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Te Rōpū Whakaora Hinengaro

Contents

Editorial

The newly – appointed editorial group members are Philip Culbertson, Angela Stupples, Margot Solomon and me, Paul Solomon. Readers of the Forum will have noticed an increasingly scholarly tone in the journal over time; this issue marks another step in that direction. The Forum is now a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The editorial group is currently working, in the words of the editorial of issue 5 in 1999, to 'enable the Journal to take its place in the international literature of psychotherapy,' alongside other psychotherapy journals in Australia, Britain, America, and other countries. Whether the transition requires a change of name, from Forum to Journal, is a topic for discussion in the newsletter, by our Council, and by all members.

For me, the move to 'scholarly journal' status and a peer – review process, resonates with the registration issue. The Psychologists' Board's somewhat hostile opposition to the proposal that psychotherapy be registered under the HPCA, has been cogently critiqued by Seán Manning, Marianne Quinn and others in the Newsletter. Our NZAP Council responded suitably assertively. The smell of turf wars is in the air, but I take comfort in knowing some psychologists who hold in high esteem their psychodynamic and psychoanalytic supervisors and trainers, in New Zealand and in other countries. The opposing group is not homogeneously hostile; it contains friends as well as foes. War and rivalry are not inevitable.

It is different overseas: an email came from a student who, having completed a BA in psychology and the AUT Graduate Diploma year, is taking a gap year working in a psychiatric hospital in Cusco. Here he is regarded as a colleague, and reports that in Peru, European-trained psychologists later train in psychotherapy, which is valued as an advanced skill.

Some NZAP members have trained in psychology as well as psychotherapy, and seem to demonstrate how the disciplines can complement one another: Mark Thorpe's article in this issue has more on the theme. While writing my MHSc thesis, I interviewed psychologists in the USA who practice psychotherapy and meditation. One of them said he practiced psychodynamically and relationally, but personally found the language of psychology more incisive when he came to describe his work. Taking a leaf from his book, in my MHSc thesis I drew on the work of psychologists (as well as psychoanalysts, neuroscientists and philosophers) to address questions around whether experience can be rendered into words, and the clear thinking of psychologists was very helpful to me. The psychotherapists whom I interviewed seemed to be more at ease with opening themselves to powerful counter-transference feelings, and reflecting on them. Perhaps psychotherapists and psychologists might benefit more from co-operation than from rivalry?

In the context of this debate around registration, Jonathan Fay reminds us ('Last Word,' Newsletter August 2006) that as a professional association we need to look to our qualifications process, and to including in it 'accurate assessment of the personal qualities required to practice effectively as a psychotherapist.' One such quality is a grounded awareness of one's own conscious and unconscious emotional processes, and the ability to reflect on them in order to develop sensitivity to transference and counter-transference. Psychotherapy trainings differ from psychology trainings in encouraging students to engage in personal psychotherapy, in addition to supervised practice, to assist in developing this core skill of psychotherapy.

We train ourselves to work with unconscious process – many psychologists and some psychotherapists do not acknowledge its existence. Recent research in neuroscience elucidates the role of implicit memory (which by definition is out of conscious awareness) in brain development and in the growth of human attachment. Thomas Lewis spoke of this at the NZAP conference in Queenstown, and his article was in the September 2005 Forum. Alan Schore (2003) outlines the implications of recent research for the practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis – what he calls a developmental neuropsychoanalysis – and Fonagy et al. (2002) synthesize developmental research from a number of disciplines as it affects psychotherapeutic treatment of psychological disturbances. As well, research is uncovering the neurobiological basis of human empathy (Google 'mirror neurons' for an overview). Because I have often felt the effects of unconscious process both in my personal therapy and as a therapist with my patients, I have no need of reassurance on that score. It is heartening to feel my subjective experiences validated by research, and empowering to be able to stand strong in the face of attacks on psychotherapy, whether from psychologists or in the popular media.

We psychotherapists willingly immerse ourselves in the uncomfortable underside of life, the disowned shadow, the negative projection, the paradoxical, conflicted and mysterious aspect of experience: the unconscious, that which many prefer not to know. Bion (1970) quoted from Coleridge's 'Rime of the ancient mariner' to describe the challenges on the path towards opening our psyche to what is new or unfamiliar:

The analyst has to become infinite by the suspension of memory, desire, and understanding. He will inevitably feel dread, like

> One that on a lonesome road doth walk in fear and dread,
>
> And having once turned round walks on
>
> And turns no more his head,
>
> Because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread.
>
> The frightful fiend represents indifferently the quest for truth and the active defences against it (p. 46).

However comforting it might be to imagine that chaos resides only in others, in the patient, or in an "other" professional group, Bion exhorts us to meet the patient's fear and defensiveness in the humbling awareness that we too are sometimes fearful and defensive; randomized controlled trials cannot help us on that journey.

The articles in this issue reflect a feast of clinical concerns and therapeutic modalities. John Bryant outlines the role of neurobiology and attachment theory in understanding violence, while Mark Thorpe (a psychologist who practices psychotherapy) links Object-relations, Self-Psychology, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and Mentalisation. Mihiteria Wharetohunga King describes a meeting with whakamā in psychotherapy, and Leon Tan offers an analysis of virtual life in mixed realities. From Mary Farrell we have an illustrated journey through Samuel Beckett's analysis with Bion in the 1930's, and from Margot Solomon a discussion of the forces that control us in large groups. Anne McDermott takes up the training theme in her discussion of the relevance of play to the teaching and learning of psychotherapy.

Paul Solomon

September 2006

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Beckett, Bion and waiting for God

Mary Farrell

Abstract

In 1948, Samuel Beckett's famous existential theatre masterpiece, 'Waiting for Godot' was written. This paper will make links between the dialogue in the play and Beckett's analytic work with the young Wilfred Bion in the early 1930s. The paper will be illustrated by extracts from the recent film version of 'Waiting for Godot'. Reference will be made to Bion's paper 'Attacks on Linking', showing the relevance of his ideas to Beckett's life history and to a patient whose persistent rejection of interpretation has characterised our work together.

Samuel Barclay Beckett (1906-1989) was a brilliant and often baffling playwright whose life mirrored his work, and was set against the backdrop of European existentialism, with its themes of alienation and the absurdity of the human condition. There have been two leading biographies: one, by Deirdre Bair with whom he resolutely refused to comply, and one by his friend James Knowlson, which was thoroughly approved by Beckett, and fittingly called 'Damned to Fame'. Beckett was indeed damned to fame. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 and his work has been discussed, explored, produced, filmed, broadcast and studied by scores of actors, directors, students and literary critics. However his extreme dislike of intrusion and social interaction is well chronicled and his house in Paris was surrounded by high walls studded with broken shards of glass.

I have been fascinated by his life and work since my teens, and read all his plays and poems as well as every article I could find. To me, his enigmatic blend of intense vulnerability and angry withdrawal encompasses so many of our difficulties in relating to each other and his most famous work, 'Waiting for Godot' (1956) says so much about the despair we can often feel when frequent disappointment is the outcome of our endeavours.

'Waiting for Godot' has become one of the most celebrated and controversial texts of the last century. Hate it or love it, one must concede that the play where, as Mercier's review in the Irish Times of 1956 said: 'nothing happens twice, once in the first act and once in the second', expresses something of the essence of our often frustrating and mystifying human experience. It was written in French in 1948. During the war, Beckett and his partner Suzanne had worked for the French Resistance (Beckett won the Croix de Guerre for his heroism) and spent many weeks of the occupation of France walking the roads and hiding at various barns and safe houses in the Midi area.

The brief summary of the play is that two homeless itinerants are waiting, on a deserted road, for someone called Godot. Godot seems to have an answer of some kind – maybe a job, maybe an entrance to a better life, maybe some interesting food to eat or a comfortable place to stay. As they wait, they meet a very bizarre couple, Pozzo and Lucky, a tyrant and his servant. Lucky is mid way between a man and a horse, treated badly by his master and yet in some way a genius who 'thinks' in great bursts of poetic speech. When Lucky and Pozzo depart, a boy appears who says he is from Godot. Godot, it seems, cannot come but may be there tomorrow. The next act is a repetition of the same events – in the meantime some long period of time seems to have passed:

> *They look at the tree.*
>
> *Estragon: I see nothing*
>
> *Vladimir: But yesterday it was all black and bare.*
>
> *And now it's covered with leaves.*
>
> *Estragon: Leaves?*
>
> *Vladimir: In a single night.*
>
> *Estragon: It must be Spring.*
>
> *Vladimir: But in a single night!*
>
> *Estragon: I tell you we weren't here yesterday. Another of your nightmares.*
>
> *Vladimir: And where were we yesterday evening according to you?*
>
> *Estragon: How do I know? In another compartment! There's no lack of void (Beckett, 1956, pp. 65-66).*

The sense of being in the wrong place at the wrong time was a familiar one for Beckett. Much has been written about his short and unfinished analysis with the young Wilfred Bion. The year was 1934. Beckett's beloved father had died suddenly in 1933 at the family home just south of Dublin, leaving Beckett at the mercy of his difficult, depressed and narcissistic mother. Beckett's mental and physical health deteriorated fast: he suffered from boils, cysts and panic attacks. Insomnia and night terrors tormented him. The only way he could sleep was if his brother Frank would get into bed with him and hold him. His mother reluctantly relinquished him to London, preferring that he sought treatment in a place where her reputation would remain unscathed. His doctor recommended the Tavistock Clinic.

Bion at the time was six years older than his 28-year-old patient. After qualifying as a doctor in 1930, with no previous training in psychotherapy, he joined the Tavistock Clinic in 1932. It is hard to know how it went for the two of them. Bion seemed very involved with his fascinating patient, and invited him to dinner, a concert and Jung's series of five lectures in London. Beckett wrote:

> I used to lie down on the couch and try to go back in my past. I think it probably did help. I think it helped me to control the panic… I remember feeling trapped, of being imprisoned and unable to escape, of crying to be let out, but no-one could hear, no one was listening. I remember being in pain but being unable to do anything about it (Letter to Maurice Sinclair, 1935; cited in Bair 1978).

Beckett continued with Bion for two years – during that time he became an avid reader of Freud, Adler and Otto Rank. He made copious notes on his study and experience of psychoanalysis, referring to his 'Peter Panitis' and the 'frightening severance from mother'. We can only guess that much of the content of his sessions with Bion revolved around his love-hate relationship with his powerful and autocratic mother, the intensity of his wish to separate from her and the narcissistic folie a deux that seemed to have had its genesis with her:

> 'For years, I was unhappy', he wrote in 1935, after 150 meetings with Bion,consciously and deliberately; so that I isolated myself more and more, undertook less and less, and lent myself to a crescendo of disparagement of others and myself … the misery and solitude and apathy and the sneers were the elements of an index of superiority and guaranteed the feeling of arrogant otherness (Letter to Thomas McGreevy, 1935; cited in Bair, 1978).

Beckett was painfully aware of the frequent contempt for others that often dominated his interactions. He described his analysis as an 'endless squabble' and chose to end it just after Christmas 1935. His ending of the relationship with Bion was another expression of the feeling of hopelessness that anything much could come of attempting to have any meaningful interaction with another person and perhaps the extreme fear of dependency that stayed with him throughout his long life. The words that remained indelibly in his mind were the ones he heard in the lecture by Jung that he attended with Bion shortly before the analysis ended. Jung was talking about a little girl, whose dreams were full of mythological figures. Jung sensed the dreams were a premonition of her early death, and indeed, she died when she was 11. 'She had never been born, entirely', Jung concluded (1976). These words had a huge impact on Beckett. He felt they made sense of his whole analytic experience – what he called his womb fixation: - the desire to stay in bed and do nothing, his obsessive relationship with his mother – he had not been entirely born. He used Jung's words later in his radio play 'All That Fall', where Mrs Rooney tells her husband about a lecture she has heard from 'one of those new mind doctors':

> It was something he said and the way he said it, that have haunted me ever since … when he had done with the little girl, he stood there motionless for some time… then he suddenly raised his head and exclaimed, as if he had had a revelation, the trouble with her was that she had never really been born! I left before the end…(Beckett, 1986, p. 195)

The resonance that this idea had with Beckett suggests to me that his life long torment from fits of depression and psychosomatic symptoms may have originated from the intense pain of his early experience of being mothered. His experience of having been neglected and suffocated, trapped in the womb and yet painfully expelled after a long and difficult labour, often dominated his thinking and these themes can be found in all his plays:

> Pozzo *(suddenly furious):* Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time? It's abominable! When! When! One day. Is that not enough for you, one day like any other day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? *(Calmer)* They give birth astride of a grave. The light gleams for an instant, then it's night once more (Beckett, 1956, p. 89).

