

Born in '47: A personal journey through the changing zeitgeist of psychotherapy in Aotearoa

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Abstract

Just like a personal ego, the zeitgeist of a practice such as psychotherapy is constantly changing, influenced by both internal and external events. As with the personal ego, not only is it changing but it is also resisting change, leading to a state of imbalance and potential conflict. A psychotherapeutic relationship can help an individual re-establish balance in the changing world and live more fully in the present, but the relationship with an organisation or group can be more challenging. Just as we can identify with our ego, so can we identify with a group: does the onus fall more on the individual or the group to adapt, both to change and to the resistance to change? What can help in this process of adaptation? With the Freudian concept of the erotic bonds of love and hate in the background, I will call on my personal story as a psychotherapist born in the year the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP) was founded, with the aim of exploring these questions with a focus on the changing zeitgeist of NZAP.

Whakarāpopotonga

Rite ki te āhua whaiaro, ko te wairua o te wā pēnei i tā whakaoranga hinengaro e nekeneke tonu ana, e ai ki ngā awenga o ngā huihuinga ā-roto ā-waho rānei. Pērā i tō te āhua whaiaro, ehara ko te rerenga haere anake, engari e whakatenetene anō ana hoki ki te huri, koia nei he ara whakaaranga tūnga pīoioi, ā, tae atu hoki ki tētahi huarahi taupatupatunga. Mā tē haere ki te tētahi kaiwhakaora hinengaro e taea ai te whakahoki tūnga tōtika i roto i te ao hurihuri e noho tahi anō ai i roto i nāianeī, engari he wero atu anō te whakapiringa ki tētahi tōpūtanga rōpu rānei. Rite tonu ki tā tātau tautohunga āhua whaiaro, ka pērā anō tā tātau tautohu ki tētahi rōpū: kā tau te taumahatanga ki te tangata kotahi ki te rōpū rānei ki te whakawaia, ōrua ki te huri ki te whakatumatuma rānei ki te whakahuri? Me pēhea e taea ai te āwhina i te hātepe whakahuringa? Kia horapahia hei papa te aria herenga karihika aroha, karihika kiriweti a Wheretiana, e huri ake au ki tōku ake matawhaiora i tōku tūnga whakaoranga

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hinengaro i whānau mai i te tau tīmatanga o te Tōpū Kaiwhakaora Hinengaro o Aotearoa, ko tāna nei whāinga ko te wherawhera i ēnei pātai me te arotahi atu ki te huringa wairua o NZAP.

Keywords: groups; erotic bonds; vagina dentata; phallus; zeitgeist; ego; self; relationship.

Introduction

Like NZAP, I was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1947. The zeitgeist was dominated by the Second World War. Approximately 75 million people died in this conflict and many more were injured, both physically and psychologically. The primary founder of NZAP, Maurice Bevan-Brown, had initiated the formation of a psychotherapeutic War Neurosis Group and Clinic for the treatment of service personnel. At the time, indications were that psychotherapy was “often regarded at best with scepticism and at worst derision by many people in both medicine and the wider community,” and its Christchurch practitioners described as “that sexy crowd on Andover Street” (Manchester & Manchester, 1996, pp. 11-12).

The “sexy crowd” presumably referred to their interest in Freud’s sexual theory and I’d like to look briefly here at the Freudian bonds of love and hate, particularly as they apply to groups. I’ll be holding these in mind as I explore the changing zeitgeist of NZAP over my time as a member.

Freud (1921) said of groups:

And, finally, groups have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do without them. They constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real; they are almost as strongly influenced by what is untrue as by what is true. They have an evident tendency not to distinguish between the two.

We have pointed out that this predominance of the life of phantasy and of the illusion born of an unfulfilled wish is the ruling factor in the psychology of neuroses. We have found that what neurotics are guided by is not ordinary objective reality but psychological reality. A hysterical symptom is based upon phantasy instead of upon the repetition of real experience, and the sense of guilt in an obsessional neurosis is based upon the fact of an evil intention which was never carried out. Indeed, just as in dreams and in hypnosis, in the mental operations of a group the function for testing the reality of things falls into the background in comparison with the strength of wishful impulses with their affective cathexis. (p. 79)

What Freud calls the mental operation of a group, I see as the group’s ego structure, and as with an individual, I see the group also has a stable element, a sense of group self: something beyond the wishful impulses that Freud speaks of.

