow'.

The Tenth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy took place in Amsterdam, Netherlands August 27 – September 2, 1989. Chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee was P. Jongerius (Netherlands) and the Programme Committee, Stuart Whiteley (UK). 1200 registered colleagues from 32 countries participated. The programme comprised 230 sessions. Each day followed the same pattern. The morning began with a keynote speaker representing cultural, social, and political themes related to psychological processes in therapeutic groups and groups in society. As Whiteley writes in his report in the *Newsletter* of January 1990,

The remainder of the morning comprised reflective discussion groups and panels. Following lunch, participants could stroll ... through poster sessions, the Moreno exhibit, or visit the Playback and Spontaneous theatres. Following the afternoon workshops, the Contact Group provided a forum for continued discussion of the day's theme and allowed free exchange of members from all over the world.

The programme covered many themes including, *Aggregation/Massification: A Fourth Basic Assumption of Unconscious Process in Social Systems* (E. Hopper, UK); *Therapeutic Community Treatment of Severe Personality Disorders* (S. Karterud, Norway); *Dynamic Uses of the Inpatient Group* (H.D. Kibel, USA); *Unsatisfying Roles: Implications for Role Enrichment* (D.A.

Kipper, Israel); *Alienation Phenomena in the Initial Phase of Treatment in Short Term Group Psychotherapy*, (V. Menoutis, Greece); *Ethical Issues in Group Psychotherapy* (J.D. Moreno, USA); *Identity, Identification and Alienation in the Group-Analytic Process* (J. Ondarza Linares, Italy); *Multiple Mirror Technique* (A. Ozbek, Turkey); *The Three Pillars of Positive Psychotherapy* (N. Peseschkian, Germany); *Shame, Affect, Dynamics and Therapeutic Implications* (M. Pines, UK); *The Place of Values in Group Psychotherapy* (M. Rosenbaum, USA and R. Battegay, Switzerland); *Interaction Group and Narcissistic Personalities*, (R. Schindler, Austria).<sup>13</sup>

The Second Pacific Rim Regional Congress of IAGP took place in Melbourne, Australia, January 11-18, 1991. The main theme was *Rapprochement*. Ian Martin (Melbourne) was the chair with Sabar Rustomjee, Cecilia Winkelmann, Ethiel Tillinger, Oliver Larkin members of the organizing committee. Among the invited guests presenting papers were Patrick de Maré, Grete Leutz, Monica Zuretti, and Raymond Battegay. There was an excellent atmosphere but everybody was affected by the onset of the first Gulf War on January 17, 1991.

## Montreal

The Eleventh International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held in Montreal, Canada, August 22-28, 1992 in the Palais des Congrès on the theme

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13 The following Executive Board was elected: President: Fern Cramer Azima, Canada, Past President: Grete Leutz, Germany, President Elect: Alberto Serrano, USA, Vice-Presidents: 1st: Joan Campos Avillar, Spain, 2nd: Bernardo Blay-Neto, Brazil. Secretary: Stuart Whitely, UK, Treasurer: Giovanni Boria, Italy, Executive Councillors: Piet Jongerius, Netherlands, Claude Pigott, France, Monica Zuretti, Argentina, Newsletter Editor: John Salvendy, Canada, By-Laws Committee Chair: R. Battegay, Switzerland, Ethics Committee Chair: Max Rosenbaum, USA, Fellowship Committee Chairs: Bernardo Blay-Neto, Brazil, Grete Leutz, Germany, Liaison Committee Chairs: Yvonne Agazarian, USA, Monica Zuretti, Argentina, Individual Membership Chair: Giovanni Boria, Italy, Organizational Membership Chair: Raquel Berman, Mexico, Nominations Committee Chair: Earl Hopper, UK; Congress Scientific Committee Chair: Alberto Serrano, USA, Pre-Congress Training Workshops Sub-Committee Chairs: Roy MacKenzie, Canada, Anne Oakley, Canada, Canadian Host Organizing Committee Chair: Allen A. Surkis, Canada.

The new members of the Board of Directors were Jerzy Aleksandrowicz, Poland; Maxwell Clayton, Australia; Francesco Di Maria, Italy; Kamil Kalina, Czechoslovakia; Sigmund Karterud, Norway; Otto F. Kernberg, USA; Irene Lenz, Mexico; Jaak Le Roy, Belgium; Ljiljana Moro, Yugoslavia; Janine Puget, Argentina; Louis Alberto Py M. Silva, Brazil; Nuno Alfonso Ribeiro, Portugal; Max Rosenbaum, USA; Gerhard Rudnitzki, Germany; Allen Surkis, Canada; Ioannis Tsegos, Greece; Isaiah Zimmerman, USA.

*Love and Hate Toward Resolving Conflict.* As Prof. Fern Cramer-Azima in the President's Page of the Association's *Forum* Vol. 1 Number, 3 Autumn 1991 wrote, this title 'could not be more appropriate in view of the startling events of the Gulf War, the conflicts in Yugoslavia, the Balkans and of course the USSR. Confrontations in ideologies, leaderships and change reflect the underlying turmoil of the nations of the world.'

Under Fern's presidency and on her initiative at a preparatory meeting at Lisbon on Sept. 6-8, 1991 a reduction in the size of the Executive Board was proposed to the General Assembly of IAGP in Montreal. Several other innovations were also proposed including the introduction of a Consultative Assembly of Organisational Affiliates. This was the first formalised attempt to recognise the role of the organisational affiliates and to broaden and underline their growing importance in IAGP. A Governance Committee was formed, which was chaired by Fern Cramer-Azima during her tenure. She was later replaced by Dr. Isaiah Zimmermann.

In 1989, at the Amsterdam congress, Fern proposed the formation of an Ethics Committee and Max Rosenbaum became its first chair.

In view of the worldwide economic recession it was remarkable that more than 800 people attended the Congress in Amsterdam. The programme was very rich and offered both in plenary and sub-plenary sessions as well as in symposia outstanding occasions to hear about almost all realms of group psychotherapy and group dynamics as well as the political implications of group psychotherapy. The final congress plenary by Mr. Yves Fortier, QC and Former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations on *Conflict Resolution at the International Level* was memorable. He emphasized that,

Nations, like individuals, have dignity and deserve respect. As in psychotherapy, which leaves all parties to a conflict able to claim a victory, a 'win-win' solution is far more likely to be durable than a clear-cut decision which imposes on one side unbearable burdens ... . As modern day crisis between states emerge, the world must call on modern day techniques to assist in the search for solutions. While these techniques of dialogue, confidence building, respect for pride and dignity, are as old as man himself, they have been honed in recent years by members of your profession. You have proven that inner personal conflicts were amenable to peaceful de-nouement if the right atmosphere were created and the will to submit to analysis accepted...

The majority of those present were considerably touched by his confidence

in us as psychotherapists and group psychotherapists and many may have thought that we may be able to help to solve conflicts between ethnic groups and nations.<sup>14</sup>

On September 23–28, 1993 the IAGP organized, together with the Society of Psychiatry of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Department of Psychiatry, College of Medicine of the National Taiwan University, the 3rd Pacific Rim Regional Congress. Congress President was Chief of the Department of Psychiatry, Prof. Chu-Chang Chen. It was held on a very grand scale with numerous overseas contributors and made possible many valuable contacts with group psychotherapists from the whole region. The theme was *Interdependence and Moderation in Group Psychotherapy* derived from the Confucian Golden Mean-Chung Yung (equilibrium and harmony) philosophy.

In 1995, the *IAGP Yearbook of Group Psychotherapies* No. 2, edited by Stuart J. Whiteley was published. It presented a world overview of published papers on group psychotherapy and group approaches.

#### Buenos Aires

The Twelfth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from August 27-September 3, 1995 on the theme *Groups at the Doorstep of the New Century*. Almost 1500 people participated. Many highly interesting scientific contributions were given in different sessions and symposia. The discussions in large groups, at which hundreds of colleagues participated, led to engaged discussions, which will remain in the memory of all those who were present. This congress made it possible for a large number of group specialists to meet each other and present their work. It stimulated the exchange of different views and made it possible for IAGP to become known in South America. Registrants from foreign countries were

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14 Executive Board: President: Alberto Serrano, USA, Past President: Fern Cramer-Azima. President elect: Earl Hopper, UK, Vice-President: 1st: Monica Zuretti, Argentina, 2nd: Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark, Secretary: Stuart Whitely, UK, Treasurer: Isaiah Zimmerman, USA, Executive Councillors: Giovanni Boria, Italy, Allen Surkis, Canada, Takashi Yamaguchi, Japan, Forum Editor: Fern Cramer-Azima, Canada, By-Laws Committee co-chairs: Raymond Battegay, Switzerland, Isaiah Zimmerman, USA, Fellowship Committee Co-Chairs: Lise Rafaelsen, Denmark; Giovanni Boria, Italy, Governance Committee Chair: Isaiah Zimmerman, USA, Individual Membership Chair: Giovanni Boria, , Italy, Nominating Committee Chair: Gerhard Rudnitzki, Germany, Twelveth Congress Scientific Programme Chair: Monica Zuretti, Argentina,; XIIIth Congress Organizing Committee Chair: Janine Puget, Argentina. New members of the Board of Directors were Bernardo Blay-Neto, Brazil; Dalmiro Bustos, Argentina; Juan Campos Avillar, Spain; Chu-Chang Chen, Republic of China; Giusy Cuomo, Italy; Roberto de Inocencio, Spain; Halina Dakowska, Poland; Yujiro Isoda, Japan; Pieter Jongerius, Netherlands; David Kipper, USA; Benjamin Rippa, Israel; Jean Claude Rouchy, France; Sabar Rustomjee, Australia; Christer Sandahl, Sweden; Gabor Szonyi, Hungary; Saul Tuttman, USA; Estella Welldon, UK.

well received and welcomed with great generosity. From a financial point of view, the congress itself was not as successful as expected but IAGP received the benefit of many new members.<sup>15</sup>

At the Buenos Aires Congress the First Report on the responses to a questionnaire promoted by the Consultative Assembly of Organizational Affiliates (CAOA) of our association was presented. There had been five meetings of the CAOAs: Montreal (August 1992), San Diego (February 1993), Washington (February 1994), Heidelberg (August 1993), Taiwan (September 1993).

## London

The Thirteenth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held 23-28 August 1998 under President Earl Hopper and the Local Organizing Committee (Chair: Meg Sharpe) in London at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre. The theme was *Annihilation, Survival, Re-Creation* with approximately 800 registrants. The Pre-Congress Training Institute was co-chaired by Walter Stone (USA) and Marianne Wiktorin (Sweden). The Scientific Programme Committee was chaired by Hans Reijzer (Netherlands). Keynote sessions were, *The Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma and the Concept of 'Time Collapse'*, *Spécificité du Groupe Familial et Psychothérapie en Famille* (in French); *The Group and the Spirit of the Age*; *Ethical Anger; its Relation to Annihilation, Survival and Recreation*; *On the Nature of Hope; Survival and Survival Units in Human History*; *Exile - The Neurotic Solution of the Jewish People - a Study in Group Dynamics*.