The grim and despairing Pozzo is also controlling, powerful and obsessional: one could surmise he represented the introjected mother for Beckett. Beckett was the second child of May Beckett, a woman who had been born into a wealthy family of landowners in County Kildare. May's father had died young at the age of 54, leaving the family in financial difficulty and with considerable debt. May, at 15, was forced to go out to work and became a nurse. A stubbornly independent person, May was tall, thin and manly in her bearing, with stern eyes and a flashing temper. Her eventual marriage to the sociable and energetic Bill Beckett was her salvation in some ways, as he could make her laugh. As a successful businessman, he also restored her to the style of living she preferred. They lived in the grand old house of Cooldrinagh outside of Dublin, where Samuel was born and brought up. May was highly obsessional, needing everything to stay exactly in order, and often losing her temper with her household staff and with her children. She also suffered from periods of dreadful despair, pacing about the dark house at night like a ghost. May's behaviour, as James Knowlson writes in his biography of Beckett:

> ... was dominated by a rigid code of conduct and concept of decorum which promised trouble once her second son started to behave in rather wild bohemian ways of which she strongly disapproved. She used to have moods of dark depression which would last for days on end, when she was extremely difficult to deal with: strange, ill-tempered, bottled-up, tricky and difficult were all words used by those who tried to describe her personality. (Knowlson: 1996, p. 5)

The lines that perhaps characterise Beckett's relationship with his mother are to be found in his short screenplay 'Film': 'Male infant. 6 months. His mother holds him. Her severe eyes devouring him.'

The blend of dependency, love, hate, disapproval and anxious attachment described in those sparing words finds expression in the arid climate and landscape of 'Waiting for Godot'. The dialogue re-iterates the intense conflict of the wish to stay and the inability to leave. The boredom and frustrated anger is voiced by the unloved and misunderstood child who was often verbally or physically lashed by his mother.

In his paper 'Attacks on Linking', Bion (1959) talks of the 'destructive attacks that the patient makes on anything which is felt to have the function of linking one object with another.' The paper describes the ways in which patients deny and sometimes vehemently reject the therapist's interpretations. Bion suggests this is to do with the refusal of the mother to allow the mechanism of projective identification, whereby the mother serves as a repository for the infant's frighteningly powerful feelings of hate and envy. He goes on to suggest that when the mother is unable to allow this, the baby's intense feelings then become directed towards themselves, causing a hatred and lack of tolerance for all feelings, including the hatred itself.

At this point, I would like to introduce some verbatim from my work with a patient whose similar rejection of linking, fear of silence and invitations to combat have characterised our five year long encounters with each other. His transferential issues, like Beckett's, revolve around the lack of attunement of his mother in his early years. Also like Beckett is his feeling, often iterated, of being trapped, feeling stuck and yet refusing any opportunity to move out of the stuckness into a more animated dialogue. Perhaps it is like the baby who needs to be born and yet is reluctant to leave the womb.

Verbatim

He's sitting waiting for me when I come back from the bathroom. He is always 5 minutes early, and always goes right into the consulting room if the door is open, rather than waiting in the waiting room. He looks amused. I have been away **on** holiday for the last 2 weeks, and he knows I have been to the Cook Islands.

'You're not very tanned', he says.

I always struggle not to respond to his openers, as they always seem to be an invitation to argue.

'No', I say, trying to keep my voice neutral.

'Bloody Poms', he says.

I try not to smile. He often makes me want to laugh.

'What are you looking at me like that for?' he says.

'How am I looking at you?'

'As if I'm a nut!' he says, with some intensity.

'I'm wondering if you're angry with me for going away', I say.

He snorts derisively.

His face lights up.

'Have you heard the one about the Buddhist who goes into the bar and says 'make me one with everything', he says.

He often tells me jokes.

We have been working together for five years now. I know him very well – the compulsive hand washing which was the initial complaint has got much better, though some phobic anxieties still persist.

Two Weeks Later

Today, he arrives ten minutes before the appointment. I am sitting in the waiting room (it's sunny there) drinking some water and having a swift look at the paper.

'What are you doing here?' he chides me. 'You should be in there!'

Once we are both where we should be, he tells me about his outrage that men are being forbidden to sit next to children on planes. He talks in a fairly unstructured kind of way for about 15 minutes. It seems to be about the rotten treatment that men get from the world, how if a bus plunges over a cliff, the news only talks about the women and children who died and not the men; how the men are in the firing line in wars while the women get to stay at home in safety.

I mention that he may feel angry about having been kept at home with his mum and his sister for so long as the baby boy of the family while his much older brothers and emotionally unavailable dad were out having fun.

He stares at me without responding. We are in silence for about 30 seconds. He looks belligerently at me.

'Ask me something!' he commands.

'What would you like me to ask you?'

'Something that would enlighten me! A revelation!' he crows triumphantly.

'You'd like me to take responsibility for your revelations.'

'That's what I pay you for, isn't it?'

He looks gleeful. He is trying to make me feel as ashamed as he felt when his brothers teased him for being Mummy's baby. I am considering whether to say this or not.

In 'Waiting for Godot', there is a section of dialogue between the two main characters that closely resembles the tone and atmosphere and the destruction of linking which occurs during our sessions. Estragon and Vladimir are talking about the haunting 'dead voices' that they both hear. Vladimir offers many alternative ways of comparing

and connecting with the voices, but Estragon steadfastly rejects them, preferring to stay with the one comparison he will accept:

> *'Like leaves …', he insists over and over.*
> *Estragon: All the dead voices.*
> *Vladimir: They make a noise like wings.*
> *Estragon: Like leaves.*
> *Vladimir: Like sand.*
> *Estragon: Like leaves.*
> *Vladimir: They all speak together.*
> *Estragon: Each one to itself.*
> *Vladimir: Rather they whisper.*
> *Estragon: They rustle.*
> *Vladimir: They murmur.*
> *Estragon: They rustle.*
> *Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.*
> *Estragon: Like leaves.*
> *Vadimir: Like ashes.*
> *Estragon: Like leaves (Beckett 1956).*

Beckett spoke of those moments when 'the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being.' The self-defeating wish to remain static that many of our patients display is perhaps just that: the boredom of the same old rituals is preferable to the intensity of the pain that occurs when a link hits the mark. Here is verbatim from a recent session:

Today he tells me I look sick and weary and tired and he thinks I don't want to see him. I tell him I think he didn't get the right kind of love and attention from his mum and he's very disappointed about that. We are in silence for about 10 minutes and he curls into a foetal position on the sofa clutching a cushion over his face.

> *"I can't remember!" he yells into the cushion.*
> *"I think you were really sad when you were little".*
> *'I wasn't!' he's still got the cushion in front of his face. 'I didn't feel anything. I just got up and went to school and came home and went to bed and got up and went to school and came home and went to bed – I didn't have any feelings about anything!'*
> *'I think you were a depressed little boy', I say.*

He curls up even tighter. He holds the cushion tight almost like he's suffocating himself. I feel scared.

'You're making me cry!' he says.

The fear that was experienced by both of us in this session has its origin, I believe, in the seemingly uncontainable intensity experienced by the baby when the mother is unavailable to digest the indigestible and give it back to her baby in palatable form. Those 'severe eyes' devouring the baby that Beckett wrote about were the eyes of a mother who has so many unsatisfied needs herself that she is unable to respond to the needs of her child and also appears to blame her child for her distress. The result is that the child learns to turn against his own needs, suppress expression and stifle his longing for love and connection, often leading in adult life to unease, disease and profound depression.

Bion (1956) wrote:

> Thanks to a denial of the main mechanism open to the infant in dealing with his too powerful emotions, the conduct of emotional life, in any case a severe problem, becomes intolerable. Feelings of hatred are therefore directed against all emotions including hate itself, and against external reality which stimulates them. It is a short step from hatred of the emotions to hatred of life itself (p. 345).

Estragon and Vladimir, the two main characters in Waiting for Godot, although they attempt to continue to make contact with each other, often find themselves at such an impasse of communication. They are both in pain, yet find it hard to express true feelings to each other, often seeming to prefer a banal and almost comic banter that occasionally dips into a pool of tears as they wait in their trap for the salvation that never comes. They contemplate hanging themselves from the tree.

'Let's go' – one or other of them often says.

'We can't – we're waiting for Godot' is the reply that always follows.

Many have speculated on what 'Godot' means – some have mooted that the word is a mixture of God and Eau (the French word for water) – the idea that we are all waiting for our spiritual or actual thirst to be quenched. In the therapeutic relationship, perhaps this is particularly true – to have 'the answer", to be relieved of the unbearable tension and anxiety patients often feel, to be perfectly and completely understood by the therapist, to have the attunement that a child should ideally have from its parents – would be the longed-for outcome. Maybe the therapist becomes Godot at times, and yet, like Godot, turns out to be fools' gold, when no satisfactory 'answer' or 'cure' can be provided.

Whenever the question of Godot's meaning was put to Beckett, he always gave the same reply:

'If I had known who Godot was, I would have put it in the play.'

Perhaps Godot just symbolizes the capacity to keep hoping and to keep attempting

to relate. Perhaps he symbolizes the ability to embrace the state of not knowing, of mystery and doubt that was the area of common ground between Beckett and Bion. Both of them continued to explore this area long after their relationship had ended. This is a state of mind, as David Armstrong (1992) writes in his online paper 'Names, Thoughts and Lies', where we are:

> in the presence of the unthought thought, the no-thing waiting to be discovered and formulated through the elaboration and playing with preverbal and verbal images, with dreams, myths, preconceptions, Bion has referred to, using a phrase of John Keats in a letter to his two brothers, as 'negative capability': that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason (p 281).

If we are to restore any kind of hope for life in our depressed and despairing patients, we have to tolerate the pain of becoming the surrogate repository for the intense buried and often cryptic feelings our patients cannot bear. We have to survive the attacks on linking, as Estragon and Vladimir do, by simply staying there and waiting until things become clearer. I have presented you with fragments only from my work and my thoughts on Waiting for Godot. I would like to leave you with the ultimate in a piece of extraordinary poetry from the play – a fragment of Lucky's speech. It makes no logical sense – if we reach irritably after fact and reason to try to understand what it means, then we have lost its power -'it means what it says' said Beckett.

Embodied in it are the images that haunt our dreams and our unconscious – the existential images of birth, death, endurance and fear. Somehow, we must tolerate the sense and non-sense of the space we occupy together in our groups and the space we live in with our clients, and like Estragon, Vladimir and Pozzo, celebrate the struggles of human kind to make itself understood.

> ...That man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation wastes and pines wastes and pines and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts penicillin and succedanea in a word I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckham Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell fades away I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per head since the death of Bishop Berkeley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per head approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unknown no matter

what matter the facts are there and considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running water running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas in the year of their Lord six hundred and something the air the earth the sea the earth abode of stones in the great deeps the great cold on sea on land and in the air I resume for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis the facts are there but time will tell I resume alas alas on on in short in fine on on abode of stones who can doubt it I resume but not so fast I resume the skull fading fading fading and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the tennis on on the beard the flames the tears the stones so blue so calm alas alas on on the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the labours abandoned left unfinished graver still abode of stones in a word I resume alas alas abandoned unfinished the skull the skull in Connemara in spite of the tennis the skull alas the stones Cunard (mêlée, final vociferations) tennis ... the stones ... so calm ... Cunard ... unfinished ... (Beckett:1956, p. 43).

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Casting the couch – some discussion of its role in shaping the place of encounter

Chris Milton & Charles Malcolm

Abstract

Analysis occurs when the space of meeting becomes the place of encounter. This place is no ordinary place, it is a place dedicated to the analysand appropriating her/his own, authentic possibilities of being. The place and process which is analysis is evoked in several ways: by the presence of analyst and analysand, the 'rules' which guide the process and the ambiance of the setting. The last of these includes the use (or not) of the analytic couch.

Drawing on qualitative research into several analysts' lived experience of having an analysand use the couch this paper discusses the role of the couch in constituting intersubjective privacy and some of the ways in which the couch contributes to a particular way of being-together-with, bodily attunement, the emergence of an analytic third, and reverie.

Introduction

Analysis occurs when the space of meeting becomes the place of encounter. Analysis is created in several ways: through the way analyst and analysand are present, through the 'rules' which guide the process, and through the ambiance of the setting. The last of these includes the use (or not) of the analytic couch (Freud, 1913/2001, p. 133). Freud did not himself wholly stick to the use of the couch nor did he expect others to do so (Roazen, 1975; Stern, 1978). He was known to conduct analysis whilst out walking (Jones, 1961/1964; Gay, 1988/1989) as well as to invite an analysand to walk through from his consulting room to his study to make an interpretation inside the metaphor by alluding to a meaningful image without direct reference to the analysand's material (Bergmann, 1989).

Gill (1984) argues that there are two sorts of criteria which 'define' psychoanalysis: intrinsic and extrinsic criteria. Intrinsic criteria relate to the development of a working alliance, transference, and the analysis of resistance. The extrinsic criteria include such features as the constancy of the setting, and the number, frequency and length of sessions. Usually, the use of the couch is regarded as an extrinsic criterion and psychoanalysts generally see it as an extrinsic technical aid to creating and maintaining the analytic process (Cooper, 1986; Eigen, 1977).

This paper explicates the analyst's experience of having an analysand use the couch and the couch's role in shaping the place of analytic encounter. How do we cast the couch and how does the couch cast us (analyst and analysand)?