As I grew up into the Fifties, the focus of adults around me was one of making the best of the absence of war and the avoidance of talking about and processing the tragedy that had recently occurred. Instead, as children we were shown war propaganda in both primary and secondary school as if the war were continuing, and there was much sharing of “war comics” among the boys, which continued this blatant propaganda. In my home, this was frowned

upon and as a consequence I hid the comics and read them secretly. There was only one war story shared in the family, which was of my uncle, my mother's brother, who, as a conscientious objector, had refused to carry a gun during service in North Africa. He was assigned to the Medical Corps who had the job of collecting the corpses from both sides of the conflict. He did not speak of this to me, but other family members shared the story of him removing the body of a German soldier from the barbed wire and recognising himself in the unruly shock of platinum blond hair of this man, just like his own. In an effort to play a part in avoiding further wars, he joined the Communist party with the hope of helping unite the peoples of the world.

Bevan-Brown and his colleagues had their own approach to creating a better world, through the promotion of natural childbirth and the support of parents, teachers and Plunket nurses in promoting healthy child nurture (Manchester & Manchester, 1996, p. 14). In the aftermath of the trauma of war, repression and idealism were dominant in the zeitgeist, and psychotherapy, although caught in this zeitgeist, was working to establish some appreciation of reality.

Regarding the bonds of love in groups Freud (1921) said:

We will try our fortune, then, with the supposition that love relationships (or, to use a more neutral expression, emotionalities) also constitute the essence of the group mind. Let us remember that the authorities make no mention of any such relations. What would correspond to them is evidently concealed behind the shelter, the screen, of suggestion. Our hypothesis finds support in the first instance from two passing thoughts. First, that a group is clearly held together by a power of some kind: and to what power could this feat be better ascribed than to Eros, which holds together everything in the world? Secondly, that if an individual gives up his distinctiveness in a group and lets its other members influence him by suggestion, it gives one the impression that he does it because he feels the need of being in harmony with them rather than in opposition to them. (p. 91)

And regarding hate he said:

Therefore a religion, even if it calls itself the religion of love, must be hard and unloving to those who do not belong to it. Fundamentally indeed every religion is in this same way a religion of love for all those whom it embraces; while cruelty and intolerance towards those who do not belong to it are natural to every religion. If another group tie takes the place of the religious one — and the socialistic tie seems to be succeeding in doing so — then there will be the same intolerance towards outsiders as in the age of the Wars of Religion; and if differences between scientific opinions could ever attain a similar significance for groups, the same result would again be repeated with this new motivation. (pp. 97- 98)

Psychotherapy was struggling to transcend these primal forces, including the “hatred” between scientific opinions within the medical fraternity; and no doubt helping ease the struggle in New Zealand, was the second Secretary of the Association of Psychotherapists, a

woman who was to become my first landlady in Wellington and later, a mentor in my work; Ilse Macaskill. Ilse escaped from the Nazis with the help of the Quakers in the lead-up to the war, but not before being imprisoned for being Jewish and tattooed with a prisoner number on her forearm. She studied psychology at Victoria University, Wellington, and sought psychoanalysis with Mario Fleischl, a Jewish refugee from Austria who had received analytic training from Hans Sachs and Paul Federn. I first met Ilse when in my mid-twenties, living in a flat with my wife at the back of her house. Her consulting room was at the front of the house and I can remember being somewhat daunted by what I thought of as the “mad” people who came to visit her. She emanated common sense and was very willing to stand up to opinions she considered controlling. I remember her saying that she would not let anyone tell her she could not offer a cup of coffee to her patients.

I will talk a little now about the development of my own interest in groups and in psychotherapy. I had navigated my way through the Fifties and early Sixties relatively unscathed and went to Canterbury University, where I studied zoology and psychology. Although we were introduced to Freud's ideas there, the mood was dominated by the ascendancy of behaviourism. I largely escaped the application of this in the human realm by working in the field of animal behaviour, in particular with rats. In effect, the rats taught me about the importance of relationship in a way that the human applications of behaviourism seemed to miss. One of my jobs was to teach students how to train a rat. Some would come to me and claim to have a dud rat that was untrainable. My job was to help them focus more on the rat and less on their desire to make it do something, and many were surprised to find that their rat was not a dud. In essence, I was encouraging them to form a relationship with the rat, and in retrospect I see this as my initial training in psychotherapy; developing a focus on the relationship. In focussing on the relationship with our clients we lessen the chance of getting caught in the transference and countertransference, and Ilse was a primary teacher for me regarding this.