Every day ended with 'The Large Group' conducted by Lionel Kreeger. Hundreds of people participated. The discussions were always heated and centred on the congress theme, around genocide, the Holocaust and the traumatising of survivors and their lives in an environment that often does not have the necessary understanding for those who managed to escape extermination. Afterwards I asked myself whether the task might not be too heavy for one group psychotherapist with a psychoanalytic orientation. It seemed to me that the moderator perhaps should have interfered when the group totally lost

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15 The Executive Board elected were, President: Earl Hopper, UK, Past President: Alberto C. Serrano, USA, President-elect: Roberto de Inocencio, Spain, Secretary: Christer Sandahl, Sweden; Treasurer: Sabar Rustomjee, Australia, Forum Editor: Fern Cramer-Azima, Canada. The new members of the Board of Directors were Frances Bonds-White, USA; Luisa Brunori, Italy; Cristina Enciso, Mexico; Guiherme Ferreira, Portugal; Jose Fonseca, Brazil; Rena M. Hatzidaki, Greece; Yuhiro Isoda, Japan; Frederic Jackman, Canada; Marcia Karp, UK; Dankwart Mattke, Germany; Hans Reijzer, Netherlands; Meg Sharpe, UK, Walter Stone, USA, L. Ono Sujoy, Argentina, Allen Surkis, Canada; Gerda Winther, Denmark; Isaiah Zimmerman, USA.

control in moments of excitement. Certainly everybody who participated in that group learned much about group dynamics and the emotions that may be mobilised through the amplifying effect of the large group milieu.<sup>16</sup>

In 1998 Juan Campos Avillar published in Spanish and English a fascinating book, *A History of the IAGP: Facts and Findings*.<sup>17</sup>

Ever since IAGP was founded in 1973 many people have attended congresses but only relatively few have become long-term members so recruitment has always been an important task. Despite the fact that since 1970 we have regularly published the *Newsletter*, (since 2000, called the *Globeletter*), and since 1993 the *International Forum of Group Psychotherapy* we have not succeeded in attracting group psychotherapists, group psychodramatists and group dynamics specialists to IAGP. Perhaps the economic crisis of the last years has contributed. Nevertheless, we can be proud of the highly interesting and successful international congresses as well as the multiple meetings we have co-sponsored and helped to organise.

The Fourth Pacific Rim Regional Congress was held from September 23-25, 1999 in Tokyo with the theme of *Training and Supervision*. The chair of the Organising Committee was Yunicho Suzuki. Others on the Committee were Yujiro Isoda, Raiko Tanaka and Hidefumi Kotani. Among the invited guests were Alberto Serrano, Hun Jin Choi, president of the Korean Association of Group Psychotherapy, Agnes Wu and Sabar Rustomjee.

## Jerusalem

The Fourteenth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held in the Jerusalem Convention Centre in Jerusalem/Israel, August 20-25, 2000. The theme was *The Spirit of Groups 2000: From Conflicts to Generative Dialogue*. The Scientific Programme Committee was co-chaired by Frances Bonds-White (USA) and George Christie (Australia). The Local Organizing

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16 Elections to the Executive Board for the years 1998-2000: President: Roberto de Inocencio, Spain, President elect: Sabar Rustomjee, Australia, Past President: Earl Hopper, UK, Secretary: Christer Sandahl, Sweden, Treasurer: Hans Reijzer, Netherlands, Forum Editor: José Fonseca, Brazil. Board of Directors: (only the new Board members who came for those who retired or whose term had ended): Kate Bradshaw Tavvon, Sweden, Hanne Campos, Spain, George L. Christie, Australia, Sandra Garfield, USA, David Gutmann, France, Howard Kibel, USA, David Kipper, USA, Moises Lemlij, Peru, Shalom Litmann, Israel, Leyla Navaro, Turkey, Junich Suzuki, Japan, Icami Tiba, Brazil, Marianne Witkorin, Sweden, Gerhard Wilke, UK, Agnes Chew-Chung Wu, Chair Persons Psychodrama Section: Peter Felix Kellermann, Israel, Jörg Burmeister, Switzerland. Chair Group Analysis Section: Göran Ahlin, Sweden.

17 Campos Avillar, J. (1998) *Una historia de la AIGP: hechos y hallazgos*, Plexus Editores: Barcelona, (ISBN: 84-605-8002-4).

Committee Co-Chairs were Shalom Litmann and Ben Rippa of Israel. The Co-chairs of the Pre-Congress Committee were Sandra Garfield (USA) and Peter Felix Kellermann (Israel). The whole programme gave room for discussion so that presented papers could be thoroughly examined. In the Large Groups the possibility for different ethnic groups to talk together was possible. Even so we could not reach much mutual acceptance in these sessions. Perhaps insight did occur but without long-term discussion a substantive resolution could not be found.

For each day a Keynote Speaker was invited. The first was Prof. Noam Sheriff (Israel) who was born in Tel Aviv 1935, studied composition and conducting in Tel Aviv, Berlin and Salzburg and Philosophy in Jerusalem. His title was *The Orchestra as a Social Micro-Organism, Past-Present-Future*. The next day Prof. Ashis Nandy (India) spoke about *Freud, Modernity and Postcolonial Violence*. He is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and bearer of many distinctions. Then Dr. Larry Hirschhorn, principal of the Centre for Applied Research (Philadelphia, USA), an expert in team dynamics, organizational development, and change, spoke about *Passion and Group Life at Work*. Prof. Eileen Barker (UK), Professor of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion at the London School of Economics, spoke about *Armageddon, Aquarius or Manchester United? Social Wombs and Spiritual Individualism for the New Millennium*. The Congress gave a marvellous overview of the theoretical and practical considerations of group psychotherapy used in different parts of the world.<sup>18</sup>

A great improvement in the administration of IAGP in this term was achieved when we started to use an 'Intranet' page of our website.

After the Jerusalem Congress there were several events in which IAGP participated including the Fifth IAGP Pacific Rim Regional Congress in Melbourne, Australia, January 24-28, 2001, the theme of which was *The Tyranny of Difference*. Co-chairs were Sabar Rustomjee and Richard Hallform. The Scientific Programme Committee was co-chaired by Sue Daniel and Oliver

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18 The new Executive Board: elected were President: Sabar Rustomjee, Australia, President elect: Christer Sandahl, Sweden, Secretary: Dankwart Mattke, Germany, Treasurer: Walter Stone, USA, Forum Editor: Luisa Brunori, Italy. Board of Directors (again I name only the new members – who replaced those whose term had ended or who retired): Carolina Beceril, Mexico, Jörg Burmeister, Switzerland, Luiz Cushnir, Brazil, Thor Kristian Island, Norway, Margarita Krikitou, Greece, Felix Mendelssohn, UK, Tomio Mijama, Japan, Hans Reijzer, Netherlands, Antonio Roma-Torres, Portugal, Haim Weinberg, M.A., Israel. The following members are Chairpersons of the Family Therapy Section: Richard Reposa, USA, Group Analysis Section: Göran Ahlin, Sweden, Organisational Section: Marianne Wiktorin, M.A., Sweden, Psychodrama Section: Sue Daniel, Australia.

Larkin. Organising Committee members were Robert Gordon, Diane Cornish and Liz Marks. Among the invited guests were Max Clayton, Felix de Mendelssohn, Yujiro Isoda, David Gutmann and Joseph Moreno.

The IAGP Mediterranean Regional Meeting in Zadar, Croatia, took place from August 29-September 1, 2001.

The Sixth Pacific Rim Regional Congress was held March 12-15, 2003, in Singapore. Chair of the Organizing Committee was Douglas Kong, who was also President of the local Organizing Affiliate Association.

The first issue of the new *Forum*, edited by L. Brunori and J. Burmeister, appeared in 2003. This journal replaced the previous publication with this name, which originally had been designed to include *Newsletter*-type material for our members' information. The new edition contained scientific articles that reflect the multicultural nature of our association.

## Istanbul

The Fifteenth *International Congress of Group Psychotherapy* was in August 25-29, 2003 in Istanbul, Turkey, preceded by a Pre-Congress in the marvellous Lütfi Kırdar Convention Centre. As Istanbul extends itself both into Europe and Asia, is bound together by bridges, and contains many historical structures from East-Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman times, the Congress theme was well chosen: *Crossroads of Culture: Where Groups Converge*.

Although many members expressed fear about coming to the Congress because of the second Iraq War and terrorism, there were more than 600 participants from nearly all continents. The programme was the outcome of hard work and collaboration by the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) of IAGP and the Turkish Association of Group Psychotherapy (TAGP). The Opening Session was Sabar Rustomjee's Presidential Address, on the theme *On Breaking the Shame Barrier: At the Crossroad of Culture*. She ended with, "In understanding the psychology of guilt, Sigmund Freud discussed in *Criminals from a Sense of Guilt* (Standard Edition 14, 332-333) the possibility of there being already present in the 'Pale Criminal,' a sense of guilt, long before the crime was committed." She asked "Can we, in our work as group psychotherapists attempt to explore a pre-existing sense of shame and cultivate a culture in which society can respond with attunement, rather than abandon with shame?"

Each day followed with a plenary session on a highly interesting theme. The first was Prof. Ýlber Ortalayli of the Faculty of Law, Galatasaray University, Istanbul, who spoke about *The Effect of Political Upeaval on Cultural*

*Evolution*. The next day was Prof. Franz Josef Radermacher, Professor of Mathematics and Artificial Intelligence, University of Ulm, Germany on *The Social and Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development*. On the third day Jonathan D. Moreno, (son of J.L. Moreno), Kornfeld Professor and Director of the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, spoke about *Undue Risk: Secret State Experiments on Humans*. The next day's plenary speaker was Laura Bonapaerte, clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst, Buenos Aires, Argentina on *Working with Victims of Human Rights Abuses: Words Are Not Enough*. On the last day, Prof. Sudhir Kakar, psychoanalyst and writer from New Dehli, gave a lecture on *The Time of Kali: Religious Violence in India*.

The days were long. There were paper panels, workshops, colloquia, experiential and supervision groups from early morning until late in the afternoon. Each working day ended with reflection groups for further discussion and working through. The social programme was also excellent. The cruise on the Bosphorus with Turkish specialities to eat were especially memorable.<sup>19</sup>

The IAGP Board also met during the Annual Meeting of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) in New York, February 2004.<sup>20</sup>

From September 1-5, 2004, the Second Regional Mediterranean Conference was organized in Athens by the Hellenic Association of Group Analysis and Psychotherapy in collaboration with IAGP on the theme *Olympism, Group-Transcultural Matrix and Brain Plasticity*. It was co-chaired by Margarita Kritikou and Vassilis Menoutis. It was not by chance that Athens was chosen for this meeting, just after the Olympics had taken place. We were reminded that this city had hosted the very first Olympic Games and was a birthplace of democracy, justice and theatre.