At the outset it may need to be said that this is not a polemical account. It is not an attempt to valorize the use of the couch. All the participants of the study, including the first author, consult with analysands both face to face and on the couch. This does mean that they all possess a basis for making a natural comparison in their experience. This natural comparison at times helps generate a sense of how we cast the couch and how it casts us.

In an attempt to address the general question (of how we cast the couch and how it casts us) the authors use what is effectively a phenomenological method. This method combines an extract (and commentary) on a segment of analysis conducted by the first author using the couch with material drawn from a larger phenomenological study (Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003; De Koning, 1979; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch, 2003; Giorgi, 1975; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003; Kruger, 1986; Malcolm, 1995; Schōn; 2000; Stones, 1988; Thorpe, 1989) of the analyst's lived experience of using the couch (Milton, 2003). In this paper we shall discuss the role of privacy and some of the ways in which the couch contributes to a mode of being, reverie and the gathering and wording of an analytic third.

Although this paper accents the role of the couch as positive, facilitative, constructive and of assistance to analysis this is not always so and neither the participants nor the authors seek to valorize the couch over and above working face to face. The couch may be simply unhelpful, contraindicated, used as part of a defense and abused for various reasons, such as power (Adler, 1966; Anthony, 1961; Balint, 1965; Bellak & Meyers, 1975; Brody, 1973; Byerly, 1992; Deutsch, 1980; Dewald, 1978; Fairbairn, 1958; Freud, cited in Bernstein, 1975; Gellner, 1993; Goldberger, 1995; Greenson, 1969; Jung, 1935; Lomas 1994; Meerloo,1963; Robertiello, 1967; Samuels, 1985; Schmideberg, 1948; Stern, 1948; Teitelbaum, 1994; Wexler, 1971; Wolf, 1995). Important though these factors are they fall outside the scope of this paper.

Case material

As it is helpful to give a lived sense of the way in which the couch shapes the place of analytic encounter what follows is a presentation of a vignette of the primary author's experience of the couch's role in the conduct of an analysis and particularly the protection its privacy provides.

Matthew is a single man in his mid-twenties. He entered analysis after a break-up with a girlfriend. He wanted to get over this and resolve what he felt were problems in all his relationships. In addition he wanted to use analysis for personal development. Loss was deeply rooted in Matthew's life as his mother had died when he was a toddler, and he was raised by his father and a nanny. Both related to him ambiguously, sometimes helping him and sometimes letting him down.

Matthew was in analysis for a little more than three years. During much of that time

he came three times a week on consecutive days and used the couch. The clinical material is drawn from a session in the second year of the analysis.

When Matthew enters my room he briefly looks about, then crosses to the couch and lies down. Seated at the head of the couch (out of Matthew's sight, and with him almost completely out of my sight) I experience a settling silence fall over the room. We are together but alone in a shared private place. Matthew starts to speak. I listen to his words with evenly suspended attention. My mind is simply drawn along by his words, their rhythm, his silence. His presence evokes my own thoughts and feelings, sensations and intuitions. I surrender to the drift of this material sponsored by my own unconscious. My experienced response forms a wake from the prow of his associations. Matthew's presence on the couch shapes my subjectivity. I feel that we enter a shared space. It is a place of coming together for Matthew and I, a place that feels as if it is formed from our joint presence. For me it has the quality of an altered state of consciousness but it is a 'shared separate reality' that feels very real. I feel an increase in the availability of my feelings, the flexibility of my thoughts and my sense of Matthew. I can easily register, consider, weigh and try out the experiences presented to me. More importantly I am able to allow Matthew's subjectivity to occupy my body-mind. Something like a third subject forms in the space of associations. From my sense of this third subject I assay a particular interpretation (the details of which are now lost), which is an attempt to explicitly access and articulate the place of encounter with Matthew.

His subjectivity both shaped and provoked by the interpretation Matthew is moved to associate further. He says that when he was a child he was very fond of gluing model aeroplanes together. He says that he was not very good at this and would often get into a mess. Sometimes when this occurred he would ask his father for help. His father would help but would then become engrossed in the task and take it over from Matthew. When his father was finished making the model he would say something like: 'Didn't we make a nice plane?' Matthew, however, was acutely aware that he had not himself made the model. I track this from my position of evenly suspended attention. At first I find myself empathizing with Matthew as a child who felt misunderstood and unhelped, then I feel emotionally moved by his account and a little protective of him. I also find myself feeling as if I were his father and experiencing the difficulty of relating to a child in just the right way. Then I find myself playing with the idea that Matthew is making an unconscious communication. One in which he says that he experiences my interpretation as interrupting and usurping his 'messy', yet creative, work, in much the same way that his father did with the model aeroplane construction. I find myself thinking that maybe he is making an unconscious complaint against a figure who usurped his creative feeling and left him feeling inadequate. Perhaps he has come to doubt his creative capacity. I wonder about speaking. I think that this is too little evidence on which to base an interpretation. I wonder if I do speak if I might not be taking over his work

again. Is there a way to speak without doing this? Has the time passed to speak, has my silence shown something else? Does he experience my silence as supportive or absent or even punitive? Am I being punitive? Was I countertransferentially stung by my assumption that he was unconsciously critiquing my making an interpretation? My thoughts and feelings, senses and intuitions swirl in the analytic space. Aided by the privacy which the use of the couch affords me this movement is easier to engage with, observe, dwell upon and shape. This also helps analytic abstinence. So I remain silent but continue listening in a state of reverie.

Matthew continues associating saying that his great aunt had once done a similar thing. When he was a child she had 'helped' him write a poem by calling out possible lines and asking him what he thought of them. Once constructed this poem was sent off, as Matthew's, to a children's poem-writing competition. Matthew won the competition and a lot of fuss was made about this but Matthew knew, with some embarrassment, that the poem was not his own work.

In the space of association the idea comes to me that Matthew's account of his great aunt usurping his creative potential may be a second unconscious communication about how, with my interpretation, I have taken over his work. Then within the free and sheltered space of the couch's privacy a different, more subtle pattern comes to me. I see that Matthew's communications are not only understandable as someone usurping his creative potential. They may also depict a split 'mentor-usurper' figure. In the intermingling of our subjectivities he is *manifestly* speaking of the usurper figure but the *latent* mentor figure enters my consciousness. I recollect a recent session in which Matthew and I had spoken of the challenges of working together in creative collaboration. Again I puzzle and wonder about speaking, I work at shaping words. Stop, discard, revise, check, reconsider. Then from a moment of silence I speak. I say that maybe there is a parallel between how his father behaved with the model aeroplanes and how his great aunt behaved with the poem. Following my feelings and intuition further I say that neither his father nor his great aunt really knew how to creatively collaborate with him and I wonder if this might leave him feeling quite bothered and frustrated. At this point rapport deepens between us. Then I say that I recalled something similar about our relationship in a previous session. In particular I recall how Matthew had previously asked me to be more interpretive but also to work collaboratively with him and that maybe he is reminding me of this in a complex way. From Matthew's vocal but nonverbal presence, the quality of silence, rhythm, tone and prosody I register that rapport has deepened profoundly. With a kind of relief, almost a sigh, he verbally agrees with me. The session continues.

So we come to the end of this brief vignette which gives not only the possible atmosphere of a session using the couch but also something of the way in which such analysis unfolds.

Research

As noted in the introduction the second component of this paper is drawn from a study of the analyst's lived experience of having an analysand use the couch. This introduces the need for a particular sort of research orientation. With the dawning of the modern era, with the Renaissance, 'science' has been split into the study of the measurable world of matter and energy (the natural world) and the experienced world of being human. The science of the natural world is natural science and because it is definitively measurable it uses quantitative (counting and measuring) methods. The science of the human world is not definitively measurable but is based on understanding (and communicating) human experience. The science of the human world uses qualitative methods which allow us to uncover and report on lived experience. Qualitative methods make use of description (phenomenology) and interpretation (hermeneutics) to gain an understanding of lived experience (Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996). Qualitative methods are not, however, restricted to the individual participant but provide generalized statements which enlarge rather than restrict or reduce (as in natural scientific/quantitative methods) our appreciation and understanding of the phenomenon (Edwards, 1998; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Stones, 1988).

Giorgi (1970) has traced the origin and development of the notion of 'human science' as opposed to 'natural science' and has cogently argued that psychology is a human science. Human science properly turns towards qualitative methods of research (Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003; Eisner, 2003; Giorgi, 1970; Marecek, 2003; McGrath and Johnson 2003; McLeod, 2001). As such it properly seeks to disclose and articulate experience from the lived world. Giorgi (1975) went on to articulate an approach and method of disclosing human phenomena using the paradigm of human science. This contributed to a particular movement of phenomenological research which, striving to be scientific, was structurally rigorous whilst remaining respectful of human phenomena. In general such 'phenomenological' methods are also implicitly 'hermeneutic', as all phenomena are inescapably interpretively fore-structured. Hermeneutics (which which is the art of interpretation) has come to involve the tracing of a 'circle' (Edwards, 1998) from descriptive 'findings' to the personal, cultural and 'scientific' fore-ground (or context) in which they are embedded, and back again to the 'findings'. In this way one seeks to contextually present, extend and deepen understanding of the 'findings' as well as the framework in which the 'findings' arise. As Heidegger more simply and elegantly puts it: 'What we first hear is never noises or complexes of sound, but the creaking wagon, the motor cycle' (Heidegger, 1927/1962, p. 207). Practically, hermeneutics respects the embeddedness of a phenomenon in personal experience as well as in history, tradition, values and culture (Addison, 1989; Kvale, 1996; McLeod, 2001; Packer and Addison, 1989; Ray, 1984; Titelman, 1979).

In the study upon which this paper draws, four practitioners (two women and two men) were interviewed about their experience of having an analysand use the couch. The interviews were transcribed and then analysed using a variant of Giorgi's (1975, 1997, 2003) method to generate a phenomenological description of the general structure of the experience. This statement of general structure was then complemented and enriched with aesthetic texture (Todres, 1998, 2000, 2002; Malcolm, 1995) by interleaving the description with enlivening citations from the interviews. Finally concern for intersubjective value and justness was highlighted through a critical dialogue of the structural and aesthetic 'findings' with certain contemporary psychoanalytic notions of critical discourse and intersubjectivity. In the research study several themes were discovered and critically discussed, however, in this paper we shall restrict our comments to a few interrelated elements: the couch and privacy, the mode of being its use facilitates, reverie and the analytic third. These elements are all addressed in Ogden's seminal 1996 paper 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique'. Because of that it is useful to review that paper.

It may be important to note that whereas phenomenological/qualitative methods are not comparative in an originary sense, they may involve investigating phenomena which are permeated with comparison (for example in a study of criminal victimization comparisons of the earlier and late stages of victimization (Fischer & Wertz, 1979)) and that any study of the couch implicates a comparison with working face to face.

Review of Ogden's 1996 paper

In his seminal paper, 'Reconsidering Three Aspects of Psychoanalytic Technique', Ogden (1996) refers to the meaning of the couch for both the analyst and analysand. In this paper Ogden clearly calls on earlier work by Grotstein (1995) and by Sadow (1995). He announces his topic by setting up a resonance between analysis and music, likening the analytic mode of being to the space of silence between musical notes. This space is somewhat like a state of mind in the analyst that is empathic, intuitive and rich in phantasy. Ogden links this state to Bion's (1962, 1962/1967) notion of 'reverie' He also intertwines his exposition with reference to the 'intersubjective analytic third' which is 'a jointly but asymmetrically constructed and experienced set of conscious and unconscious intersubjective experiences in which analyst and analysand participate' (p. 884). The notion of the intersubjective analytic third shares something with Sadow's (1995) notion of a 'third entity', formed from the micromerger of the mental activities of analysand and analyst, as well as with Grotstein's (1995) notion of a 'third entity', derived from both the analysand and the analyst in the dialectical state of transference/counter-transference. Ogden suggests that access to the intersubjective analytic third comes through the state of reverie. From here on, Ogden elaborates thinking that goes beyond the springboard provided by the thinking of Sadow and Grotstein. Firstly, he offers an augmented definition of the analytic process. Freud had very succinctly defined psychoanalysis:

Any line of investigation which recognizes these two facts [the phenomena of *transference* and *resistance*] and takes them as the starting point of its work has a right to call itself psycho-analysis (Freud, 1914/2001, p. 16).

Ogden augments this definition of psychoanalysis:

> I would suggest the following elaboration of Freud's succinct statement. Perhaps psychoanalysis might be viewed as involving a recognition not only of transference and resistance, but also of the nature of the intersubjective field within which transference and resistance are generated (Ogden, 1996, p. 885).

This redefinition of the analytic process leads on to defining the role of the couch in analysis. Ogden argues that the couch is instrumental in producing, accessing, developing and using the intersubjective analytic third:

> The problem of defining the nature of the role of the couch as a component of the analytic framework then becomes a problem of conceptualising the role of the use of the couch in the process of facilitating a state of mind in which the intersubjective analytic third might be generated, experienced, elaborated and utilized by analyst and analysand (Ogden, 1996, p. 885).