After University, I travelled to Germany with my wife, who had obtained a scholarship to study there. The zeitgeist of the Fifties was still present enough in the early Seventies for travelling to study in Germany to be a little transgressive; to be collaborating with the enemy. On the other hand, revolution was in the air; the students in Europe were rebelling and demanding greater control of the curriculum and partnership with their professors. Interactions were characterised by replacing the polite form of “You” (Sie) with the more intimate “Du”. There were many different Communist groups among the student body, often in conflict with each other.

Returning to New Zealand after about two years in Europe, I worked for the Department of Health, promoting various aspects of health with a wide variety of community groups, from schools, to industry, to Plunket, WEA, YMCA and others. I found myself approached by a number of participants to work on an individual level with them and in response to this I undertook an internship in counselling and psychotherapy with the Presbyterian Support Counselling Centre in Wellington. This was in the early Eighties and the freedoms that I had experienced in Germany in the Seventies were beginning to filter through and affect the zeitgeist in psychotherapy in New Zealand. The mood was of eclecticism and experimentation with an emphasis on brief therapy and what worked. There was an interest in “growth groups”, which was basically group psychotherapy for people who did not necessarily

consider themselves to be suffering from mental problems — part of the “Human Potential Movement”. In this environment, boundaries were tested and stretched in the field of psychotherapy and conflict was generated as a consequence of this. This was especially so, regarding sexual ethics and mores.

In what follows, I will hold the sexual underpinnings of the ego, both of the individual and of the group, as I describe the changes in NZAP during my time with it. Before doing so, however, I’d like to talk a little more about what I see as the symbolic representation of love and hate. In doing this I will call again on Sigmund Freud and also on the work of Sabina Spielrein (1994/1912). As I have discussed elsewhere (Sandle, 2020), I believe Spielrein brought important insights to the nature of symbolism. A prominent symbol for Spielrein was what she called “the Mothers”, a creative and destructive force which has also been called the vagina dentata. A central symbol for Freud, on the other hand, which is also both creative and destructive, is the phallus. As someone born in Aotearoa and exposed to Māori mythology, I link the vagina dentata to Hine-nui-te-pō and the phallus to Maui. Each of these symbolic representations deal with both creativity and destruction, but in different ways, and with important relevance to the life of groups. If we can hold these powerful symbols in mind they can help us navigate the tendency toward emotional dysregulation that I believe contributes to group formation and maintenance (Sandle, 2020). Spielrein says of this, “The symbol is analogous to the painful image, but it is less differentiated than an ego image” (1991/2012, p. 161). The painful image she speaks of is different for each of us but is of an experience we have failed to process fully, such as the war trauma of returning soldiers from the Second World War. She describes the nature of the symbolic image as follows:

The deeper we penetrate the unconscious, the more universal and typical the images. The depth of the psyche knows no “I” but only its summation, the “We”. (p. 160)

And:

Every sexual symbol in a dream, as in mythology, possesses the significance of a life and death-bringing god. (p. 167)

Freud focussed on the Greek hero Oedipus who, like Maui, carries the symbol of the damaged phallus. Oedipus, or “swollen foot”, a reference to the phallus, is analogous to the painful image of his father’s attempted infanticide of him, which was driven by his father’s sexual fears. Maui is represented by a bent phallus, symbolic, among other things, of his attempt to enter the toothed vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, which led to his death.

My experiences of the changing zeitgeist of NZAP seen through conferences I have attended

I will next talk about NZAP through my experiences at conferences. My focus will be primarily on aspects of these that made a personal impact on me as I developed as a psychotherapist.

My first NZAP conference was in 1985, the theme being *Unity and diversity*. This reflected the zeitgeist I have named above of diversity and eclecticism. I remember well the initial

warm-up, “A beginners guide to role confusion”, a psychodrama directed by my supervisor at the time, Dick Fowler, which led to Evan Sherrard (like Dick, a Presbyterian minister) being hoisted up into the rafters of the dining room of the Central Institute of Technology (CIT) in Upper Hutt, to be God. This was facilitated by Peter Read and Peter McGeorge, both of whom were to become President of NZAP in later years. The mood was definitely creatively phallic in its playful and competitive nature. Evan was my wife’s brother-in-law and we had stayed with him and my wife’s sister in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on the way back from Europe. At Evan’s invitation, I had attended a Transactional Analysis training group, which was run largely as a “growth group”, with an inner circle of people doing the work and an outer circle of observers, of which I was one. This made a deep impression on me as part of becoming a psychotherapist and Evan was someone who I identified with in this regard.