The rich Scientific Programme included: Olympics and Sports; War, Truce,

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19 The following members were elected to the Executive Board: President: Christer Sandahl, Sweden, Past President: Sabar Rustomjee, Australia, President Elect: Frances Bonds-White, USA, Secretary: Howard Kibel, USA, Treasurer: Jörg Burmeister, Switzerland. Board of Directors: Göran Ahlin, Sweden, Gregorio Armananzas Ros, Spain, Carolina Becceril Maillefert, Mexico. Kate Bradshaw Tauvon, Sweden, Bonnie Buchele, USA, Ta-jen Chang, Taiwan, Luiz Cuschnir, Brazil, Eva Fahlstrom, Sweden, Heloisa Fleury, Brazil, Luis Ernesto Fonseca Fabregas, Spain, Robi Friedman, Israel, Maurizio Gasseau, Italy, Einar Gudmundsson, Iceland, Pirkko Hurme, Finland, Thor Kristian Island, Norway, Douglas Kong, Singapore, Hidefume, Kotani, Japan, Margarita Kritikou, Greece, Francesco Di Maria, Italy, Dankwart Matke, Germany, Felix de Mendelssohn, Austria, Leyla Navaro, Turkey, Maria van Noort, Netherlands, Celia Riskin, Argentina, William Roller, USA, Antonio Roma-Torres, Portugal, Walter Stone, USA, Icami Tiba, Brazil, Haim Weinberg, Israel, Marianne Wiktorin, Sweden. Section Chairpersons: Family Therapy: Bernard Frankel, USA; Group Analysis: Jamie Ondarza Linares, Italy; Organizational Consultation; David Gutmann, France; Psychodrama; Manuela Maciel, Portugal; Transcultural; Vassili Menoutis, Greece.

20 See photograph in Globeletter September 2004.

Ethics, Philosophy; Group Analysis Matrix; Psychodrama Therapy, Sociodrama; Family Therapy - Phases of Life; Organizational Consulting; Transcultural-Political Issues; Therapeutic Community Research - New Technology; Psychodynamic Issues and Analysis; Loss – Psychotrauma; Stress – PTSD; Preventive Mental Health.

The Board Meeting was held in Aegina near Athens, where the Scientific Programme Committee Co-Chairs Heloisa Fleury and Haim Weinberg of the Sixteenth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2006 on the theme, *Groups: Connecting Individuals, Communities and Cultures*, reported on their preparations. It was agreed that for the first time the registration fees would be scaled so that people would pay fees related to World Bank economic ratings. As the president of IAGP, Christer Sandahl, said in his Annual Report 2004, “The next Congress (in Sao Paulo) seems to be proceeding in a very constructive and productive fashion. If I can trust my good feelings (and I usually can) we can look forward to a successful event in Sao Paulo”. His remarks correspond totally with my impressions. At this same meeting, Margarita Kritikou, Chair of the Membership Committee reported that since she took office in October 2003, many new members had been accepted. By the end of 2005 IAGP had 632 members, including 44 group memberships. We still need to increase our membership to create a large framework of contact and communication in our field.

### Changing our Name

The next board meeting was held in March 6-7, 2005 at the time of AGPA in New York. Almost the whole Board was present including two Past Presidents. The report of the secretary, Howie Kibel, had accomplished an enormous task during his time of office. We owe him many thanks for his organizational work and his perpetual readiness always to be at our disposal. It was during this term that we switched to Yahoo Groups and an Online Database System, Quickbase, was started with a mailing list for contact with members and former members.

The reports of all our sections showed great activity. A reported dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians was welcomed and emphasised that our association may also be able to further such contacts between groups of people living in tension. The discussion about publishing *Forum* and *Globeletter* indicated how important it is to have contact with members in this way but also how limited finances may restrict our ability to maintain these activities.

From August 6-8, 2005, a further Meeting of the IAGP Board of Directors

was held in Molde, Norway. Christer Sandahl in his President's report raised the question about whether the name of IAGP was still applicable.

When the IAGP was founded the psychotherapy scene was very different. Current psychotherapy has to a large extent developed within the medical/natural science paradigm. As group psychotherapists we see the pitfalls in this and the need to take social and humanistic perspectives into account when seeing our patients.

Martin Buber suggested that 'human beings become an *I* through *Thou*, Perhaps today we can say that human beings become an *I* through the *We* (or the group). I agree that we should add something to include social processes in our name. Christer's initial proposal was *International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Social Innovation*. I think that adding *and Social Processes* might be more accepted by social psychologists. There was also an important discussion about 'Ethical Orientation for Group Leaders and Guidelines for a Code of Ethics' on the agenda in Molde. The criteria for Distinguished Fellowship was also discussed and Distinguished Fellows that have since been created are, Raymond Battegay, Fern Cramer Azima, Jay Fidler, Anneliese Heigl-Evers, now deceased, Grete Leutz, Zerka Moreno, Malcolm Pines, Raoul Schindler, Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger.

On September 24-28, 2005, the Seventh Pacific Rim Regional Congress of Group Psychotherapy was held in Taipei, Taiwan, together with the 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Psychotherapy sponsored by IAGP and other organisations. There were about 200 registrants who participated in 15 workshops, 15 symposia, 73 paper presentations and 47 poster sessions. The Main Theme was *Containment with Courage in a Century of Challenges*. Congress Chair was Ta-Jen Chang and Scientific Programme Committee Chair was Hung-Jung Chang. Among the invited guests were Christer Sandahl, Weng-Shing Tseng, Ulrich Schnyder, Chan Master Sheng-Yen. Weng-Shing Tseng, President of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry, gave a two-hour outstanding presentation of transcultural global issues from various perspectives and included descriptions on variations of Oedipal conflicts in a number of Eastern cultures with clear diagrams taking into account the history of each region.

And thus I end my historic overview of IAGP, knowing that it is necessarily incomplete. I think that Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger could add many points from her vast knowledge of the history.

I had the great privilege to participate at the Sixteenth International Congress of Group Psychotherapy in Sao Paulo July 18 to 22, 2007. The keynote lectures and the many other presentations were excellent. The whole atmo-

sphere of the Congress was stimulating and gave occasion for worthwhile encounters and discussions in an international framework.

At the Board Meeting, it was decided to change the name of our Association to the *International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes* to reflect the larger interests of our members by including all interactional or social processes within or between groups in society. I wish IAGP a prosperous future.

## A Place to Stand *Turangawaewae*

### Un Lugar para Estar Parado *Turangawaewae*

Stephen (Teeps) Gladstone (Aotearoa New Zealand)

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Born in 1954 in Nelson, New Zealand, the sixth of ten children to a first generation 'Central Otago' dad of Scottish and Cornish descent and an Italian 'war-bride' mum from Faenza, Italy. I completed an apprenticeship as an engineer but also worked in the NZ Police, on an oilrig as a cook and other varieties of employment. At the age of sixteen I was whangai'd (adopted) into a local Maori family as the surrogate for their son who was drowned. I found him at the bottom of a cold, dark swimming hole. I carry his name, Dennis Te Kopa Kotua, and I wear his Korowai, cloak of responsibility. For the past ten years I have been employed by the New Zealand Corrections Department at the prison in Hawkes Bay. I worked as an officer for two years and then moved into psycho-educational and therapeutic programme facilitation. Working with inmates is fascinating. Email address: moochopper@actrix.co.nz.

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#### Editors' note

This paper was given as a very moving presentation at the NZAP Conference, Weaving our Living Stories, in Napier, New Zealand in March 2007. The conference was an innovative initiative, organised biculturally, that sought to bring a genuine encounter between Maori and Pakeha psychotherapists in Aotearoa, New Zealand. 1 The talk included Maori ceremonial and protocol, which is difficult to explain so we have decided to let 'Teeps' describe it for himself.

#### Abstract

New Zealand is relatively unique as a 'new' nation. We enjoy a strong Maori (indigenous) culture and an equally strong Eurocentric influence. Unfortunately, Maori are over-represented in prison by a multiple of five times their number in the general population. In my work, I have observed that there is a need for the clinician to 'earn the right', from a cultural perspective, to quickly build a strong foundation upon

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1 Pakeha: People from Europe

which a successful therapeutic relationship can stand. It is therefore of great benefit for the clinician to indicate to the client that he (or she) understands the dynamics and values of Maori Culture because they run parallel to the dynamics and values of the clinical practice. It is best explained as follows:

Maori will always identify and define themselves by reciting their geographical and familial factors by naming their:

Mountain (*Maunga*), the most significant feature of the landscape

River (*Awa*), which supports all life

Canoe (*Waka*), in which their ancestors travelled here hundreds of years ago

Locality (*Marae*), where local people and guests gather

Meeting House (*Whare Tupuna*), where the ethos of the ancestors is tangible

Tribe (*Iwi*), the larger group which can often be scattered, but united

Family (*Hapu*), their immediate family and support.

As a Clinician I arrived at the following understandings:

Mountain is their Therapeutic Foundation (Cognitive, Behaviourism, Gestalt or a blending of various disciplines).

River is the flow of therapeutic models and knowledge they employ in their practice.

Canoe is the means of their learning, e.g. University, school etc.

Locality is their place of practice.

Meeting House is their Therapeutic Environment wherein abide the ancestors of their practice.

Tribe is their therapeutic community, which could be international.

Family are those with whom they are closely aligned in practice and supervision.

## Resumen

Nueva Zelanda es relativamente única como “nueva” nación. Gozamos de una cultura Maorí fuerte (indígena) y de una influencia igualmente fuerte de Eurocentrismo. Desafortunadamente, los maoríes están sobre-representados en la prisión: cinco veces más en proporción, que los pertenecientes a la población en general. En mi trabajo, he observado que hay una necesidad del clínico de “ganarse el derecho”, desde una perspectiva cultural, de construir rápidamente una sólida base sobre la cual cimentar una relación terapéutica sostenible. Es muy beneficioso, por lo tanto, para el clínico demostrar al cliente que entiende la dinámica y los valores de la Cultura Maorí porque funcionan en paralelo con la dinámica y los valores de la práctica clínica. Se explica mejor de la siguiente forma; Los maoríes se identifican y se definen a si mismos, siempre recitando sus factores geográficos y familiares nombrando su:

Montaña (*Maunga*), la característica más significativa del paisaje

Río (*Awa*), que sostiene toda la vida

Canoa (*Waka*), en la cual sus antepasados viajaron aquí hace cientos de años

Lugar (*Marae*), por donde la gente y los huéspedes locales circulan

Casa de reuniones (*Whare Tupuna*), donde está tangible el ethos (origen) de los antepasados

Tribu( *Iwi*), El grupo más amplio o grande, que puede estar disperso a menudo, pero unido

Familia (*Hapu*), Su familia y sostén inmediato

Para un clínico, he llegado a la comprensión siguiente:

Su Montaña es su Referentes Teóricos (Cognitivos, Comportamentales, Gestálticos o la mezcla de varias disciplinas).