Ogden constructs the meaning of the experience of the couch for the analyst as providing the analytic couple with an asymmetric but containing 'free and sheltered space' (Kalff, 1980) that sponsors the generation, experience, elaboration and utilization, through reverie, of the intersubjective analytic third.

The notion of a contained, free and sheltered space returns us to the selected elements from the research, first and foremost to the couch and privacy.

The couch and privacy

Freud (1913/2001) indicated early on that a significant intersubjective factor in analysis was privacy. Freud's reference to the use of the couch, in his papers on technique, was, from the beginning, allied to the practical virtues of the privacy afforded by the couch:

> I cannot put up with being stared at by other people for eight hours (or more). Since, while I am listening to the patient, I, too give myself over to the current of my unconscious thoughts, I do not wish my expressions of face to give the patient material for interpretations or to influence him in what he tells me (ibid, p. 133).

The existential analyst Medard Boss specifically implicates the couch in the important provision of privacy:

I say the best way for you to come to know yourself and develop what you really are is this way of being there on the couch for yourself, independent of me. There, you're not influenced by my facial expressions, my gestures and so on. But it's not an absolute law (Boss cited in interview with Craig, 1988, p. 33).

Although these words mostly describe the role privacy provides from the perspective of the analysand the implications for the analyst are clear: as the analysand is freed from the facial expressions and gestures of the analyst, so too privacy frees the analyst to be present bodily in an authentic way. This means that an analyst need not modulate or suppress conscious and unconscious somatic responses to the analysand. So the analyst impinges less on the analysand's emerging psychological life. Many analysts (including Freud) essentially express the opinion that the couch helps shape intersubjectivity so that the analyst's own spontaneous body language does not compromise the privileging of the analysand's authentic presence (Barglow, Jaffe and Vaughn, 1989; Boss, (cited Craig) 1988; Fordham, 1978; Freud, 1913/2001; McWilliams, 1999; Ogden, 1996; Searles,1984/85). The importance of this is less the literal success of the opacity of the analyst (the infamous 'blank screen'), and more the positive way in which privacy helps open up possibilities of being for the analysand.

The experience of Matthew's analysis resonates with these thoughts on privacy. Although the first author did not feel a conscious concern about Matthew's sight of him he recognized a felt truth in Freud and Boss's reflections. The use of the couch helps provide us with a shared private place within which we feel freer. The intersubjectivity that is generated by the use of the couch frees the subjectivities from their respective embeddednesses.

The findings of the research study (Milton, 2003) specifically concurred with this view, namely that *the privacy afforded by the couch makes the most significant contribution to its shaping of a mode of being. In particular privacy shelters the analytic couple from the influence of each other's gaze. It specifically reduces the analyst's anxieties about his/her own body language*. The first participant of the study expressed this meaning of the couch directly: 'the couch as a structure which doesn't require looking another person in the eye is facilitating'. The second participant agreed: 'it's a great relief to kind of not have the dead pan face and to be careful not to respond to things'. Likewise the third participant said: 'I think in a way that's the freedom to sort of sit there and really listen and think in a way that I think might look odd if [I were face to face]'.

There is, however, more to it. It was found that the privacy of the couch both aids the analytic attitude and helps the analyst establish and maintain an analytic state of mind.

We see that the privacy of the couch shelters the analyst from interpersonal pressure

and this helps foster an analytic attitude by supporting abstinence. In one sense this seems problematic, for, by reducing the analyst's urge to respond to interpersonal pressure, it may shelter the analyst from useful, albeit uncomfortable, counter-transference pressures. That having been said, to 'shelter' is not to 'shield', i.e. the analyst is still subject to counter-transference but in a way that is more tolerable and therefore more open to observation and reflection.

Implicit in Freud's statement about disliking being stared at is the insight that the couch helps the analyst sustain an analytic state of mind. Stern (1978) notes how the privacy of the couch permits the analyst to relax and maintain energy and concentration. He also highlights the view that the couch supports the analyst's evenly suspended attention and the associated multiple tasks of attunement to, processing, formulating and articulating of, analytic phenomena. The couch helps the analyst maintain the privacy and autonomy that is necessary for both a centred subjectivity and autonomous thought. The findings of the research study concur, all the participants linked their experience of the couch to relaxation and freedom of thought and feelings. This was also noticed in the session with Matthew. The privacy of the couch helped the analyst surrender to Matthew's presence as well as the drift of the analyst's own unconscious. The analysts feelings were more available, his thoughts more flexible and he was more open to encounter Matthew. He more easily registered, considered and played with the experiences presented to him. Later in the session, within the contained, free and sheltered space of the couch's privacy, the analyst becomes open to a different, more subtle, pattern of understanding than the facile translation of unconscious derivatives . So the density of the analysis was enriched as analyst and analysand played in the field of the intersubjective analytic third.

Both the first author's experience and the findings of the research study showed that there is a significant connection between privacy and the mode of being mediated by the couch which naturally leads to consideration of that mode of being and of reverie.

Mode of being and reverie

All the research participants and the first author found that the use of the couch significantly shapes the mode of being, i.e. the analytic couple's being-together, emotional attunement, thoughts/fantasies, bodily-ness and states of mind. The participants in the study made several statements which relate to these dimensions.

Firstly it was noted that using the couch positively influences intimacy. The first participant said: 'I think one of the things is [the couch] sort of encourages a different kind of intimacy . . . - I don't kind of get too mystical about it and I don't like making things sound gobbledy gookish like if you haven't had analysis you don't know what

it's about - but I think there is something quite particular [that the use of the couch] supports or encourages or promotes in its creative dimension.'

In using the couch analysts may experience stronger emotional attunement to the analysand's associations: The second participant said: 'I often feel . . . intense frustration or I feel like I want to get in and do something. Like somebody who's wife is picking on them then that kind of will rile me on the couch in a way that its doesn't otherwise.'

The analysand's associations are experienced by the analyst as more natural and more available. According to the first participant: 'more often in this kind of analytically inclined work . . . the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so on . . . tend to be more available'. The fourth participant said about the analysand's material: 'I would think that the free association is more flowing and more often. And my experience, I think, has been that the dreams, the remembered dreams, come out in the course of the hour rather than someone arriving and saying 'I've had a dream'.

Using the couch foregrounds the analyst's experience of his or her own bodily-ness. The second participant said: 'I'm much more closely in tune with experiencing what the patient is telling me in an experiential bodily way than I would be face to face'. So, it can be said that the couch facilitates a certain presence of the body — a bodily communication that may be 'more than words can tell' (Todres, 1999). Its use removes the analysand and analyst from visual connection with each other, which heightens reliance on other channels of communication. Typically, these comprise verbal as well as non-visual sensory forms, such as rhythm of breathing, prosody, intonation, the use of puns, verbal slips and even silences. In the words of the first participant: 'I noticed once a person would be absolutely in tune to my breathing'.

Although designed to reflect the analyst's experience the research study suggested that use of the couch facilitates access to different states of body-mind for the analysand. (This suggestion takes on more value when we consider that analysis is constituted as definitively intersubjective.) In the words of the third participant: 'I think it's possibly easier to get to different states of mind . . . My sense is, it allows earlier states of mind to emerge, but probably not to be completely overwhelming'.

Whilst in the opinion of this analyst the couch offers the analysand access to different states of mind it is clear that the analyst too crosses a portal into state of mind the ambiance and texture of which shape the space of meeting into a place of encounter and analysis. Todres (personal communication, 1990) has suggested that the main thrust of phenomenological research is to best convey the lived experience. He suggests that to do so a piece of 'fiction' may serve best. This view is not inconsistent with the position of Romanyshyn (1982) that 'fact' and 'fiction' mutually implicate each other in the metaphoric nature of psychological life. Following these suggestions, in an attempt to get a phenomenological lived sense of the place of encounter when

using the couch, we shall blend and gloss the first author's own experience and extracts of the research participants' responses into one first person account:

> *Using the couch facilitates a meditative state of evenly suspended attention. Using it I feel much more relaxed and concurrently I have a great deal more space to dwell upon what is going on. I often experience particular intimacy, increased emotional responsiveness and bodily responsiveness. The couch helps me receive the analysand's psychological life. I have greater access to the stuff that dreams are made of, associations and so forth. I can more easily elaborate the narrative contents, sift and metabolize the material. Although I may dwell into the analysand's subjectivity very intensely there is an observing space and I then have the advantage of seeing patterns and intuiting better. Mostly the couch provides me with more mind space and more clarity of mind and I am able to think in novel and creative ways.*

In keeping with this it was noted in the research study that use of the couch facilitates the analyst's freedom and capacity for observation. The fourth participant expressed this explicitly: 'I am able to risk more also. Because there's an observing space'. She also linked privacy to a space for thinking: 'I think one of the first things is that I feel much more relaxed. I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive and concurrently I have a great deal more space to think about what's going on'. More pointedly, it is the quality of this thinking space which is her central experience of the couch: 'cardinally I ... have a thinking space. A better thinking space. That I guess would be the central experience'. The quality of the space is also related to the effect which the couch has on the experience of time. The third participant said: 'you can abandon yourself to this almost different kind of time that occurs in that space'. As the second participant put it:

> *I feel like, what was that fabulous movie – the Matrix – did you see that, you know where the bullet is coming to you and then it slows down and you kind of bend backwards . . . it's that, not in such a dramatic way, but there's space to manoeuvre with the space and I'm actually free to think.*

The second participant also explicitly linked the use of the couch to reverie: 'I have my own *reverie* that's allowable on the couch in a way it's not allowable face-to-face'. This invites us to briefly discuss 'reverie' in a theoretical way.

Reverie

The term 'reverie' was introduced to psychoanalysis by Bion (1962, 1962/1967) 'to refer to the state of mind that the infant requires of the mother . . . to take in the infant's own feelings and give them meaning' (Hinshelwood, 1991, 420). The meaning of this term has been extended to aid understanding of the analytic process by allying it to Freud's injunctions to the analyst to maintain a state of 'evenly suspended attention' (1912).

> *I think the ability to move into the meditative state of evenly hovering attentiveness, to receive and articulate projective identifications, to elaborate the narrative contents through inner free associations, and to follow the analysand's mood in the hour contributes to the psychoanalyst's intuitive grasp of the analysand. Certainly this is what Bion means by the analyst's reverie when he takes the patient's communications, contains them, works unconsciously to transform them into sense, and gradually passes them back to the analysand for consideration (Bollas, 1992, p. 97).*

Ogden sees reverie as of central importance in the conduct of analysis:

> For the analyst, an indispensable source of experiential data concerning the leading unconscious transference-countertransference anxiety at any given moment in an analytic session is available in the form of his reverie experience. Part of what makes the analyst's reverie experience so difficult to work with is the fact that it is not 'framed', as dreams are framed, by waking states. Reverie experience seamlessly melts into other more focused psychic states. The analyst's reveries usually feel to him like an intrusion of his own current fatigue, narcissistic self-absorption, preoccupations, unresolved emotional conflicts, and so on. Despite these difficulties, I find that my reverie experience serves as an emotional compass that I rely on heavily (but cannot clearly read) in my effort to gain my bearings about what is going on unconsciously in the analytic relationship (Ogden, 2001, no page reference).

The outcome of the study reflected that the couch helps the analyst shift into a state of 'reverie'. This is experienced as granting access to different, even developmentally earlier, states of mind. Reverie helps the analyst to automatically track the analysand, facilitates the analyst's reception of the analysand's narrative in an experiential, bodily register, facilitates the analyst's counter-transferential responsiveness, and provides the analyst with ready access to his/her own associations. The first author's experience of Matthew was one of reverie in which his thoughts and feelings, senses and intuitions swirled in the analytic space. The privacy which the the use of the couch affords clears a space of reverie in which this movement is easier to engage with, observe, dwell upon and shape. The fourth participant explicitly linked the privacy of the couch to the creation of reverie:

> *I don't have to look interested and look concerned and look attentive ... I think... [certain clients were] so vigilant ... that if I seemed to be lost or distracted or not paying attention to every bit, they got agitated and when they were on the couch... they were less aware of me and I think that created a reverie state.*

The couch and the analytic third

Several analysts (Grotstein, 1995, Sadow, 1995, Ogden, 1996) implicate the couch as a special 'object' which helps constellate an analytic third. If we return to Ogden's seminal 1996 paper we find that he believes that the task of analysis is to create conditions in which an intersubjective analytic third can be gathered into consciousness and worded.

Phenomenologically, although present, this understanding of Ogden's was the least prominent in the both the first author's own experience and that of the research participants. Possibly this is because the notion is so strongly from within a relatively new form of psychoanalytic discourse. However, the research study did show that the couch helps constellate a third analytic element 'located' within the 'space' between the subjectivities of the analyst and the analysand and 'formed' out of their merger. In fact the second participant clearly implicated the couch in constituting an analytic third saying:

> *[T]here's some kind of a shared possession . . . put into that space . . . between the patient and myself in a way that we kind of become one . . . there is the patient, yourself and the third sort of space and somewhere there's a merging of these two.*

Connecting this with other findings of the research study we can say that the couch sponsors a state of reverie in which the analyst can gather and word the unconscious analytic third.