The creative aspect of the feminine was also represented at this conference. Dale Dodd spoke about the importance of the alchemical “well-sealed vessel”, the therapeutic container in which transformation can take place, and Isla Lonie of the containing nature of idealising and mirroring transferences in work with people with borderline disorders. Isla was born in Christchurch ten years before NZAP was founded and became an important person in teaching psychodynamic therapy in Australia and New Zealand. She presented at several of our conferences.

Ilse Macaskill also presented on brief intervention. Seventy at the time, and with approaching forty years of experience as a psychotherapist in New Zealand, her ability to attune to the zeitgeist (brief intervention) and to maintain her pragmatic, relational self shone through. I think I can speak of Self (with a capital S) here as well. Although fascinated by theory, Ilse had a direct presence in the moment which may be felt in this short extract:

A sense of stillness is preferred, as the patient in his vulnerable, hypersensitive state may be disturbed by the continuing dialogue in the therapist’s mind. Don’t listen too long to recitals of specific events, as it wastes valuable reconstruction time, but be sure to see recurring patterns in the story. Avoid filling up your place of work with too much gloom, and introduce very early positive factors in the patient’s life — be light-hearted, but not discounting of pain or the seriousness of the patient’s predicament. Put your own relevant cards on the table. Personal experience of the therapist, if sincerely reported, is a gift to the patient, and makes for some mutuality. Do not forget the person’s body language and body state — be sure there is some laughter in the first session and that he/she leaves in a better frame of mind than he/she came with. (Macaskill, 1985, p. 9)

She also attuned to my growing interest in psychotherapy proper, giving me her well-thumbed copy of Jung’s autobiography *Memories, dreams, reflections* (Jung, 1967).

This interest of mine was deepened further at the 1987 conference at Knox College, Dunedin — *The inner world*. Two presentations come to mind: those of Peter Callachor and of Isla Lonie. I recall that each of these presenters took me on a journey of exploration into the inner world by means of stories and metaphor, both historical and more recent. I can remember thinking, “This is the psychotherapy I am interested in.” In retrospect, I can see their presentations followed the theme I have named, of the destructive and creative

aspects of the masculine and the feminine. Peter's stories, many biblically based, but including Greek myths such as that of Oedipus, were of the competitive struggles of fathers, sons and brothers, of murder and intrigue, often in search of power, but also of redemption. Isla's were of the unknown, of darkness and the twilight zone, particularly as part of the creative process. One of her stories that stuck with me was of the women who knitted the Fair Isle jerseys for their men, while they waited for their return, or news of their death at sea. The patterns knitted into the jerseys were unique to each man and served as a means of recognising them if their sea-changed bodies were washed up after drowning.

The New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists and Counsellors, which it had been since 1981, changed its name back to the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists at this conference. This was one sign of a movement away from the difficulties brought by many diverse views on what the profession should be. There was resistance to this move. Following the conference, George Sweet (1987) wrote of his concern that, inevitably perhaps, the organisation was moving from a free-spiritedness towards exclusivity and elitism, to be followed by irrelevance. I had spoken with George at the Dunedin conference and failed to convince him that a deepening and focussing of the psychotherapy process was not necessarily the same as a hardening of the psychotherapeutic arteries.

In the year following that in which George wrote his letter, a conference was held in Auckland which carried a particular intensity. I did not attend and only heard about what happened second hand. The issue revolved around who could call themselves a 'psychotherapist' and in particular, Bert Potter's claim to the title. Potter was the leader of the Centrepoint Commune, a residential therapeutic community which, by a number of accounts, had produced beneficial outcomes for some individuals. Potter, however claimed that having sex with clients was a therapeutic intervention (Tudor, 2017). In order to encourage the move to registration of psychotherapy so as to protect clients from people such as Potter, the conference planning committee invited him to speak in order to demonstrate to the wider psychotherapeutic community the dangers of his practice and the need to exclude him from the community. As one of the planners, Evan Sherrard put it:

Powerless to do anything about Potter's offensive grandiosity, some Association members displaced their anger onto the conference arrangements committee. ... [and] the point that we were trying to make, that psychotherapy was gaining a bad name in Auckland and people were being damaged by its so-called practice, was side-tracked. (Tudor, 2017, p. 323)

Here we have an example of the importance of what I have called the ego of the group, the name "psychotherapist", as a protective container, but also as a source of conflict.