El Río es el flujo de modelos terapéuticos y conocimiento que emplea en su práctica.

La Canoa es los medios y el significado de su aprender, Por ej: Universidad, escuela etc.

El Lugar es el lugar de su práctica.

La Casa de Reuniones es su ambiente terapéutico en donde habitan los antepasados de su práctica.

## Introduction

To open I recite a chant to acknowledge the different deities from the world of Maori who have taken the time to share their presence with us and to guide us in this journey.

Following the chant, I recite my *Pepeha*, my Boast. It refers to:  
My Mountain, the first thing that is seen on the landscape,  
My River, the next thing that is seen, flowing down the mountain,  
The *Waka*, the canoe that carries me toward the Mountain and River,  
The *Iwi*, the name of the tribe or people, who are populating the *Waka*,  
The *Marae*, the Meeting House, inclusive of the piece of land in front of it,  
and last, as if it is of no consequence, I recite my name. I say this because I am not speaking for myself or from myself. I have brought my ancestors amongst this gathering. They stand behind me. I give this time over to them. They put out to you what you need to hear from them. I am nothing at this time. I am of no consequence. It is THEIR time to speak.

## Greeting

*Kia ora Ra Tatou!* Greetings to you all!

This 'talk' comprises four basic dimensions, three case stories lifted from my own experience, a descriptive analogy of how my model was generated, an overview of the practice model and an explanation of how the model might work for you and your clients.

### Three Stories

I begin with the three brief stories. To preserve anonymity, I have simply titled them *Tahi, Rua and Toru...*

"I am Tahi. I am Maori. I am a thirty two year old man and I have killed a man. My father, I have great plans about how I am going to kill him when I finish my life sentence. It's funny really; my sentence began long before I came to jail.

I can't remember my age when the drunken beatings began. Have you any idea how that feels for a kid? I thought that being Maori meant *whanau*, family, *Aroha*, love, *Kai*, food and fun. For me it was an electric jug cord, a lump of wood, being beaten and kicked and watching mum get hers when she tried to stop it.

After a really hard bash one day, when I was fourteen, I took my twelve-year-old brother and ran away again. My father caught us two days later and took us home. He bashed my kid brother and kicked him around the kitchen and then he threw him into his room. He belted my mum when she tried to stop him.

He looked at me and said, 'I warned you'. He grabbed me and tied up my hands and legs with a couple of his belts. I thought, 'He's going to do it. I don't believe it, he can't do this to me'. I kept thinking this as he threw me onto my stomach on the kitchen table. I struggled, but he was a tough man. He leaned all over me and held me down. I watched the cruel bastard select the bread knife from the rack. It was a 1970s type with the sort of pointed serrated edge. He grabbed my foot and started sawing through my leg, just above the heel. I found out later that the big 'bang' I felt in my whole leg was my Achilles tendon being cut through. When he finished, he picked me up and threw me into my room. There was a lot of blood. Mum put a wet tea towel on it and I just lay there for two days.

I understand the meaning of agony, inside and out. I will show you the scar the knife left, Teeps; it's still there. He was right when he told me my running days were over. I've never run since. My world is full of hate. What happened to me? Who am I Teeps?"

"I am Rua. I am a twenty-three year old Maori man. I remember spending more time living with my *koro* grandfather than with my parents. He taught me lots of neat stuff about eeling, the land, the forests, Maori culture and our language. When I was seven I had to go back to my parents and stay with them full time. It seemed O.K. but they were *piss-heads*, drunkards and so were most of their mates. I was eight years old when I was raped for the first time. He was a close family friend. I wasn't sure what to do, so I did nothing.

He told me not to tell anyone, and that's how it stayed for the next six years. I grew to think that it was normal, but I didn't like it at all. Then, when I was 14 years old, I found out that it was all wrong. It was all wrong. He tried to do it again and I attacked him. Soon after that, he and his family moved away. But I was stuck. I had six years of being raped by that bastard and it made me feel worse every day. I felt so ashamed, so *whakama*. I couldn't talk to anyone. I brewed on it. I was a volcano and when I was sixteen I exploded. I followed a woman into her house. I walked straight in. Her family was home, a husband and two children. I shut the kids in a bedroom, bashed the man and tied him up and I bashed and raped the woman. I did it because she was the same color as the bastard that had raped me for six years. Can you believe that, Teeps. What have I done?"

I phoned Rua's mother near the end of his sentence, to check on his granddad's health. She knew that Rua and I were close, so she said, "Before he gets out, ask him about the beatings and burns his father gave him. And that's not the half of it. His aunties used him sexually also and his father kept him locked in a cupboard for most of six years. Talk to him about that stuff". To my shame, I couldn't do it. Rua still carries his burden.

I first met Toru, a sixty eight-year-old convicted pedophile, nine years ago. He was, and still is, an incredibly knowledgeable man in the world of *Tikanga* Maori. His expertise in advising both Maori and non-Maori on matters of lore goes all the way to the top. Raised by his grandparents in the traditional dirt floor, no power environment, he was kept from going to school, instead, being taught an enormous amount about the world of Maori. Unfortunately, Toru, at a young age, was initiated into the cultural practice of *kai-whiori* or *ngau-whiori*. It is the situation whereby a selected grandchild is used as a sexual partner by a grandparent, in this case, his grandmother. *Kai-whiori* literally means 'to devour one's own tail', the parallel being the grandparent feeding on the grandchild.

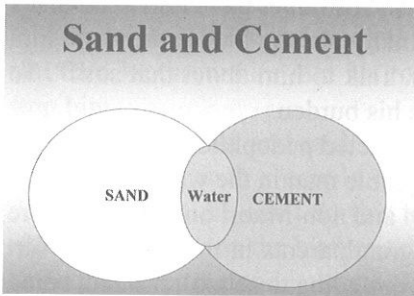
Toru lived like this for many years and held close a cultural expectation that he could repeat the cycle when his time came. He did. Three of his granddaughters bear the wounds. There may be even more. Sadly, any mainstream rehabilitation offered to Toru could not cater for his demand for cultural sensitivity and a protected environment. Nor could any cultural provider come anywhere near to him in *Matauranga* thereby negating any form of cultural redress for his offending. To add to the dilemma of his accepting responsibility for his actions, he has been wholeheartedly and unconditionally welcomed by a church that reinforces his denial by telling him, "Only God can judge you. In our church you have not sinned". Toru has been in the community now for three years. I sit and talk with him often. I fear, but I'm not sure about what

or for whom.

I will leave you to sit with those stories for a while, and come back to them later.

## When Strength comes from Mixing Two Ingredients Together

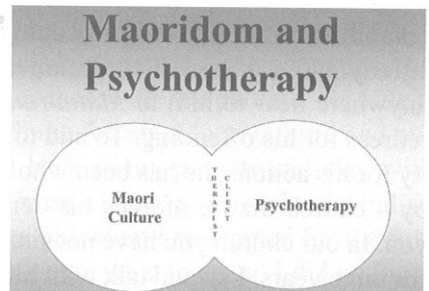
Several months ago, I was hand mixing some concrete to lay a small foundation. I observed that the sand and cement, dry mixed together in the wheelbarrow still remained separated. With the addition of water this mixture created a new and powerful substance that, even after the water has evaporated, is laid as a strong foundation for building upon. The water, although no longer present, has left elements of itself behind to strengthen the bond. I grabbed a pen and the cement bag and started drawing and scribbling. I drew two



conjoined circles representing Maori Culture and Psychotherapy. But what was the catalyst that could bind these two worlds together? The question is answered by a *Whakatauki* Maori proverb, *He aha te mea nunui o to Ao nei*, what is the most important thing of this world, *he Tangata, he Tangata, he Tangata*, it is people, it is people, it is people. It is PEOPLE who bring cultures together.

So, the two cultures need to find a place

to meet and trust each other but I wondered, "What is the solid foundation they stand on?" What elements of themselves do they leave behind and what do they take with them? At that moment, I realised that there was a need for a practice model wherein the two cultures could stand safely and respectfully in the same place and understand each other. What I was looking for were powerful and visible processes from each culture that not only ran parallel to each other but carried sufficient integrity to work together AND fulfill the requirements of developing a singular and strong platform which linked the two cultures. The response was quick. The *Powhiri/Wananga* dynamic from the Maori culture and the Therapeutic Relationship dynamic of psychotherapy were the two processes that made them-



selves visible and volunteered to support me in my search to develop a viable model. I logically started at the beginning of each of these processes, 'First Contact', and watched them unfold. Please walk beside me on this *Ara*, this path through both worlds.

## First Contact

Traditionally, prior to the *Powhiri* (meeting), runners would approach the *Manuhiri* (visitors) a long way out and ascertain who they were and where they were from. Even today, before the *Powhiri* commences, the *Tangata Whenua* (local people) engage the *Manuhiri* in their own subtle manner to ascertain the appropriate manner in which to conduct the *Powhiri*. In the therapeutic Relationship, the answers to the questions, "Who are you?" and, "Where are you from?" are gained often through referral or appointment and can be supplemented by file notes or detail given at the time of appointment.

What is common to both is that 'First Contact' is largely a vicarious and important precursor to initiating a *Powhiri* or a Therapeutic Relationship. The next phase is the call of the *Karanga*, or the call of the Therapist, in both cases, to attend a '*kanohi ki te kanohi*', or face-to-face event.

The *Karanga* is the first voice the *Manuhiri* hear, and unique to Maori, it is always that of a woman. It reaches out over the *Manuhiri*, extending over them the *Tapu* and *Kawa* of the *Marae*. After hearing this call, the *Manuhiri* begin the walk on to the *Marae*. At this initiating stage of the therapeutic relationship, the call has gone out to the client and they arrive at the reception or waiting area of the practice. At this time, they are held under the Code of Ethics, or Practice. When they are called, they move toward the therapeutic environment. It is interesting to note that in both cases, a heightened state of emotion exists within the *Manuhiri* and the client. They are about to be challenged.

The *Manuhiri* are confronted by the *Wero* (challenge), at the gate of the *Marae* (threshold) and the *Take* (the issue to be discussed) is laid down on the ground in front of them. Then the *Manuhiri* singularly pick it up. It is a sign of acceptance that they intend to open the way for them to continue their progress forward. Non-acceptance would be a stepping back from the *Take* and reversing the process with the *Manuhiri* leaving the area to return home without addressing the issue.

## Accepting the challenge

At the time of laying down the *Take*, the *Wero* (the physical manifestation of the challenge) is exhibited. In this moment, what is known as the *Ihi*, the *Wehi* and the *Wanawana* become tangible and necessary dimensions in the perceptions of the *Manuhiri*. The *Ihi* is the feeling that the *Kai Wero* (challenger) carries in himself at such a moment of potential, where a new and unknown relationship is about to be initiated. It is one of awe and thrill, and in Maoridom, it is openly and intentionally displayed to the *Manuhiri*. The *Wehi* are the response emotions that the *Manuhiri* hold in the face of the *Wero*. They are typically ones of excitement, trepidation, anxiety, arrogance, fear, confidence, pride and others. They serve to shore up the intention of the *Manuhiri* in their role of acceptance. The *Wanawana* is the emotion and intensity of all present, combining the *Ihi* and the *Wehi* into a single dynamic as an entity in itself. The *Wanawana* imbues itself into the whole of the occasion and is shared by *Tangata Whenua* and *Manuhiri* alike.