The experience of analysis with Matthew gestured towards the same notions. The primary author felt that Matthew's presence on the couch shaped both of their subjectivities. In this shaping the analyst experienced entering a state of reverie, an analytic space that felt shared. The idea of a split 'mentor-usurper' figure took shape within the primary author's sense of an intersubjective analytic third. To him it felt as if there was a place of coming together formed from the joint presence of the analytic couple. More importantly, as analyst, he was able to let Matthew's subjectivity occupy his own body-mind, and that something like a third subject formed. In this emergent subjectivity was something which both knew but which needed to be thought and felt. That was the work of the analysis.

Conclusion

If analysis occurs when the space of meeting becomes the place of analytic encounter then what is the role of the couch in generating that place? How do we cast the couch and how does the couch cast us?

Drawing on clinical material and using the findings of a qualitative research study we have traced the validity of Freud's original insight that the privacy afforded by

the couch is of primary importance. This privacy shapes the analyst's experience of intimacy, emotional attunement, bodily-ness, and states of body-mind (such as time and the spatiality of thinking). This in turn becomes a shaping of the space into a place of reverie, which allows for the gathering and wording of an intersubjective analytic third, the place of analytic encounter between analyst and analysand.

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Potential space, dialectics, reflective function, mindfulness and mentalization; one concept in different bottles?

Mark Thorpe

Abstract

The therapeutic encounter becomes transformational through the creation of potential space, dialectics, reflective function, mindfulness or mentalization. This paper dialogues these concepts as employed by different therapeutic modalities within New Zealand, namely; Object-relations (Thomas Ogden and Donald Winnicott), the Conversational Model (Russell Meares), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (Marsha Linehan) and Mentalization (Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy). It suggests that there is sufficient common ground to view them as one concept in different therapeutic bottles.

Introduction

Working in New Zealand has allowed me to wear different therapeutic hats. These include; clinical psychologist and psychotherapist for a DHB and in private practice, NZAP supervisor and infrequent panel member and case study marker, past psychology professional advisor, member of the local university psychology advisory board, and trainer of psychiatric registrars. When my ability to split is low, I witness a bewildering cacophony of divergent therapeutic styles, worldviews, competitive sniping, and theoretical disputes. It is remarkable how all of this diversity occurs within the small group of New Zealand mental health workers.

The seed of this paper was sown one hot afternoon in a Christchurch lecture theatre, the venue for the Gathering 2003 (The Annual NZ National Personality Disorders Conference). I was conscientiously listening to Dr Elizabeth Simpson explaining the centrality of dialectics and mindfulness in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). Three days earlier, Professor Russell Meares had spoken of Reflective Consciousness in the Conversational Model. Simpson attended Meares' workshop. Meares acknowledged echoes of his work in Ogden's writings on the transitional object and potential space. A doodling cum-mind-mapping style of note taking facilitated my musing about the similarity of these concepts and their resonance with others such as symbolism and mentalization. I chuckled at the ironic possibility that theoretical orientations were being drawn towards integration in a field in which splitting is endemic, namely Borderline Personality Disorder. I started noticing strange occurrences; behaviourists sounding Tibetan singing bowls, meditating and discussing dialectical philosophy, and psychoanalytic therapists talking about statistics, outcome studies, and affect regulation.

This paper looks at the similarities between the concepts of potential space, dialectics, mindfulness, reflective function, and mentalization. It consists of brief excursions into a few theories popular with New Zealand psychotherapists, namely Ogden's conceptualization of Winnicott's potential space, Linehan on dialectics and mindfulness in DBT, Meares' reflective function, and Bateman and Fonagy's mentalization. Some important contributions, which were regretful excluded, include the Phenomenological-Hermeneutic, Jungian, Lacanian and Narrative perspectives.

Potential space: Thomas Ogden and object-relations

Thomas Ogden is a Californian object-relations psychoanalyst who has richly contributed to psychoanalytic theory. His work is well read amongst psychodynamic clinicians in New Zealand, particularly in the Auckland area.

Ogden (1985, 1986, 2001) clarifies and develops Winnicott's (1953, 1967) most important and evasive of concepts, 'potential space'. This is the intermediate area of experiencing which lies between fantasy and reality. Specific forms of potential space include the transitional object, analytic space, and the area of cultural experience and creativity.

Ogden proposes the idea of a dialectical process as a paradigm for the psychological activity, which generates potential space and meaningful symbol formation. In referring to the philosopher Hegel, Ogden explains the dialectic as a process in which two opposing concepts each create, inform, preserve and negate the other, each standing in a dynamic (ever changing) relationship with the other. The dialectical process moves toward integration, but integration is never complete. Each integration gives rise to a new dialectical opposition and a new dynamic tension.

Ogden shows how meaning cannot arise out of a homogeneous field but accrues from difference. During infancy there is no perception of difference but rather an undisturbed state of 'going-on-being'. In a state of 'good enough' primary maternal preoccupation, the mother meets the infant's needs in such an unobtrusive manner that they are not experienced as needs. The perception of difference and the need for symbols arise when the desire is not immediately met. The contrast between frustration and desire gives rise to the awareness of separateness from the mother leading to the differentiation between me and not me, and between fantasy and reality. A dialectical process between the differentiated poles is then set in motion. Given optimal conditions, in which an attentive mother moderates frustration, a dynamic interplay of three differentiated entities is set up. This triangularity, 'three-ness' as opposed to 'one-ness', consists of the symbol (thought or desire), the symbolized (what is thought or desired) and the interpreting subject (child/mother/therapist). It is within the triangularity of subject, symbol and symbolized that potential space originates. The development of potential space leads to the capacity to generate personal meanings represented in symbols.

Initially there is no self that can set up the triangular relationship, and it is the mother who is the first subject to set the dialectical process in motion. The 'otherness' of the father in the Oedipal triangle plays an important role in later developmental stages.

Ogden goes on to propose a theory of the psychopathology of potential space. His basic assumption is that the symbolic function is a direct consequence of the capacity to maintain psychological dialectics, and psychopathology is based on specific forms of failure to create or maintain these dialectics. A collapse of the dialectic in the direction of either the symbol or the symbolized, or the unavailability of a third to recognize the dialectic, results in an inability to symbolize and hence to create meaning.

Ogden links his formulation of potential space with projective identification. He shows how the recipient of projective identification loses the capacity to maintain the dialectic process of 'me' and 'not-me' in the course of his unconscious participation in the projection. Processing of the projective identification is described as the recipient's ability to re-establish this dialectical process leading to meaningful symbol formation and understanding (Thorpe 1992).

Ogden defines analytic space as an intersubjective state, generated by client and therapist, in which meanings can be played with, considered and understood. The client undermines analytic space through the use of projective identification. This is a communication by means of a direct induction of a feeling state in the therapist that is not mediated by verbal symbols. As a result the therapist feels locked into a fixed position or sequence of affective states, and experiences these states as reality rather than subjective. The therapist undermines analytic space by presenting interventions that constitute 'statements of fact' rather than interpreting the symbolic meanings of the client.

Dialectics; Marsha Linehan and dialectical behaviour therapy

Marsha Linehan is professor of psychology and adjunct professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at the University of Washington. She is the founder of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and introduced the concept of dialectics to mainstream behavioural psychology in the USA. Clarkin (1997) suggests that DBT has spread around the world as fast as, and in the shadow of, managed care.

DBT has gained in popularity, funding and influence within New Zealand in the past 10 years in some District Health Boards (DHB) and a few university psychology departments. MHP and participating DHBs are funding DBT training for 70 mental health clinicians. Dr Elizabeth Simpson, a psychiatrist trained under Linehan and Director of the Massachusetts Mental Health Centre DBT programme, and Mike Batcheler, Auckland DHB DBT coordinator and NZ trainer, are facilitating the 14-day training, spread over two years. The aim is to develop a New Zealand based

training capacity associated with Behavioraltech, the training company established by Linehan (Batcheler 2006).

Linehan first employed DBT to treat suicidal individuals in the 1970's using traditional behavioural problem solving techniques such as skills training, exposure and contingency management (Linehan 1981, 2000). She quickly realized that treatment that was focused solely on *change* did not work. Most of the clients were extremely sensitive to criticism, prone to emotional dysregulation and efforts to change quickly led to increased and overwhelming arousal, resulting in them shutting down emotionally, storming out of sessions or attacking the therapist. The programme then dropped the emphasis on change and focused on listening to and sympathetically validating the clients' responses. They found that the clients then began to panic at the prospect that life would never improve. Clients interpreted this as the therapist ignoring their suffering or treating it as of little consequence (Lynch et al. 2006).

Linehan postulates that a therapeutic stance, either with an exclusive focus on change, or acceptance, is experienced as invalidating. Using the research of Swan (1992) she reasoned that if a client's basic self-constructs were not verified, their arousal increased which led to cognitive dysregulation and the failure to process new information. To work effectively and keep both client and therapist in the room working on the problems, she had to figure out how to hold both acceptance and change in the therapy simultaneously. The wish to change painful experience had to be balanced with a corresponding effort at learning to accept Life's inevitable pain. This synthesis could engender both change and new acceptance.

The dialectical balance that the therapist strives for is to validate the essential wisdom of each client's experiences (especially vulnerability and the sense of desperation) and to teach the client the required skills for change to occur. In common language this sounds like "I accept you as you are, and you need to change".

The dialectic between acceptance and change became a fundamental principle in DBT, and led to the use of the term dialectical as a descriptor for the standard behaviour therapy used in the treatment.

Linehan points out that most theorists are aware of dialectics through the socioeconomic theory of Marx and Engels. Although extending back over thousands of years, Hegel is generally credited with reviving and elaborating the philosophy of dialectics. Hegel discerned that specific forms of arguments come and go in a complex interplay, with each argument creating its own contradiction, and each contradiction in turn being negated by a synthesis that often includes or enlarges upon both preceding arguments, beginning the entire process anew. In her review of the history of dialectics, Linehan quotes Wells (1972) who has documented a shift toward dialectical approaches in most social and natural science during the last 150 years.

According to Linehan, dialectical observations that most influence the practice of DBT are:

> The whole is a relation of differing parts that hold no independent significance.
> The whole is more than the sum of its parts.
> Parts and wholes are interrelated (and defined in relation to one another).
> Change is an aspect of all systems, and is present at all levels of any given system.

Some of the favourite DBT sayings are; a) opposing events or statements are highly dependent upon each other for existence and resolvable at further levels of abstraction or across time, b) life is both intensely meaningful, and painfully meaningless, c) clients intensely desire change and are often highly fearful of failing or making the attempt, d) changing is both hopeful and terrifying.

A example of a common dialectic heard in a treatment team is clinician A saying, "This is a lovely client, who has suffered terribly and we ought to go out of our way to help her", and clinician B replying "She is nasty, manipulative and sabotages treatment – discharge, don't indulge". Simpson teaches that the ability to flush out the hidden conflict and look at the unwanted polarity requires a passion and ease with anger. In one of her workshops she facilitated a role-play of a residential team debating adolescent male's suspected misdemeanour in a treatment setting. She tried to get a good argument/split/dialectic going between the group members and finally made a strategic retreat by saying "You New Zealanders are such *nice* people".

Simpson maintains that it takes about five years of stable team membership to develop the quality of "radical genuineness" and "irreverence" (2 favourite DBT terms) to work clinically with dialectics. Back in my DHB adult mental health team I did a quick survey of staff retention. I was not surprised to learn that I was the only person who had been in the team for more than six months. Staff turnover is endemic in the New Zealand health system leading to fragmentation and unstable group dynamics. Similarly, managers have short half-lives and are often 'upwardly bullied' and 'scamper off' to greener dialectics across the fence.

Linehan employs the image of a see-saw to explain the concept of dialectics in the treatment of suicidal clients. Therapist and client are on opposite ends of the see-saw connected by the board. Therapy is the process of going up and down, each participant sliding back and forth trying to balance it so that they can get to the middle together and climb up to a higher level. The higher level, representing growth and development, can be thought of as a synthesis of the preceding level. Dialectically speaking, the ends of the see-saw represent the opposites (thesis and antithesis) and moving to the middle and up to the next level represents the integration or synthesis of these opposites, which immediately dissolves into opposites once again.

In psychotherapy the client continually moves back and forth on the see-saw and the therapist moves accordingly, trying to counterbalance. Linehan shows that the difficulty in treating a suicidal BPD client is that instead of being on a see-saw, therapy takes place on a bamboo pole perched precariously on a high wire stretched over the Grand Canyon. When the client moves backwards on the pole, the therapist moves backward to gain balance, and the client moves back again to regain balance. Because the pole is not infinitely long the therapy is in danger of falling into the canyon. Thus the task of the therapist is not only to maintain balance, but also to maintain it in such a way that both therapist and client move toward the middle rather than back off the ends of the pole. This is often counterintuitive for the therapist.