Also, part of the zeitgeist at this time was a calling into question of Freud's theory of childhood sexuality and a return to his earlier theory of child abuse by adults, the seduction theory. The zeitgeist moved away noticeably, if not completely, from the depths which had attracted me in Dunedin, and from the place of sexuality in the therapeutic process that was there in Freud's theory. This was accompanied by an increasing emphasis on ethics in the profession.

This shift was marked in the 1989 conference held at Victoria University, Wellington, which had the title *Change*. In my notes for this conference, I have noticed the prevalence of polarity and of attempts to control it through ethics and the structure of the therapeutic relationship. There was a shift in focus to the here-and-now and away from the unconscious. I had a sense of “How do we best ride out the storm and keep ourselves safe?”

At the first NZAP conference to be held in the Central Districts, at Flock House in 1993, the conference theme was *Being ourselves* and opened with a powhiri by Ngāti Apa. The President, Lewis Lowery, commented:

At last we have both Māori and Pakeha cultures acknowledged in our title [Te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro] — to me it is no accident that the Māori translation was given birth at the Central Districts Conference. The land speaks to us of our Māori brothers and sisters and it was they who welcomed us here” (Manchester & Manchester, 1996, p. 101)

For me, the acknowledgement of Māori tikanga brought back again a recognition of the deep processes which had been operating, perhaps at an unconscious level, since Bert Potter was given an opportunity to speak in Auckland. Potter had blatantly enacted the phallic and had been countered by the vagina dentata. Māori tikanga is familiar with these unconscious forces and has ways of working with them that allows them to re-enter conscious process. A teacher of mine, Ta Tipene O'Regan (1974), considered that the tikanga of the marae in Aotearoa developed following European immigration as a means of enabling warring iwi to cooperate in order to deal with this influx. By this means (the protocols of the marae) a process of integration can be established in the face of a tendency to split.

When the conference returned to Auckland in 1994 with the title *Integration and learning in the teaching and learning of psychotherapy*, the memory of Potter rose again in the background from the last Auckland conference. In the foreground however, the keynote speaker, Katherine Murphy spoke of her experience of an integrative approach moving away from splitting and towards rapprochement, thus avoiding ‘dogma eats dogma’ (Murphy, 1994). For me, an important presence was my mentor Ilse Macaskill, who transcended dogma into the realm of the Self with a presentation with the evocative title, “The joys of psychotherapy.”

Back at the CIT in Upper Hutt in 1995, the theme was *Substance and shadow*. I remember a very lively public symposium, particularly the interactions between three of the presenters: John Briere, Margaret Mahy and Kim Hill. The zeitgeist at this time had swung from attention to the blatant sexual abuse of Potter and his like, toward a focus on the so-called “industry” of recovered memory of sexual abuse, which was seen to be imaginary. With the Freudian theory of childhood sexuality having drifted somewhat into the shadow, there was a tendency to split into a belief that all memory of abuse was real on the one hand, to the belief that it was imaginary on the other. The reality of the symbolism of the unconscious process got seriously blurred in this process. Kim Hill had been challenging the so-called “recovered memory industry” on her radio show and John Briere was well-known for his work with trauma, including sexual abuse trauma. In between these two sat Margaret Mahy, prize-winning children’s author, with her book *A lion in the meadow* (1972). This book explores the relationship between a young boy and his mother as the boy develops his

autonomy through exercising his imagination. Margaret Mahy, seated between the other two, was the first to speak. She stood and looked to the left and right, sniffing the air. “I smell conflict,” she said, “and at my age I’m no longer so interested in conflict between people. I may look like an eccentric old lady but I’m actually a secret scientist. On one side of my bed is a pile of *Scientific American* and on the other *New Scientist*; I read them avidly. I’m much more interested in the conflict between the horse brain and the crocodile brain than conflict between people.” After Margaret had spoken, John stood. He picked up the wodge of paper on the lectern in front of him and dropped it, before expressing some apprehension about the impact of media criticism regarding clinical practice in relation to the treatment of sexual trauma. I don’t remember much of what Kim said, but as a listener to her radio interviews, I noticed a softening in her style following her appearance at this conference; a greater tendency to listen instead of challenging.