With these explanations in mind, consider the phenomena of Transference, Counter Transference and Group Dynamics. It is interesting to note that Maori have practised this ritual for hundreds of years and are intimately aware of the dimensions within it. For the Client, to move on with his intention to meet the therapist, he is confronted with the anxiety of approaching the therapeutic threshold for the first time. The question is generally asked, "What can I do for you?" and so the issue at hand is identified and laid out before the client and accepted by him. The way is now open for dialogue and forward movement.

Together, the *Manuhiri* and the client begin to talk about broader and finer aspects of engagement in the following way. First the *Manuhiri* walk on to the *Marae* and seat themselves on the *Pae* (*Marae* seating) and the *Whai-korero*, speaking begins. The *Kawa* (rules) are more firmly established at this time. *Marae* protocols are clarified. The process of *whakawhanaungatanga* seeks to set the *Manuhiri* at ease by identifying as many links as possible between them and the *Tangata-whenua*. References to the *Take* are made, and after all the requirements of this first phase of talking are completed, the more tactile ritual of *Hongi*, the touching together of forehead and nose at once, is performed. For the client, seated in the therapeutic environment, the Code of Ethics is established, the protocols of engagement are set, and a relationship is initiated which fosters ease, openness and honesty. Reference is made to the issue, and acceptance that further talking is needed.

In both cases, the initial relationship is established and further and deeper engagement is agreed. In *Te Ao Maori*, the world of Maori, the above process may take hours to complete but generations ago, it could have taken two or

three days. In Psychotherapy, it can take weeks, or months, to establish a relationship which is strong enough to take to a deeper level. And so we move on, into the *Wananga* or deep therapeutic relationship.

## The Meeting

The *Wananga* (discussion/learning process) is a difficult process to describe. It is alive with many dynamics and energies that serve to attain movement toward a successful conclusion. The deep, intense Therapeutic relationship is also a difficult process to describe. It is alive with many dynamics and energies that serve to attain forward movement toward a successful conclusion. The *Whare Tupuna* or Meeting House, is always symbolic of an Ancestor. In this space, where we now sit, is where the very valuable exchanges take place. It is where wounds are examined and attended to, where there is laughter and weeping, where there is talking and silence and through it all, there is healing. In every one of these dimensions, there is healing. This is the realm of *Rongomatane*, the bringer of peace. It is the realm of the therapeutic relationship in the most potent of therapeutic environs, inside the *Whare Tupuna*, inside the body and soul of humanity.

## Concluding the Encounter

As we will always come to do, we arrive at a respectful conclusion. We review all the work covered and revisit the events and learning. We acknowledge the energy of all those who have been involved in the intervention. We validate the learning and the movement of energies. We thank each other for the respect and trust that we have shown each other. We close, with a *karakia* (a prayer) or a 'thank you'. But what can this model give us? Simply, a strong place to stand where we can be joined by and to Tahi, Rua and Toru.

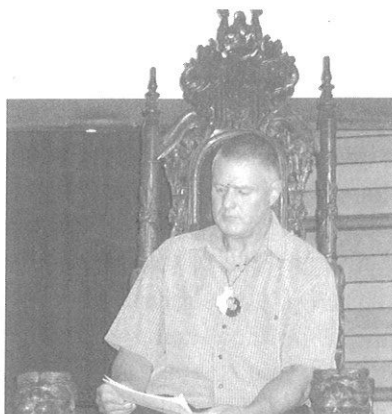
Tahi is too *whakama* (shamed) to talk with Maori Health Providers. He has no faith, based on past experience, that he will get his *whanau*, *aroha*, *kai* and fun through his culture. But also, he is sceptical that non-Maori are able to meet him at a cultural level that can recognise who he is as a Maori man and show understanding of his culture.

Rua, although now less volatile, is still a man struggling with his sexual abuse issues, trauma through violence, and intense anger toward his *whanau*. He too, feels his place to stand needs to be recognised and understood by whomsoever it is that eventually attempts to help him. At this stage there is nobody who can stand and talk *kanohi ki te kanohi*, face to face, on a firm

foundation, with Rua.

Toru will not 'lower himself' to talk with *Iwi* providers. Past attempts have seen him gain cultural dominance easily through *Whakapapa*, genealogy and *Matauranga*, Cultural Knowledge. He would be best suited to a therapist who can earn the right to stand beside him using a model such as this as a foundation of engagement, and building the relationship on Eurocentric models, hence removing the catalyst for Power and Control from the client. He needs to be drawn away from *Te Ao Maori*, the world of Maori, because that is where his justification, in this case, *Kai Whiori*, literally, 'eating one's own tail' is embedded. Who, among you, are ready for this *Wero*, challenge? This is what

I offer you for your consideration. I see it as a strong Place to Stand.



### **This is the real challenge!**

Outstanding people of the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists, it is often said that we each are apportioned fifteen minutes to prove our worth in our lives, fifteen minutes on the stage. This conference, in your lives, is YOUR fifteen minutes. What are you going to do with it? Our cultures are in need of each other.

Imagine the difference your practice could make if you could safely reach those in Maoridom who are in need and there are many. Imagine how exciting it would be to introduce the essence and dynamics of *Te Ao Maori* to Eurocentric models. Imagine how they could enhance each other. Imagine how we could grow and research our own models and employ conventional and cultural elements to create world firsts and defyingly successful outcomes. To be able to meet and talk in a place that is safe for all is a key to the door to generations of Transpsychocultural models and practice.

I humbly lay this *Wero* at your feet. For *Tahi*, for *Rua*, for the potential victims I fear that Toru may still create, especially for the victims. I beg you, please, walk beside us, help us. Pick up this challenge.

At the conclusion of this presentation, in a manner fitting to the traditions of Maori culture, I performed a *haka*, which was not a challenge but a celebration of the voice of my ancestors being heard through the presentation of this model. It is called '*Nga Atua Maori*' and pays respect to the elements that Maori hold in high esteem.

# The Use of Large Groups to Address Cultural Differences in the Psychotherapy Community in Aotearoa New Zealand <sup>1</sup>

## El Uso de Grupos Grandes para Abordar Diferencias Culturales en la Comunidad de Psicoterapia de Aotearoa Nueva Zelanda <sup>2</sup>

Margot Solomon (Aotearoa New Zealand)



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### Resumen

Este artículo se ocupa de experiencias grupales en la Comunidad de Psicoterapia de Aotearoa Nueva Zelanda como estudio de casos en temas emergentes relacionados con la cultura, la identidad y los procesos de los grupos grandes. El grupo grande establece un contexto relacional socialmente diferente donde se hace posible construir nuevas relaciones personales en el ámbito socio-político, así como aproximarse y confrontar el dolor de los individuos y grupos minoritarios que bloquea el pensamiento en el ámbito de las posiciones divisorias en la sociedad. Este es el tipo de trabajo que realizan los psicoterapeutas en Nueva Zelanda.

1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the VIII Summer Academy of the DAGG and IAGP: Groups between Worlds and Cultures, Granada 2007.

2 Este trabajo fue presentado anteriormente en la VIII Academia de Verano de la DAGG y la IAGP: Grupos entre Mundos y Culturas, Granada 2007.

### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on large group experiences in the psychotherapy community in Aotearoa New Zealand as case illustrations for the themes that emerge relating to culture, identity, and large group process. The large group works to establish a new socially relational context where it becomes possible to build new personal relationships in the socio-political domain; to sit with and confront the pain that is held by the individual and the minority group and blocks thinking outside divisive positions in society. This is the work that psychotherapists in New Zealand are doing.

### **Introduction**

The human condition can be thought about from many different perspectives. When thinking about groups, and in particular large groups, we humans tend to struggle to stay with ourselves as individuals as well as the group. Significantly the father of group analysis (S. H. Foulkes) argues

one of the surest observations one can make is that the individual is preconditioned to the core by his community, even before he is born, and his personality and character are imprinted vitally by the group in which he is raised (Foulkes, 1966, p. 152).

Another group analyst says

any group or community is inevitably vexed by the problem of our ultimate inability to gain access to the 'other'. The 'other' is always alien, irreducible and incomplete, and therefore unknowable as a whole (Oakley, 1999, p. 7).

Thus culture impacts each individual to the core of her being. In this paper I want to explore the importance of culture in my country and the difficulty of becoming conscious of the deeply embedded processes we engage in as individuals and as a society in relation to the "other".

### **Culture in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The culture that I grew up in attempted to be homogeneous. Following the Second World War there was an incredibly strong drive for everybody to be the same. There was no acknowledgement of the different cultures - a denial of the different ways in which each culture experienced the world. In Aotearoa we thought of ourselves as better than the Australians who were racist and

treated their indigenous people so badly. There was no race problem in our country. Māori people were well integrated into New Zealand society. What these assumptions totally ignored was the marginalisation of Māori culture, language and people. There was a problem and there still is. Our Māori people are the biggest users of the social services, the prisons, and mental health agencies. Our Māori people have been decimated in numbers. From having been the majority group 150 years ago, they now form 10% population.

One way to consider these dissonances is from the perspective of the social unconscious. Hopper (1999) talks about the social unconscious as,

... referring to the existence and constraints of social, cultural and communication arrangements of which people are unaware. Unaware, in so far as these arrangements are not perceived (not 'known'), and if perceived not acknowledged ('denied') and if acknowledged not taken as problematic ('given'), and finally not considered with an optimal degree of detachment and objectivity (p. 113).

In my growing up there was no perception of a race problem. In fact New Zealand was celebrated as a model society in terms of race relations. It was considered an achievement that Māori were clearly 'integrated' into New Zealand Pākehā society. There was often reference to how badly the colonisers continued to behave across the ditch (in Australia). Gaining more perspective on this came slowly, gathering momentum in the 1970's and 1980's, which marked the beginning of a Māori renaissance.

Nowadays we New Zealanders call ourselves bi-cultural, by which we mean acknowledging Māori in New Zealand as the First People (or *tangata whenua*, the people of the land). The national psychotherapy organisation (NZAP) and the university where I work (AUT University) both acknowledge this premise. We attempt to honour the Treaty of Waitangi, which is the document signed in 1840 on which we base our values concerning the relationship between the indigenous people (Māori) and settlers (commonly called Pākehā). It has only been over the last 30 years that there has been a growing active awareness and recognition (in the colonisers) of the importance of the treaty and thus an attempt to work with the document and the meaning that it has for Māori and Pākehā. In the previous 130 years Māori had significantly almost lost their language, most of their land and treasures, and their *mana*.