One of the techniques advocated by Linehan to deal with this type of dialectic is called "irreverent communication". This is an 'offbeat,' 'unorthodox style' that provokes the client, pushes them off balance so that rebalancing can occur. It is designed a) to get the client's attention, b) to shift the affective response, and c) to get the client to see a completely different point of view. For example if the client says "I am going to kill myself" the therapist may respond with "I thought you agreed not to drop out of therapy". Another of Linehan's examples is of a client who kept failing to keep her job. She tried to convince Linehan that the stress of such constant failure was reason enough to kill herself. She also implied that Linehan did not understand or appreciate how stressful it was, since Linehan was obviously a successful professional. In the middle of a highly intense and emotional discussion, Linehan calmly, irreverently, and matter-of-factly said "Oh! But I do understand. I have to live with a similar amount of stress much of the time. You can just imagine how stressful it is for me to have a client constantly threatening to kill herself. Both of us have to worry about being fired!" Linehan states that used judiciously, irreverent reframing facilitates problem solving and at the same time does not reinforce suicidal behaviour. Linehan's books, and trainers, continuously reinforce the idea that therapists need to be mindful of what behaviour they are reinforcing (see Pryor 1999).

Linehan maintains that a dialectical point of view is compatible with psychoanalytic theory, in that both stress the inherent role of conflict and opposition in the process of growth and change. But how would someone conceptualize and deal with the suicidal threat discussed above from a psychoanalytic perspective? Authors such as Maltsberger and Buie (1974) would formulate the interaction as one of the client placing, via projective identification, unbearable feelings of rage and hopelessness into the therapist for safe keeping. Psychodynamically the task of the therapist is to initially adhere to the old adage, 'don't just do something, sit there' and then to identify, contain and process the feelings and give them back in a more manageable form (Thorpe 1989). If, for whatever reason, the therapist is unable to do this, the feelings are prematurely re-projected, usually with greater anxiety attached, for example, by 'unthinkingly' and hastily calling the crisis team.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a core skill in the DBT 'tool bag' and is taught at the beginning of each group skills training session. It is a recent psychological version of meditation derived from the Zen Buddhist tradition, although Linehan is quick to point out similarities in Christian and other contemplative practices.

Linehan (1973 a &b) uses Kabat-Zinn's (2003) definition of mindfulness as a means of non-judgementally and purposefully paying attention in the present moment. The aim is to teach the clients to take control of their minds and be in the present moment instead of straying off into the past and future concerns and distractions. This is achieved through various exercises such as observing, describing, participating without self-consciousness, focussing on one thing at a time, and focus on outcome rather than principle. Mindfulness is the opposite of being on automatic pilot, participating in life without awareness and engaging in impulsive and mood dependent behaviours.

Linehan describes three primary states of mind; a) Reasonable Mind - the ability to think thinking rationally and intellectually, b) Emotion Mind - the influence of emotions on behaviour, and c) Wise Mind, which is a dialectical synthesis of the first two, giving rise to a form of intuitive holistic experience.

Mindfulness has recently become a 'hot' topic in psychology and there are large groups of CBT clinicians in New Zealand linked to email discussion groups and doing weeklong Zen-like retreats. A related book that is appearing on many clinicians' bookcases is Teasdale, Williams and Segal's *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression* (2002). This therapy prevents relapse in clients with highly recurrent depression by combining mindfulness medication with CBT. Using insight (rather than concentration) meditation the client lets their mind wander freely, and adopts a non-judgmental attitude towards the kaleidoscopic flow of mental contents and states. This entails turning one's attention towards, rather than away from, distressing thoughts and feelings, then observing changes in the distressing and depressing thoughts and feelings.

Teasdale writes that this approach does not aim to change the *content* of thoughts, as a good CBT therapist would, but rather to change the *experience* of mental states. Clients are taught that emotional disturbance is caused by thoughts and cognitions that are *mental events*, not *realities*. Research indicates that it is the client's relationship to their negative thoughts and feelings that is the curative aspect. Rather than becoming mired in depressive rumination, clients are able to let their depressing thoughts pass through, to construe them as mental processes rather than reflecting the absolute truth. Being aware of their mental state they can temporarily feel bad without succumbing to depression. The result is being less prone to relapse.

Reflective consciousness; Russell Meares - the conversational model

Russell Meares, Professor of Psychiatry at Sydney University and Director of Psychiatry at Westmead Hospital, has developed a psychotherapy unit specializing in the treatment of personality disorders. Meares used to regularly visit New Zealand. He was the keynote speaker at the 2003 NZAP and 2003 Personality Disorders conference.

Meares (1999, 2003) describes how the behavioural purge following the First World War decimated interest and research into issues such as the self, inner processes and consciousness in psychology. To repair this gap Meares returned to earlier philosophers and psychologists. Collaborating with a London Jungian, Robert Hobson (1971), using concepts such as amplification and imagination, Meares developed the Conversational Model. The relationship is seen as the transformative aspect of therapy rather than the more traditional psychoanalytic view that places interpretation as central. Using Heuling Jackson's work of the 'double self', Meares stresses the mutative value of *reflective consciousness*. Reflective consciousness leads to the development of a strong sense of self, which mitigates and protects against the ravages of PTSD. Dipping into recent neurophysiology, Meares points out how the orbito-frontal cortex is the area in which consciousness and intentionality arise. Any assault on the system may result in an inability to integrate memories and assimilate new experiences.

Meares relates the story a journalist who survived years in solitary confinement without the expected ravages of PTSD by continuously telling himself stories. The stories preserved his sense of self, which bolstered him against PTSD. Similarly, Victor Frankl (1963) in his classic book "Man's Search for Meaning", claims that he survived the concentration camp through meaningfully writing his book on Logotherapy.

The aim of psychotherapy, according to Meares, is to facilitate the emergence of dualistic-reflective consciousness. This replaces a constricted and static mode of being with a sense of liveliness.

I listened with a somewhat critical ear when attending one of Meares' one-day workshops. His ideas seemed like plagiarised existential-phenomenological and psychoanalytic concepts. However, my scepticism melted by the end of the day when I found myself in the most wonderful comforting reverie. Meares' presence and style of presentation opened a creative and therapeutic space for me. The feeling, which imperceptibly took hold of me, was as reminiscent of being spirited away by a piece of inspirational music - somewhat bewitching and mesmerizing - like being in a good therapy session.

Meares previously facilitated a three-year training in the conversational model for a group of South Island therapists. DHB clinicians found that one of the difficulties

was that the training was not in manual form, which made it difficult to train generic case managers without psychotherapy backgrounds. A few DHB clinicians then met Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy at an international conference and concluded that the Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT) was a useful extension of Meares' approach. The Christchurch group, particularly the DHB based clinicians, seem to have moved towards the MBT approach and made it the theme of the 2006 National Personality Disorders Conference.

Mentalization; Anthony Bateman and Peter Fonagy

Anthony Bateman is Clinical Head and Research Head of Psychotherapy Services, St Ann's Hospital, North London and Honorary Senior Lecturer at the Royal Free and University College Medical School, London. Peter Fonagy is Professor of Psychoanalysis at London University and Chief Executive of the Anna Freud Centre. Bateman and Fonagy, were the keynote speakers and facilitate a three day workshop at the 2006 Personality Disorders Conference in Christchurch.

The term *mentalization* entered the literature in 1977 although Bateman and Fonagy (2004) argue that it has been part of psychoanalytic thinking since its inception. Fonagy and Target started publishing in 1991 when they discussed the deficits in mentalization, which resulted from trauma and severe character disturbance (Fonagy and Target 1997). Holmes (2006) points out that 'mentalization' has not yet appeared in either Pontalis (1973) or Rycroft's (1982) psychoanalytic thesauruses. The term is also a relatively new addition to the New Zealand therapeutic vocabulary and was discussed by Stuart Twemlow in Auckland 2000 (Bolton 2001). Jeremy Holmes' three seminars (Auckland June 2006) and the visits of Bateman, Fonagy and Allen (September 2006) have sparked a significant interest in mentalization.

Bateman and Fonagy (2004) define mentalization simply as the ability to comprehend and use knowledge of one's own and other's states of mind. It is the capacity to grasp the mental states underlying human behaviour and to think about mental states as separate from, but potentially causing actions. Holmes (2006) sees four inter-related aspects of mentalization: a) a 'meta-cognitive' phenomenon which refers to the capacity to think about thinking, b) the meanings we attribute to our own and other's actions, c) intentionality towards projects, desires and wishes, and d) a process.

The exercise of mentalization promotes a number of critical developmental achievements, a) the sense of agency or ownership of one's own behaviour, b) the capacity for social reciprocity and empathy, c) the ability to regulate one's affects, d) to tolerate frustration and to set one's own goals and ideals, and e) the capacity to symbolize (Green 2005)

Mentalization is an activity related to persons not objects. When engineers theorize about the structure of materials they are engaged in sophisticated mental activity,

but they are not mentalizing. Similarly when we treat people like objects, we cease to mentalize.

Mentalization is similar to, but differentiated from, concepts such as empathy, insight, observing ego, potential space, reflectiveness, and psychological mindedness. Jon Allen (2005) states;

> In some way or other, you have been using the concept of mentalizing to think about your clinical work all along, not to mention the fact that you have been a full-fledged mentalizer since your early childhood. You are mentalizing whenever you are making sense of what goes on in your mind-your own mind and the mind of the other person. Thus you mentalize when you do psychotherapy (p 1).

Bateman and Fonagy (2004) see mentalization as a specific form of symbolic function that is central to psychoanalytic and attachment theory, and appeared concurrently in both arenas. In linking attachment with mentalization, he shows how it is critical for the mother to mentally 'contain' the baby and respond in a manner that shows awareness of the child's mental state yet reflect coping. Thus if secure attachment is the product of successful containment, insecure attachment may be seen as the infants identification with the caregiver's defensive behaviour. A number of empirical findings show that attachment security is a good predictor of metacognitive capacity in the domains of memory, comprehension and communication.

Secure attachment provides a relatively firm base for the acquisition of a full understanding of minds. The secure infant feels safe in thinking about the mental state of the caregiver. By contrast, the avoidant child shuns the mental state of the other, while the resistant child focuses on its own state of distress to the exclusion of intersubjective exchanges. Disorganized infants may represent a separate category; hypervigilant to the caregiver's behaviour, they may appear to be acutely sensitive to the caregiver's mental state yet fail to generalize this to their own mental state.

Fonagy shows how victims of childhood sexual abuse cope by refusing to conceive of their attachment figure's thoughts. By recognizing the hatred or murderousness implied by the parent's acts of abuse the child is forced to see him/herself as worthless or unlovable. They thereby avoid having to think about their caregiver's wish to harm them. This disrupts their capacity to depict mental states in themselves and in others and leaves them to operate on inaccurate, schematic impressions of thoughts and feelings. A vicious cycle develops in which the psychological isolation of maltreatment amplifies distress, activating the attachment system. Mental proximity becomes unbearably painful, and the need for closeness is expressed at a physical level. The child paradoxically may be driven physically closer to the abuser. Their ability to adapt to, modify or avoid the perpetrator's behaviour is likely to be further constrained by limited mentalizing skills.

A pervasive lack of consideration for the child's intentionality may have functional and neuro-developmental consequences. Neglect and maltreatment during the first few years of life have been shown to manifest a significant loss of cortical function in the fronto-temporal areas - the areas involved with inferring mental states. Researchers such as Arnsten (1998) in his paper *The Biology of Being Frazzled* shows how a neurobiological switch is from the pre-frontal cortex to the activation of the posterior-limbic system takes place.

Bateman and Fonagy (2004) point out that 'wise mind' in DBT is phenomenologically similar to mentalization. However, while DBT conceptualises wise mind as a teachable skill, mentalization is seen as a developmental psychological process. Acquisition of mentalization mostly takes place outside consciousness through the presentation to an individual of a view of their internal world, which is stable, coherent, clearly perceived and adopted as the reflective part of their self. This gives rise to three therapeutic guiding principles in mentalization; a) to establish a continuous attachment relationship with the client, b) to create an interpersonal context in which understanding of mental states is a focus, and, c) to create (mostly implicitly) a situation in which understanding the client's self as intentional and real is a priority and to ensure that this endeavour and aim is clearly perceived by the client.

Conclusion

Psychotherapy styles practiced in New Zealand appear to have widely divergent theoretical, philosophical and therapeutic worldviews. This results in considerable envious and competitive sniping between different groups. However, it is suggested that concepts such as potential space, symbolism, dialectics, mindfulness, reflective function and mentalization share a common ground phenomenologically and clinically. This paper briefly reviewed these concepts as presented within their respective theories. In order to avoid a forced and premature synthesis, the concepts were left to speak and dialogue for themselves. Time will tell whether the common ground will draw together previously conflicting and discordant groups of clinicians. By employing the mutative function, inherent in the concepts themselves, a dialectical process may be set in motion giving rise to an integration, followed by new dialectical oppositions and dynamic tensions.