In 2001, I was on the planning committee for the Wellington conference, *Weaving the threads*. The question arose as to the nature of a pōwhiri and whether to have one at all. I was strongly in favour so the task fell to me to contact tangata whenua. I arranged a meeting with a representative of the Wellington Tenth Trust and he asked what I wanted. When I told him about the conference we were planning, I was challenged about the integrity of our pōwhiri request and responded by affirming that, “we are holding this conference on Te Ati Awa’s whenua and want to honour that.” After a moment of silence he said he would ask his elders and see if something could be arranged.

Following the conference, Charlotte Daellenbach (2001), President of the NZAP, wrote:

I am grateful for the pōwhiri which creates such a potent way of welcoming us onto the site of our common explorations. I am grateful for the messages from Paraire Huata and Mihiteria King which, through their parallels and through their divergence, offer us a compelling challenge and a reminder that we need not search for the right way to be in relation with the tangata whenua — there may not be a right way — but we need to continue the dialogue. (p. 5)

At the conference in Christchurch in 2003, entitled *The ebb and flow of relationship*, one of the keynote speakers was Reverend Maurice Manawaroa Gray, Upoko o Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu. Listening to Maurice, I felt again my interest in the deep process of psychotherapy being addressed. He named the tidal process of the flow between “all of us” (tatou) and “ourselves” (ko au), and the place of Maui in the process of healing. Describing our life force, our mauri, as the Maui in us, he linked this to being ill (mauiui) and to recovery (whakamaui); the trauma of Maui’s birth symbolising the trauma which permeates the world and which is reborn again and again. He described this rebirth as symbolised in the Maui cycle where Maui moves through the elements, from the spiritual (fire, symbolised by his mother’s topknot) to the emotional (water, symbolised by his mother throwing him into the arms of Tangaroa) to the psychological (air, symbolised by him being lifted up by Ranginui) to the physical (earth, symbolised by his return to Papatūānuku). As I remember this now I am linked to the theme of this 2022 conference *Ka mua, Ka muri* — the tidal and cyclical nature of life. The Maui story, as with that of Oedipus, brings together for me the temporal, with its constant change, and the eternal — the ongoing stability of life.

In 2006, with the theme of the *Performance of meeting*, the tide went out again, with no pōwhiri. Biculturalism was addressed by looking at it, as against engaging in it, but in 2007 in Napier, the tide came in again with a rush. The conference was in the war memorial on the foreshore, with an eternal flame burning in the foyer in memory of the war dead. Outside my hotel room in the Masonic Hotel, also on the foreshore, was the statue of a grieving soldier leaning on the butt of his rifle which was pointed to the ground. In retrospect, I see these as symbols of the underlying process I have named; that of the vagina dentata or “the Mothers” and that of the phallus. The war memorial was the container for an intense big group process led by Teresa von Sommaruga Howard, one of the rules of which was to remain seated when speaking. (von Sommaruga Howard (2012) writes of her experience of this group in her article *To Stand Sitting! Bi-Cultural Dilemmas in a Large Group in Aotearoa New Zealand*). Intensity developed around whether to sit or stand to speak, which had a quality of cultural conflict in it, with a risk of the container being breached. I experienced this intensity as an engagement between two taniwha, spiralling in the group. Individuals were processing what emerged for them within the group and this increased the intensity. The following morning the Māori caucus clearly challenged the group’s (mono)cultural assumptions underpinning sitting and standing. With some trepidation I got up from my seat and, along with Paul Solomon, stood alongside the Māori caucus. When I sat down again, I was cautioned about my apparent and unwelcome Pākehā idealism — the death of Maui, aue!

Following this conference, two major events emerged out of the struggles within the zeitgeist of NZAP — the establishment of the Māori caucus under the name Waka Oranga, and the registration of psychotherapy in Aotearoa. These changes in the structure of the organisation can be seen as the outcome of the interaction between the erotic bonds of love and hate within it and within the wider society at the time. For me, this conference stands at the heart of what I am exploring here; the destructive and creative aspects of the erotic bonds in the group as a whole.