The Treaty of Waitangi *Te Tiriti O Waitangi* was written down twice - in Māori and in English. The meaning was different in each language. Neither Māori nor Pākehā understood what was written in the other language. There

are three articles and two where the meaning varies. The first in English gives the Queen of England sovereignty (total power over) while the Māori version gives the Queen governance. (take care of). The second article in English gave Māori possession of their land, while in Māori, they were confirmed and guaranteed 'te tino rangatiratanga' —the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship—over their lands, villages, and all their treasures. In fact the British didn't even honour the English version of the treaty! The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 by the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. The Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry charged with making recommendations on claims brought by Māori relating to actions or omissions of the Crown that breach the promises made in the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>3</sup>

As a profession psychotherapists have made a commitment (see Code of ethics NZAP p32 code 3.1 - 3.6) to honour the Treaty.<sup>4</sup> This is being worked on by having committees to specifically facilitate the dialogue between the cultures and through large groups held at our annual conferences. Regionally Auckland has taken the initiative to have regular hui for Māori and Pākehā separately and for both together. The school of psychotherapy at AUT has the same commitment, which made manifest through a weekly large group and an annual hui on a marae.

I co-conducted the large group at the university for 5 years. We called the group the community kōrero, (kōrero means to speak, news, narrative). It is a weekly group with 40- 60 people present. We meet for an hour in the whānau room. It is a large classroom but there are no chairs. It is set out with mattresses around all four walls. The whānau room has protocols in accordance with Māori tradition. "Whānau" means close family in Māori. It is a room put aside for Māori or when the focus of study is Māori. Membership of the group is compulsory for all psychotherapy students in training. The purpose of the group is to be authentically oneself, and to work together to come into relationship with each other in the group and to use the space to reflect on our experience of being part of a bi-cultural nation. The conductors approached this by combining the traditional Māori protocols with group process. (The

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3 The two key principles are partnership and active crown protection of Māori interests. Partnership, although not explicitly stated in the Treaty, is a recognition of the exchange made between British and Māori in article one and two of the treaty; both parties required the concession of the other. Active protection, again words not found in the Treaty, is recognition that the Crown's authority under the treaty was the result of an exchange with Māori, and that exchange required the crown actively to protect the interests of Māori with the authority ceded to it.

4 Clause 3.1: Honour the Treaty. Psychotherapists shall respect the values and beliefs of the Tangata Whenua and seek to determine how the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi can influence and guide the practice of psychotherapy.

large group, group analytic style and the Hui, Māori style). The way that that naturally occurred in the group was that we had turns of starting the process – taking week about. The Māori co-leader (Russell) would always start with a mihi (introduction) and karakia (prayer) and I would always start with a reflection about what I saw had been happening in the group or issues that I felt that were being held (this is different to what I would do in other settings).

Our different styles of leadership reflect our life experiences and our cultures. From Russell's perspective the Community kōrero is a Hui. Hui can be very formal, using traditional protocols that follow the kawa (particular custom) of the Marae, and the tikanga (spiritual meaning) of the iwi (tribe). There are ritualised protocols for meetings held on the Marae. Speakers stand and say a mihi. They acknowledge the source of life, the elements, their ancestors, the elders, the place, the hosts. This gives them strength, tūrangawaewae- a place to stand and connects them to the earth -Papatuanuku, and spirit - wairua, and to family - whānau. The speech has a key point, or meaning, which is elucidated through metaphor and reference to Māori mythology. Speakers finish with a waiata (song). Russell has used the principles outlined above when he opens the community kōrero. Mostly he has started with a mihi, and at times he has translated that, while at other times he has not. It has been hard sometimes to hold his culture in the presence of the dominant majority of Pākehā. In any given year there may be only 2 to 5 people who identify as Māori and only one who speaks fluently in Māori in the group. Māori tradition is that support of whānau is central to all, and so I feel the weight of what Russell has to hold.

My perspective is different. The protocols of the large group are at times at odds with the protocols of Hui. A main feature of the large group style is that it is usual for the conductor to lead from behind, to be non-directive. This is the greatest area of difference between us. Māori are patriarchal and leader centred. Leaders have mana, are given and take a lot of responsibility. They are trained as orators and tend to teach as they speak. Russell and I have needed to talk, listen and think together to hold our differences in mind so that both can be acknowledged and so that we can find a way to respect both cultures in this area.

I have held a wish for the group to find its own meaning in the Community Kōrero. I wanted to keep the space as open as possible with little or no explanation. This has been hard for the students, and in combination with the compulsory nature of the group has been a rich source for struggles with power and authority – which the large group attracts anyway.

## Missing the Leader

In June of the first year, there was a session where Russell was away. One group member, who came from Argentina, was wistful in wishing that we could begin with Russell's *karakia*. She said it provided an entranceway into the group and she liked that. I was listening with more than one ear. I was aware that she was late and missed my shortish introduction. Also that often after Russell spoke there was a silence which I have thought of variously as; stunned and captured and not knowing what to do or say, not understanding and unable to enter the space; a spiritual spaciousness; or a parent gathering up his young children who are dependent and need only be there. I was also aware of the attack on me that was implicit in her sharing. I sat with it. I missed Russell too. Later in the session a Māori man spoke up and said that he wanted to respond to her comment. He preferred the open group process style. He found little space for himself in the *mihi* and *karakia*. This brief vignette demonstrates the complexity of the process we are engaged in. At an individual level, transferences to the conductors are present. At a group level the differences in our leadership style offers a safe haven for different people and cultures. The struggle between the individual and the group as well as with each person's relationship with power, authority and belonging are implicit in this example. One of the important features was that it was through the students' responses to each other that something shifted. Perhaps these different experiences spoken in the same space helped us to expand the equivalent social space within each individual.

## A multicultural experience of shutting the door

It was spring. The *whānau* room has windows all the way around with the option of using the curtains if it is too hot or too cold. There are also two doors one at each end of the room on one side. On this particular day, which was warm and sunny, we all sat down and then I noticed that one of the doors was still open. I started to move to shut the door. A Fijian male student anticipated my action and got up and shut the door. After the group had been going for a while he said,

I have been thinking about what I did at the beginning of the group. I realise that I was responding out of my cultural heritage. In Fijian society men look after the needs of the women. So even though I noticed it, I'm glad I did it.

Another student, a Māori male, said that he had felt disturbed. His issue was more with my power as Head of School than of me as a woman. His culture also required him to assist me but he felt rebellious about it and didn't know if he would have shut the door for me. He might have – as he felt the injunction – but he would have resented it. Yet another male student then spoke up (an Indian Buddhist). He said that he loved the open door and was for him reminiscent of his childhood schooling in India. The doors were left open to allow a freedom of energy to come and go. He had experienced a fleeting sense of that and then felt quite suddenly shut down when the door was closed. He felt somewhat annoyed that I wanted it closed.

I was interested in all these different cultural and personal reflections on the meaning of what had happened. Each person spoke from the social milieu in which they grew up, including myself. My preference is to have the door closed as a holding function. I see it as part of the task of the conductor to attend to the dynamic administration for the group – to hold and contain the boundaries in such a way that members of the group feel 'safe'. There are people walking down the open corridor next to where the doors are and it can feel quite intrusive (to me). I said that I thought their willingness to share their different experience was fruitful for the group and that for all of us, including me<sup>5</sup>, our behaviour was a mixture of cultural imperatives and internal object relations. I wondered if the Indian student had felt he had the right to say out loud that he wanted the door left open. He said of course not. The group then began to reflect on their relationship with authority, how culture of family, race, nationality all impacted on the way individuals responded to authority. This scenario could have happened in any large group. What is different about this situation? Perhaps nothing, but maybe the bicultural context created a different discussion that revealed many opposing assumptions. While I prefer to run the group in the group analytic style, I am cognisant of the need to hold open the space in a different way; in a way that invites cultural difference, particularly bi-cultural awareness to emerge.

## **Apologising for Racism**

So, how does one find a way to stay with oneself and join the group – and belong? In the Community Kōrero somebody apologetically owned their racism and felt that one of the ways that it surfaced was through competition. This makes sense when we think about the position of different ethnic groups.

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<sup>5</sup> My own wish to have the door closed,

Who has supremacy over whom? My response to this student was that idealisation of the other is also racism. I was attempting to address the observation that many people adjust their view of Māori as all good and their traditional ways are superior to Western ways, thus idealising the 'other' and failing to reflect on and face one's own racism. Russell responded differently to the student apology. He became heated about the fact that all Māori are not the same. He didn't want people to apologise, rather to stand in their own story. The group became uncomfortable as group members attempted to speak tentatively about some of their misgivings about putting Māori first. Some group members became angry and protective towards Russell – as if he was being personally insulted by what was being said. This is a common struggle in the group – that of the projected marginalised experience. I am reminded of the writing of Dennis Brown who talks about the difference between morals and ethics. Group members struggle between being moral (doing it right – eg: recognising the correct stance in relation to the imperative from the psychotherapists' association, the treaty of Waitangi and the structure of the group) and being ethical – being honest about their own responses, having personal integrity in relation to authority.

One day the group was talking about a 65-year-old primary school teacher who had been murdered in her classroom. It was unknown who the murderer was. Russell said that his heart sank and he felt shame because he guessed that the murderer was most likely to be Māori. Two Samoan people in the group had also had the fear that the murderer would be Samoan. Russell asked the group if Pākehā had felt like that – or other nationalities present. People agreed that for the dominant majority, identification with the actions of anybody of the same race or culture was not an issue. Whereas for minority groups it was more likely that a member of that group would identify with somebody else of that group and others would do the same to them.

### **Subgrouping, Being an Individual and Belonging**

Another theme emerged: the struggle between being an individual and being part of a subgroup. Cultural sensitivity means that we think more about and accept the presence of subgroups than otherwise may be the case. Dalal in his 'general theory of difference' (2006) claims that race is one element only of 'the fiction of difference'. One of the key issues in (traditional) psychoanalytic thinking generally about race is that it doesn't figure because race is externally determined and psychoanalysis is attentive to the internal workings of the individual, which are related back to the dynamics of early life. Dalal

argues for an interpenetration of social and psychological thinking. Both are part of the same process and cannot be separated. All relationships are power relationships. He comes up with the notion that “who I am is the same as where I belong” (p. 25). I take this to mean that when one’s social identity is experienced as being violated then one feels personally violated. This may mean that in the large group when the focus is bi-cultural, there is a re-experiencing of the Treaty as a place of misunderstanding, where the two cultures originally failed to understand each other and could feel like the chosen trauma (Volkan, 2001) for New Zealand. We continue to re-experience not being understood and having the experience of having to adapt to the ‘other’ outside of our cultural comfort zone – perhaps feeling the other as the perpetrator.