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The large group as a transformational space

Margot Solomon

Abstract

This paper explores the process of a large group – from my experience as both a participant and conductor; and using my artwork as a way to facilitate my understanding. I attempt to articulate what is implicit to large groups and is difficult for the individually-focused mind to comprehend. I have approached my paper from the inside out. I have thought about the process of the large group from inside of me: what I sense, feel, and experience in a large group. Then, through images that I have made and through Māori mythology, I have explored some ways of attempting to make sense, to understand and make meaning.

Large groups can be a means to better understand and learn to engage in the conscious and unconscious processes that affect us and control us all in large group settings. Inside the large group many or all of the elements of an organisation, or even a culture, already exist that offer us the potential means to begin to engage in more of the whole picture of human life. Large groups can help us to think about interdisciplinary issues, bi-cultural and multicultural issues, political issues, power issues, and all areas where splitting occurs in connection with difference. It is also possible to experience in the large group space a transformation of separate individual consciousness, into a feeling of belonging and community where people can dialogue across their differences.

Introduction

He awhi tētahi i tētahi	To find a place in our hearts for each other,
Me noho tahi, tēnā pea ka tika	Let us sit together, and then we will find a way through.

I aspire to embrace (awhi) others with all my heart without losing my self. I believe that large groups can be helpful; they take us beyond family and the familiar, towards the social and the cultural life of our existence. My hope is that we can meet together with both our differences and our similarities in a creative and productive way. In the traditional Māori culture, members of an iwi meet on the marae in hui where 'sitting together' is the customary way to discuss issues, work out differences, and find new directions. In the culture I grew up in there was no such space. The transformational space I seek draws on the blending of large groups based on the group-analytic frame, the talking circle I learned in heart politics and the hui.

The other core theme throughout this essay is the capacity to not know. W.B. Yeats said it best:

> God guard me from the thoughts
> Men think in the mind alone
> He who sings the lasting song
> Thinks in the marrowbone.

Here, Yeats addresses a common problem, one that W. R. Bion (1961a, 1962) wrote about when he talked of 'K' and '-K'. This essay explores some of the experience of being in a large group from my experience as both a participant and conductor; and from using my artwork as a way to facilitate my understanding. I attempt to articulate what is implicit to the large groups and is difficult for the individually focused mind to comprehend. Maori Marsden talks from the Māori world view about Te Korekore, the world of potential being, Te Pō, the world of becoming and Te Ao Mārama, the realm of being. It is through a cyclical creative process that new life arises. From a different cultural perspective, Daniel Stern says that we prefer the perspective of the bright light of midday but it is in the hazy mist of the landscape at dawn that newness occurs (Stern, 2005). I take this to mean that it is when things are not clear, not understood but more in the realm of potential that change or growth is possible. The potential of the large group is to take us beyond the known familiar to new experience that is centred in the essence of who we are, our marrowbone.

Large groups can be excruciating. As the group forms, the space between the people shifts: it begins as a collection of individuals with different desires and needs, and becomes a group with which each individual may or not may not identify. Some group members feel silenced. Others feel compelled to speak. Some are unable to find their voice. There are also those who refuse to participate. And then there are those who do find their voice and find the experience expansive and illuminating. Each person brings to the group their history, stemming from school, church, community, cultural, and family settings. These histories then form a lens, which shapes and limits the ways the new group can be seen.

Why then, you might ask, should we bother to have a large group? Large groups can be a means to better understand and learn to engage in the conscious and unconscious processes that affect us and control us all in large group settings. Inside the large group many or all of the elements of an organisation, or even a culture, already exist, offering us the potential means to begin to engage in more of the whole picture of human life. Large groups can help us to think about interdisciplinary issues, bi-cultural and multicultural issues, political issues, power issues, and all areas where splitting occurs in connection with difference. It is also possible to experience in the large group space a transformation of separate individual consciousness, into a feeling of belonging and community where people can dialogue across their differences.

The creation story

I have approached this essay from the inside out. I have thought about the process of the large group from inside of me: what I sense, feel, and experience in a large group. Then through images that I have made and through Māori mythology, I have explored some ways of attempting to make sense, to understand and make meaning. The Māori creation story, through the vibration of sound, resonates inside of me with something ineffable that connects to what I carry in relation to large group experiences. Listening to the creation story being spoken helped me to find what Symington (1983, p. 283) calls 'an act of inner freedom' and in this way find the space for thinking. I found myself moved and excited by listening to the creation story as spoken and written by Ranginui Walker (1990):

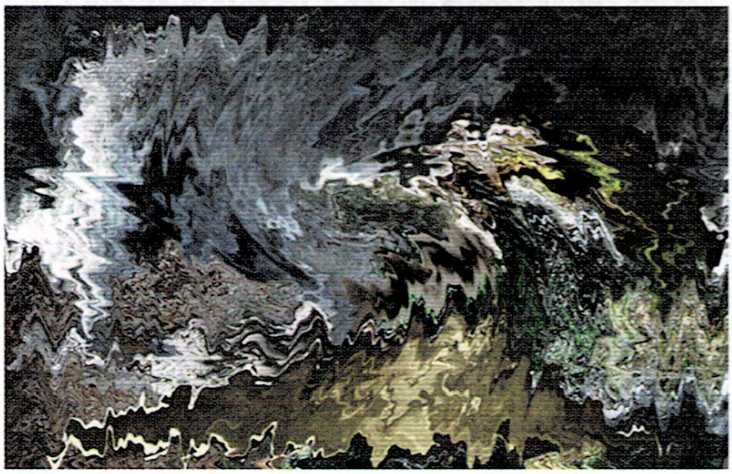
Te Kore	The void, nothing, potential
Te Kore-te-whiwhia	the void in which nothing is possessed
Te Kore-te-rawea	the void in which nothing is felt
Te Kore-i-ai	the void with nothing in union
Te Kore-te-wiwia	the space without boundaries
Na Te Kore Te Po	from the void the night
Te Po-nui	the great night
Te Po-roa	the long night
Te Po-uriuri	the deep night
Te Po-kerekere	The intense night
Te Po-tiwhatiwha	The dark night
Te Po-te-kitea	The night in which nothing is seen
Te Po-tangotango	The intensely dark night
Te Po-whawha	The night of feeling
Te Po-namunamu-ki-taiao	the night of seeking the passage to the world
Te Po-tahuri-atu	the night of restless turning
Te Po-tahuri-mai-ki-taiao	the night of turning towards the revealed world
Ki te Whai-ao	to the glimmer of dawn
Ki te Ao- Marama	to the bright light of day
Tihei mauri-ora	there is life

In the Māori worldview, the concept of creation has three components. The first is Te Kore. Patricia Grace (1984, p. 16), says in Wahine Toa:

Te Kore could neither be felt nor sensed. This was the void, the silence, where there was no movement and none to move, no sound and none to hear, no shape and none to see.

It is impossible to conceive of the part of creation that Te Kore represents. The

human mind reaches for meaning, shape, patterns, and the familiar. Consciousness is not a feature of Te Kore. Marsden's words (1992, p. 134) helped me to make sense of Te Kore, a concept central to the Māori worldview. He says that while 'Kore' means 'not, negative, nothing' and is absolute, to say 'korekore' then transmutes the negative into the positive, without abandoning the negative and thus encompasses both. Potential for life, creativity, and newness marks the beginning; the hope of life, there is always something, some essence, and an inchoate energy that is a precursor of all phenomena. In my understanding this is the source of life, and of our humanity.



Te Pō is more tangible than Te Kore. Out of the nothing comes the beginning of something. The beginning of gestation is Te Pō. Something begins to exist without form or direction. It is possibility. It connects to a part of humanity that can be new, that can find new possibilities. My experience in this place happens out of consciousness, out of rational mind and out of contact with what is known. Te Pō begins structures, the world of becoming. Te Pō is the seeding of life. Te Pō is born out of Te Kore, and Papatuanuku (the earth) is born out of Te Pō. Te Pō is the journey from darkness to the glimmering of light; it is the beginning of life, of existence. The process is arduous. It is endless; there is no sense of time or of a beginning or an end and yet it subtly changes. Something is happening.

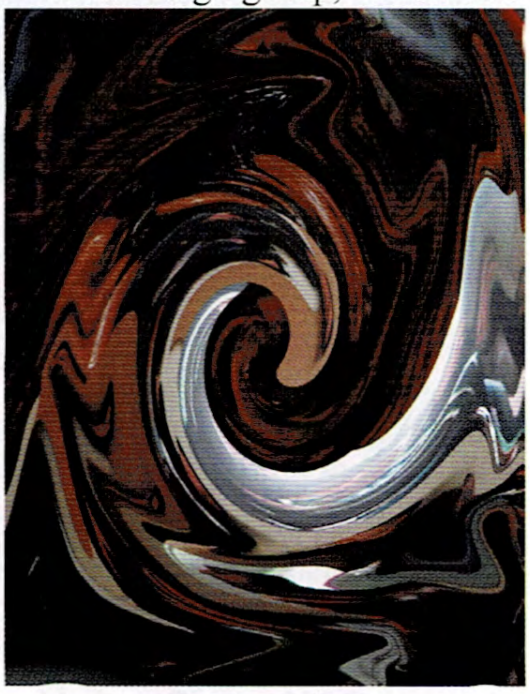
Large groups can feel like this. I find I need to surrender into the experience where the sense of oneself and what is known is lost or threatened, where one feels as if the meaning has been stripped away. Then gradually one's own sense of self can be reasserted. Letting go is essential. The idea of letting go reminds me of a favourite paper written by Emmanuel Ghent in 1990 called 'Masochism, submission, surrender'. The core assertion of his paper is that we all long for surrender—to let go and to be known and recognised. Ghent defines surrender as 'convey (ing) a quality of liberation and expansion of the self as a corollary to the letting down of defensive barriers' (p. 213). Paradoxically though, the movement toward surrender brings with it dread: dread of emptiness, of pain, of loss, or of the unknown. This is a corollary to what Bion meant when he talked about 'K' and learning from experience. Daring to experience the unknown requires a quality of surrender and brings dread and loneliness. If we are willing to surrender to the process and find ways of voicing our experience, large groups offer the possibility of a greater awareness of life beyond the bounds of our own culture and family bindings.

Group-analysis

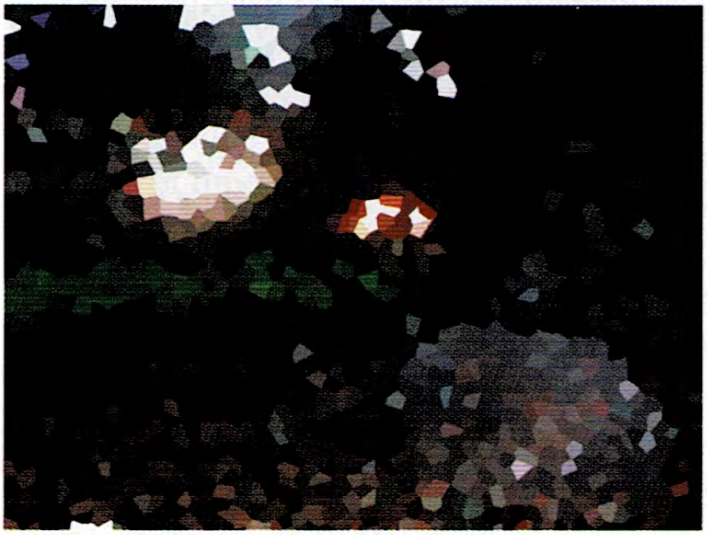
In the discipline of group-analysis, the history of thinking about large groups has arisen out of the work of psychiatry in World War Two, which out of necessity focused on therapeutic community rehabilitation (Schneider & Weinberg, 2003). Important early thinkers include W.R. Bion (1961b), S. H. Foulkes (1957, 1990), Main (1975), de Maré (1975), de Maré, Piper, & Thompson (1991), and Kreeger (1975). De Maré says in his 1975 paper, 'To apply small-group or psychoanalytic models to the large group is like trying to play ludo on a chess board' (p. 146). Large groups incorporate the contextual in its totality; all the variations present in the group in terms of role, culture, gender, race, religion, age, and so on are part of the group process. So for example in Jerusalem in 2000 (the International Association of Group Psychotherapy congress), I participated in a large group of over 200 in which there was a dialogue between Israelis and Arabs; and where we re-enacted the Berlin wall, exploring its many meanings for people from east and west of the wall and the implications for those of the rest of the participants. Historical tensions between Jewish and German people were also aired. As de Maré (op cit.) reminds us, large groups are complex and many-layered.