At the conference in Waitangi the following year, I slept on Te Tii Marae, but the event that had the most impact on me happened on the upper marae and involved Professor James Ritchie. Ritchie described himself as an ethnopsychologist with forty years’ experience of working in the Māori world as a Pākehā. I have written elsewhere of the important connection I made with him on the harbour cruise (Sandle, 2013), where his wisdom helped me deepen my connections biculturally, but what happened on the upper marae was different. It felt to me as if the taniwha from Napier had not yet gone to sleep but had shifted their focus from the cultural boundary between Māori and Pākehā to that between men and women. We were gathered in the wharenuī and James was speaking of his experiences when he was told to sit down and give space for women to speak, reawakening for me the Napier taniwha.

In 2009, at Te Puna Wanaka in Christchurch, the theme was *Challenge and change*, with a focus on biculturalism and registration. What emerged was the process of strengthening the container for NZAP, and for me the depth that was opened up within the container. In the large group, the metaphor and reality of the burning down of homes emerged — the destruction of the container — and the need to grieve for this as well as the failure to accept the deep grief. The theme had returned to the zeitgeist at the foundation of NZAP. It was the

Saturday of the conference, ANZAC day, and we were reminded of the aftermath of the destruction of the Second World War which was one of Bevan-Brown's motivations for establishing the Association. I slept on the marae beneath the big pou with members of Waka Oranga and their families and others, and experienced the depth of the wellspring of knowledge — te puna wanaka. Paraire Huata had spoken about this wellspring as having no ownership and as belonging to all — a healing experience. I spoke with Fakhry Davids, psychoanalyst from London, regarding the nature of the container and challenges to it. "What would you say to a patient who said 'I want to work with you but not do psychoanalysis?'" I asked. "Not a problem," he replied, "it's only a conversation." (Personal communication, 2009, NZAP Conference)

Back in Wellington in 2012, the theme was *Tona kanohi — The face of the other*. In the continued settling of the zeitgeist since Napier, the strengthening of female presence and that of tangata whenua was noticeable. Almost twice as many of the presenters were women and about a third were tangata whenua. Most memorable for me was the presence of tangata whenua healers offering mahi wairua. The concept of wairua was presented to us in a way which made immediate sense to me in my practice and as a way of staying present in the face of the changing zeitgeist. Wairua stands for the two streams — wai, rua — the ego stream and the soul stream. We were told that the task of the healer was to stand in the soul stream and when we do that the ego stream becomes much more visible to us and is available to be worked with. A further task is to avoid getting caught up in the ego stream and to stay standing in the soul stream. The ego stream both changes and resists change, whereas the soul stream stays constant and unchanging and provides a basis for ongoing relationship.

The mahi wairua workers were also present at the conference the following year on Orakei Marae in Tamaki Makaurau. As we walked on to the marae and approached the wharenuī, Tumutumuwenua, the leader of the mahi wairua group, called out to the ancestors in what to me sounded like ancient te reo Māori. It sent a chill down my spine. Subsequently, a trusted cultural mentor of mine, who was also present at this conference, told me in a matter-of-fact way that he spoke to the ancestors in the language they spoke. It was at this conference that I presented my paper on the sexual aetiology of violence in the form of a TED talk (Sandle, 2013) within the body of Tumutumuwenua. In my mind, then and now, was the phallic potency of Tumutumuwenua to rise and stand up in the face of the destructive colonising powers and also his place as a container for integration. A potent film by Merata Mita, *Bastion Point — Day 507* (1980) captures some of the history of this.

This conference marked a shift in my relationship with NZAP. As Maurice Gray had spoken of in his presentation in Christchurch in 2003, the tide for me was turning away from tatou to ko au. Following Spielrein, I think of this as a move from the general to the specific, from the unconscious process into the conscious, and a strengthening of the ego. This was also marked by my beginning to write and present at NZAP and Bioenergetic conferences and in the *Transactional Analysis Journal*. My individual creativity in the field of psychotherapy was finding a voice: I no longer had to hide the phallic as I had hidden the war comics as a young child.

Back in Christchurch in 2015, the post-earthquake conference was entitled *Shifting ground*. The ground had shifted for me personally in two major ways. Earlier in the year I had been hospitalised with a life-threatening lung abscess, and decided to begin my retirement

by not taking on new clients. In addition to this I decided to help my brother repair the seriously quake-damaged family house in Christchurch. There was a sense for me of “coming home” and I spoke of this with guest presenters Fakhry Davids and Pele Fa’auli on an orienting drive. I took them on to the surf beach at Sumner. Fakhry spoke of the surf in South Africa where he had his initial training and Pele stood with his bare feet in the water and gazed out to sea.