Perhaps subgrouping undermines the integrity of the community *kōrero* and maybe it is a natural and necessary step towards a meeting of cultures. The idea that the individual in the group needs to be willing to experience the process of being in exile from the group as a way forward in learning to negotiate being in a large group and staying with oneself (personal communication von Sommaruga-Howard, 2004). This oscillation could also be thought about in terms of turning back to our subgroup and seeking the comfort of our social identity. This is more central for a minority group, and for a group that focuses more on the community for identity, than it is for those who come from cultures that predicate the individual.

Here is an example from a large group of psychotherapists at our national conference. Teresa von Sommaruga Howard was the conductor. Afterwards, a colleague talked about sitting in the outer circle (there were 200 people in the group) and feeling her outer backbone. She felt that in some way she had not joined the group. I commented that she was describing something about the struggle between staying with oneself and being a part of the group. She replied that she missed something by not immersing herself in the group. It is also possible to think about this state as oscillating between ‘massification’ or needing to merge and ‘aggregation’ or needing to be disconnected, perhaps an essential part of strengthening ourselves in relation to the group: a form of individuation or maturation of the individual (Hopper, 1997, 2000). At the same time one has to contend with the group’s responses to one’s separateness as well as the fear of not being connected.

The theme of massification continues, somebody described how much they hated the group: “it’s like soup with these chopping up blades underneath mashing everything together”. Group members then started to reflect on the different kinds of soup they felt they were in and their identity. Some liked hunks of carrots. I said I preferred salad because each piece was discrete and living. I was also thinking how I don’t enjoy soup when I cannot tell what

the ingredients are. My mother used to use leftovers from the fridge with foods I did not like. On reflection I was able to recognise my unwillingness to surrender to the group at that moment. I was feeling critical of some group members; I didn't want to belong with them! And yet as the group progressed that did change for me and for others. We began to trust in the group, in the process and in us. I felt as if the self that I found in the group expanded me, was more than before. The chopping up blades evoke in me the potential for losing myself and being pulled into a vortex that I do not identify with and so need to find a way to stay connected to myself. I think we have different ways of coping with this fear.

Related to the struggle between the individual and the group is the process of recognising and understanding that each individual has their own interpretation of reality at any moment in the group. Our perceptions of the same events are different and, in a large group, finding a way to meet while accepting these differences can be a slow and painstaking process. Maybe we do need to surrender something (perhaps) our familiar ways of perceiving the world while at the same time hold on to something that allows us to have integrity with oneself.

## Discussion

Brown, (2006, p.165) proposes the term 'transculturality' to describe a relationship between cultures that transcends prejudice and projection. He talks about acknowledging similarities that can bind us through our humanity. However, it is understood in Aotearoa that there is a need to privilege Māori experience – to put Māori first – this is the essence of what is meant by being bi-cultural. Some people on hearing this get upset and say that this is like treating Māori like children. Still others feel concerned about the potential for loss of their own autonomy. This reveals that the fear of being colonised goes both ways. Is it possible for the two cultures to encounter each other without one group or the other having the experience of being marginalised? Privileging Māori <sup>6</sup> experience is a good place to start in Aotearoa New Zealand but it also invites a struggle that resonates inside and outside each of us. What I am saying here is that we have to be careful not to just keep on repeating the same old patterns – our social unconscious racism. To think we know when

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<sup>6</sup> Pākehā can't claim the same level of belonging to Aotearoa as Māori. Pākehā are not tangata whenua. (people of the land). This can be hard to take in and accept, especially when there is nowhere else that a person can identify with (ie: has been in Aotearoa New Zealand for many generations).

we don't; or to close down from reflecting on the possible meaning of our thoughts and actions.

As (Brownbridge, 2003) says Foulkes' theory of the matrix<sup>7</sup> defines mind as a group phenomenon, and behoves us to think beyond individual psychopathology to interacting processes where at least some of the mental disturbances have their source at the social level.

In Aotearoa it is important for each person to find his or her own cultural roots as an essential part of individual and group identity and to be with that in the face of the other culture, race or difference. One of the problems in Aotearoa is that Pākehā have lost their cultural roots through immigration and Māori have lost their culture through colonisation and urbanisation; our country is beginning the struggle of finding our own culture(s). There is a third significant group as well who do not identify with either Māori or Pākehā and who suffer from "deep sorrow about the multiple losses, (and) coupled with excessive needs for adaptation, leave immigrants vulnerable with weakened ego resources" (Thorpe and Thorpe, 2008 p. 33).

The work I have described continues. There are many people of many races involved in working to "honour the treaty" in their own way. In New Zealand there is a tradition to do rather than think about issues. Thorpe and Thorpe (2008) make reference to the 'number eight (fencing) wire' (p 32), which is an answer to most problems, implying that they are concrete and fixable. For me, Group Analysis has offered a paradigm that has reflected my own attempts to expand and reflect on the perspective I grew up with. Foulkes said it clearly when in one of his final papers he said,

What is inside is outside, the 'social' is not external but very much internal too and penetrates the innermost being of the individual personality. The 'objective' external 'reality' is inseparable from the ... individual whose world it is and therefore is part of the psychological reality as well (Foulkes, 1971, p. 227).

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7 Foundation matrix. This is the matrix of historical, cultural, social interaction in which the dynamic matrix is grounded, the 'colossal social forces', which penetrate us to the core. Thus all of the present processes and their interactions are also potentially influenced by any past processes and interactions.

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# From Relational Hunger to Intimacy

## Desde el Hambre Relacional a la Intimidad

Robyn Salisbury (Aotearoa New Zealand)



Robyn Salisbury is a Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist specializing in sex therapy and training. She has an MA (applied) with First Class Honours from Massey University, New Zealand. In addition to working full time in Private Practice she guest lectures for Massey University and is currently Director of Sex Therapy NZ Ltd, directing a national referral network for sex therapy and producing and facilitating training courses in dealing with issues of sexuality. Robyn enjoys swimming, tramping, gardening, sewing and cooking, cinema and theatre.

### Resumen

Este trabajo presenta una historia personal enmarcada en una síntesis de los actuales conocimientos, en el ámbito internacional, sobre el desarrollo de la capacidad para la intimidad en las relaciones sexuales adultas. Explora la cuestión de la intimidad ética y la transferencia erótica, aplicada por primera vez a un hui<sup>1</sup> bicultural denominado 'Tejiendo nuestras Historias Vitales', facilitado por la Asociación de Psicoterapeutas de Nueva Zelanda (NZAP) y los curanderos Maori Awhina<sup>2</sup> en Marzo de 2007.

### Abstract

This paper presents a personal story embedded within a synthesis of the current international expertise on the development of the capacity for intimacy in adult sexual relationship. It explores the theme of ethical intimacy and erotic transference and was first given to a bicultural *hui*<sup>3</sup> called *Weaving our Living Stories* facilitated by the

1 Hui: término Maori para referirse a una gran reunión de personas. En este caso, el congreso anual de la Asociación de Psicoterapeutas de Aotearoa Nueva Zelanda.

2 Awhina: nombre del servicio de salud mental Maori en Napier Nueva Zelanda.

3 Hui: Maori for large gathering of people. In this case the annual conference of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists

New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP) and Awhina<sup>4</sup> Maori healers in March 2007.

## Introduction

I want to thank the organisers of this Hui, which works towards honouring Maori and Pakeha<sup>5</sup> ways; honouring difference in order to achieve connection and closeness, just as in any intimate relationship, while realising of course, there is no *one* Maori way and no *one* Pakeha way.

It is an honour for me to be here to tell my story. My extra heartfelt thanks to those of you who listen to me in a language other than the language of your soul.

Before I begin my story I need to explain I was invited to speak to you in deeply personal ways, from my soul. I was also encouraged to share my theoretical, professional reflections on the themes of our conference: ethical intimacy and erotic transference. This is difficult ground for a girl who learned to survive by pleasing. It is of course one of the many pieces of conflict that those of us who are members, or applying members of NZAP, sit with - different needs and priorities, different ways of setting about our work, as in any relationship.

I registered during the Whakawatea (clearing the way) Hui that I had been asked to be a storyteller yet I grew up with few stories about my family of origin. The wisdom of Teresa von Sommaruga Howard guided me through my panic about that: she suggested that when we open our mouths it can be with the voices of ancestors that we speak. Perhaps I am full of stories after all!

## My Origins

Who then is this person I call “I”? I am aware that that concept is seen differently by Maori and Pakeha. As I look at photos of myself as a small, unattractive, unfeminine-looking child it occurs to me that this could have been a transgender journey, but it is not. I was a girl, I am a woman.

Each time I have worked to learn more about Maori colonisation by British and the ongoing impact on Maori cultural identity it has necessitated another step in my own ongoing search for my own identity (cultural and personal). The NZAP conference in Dunedin several years ago was an important

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4 Awhina: Name of a Maori mental health service in Napier New Zealand

5 Pakeha: New Zealander of European descent

experience for me as I reconnected with my need to know more about my background. Since then I have visited Scotland and have a sense of having completed the circle for my maternal grandparents who came to NZ in their twenties to escape a life limited to coalmining. I have also visited Hamburg in Germany, land of my father's first 11 years, and I have further researched family deaths in the Holocaust in order to fill in more of the gaps left by dad's refusal to talk about his experiences in Germany or as a refugee arriving in Wellington in 1939.

Receiving psychotherapy and becoming a therapist has helped me along the road in coming to terms with my family of origin and being able to celebrate the positive things that I gained: my skills in the womanly arts of cooking and sewing for my loved ones come from my mum and I will always appreciate her teaching me to value those things. My body comes from my father. I have his height and bone structure and the gap between my teeth and I love these pieces of knowing where I come from. My parents have also modelled commitment as they are now in their fifty-third year of marriage and each has been supporting the other through severe illness in old age.

I have never met Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier but I think he must have met my family. His films illustrate powerfully where I, with my interest in intimacy, come from. At the end of the film *The Idiots*, we discover that a shy, young woman who had apparently disappeared had in fact run away after the death of her baby. We witness her coming home two weeks later. We see her mother, her sisters and then her husband having their first meeting with her after what had been a terribly distressing event for them all. Karen is accompanied by a new friend made during her two weeks of absence, a young woman who has been portrayed throughout the film as self-centred and uncaring, yet it is she who demonstrates so much more emotional awareness and connection than any of the family members. This event illustrates the tragic disconnection, the painful lack of meeting and understanding that occurs when there is no emotional sophistication, when people have not developed ways of expressing powerful emotions, connecting intimately and showing love.

I was delighted to learn from Thomas Lewis (2000) that our capacity to take part in an intimate relationship is shaped first and foremost by our primary caregivers during infancy and childhood. It is stunning to know that these interactions actually go as far as influencing the formation of neural pathways. This neuroscience fits well with my personal and professional observations of process. I had to learn from scratch so many tiny steps in the dance of intimacy and am afraid that even now unless I know you very well, you are likely to experience me falling back on the default position of my family of origin. I am a work in progress!

The work of the developmental neuroscientists has taught us that as well as warmth and love, children need *skillful attunement and appropriate responsiveness to their emotions and needs*. I am mindful that attachment (and the whole process of sequential neurodevelopment) is a white, western notion usually applied to infants and children. I believe there are many pathways to creating secure healthy children and adults: but the essential common strand involves attuned connection with others. Dr Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal described how mana<sup>6</sup> lies at the heart of Maori, of all human health and wellbeing; how mana fosters relationships. There is a connection here, two rich and crucial energy flows: mana, attachment. It is beyond my current understanding to name the place of intersection.

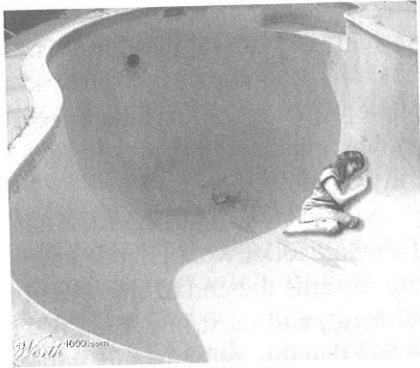
What I do know is that without rich connection from those who love them, children will struggle to develop social and interpersonal skills, will not grow up confident. These skills are the pre-requisites for healthy intimate behaviour. The *relational hunger* that arises from connection deficits leads to destructive efforts to fill a hole, in more ways than one. I most certainly grew up with this relational hunger. It felt like this:



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6 Mana: authority, influence, prestige, power

But looking back on it now I would describe it more like this:



Having no understanding of it at all, I filled the hole inside me in the best way I knew - I ate hugely. This had the added advantage of placing a big layer of fat around my body so that I was less accessible and less attractive sexually. The cruel fact is that relational hunger is self-perpetuating: not only do you have a great big hole but you don't have the skills to fill it and your brain doesn't even have some of the neural connections necessary to learn the skills! It has been such hard work for those who love me, those who have worked therapeutically with me, as well as for myself, to grow them as an adult. *Hard, but definitely possible.*

I would suggest to you that THIS is the core work of therapy. It is not the only way we can grow relational capacity but when it is going well, therapy is a safe, powerfully effective way to develop this capacity for intimacy and to rebuild breaches in relationship trust. I want to talk about ethical intimacy in therapy and about erotic transference but first I want to acknowledge some of the pivotal positive experiences in my life, some of which of course occurred *outside* of therapy and began to develop in me the capacity for intimacy.

### **Pivotal Experiences in My Life**

My fifth form English teacher taught me to think. He also asked me to bring my emotional responses to poetry and film. I had no idea what they were but that was such a valuable invitation it began a stirring in me that fortunately has never disappeared.

I married at nineteen. Over the last thirty years Kevin has taught me how to love. I cannot find effective words to describe all that means to me. Because

I'd hate in any way to reinforce the myths our society has about love I also want to add that as with every long term intimate relationship there has also of course been times of frustration and disappointment for both of us.

Getting pregnant at twenty-two meant that for the first time ever I felt that my body was GOOD and worth looking after. Then after giving birth to our son Ryan and for a couple of hours feeling like the cleverest woman in the world, I rapidly lost my newfound sense of worth, returning to an eating disorder as a symptom of my inner neediness.

That led me into my first therapy. I didn't have the language or sense of self to be able to talk about a whole lot of what I needed help with but I made two major gains. Somewhere towards the end of that year I discovered emotions (I remember that day clearly!) and most important of all, I gained the sense that I existed. From the fact that this therapist met with me regularly I grew a 'me' that needed to be attended to and I began to learn how to attend to that self from his modelling.

### **Why Have I Chosen to Focus My Professional Life on Sexuality?**

It could be my history of living on the margins. I'm an incest survivor from a family that isolated itself. I'm the first in my family to get School Certificate (year 11) never mind tertiary education. (I'm currently one of only two in my whole extended family who have now done that and still seen as very strange). Living on the edge of being middle class, struggling to survive on one below-average income until ten years ago, may have contributed. My late learning of the language of emotions and academia often left me feeling an outsider. From all of these experiences I may well be used to doing something different; standing alone. Or, it could simply be that it is a highly gratifying area to work in!

Part of it would be understanding that things left unspoken can be dangerous. No doubt some of this comes from both my experiences of sexual abuse from four different men and also from both parents' lack of intimate connection with me. What Briere (2002) calls acts of commission and omission. So I make it my business to talk about sex and intimacy because I want everyone to have the words and the skills to make life safe and healthy.

Years of involvement with private and Family Court separating couples has shown me what costly messes families and couples can get into when the adults don't engage in ethical intimacy with each other. Charles Annou, the French government minister responsible for the idea of bombing the Rainbow Warrior, is reported to have had a messy divorce around the time of issu-

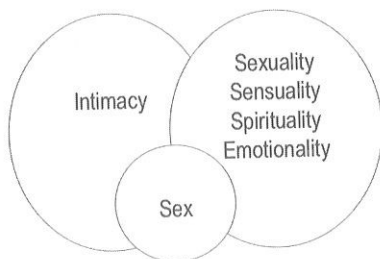
ing this order. Hitler is reputed to have experienced ongoing relationship and sexuality problems.

## What Is the Difference Between a Sex Therapist and a Psychotherapist? How Might that Make My Work Different?

I know a great deal about sexuality, sexual function and dysfunction and sexual concerns. With any client I look through the lens of relationship. My focus is on the dance that goes on between partners, between an individual and the world, between each client and myself. At the risk of sounding obsessive and revealing a lack of objectivity I see intimacy as being absolutely central to human wellbeing. **It is our lifeblood.**

I've tried here to illustrate my definition of these words I use all the time.

### Sex Therapist/Psychotherapist



You can of course be sexual without being intimate. You can be intimate without being sexual as our work demands. I see sexuality as encompassing sensuality, spirituality and emotionality. It is the skills of **life enhancing relating**, through limbic connection as Thomas Lewis (2000) tells us, that interest me.

I am curious and sometimes frustrated that there is government funding for dealing with problem gambling and alcohol and drug problems but not for intimacy problems. I suggest that at the core of any substance abuse, any out-of-control behaviours, including sexual addiction, is a relational hunger; either the lack of capacity for intimacy or the learning that it is not safe to let people get close.

## Intimacy in the Therapeutic Relationship

### *Ethical intimacy*

This rich connection of one with another is a basic necessity: without it, therapy doesn't occur. It is a sad part of our human nature, our longing for connection, our human neediness and our powerful sexual drive that we have to add in this word ethical as a reminder.

Effective therapy requires that we as therapists be ethically intimate with ourselves, that we be ethically intimate with our clients (helping them learn to do that if necessary) and that we help our clients be ethically intimate with others.

### *Erotic Transference*

I experienced my first therapist as God, father and lover all rolled into one. I'm not sure that it's ethical for therapists to be so good-looking. I surprised myself somewhere during that year by expressing my sexual feelings to him very clearly. I was frustrated and disappointed by his response. He made a brief statement about professional boundaries and then a further one about how he would never seduce a client. I was left thinking "But...you wouldn't need to, I'm seducing you, don't you know." Now, twenty-seven years later, I appreciate his willingness to maintain professional boundaries. I was wide open to being abused yet again.

I am quite sure looking back on it and having since then dealt with this issue with some of my clients that what I was expressing was actually far more than sexual feelings. I think this applies to much erotic transference if not all. I had a deep longing for intimate connection: notice me, know me, hold me, stroke me, kiss me, enter me, take over my body, enjoy me, love me, adore me.

I see it as a healthy human response to be experiencing those longings; it is part of being alive in every cell of your body. We therapists need to be skilled at making clear, non-shaming, formative statements to address erotic transference. "Yes, this work of therapy that you and I are engaged in is very intimate isn't it, so of course sexual feelings can arise from that. But our task is to focus on helping you learn about yourself and make some changes. It's not a two way relationship that you and I have and it cannot be." If our client persists in trying to initiate a sexual relationship: "I can hear your longing for some sexual intimacy — let's look at that and see what we can learn about what

might be keeping you dissatisfied in your life outside therapy.”

We cannot banish the erotic at will; our own or our clients - we could try to ignore or suppress it but it is far too valuable. Sex is NOT bad: it is people's abuse of it that is bad both for themselves and others, for their victims. It is our professional responsibility to contain the erotic in the therapeutic relationship and to ensure it becomes a healthy transformational force. Sexual feelings aimed at us as therapists can be powerful and uncomfortable but of course if we stay in our comfort zone we limit the possibility of change.

I am not sure why we as therapists differentiate between transference and counter-transference as though longings and reactions brought into professional relationships are somehow qualitatively different from our responses to them. We therapists have our own erotic fantasy life. Falling in love is erotic transference and counter-transference. This occurs everywhere, in and out of the therapeutic relationship. Standing in love is doing the work of intimacy.

Life is a Rorschach test. We all carry with us our interpretive filter shaped by our unique internal world into every single encounter throughout our life. For us as therapists the 'here and now' spontaneity of the ongoing, intimate, moment to moment therapeutic relationship is the essence of what brings about change. The onus is on us, as professionals, to understand both our own and our clients' reactions and needs and work to resolve or meet them in non-destructive ways.

### *Safety*

It is enormously important that we make our clients safe (NZAP's history includes some stories of that not happening and the damage that was done). But who gets to define what is safe? Us, or our clients? Safe for whom?

Throughout the therapy I have received various experiences of touch. Some have been enormously therapeutic, both in triggering strong feelings, that could then be worked through, and in meeting a need at an appropriate moment. Others were against my inner wishes but I didn't say anything about them.

It is beyond me to name precisely the boundaries of ethical intimacy. My very wise and skilful first supervisor taught me that we can hold without touching. That guided my practice for many years.

Now I wonder are we being authentic and therapeutic if we do not touch? If we do not allow expressions of our love? I feel sure that we cannot allow any sexual touching but less sure that if my truth in response to my client's experiences of "I love you" is "I love you too" is it ethical to withhold that truth? Is it ethical to express it in any way? Do we work from our love anyway? Can

therapy possibly be effective if we don't?

## Conclusion

I look forward to the day when Pakeha New Zealanders such as myself have our own rich and moving songs, as do our tangata whenua<sup>7</sup> that arise from this land and our culture. That will mean I will have to learn to sing in front of others and I've had enough challenges today so instead I will read you one of my favourite love poems written by Robin Healey, a man from my home town, Palmerston North.

### *Pullover*

I want to be your little black sleeveless pullover  
so I can feel your ribs  
pout gently for your boobs  
sit neatly at your waist  
and as you see yourself in glass as you pass

I can ask in a neatly knitted way  
how you like me now dear sweet coz  
And then at night when, ah, you ease me  
over your head, flicking your clean  
shiny hair as I go, you can fling me  
into your chair. I'll lie about  
all vee neck, armholes and contentment  
hoping for a cold morning  
and a warm wool ride all day long.  
Smell me, I smell of you, think of me as stylish,  
wear me into holes, cherish me, cherish me.

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7 tangata whenua: host people or original inhabitants of the land

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