It may be that the zeitgeist of NZAP was also becoming less focussed on the organisation itself and more on the work; a parallel move from tatau to ko au. At the 2016 conference in Hastings, tangata whenua challenged our group at the pōwhiri. They described that “our young people” are dying by suicide, and vigorously questioned what we were doing about it. In the wharenui that night, we were encouraged to keep our mattresses close together to stop the ghosts getting in. I lay there and listened to Haare tell a local version of the Hine-titama story as I fell asleep. Hine-titama is the dawn and is impregnated by her father Tane and in shame enters the realm of the dead, becoming Hine-nui-te-pō. This symbolic story of day and night contains within it the elements I have named at the beginning of this paper. The story Haare told was much more earthy and connected me to the dying young people named during the pōwhiri. What I remember from my half-asleep state is that an old fisherman was entranced by the beauty of the dawn and pursued her, eventually making love with her. In shame, she threw herself off a local cliff into the ocean.

I have written about my experience at the 2020 conference, *Wiwini wawana wehi ihi — Terror in the transference*, elsewhere (Sandle, 2020), but in conclusion, I’ll return to it here, with a quote from my 2020 presentation, which relates to the impact of the Covid pandemic which was just starting in New Zealand at the time.

I watched online as the conference began to unravel and felt both frustrated and deflated when local presentations, one of which I was to deliver, were cancelled. I turned up to the venue early, not knowing what to expect but wanting to offer what support and help I could to the planning committee. I helped setting up chairs for the pōwhiri and was encouraged by Cherry to speak if the opportunity arose. I spoke in te reo of the earth, the ancestors and the house, Whaia Pu Aroha, Mother Aubert (Munro, 1996). For me the ancestors continued their presence from the belly of the earth, both supportive and challenging. As Tangata Whenua spoke of Mother Aubert’s encouragement for us to live in the present, I found myself thinking of Maui, and how his attempt to find eternal life could be seen as the challenge we all have to live in the present and adapt to change. His death in the pounamu teeth at the entrance to the womb of Hine-nui-te-pō, was close to the theories of Sabina Spielrein I had been exploring in my paper. His companion Piwakawaka, the fantail, had led to Maui’s death when he awakened Hine-nui-te-pō as Maui tried to enter her womb as a Namu (sandlfy) larva, and she crushed him with the pounamu teeth of her vagina dentata. I thought of him as a schizoid structure, his injury being abandonment at birth by his mother Taranga, which led to his ongoing search for her in the underworld.

Larry, the keynote speaker, isolated in his hotel room, spoke by Zoom from the big screen, and as he did so Piwakawaka (a fantail) came into the room and flew about, calling out. I felt fear come upon me, who was going to die? Several possibilities

passed my mind, including myself and Larry. I noticed Larry blowing his nose and feared he might have the virus.

My voyage into the symbolic realm in the presence of Larry and the virus and its consequences chastened me and renewed me, helping me accept the “death” of the conference and my presentation. (Sandle, 2020, pp. 34-35)

I later presented this paper online and it has informed what I am presenting today.

Conclusion

How do we hold these deep, archetypal forces safely enough, both as we work with our clients but also as we relate to each other through the many groups we belong to? In the time of Covid, they rise up and may divide us and those around us. In the social media world they take on new forms such as the Alt Right on the one hand and Cancel Culture on the other. I have presented Sigmund Freud and Sabina Spielrein as hero figures in our history as psychotherapists, embodying the phallic and the “Mothers”. As hero figures they were subject to challenge and denigration in their time and their theories have suffered a similar fate, being modified over time and returning again to their archetypal roots. I see each of us as also following our own hero path, negotiating our individual encounters with the archetypal forces of love and hate. In Aotearoa our biculture has given us the opportunity to meet these archetypes in a different form from what we are familiar with and perhaps see, as Spielrein noticed, their basic similarities, and the fact that they emerge for each of us from the individual traumas we experience in life.

Through my personal recollections of my journey as a psychotherapist in Aotearoa and in particular of NZAP conferences over the time I have been a member, I have attempted to throw a light on the changing nature of its zeitgeist and also its underlying essence, stable in the presence of the alternating pull of the erotic bonds of love and hate.

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