As the group numbers increase the dynamics change. Schneider and Weinberg (2003) suggest that a large group is more than 30 to 35 people. On the other hand, Volkan (2001) talks about the large group in terms of nations: ethnic, political, social, or cultural groupings. The size of the group makes a huge difference to the functioning of the group. Factors such as whether everyone can be seen and heard by everyone else make a difference to how one feels in the group. In a large group one can not expect to see and know everyone. For example last year I went to Norway for the Tri-annual Symposium of the Group-analytic Society. Four hundred and fifty delegates gathered in Molde on the northwest coast, nestled in the Norwegian fjords. The last event of each day for four days of the conference was the large group, which was described in the programme as:

> a tradition that offers participants a safe and contained context in which to explore the interface between the individual psyche and the social sphere. The daily large group sessions will bring together all participants, and through the free-floating associative discussion they are given the chance to explore the connection between individual feelings and ideas, and link to the social unconscious in relation to the societal context in the here and now. (Island, 2005 p. 8)



We sat in a series of circles, with aisles dividing the circles at regular intervals. The room had no windows and a very high ceiling. I felt as if I was in a cavern filled with a sea of people. The seating was on one level and the circle in the middle was very small. At first, most people could not see or hear what was going on around them. While English was the language of the conference, there were many cultures present. What we shared from the beginning was a willingness to sit in this crazy-making space together and attempt to [1]communicate. It was hard to tell exactly where the solitary female conductor was. Interesting though how clear it was when she spoke that she was the conductor. Amazing how much is communicated through tone, timbre and volume of the voice. The experience was confusing. The topics seemed to shift from one person to the next. Nobody seemed to be listening to what was said. However, over the four days of the group the energy changed. There were some heated exchanges about race and nationality. The discordant and disconnected sense from the first day became more coherent and relational. It became easier to understand and follow what was being said. It was as though we settled into being together and started to make use of the group to think together. I got a sense of how the large group in Molde was part of a larger process of different cultures beginning to listen to each other and find our own voices without discounting the less articulate. Also I was aware that the large group within the group-analytic conference has been meeting for many years. It carries a history, a whakapapa, and a culture of its own that will continue.



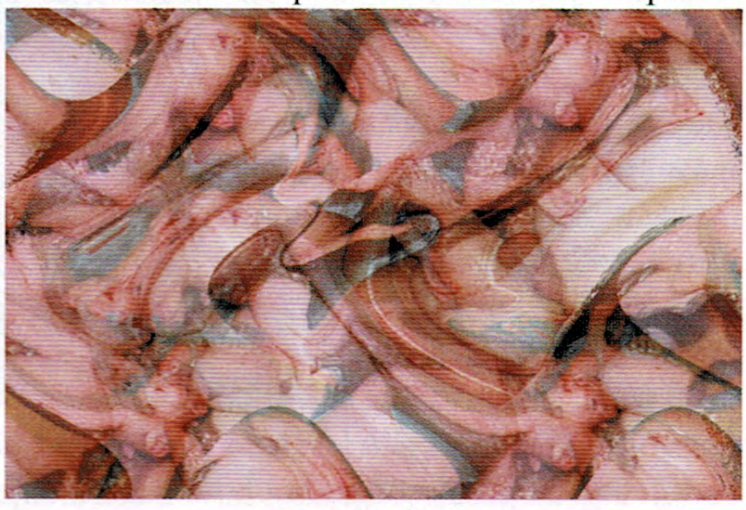
The protocol for large groups in the group-analytic tradition often starts with silence. While the setting may have been very carefully prepared (e.g., Teresa von Sommaruga Howard—also an architect—carefully spaces each chair in a perfect circle before the group arrives), there is no warming of the space through taking turns with introductions or in some way avoiding the awkwardness of beginning with how we are now. People are expected to attend, to stay in their seat throughout the session, to speak, participating in a free floating discussion (de Maré, Piper, & Thompson, 1991) and to be silent when others speak. De Maré et al (op.cit.) assert that the group has no set task, although they also write passionately about the need for the group to learn to dialogue. To dialogue takes practice; it is something to be learned like a language and is a process of speaking that engages a sharing of thoughts and feelings back and forth across the space, and from different perspectives so that they may be held together. The injunction is to use words to find a way to speak into the group. De Maré et al (1991) describe the process as reflecting the matrix, which can be defined as the common shared ground created within the

boundary of the group experience, and from which the meaning and significance of all events are determined. The matrix is the source of verbal and non-verbal communications. I associate immediately to that series of movies called The Matrix, where the matrix was an underlying structure that controlled everything and yet was outside of individual awareness. It is that unconscious underlying structure which we could call culture, that can begin to be noticed, and in the work of the large group then begins to be somewhat known.

De Maré differentiates between the small and large group as between feeling and thinking. Theorists such as Kreeger (1975) and Weinberg (2003) also say that being in the large group increases the likelihood that people will revert to more primitive anxieties. This is particularly true at the beginning of a large group where group members are more inclined to defend against the experience by becoming more paranoid and schizoid. I think this happens more powerfully and more unconsciously when the large group style is new to people, when there is no implicit knowing of the process. However, paranoid-schizoid processes occur in all groups. Also, in the process of surrendering, to some extent we lose our minds and so may revert to a paranoid-schizoid state of being. Another way of saying this would be that we see things in a more black and white way when we regress. When the large group is working well, thinking enters another domain, that of dialogue. I believe that feeling still occurs, but maybe less of the splitting and divisive or overwhelming type of feeling that leaves no space for thoughts.

Large group themes

Three themes—'transposition', 'not understanding', and 'belonging'—have been present for me as a group conductor and participant in the large group. Transposition is the repetition of patterns that occurs when we transpose to the large group as a whole unit, our past experience of large groups and sometimes family experiences that have been in some way difficult for us. The most common are school and church. The 'not understanding' is about the individual in the group. Large groups incorporate more than an individual can take in. Individuals attempt to hold onto their separate identities, their individuality, and they cannot. The large group represents the organisation, the culture and society and will reflect that which is happening in the world beyond the individual and thus makes it hard for a person to understand the experience that they are having. De Maré (1975) comments that the large group, in the most part, does not attend to the needs of the individual. The focus is on our social being (Sirota, 2005).



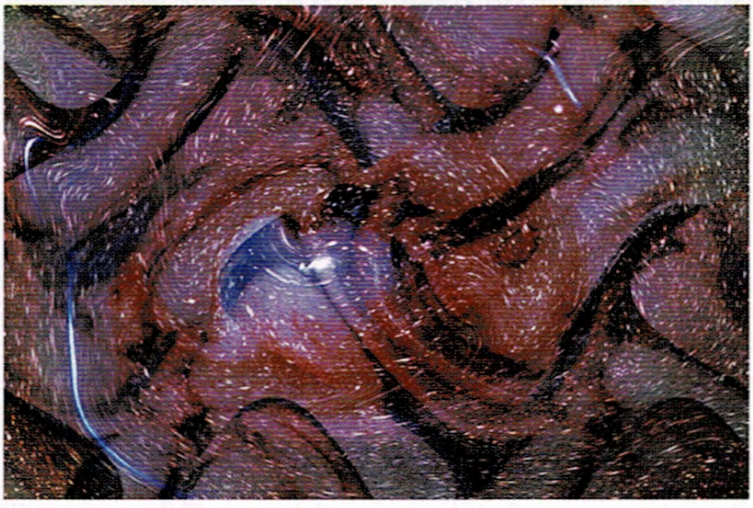
Not understanding

Some of the problem with this tension between the individual and the group arises from the traditional philosophy of psychotherapy that reflects the Caucasian tradition of the individual as primary (Stacey, 2003). Sociological theory (and the Māori world view) focuses on the social as primary:

> This is a way of thinking in which both mind and society are the patterning activities of human bodies. For actions, there can be no inside or outside and so mind comes to be thought of as forming social interactions while being formed by them at the same time (Stacey, 2003, p. 2).

Group-analysis has evolved in part from this tradition, which has its roots in the work of social interactionists such as G. H. Mead. The individual grows out of the group, not the other way round. Individuation takes a lifetime and incorporates the evolution of awareness to include the developing of a self in relation to the group. In the large group we are in a sense at once more isolated than in any other place and at the same time we totally lose our sense of personal identity. These things happen simultaneously. In a large group we tend to either abandon ourselves and follow the group or abandon the group to hold on to our identity. Large groups impel us to reflect on our identity because they bring us up against our implicit cultural knowledge.

After a large group event, a colleague talked about sitting in the outer circle (there were 200 people in the group) and feeling her outer backbone. 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 as being in exile, an essential part of strengthening ourselves in relation to the group. This is what is meant by individuation. At the same time one has to contend with the group's responses to one's separateness.



In this same group, somebody was sharing their hating of the group: 'it's like soup with these chopping up blades underneath mushing everything together' (March 2004 NZAP National Conference). 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 at that moment in the group. 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. We can also reflect on what people meant by the soup with chopping up blades. It is evocative, and I think is a wonderful description of the struggle for identity that the large group engenders.

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 in 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. This connects back to surrender and letting go our familiar ways of perceiving the world.

Belonging

The urge to belong is a basic impulse for humanity. As the number of participants in a group increases, unconscious processes become more dominant (Seel, 2001), and it becomes more difficult to establish a sense of belonging. There are so many other possible realities with which to contend! People find ways, often habitually and non-reflectively, by splitting, projecting or introjecting, to manage this discomfort. Splitting occurs when people take opposing positions, such as being too emotional, or too intellectual; some feel wrong, others righteous, some withdraw, and stuckness in the group ensues. The usual outcome of stuck divisiveness is that people disengage from the group. This increases their isolation and reinforces the experience that large groups are impossible.

For over two years now I have been co-conducting with Russell Waetford of Nga Puhi, a median-large group at AUT on a weekly basis. The group is called the Community Kōrero and it is a blend of a hui and a large group. We meet in the whānau room called "Te Tuinga" which suggests binding together in a new way. The participants are students from the adult and child psychotherapy training at AUT.

How to find a way to stay with oneself and join the group? 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. Who has supremacy over whom? For New Zealanders this brings to mind the Treaty of Waitangi which has been interpreted differently by Māori and Pakeha in terms of sovereignty (Orange, 2004). My response to this student was that idealisation is also racism and I owned it as a problem that I have faced. As a New Zealander born in New Zealand, it has taken many years for me to begin to value the bi-cultural nature of Aotearoa. Māori culture seemed to offer so much more.

In the Community Kōrero last year, one of the central themes related to belonging was between the child psychotherapy students and the adult psychotherapy students. The child students were angry because of their invisibility. Their difference was not recognised or understood by the adult students who assumed that they belonged to the same culture. In fact they do not. There are some core differences in the way the programmes are structured and in the culture of teaching and learning. It took some time for the adult students to take in this different culture. As the difference became clear, the blame came towards the leaders: 'You should change the structure. Why have you put us through this?' What was the hardest to achieve was to sit together with this difficulty, with the feeling of the lack of fit. It was a parallel to the issue of bi-culturalism. Somebody had to be wrong. Students often resorted to institutional blame. It is hard to sit 'with' and 'in' these differences. Yet paradoxically, when we listen to each other, then something can change—not the situation, but the feeling inside of the group.

Transposition

In the group I co-conducted in Molde last year, we established from the 1st session that it was an open group; that people could come for one day or for all four days. By the fourth day when new people came, there was a huge disruption in the group. The existing group members wanted to get on with the work they had begun together. The new group members wanted to find out what was happening and to find a way to belong. One of the new group members turned on the conductors saying, 'Why did you let us come in? It would have better if you had made it a closed group. That is what we usually do in group-analysis.' The feelings were intolerable to her. She represented a newcomer (immigrant) who was part of an established and strong culture who expected to belong and expected the group to follow her own culture; however, it did not. The existing group members were eventually able to reflect on their process and likened their experience to how it might feel for a people in a country when a new wave of immigrants arrived, disrupting the focus and pattern of the culture of the indigenous people, not understanding their culture and treading on their sensitivities.

New group members were struggling to belong. The group divided into subgroups—those who had been there longer and knew the culture and those who were new. We were able to begin to think about this as another wave of immigration and how difficult it is to recognise the otherness of the other. In the group's fantasy, we were New Zealand. This came particularly from a woman who had struggled on the first

day with the Māori words in my paper. Early in the second session she said how much hatred she had felt towards my strangeness. It was hard to understand me with my odd accent, and it didn't matter anyway because I lived across the other side of the world. She wasn't going to come back since it felt too hard, but then she realised that she was being racist and felt it was important that she come back and explore the meanings for herself and she did so. The background story was that this woman was Danish and currently lived in Norway. She didn't always feel as if she belonged or that her difference was accepted. In some way she was transposing her experience from where she lived onto me. So on the fourth day when the new wave of immigrants arrived, the group had to work hard to accept the new and allow the group to change to accommodate their difference, while respecting the ongoing process that was already happening in the group.

Conclusion

Central to my thinking in this paper is the concept of learning from experience (Bion, 1962). I am talking about experience that goes beyond the implicit, to Te Kore, and Te Pō, to the potential that is inside us for building meanings that relate to and contain our own and others' culture. Learning from experience requires us to be able to bear being in the place that has been called 'not knowing' long enough for our authentic self to emerge and develop.

In the process of writing this paper, I created my own art, inspired by the rich and vibrant Māori chant, as a way of exploring my own not knowing, to find understanding that is based in the experience of my senses. The vignettes illuminate the themes of 'transposition', 'not understanding', and 'belonging', and the necessary struggle and the growth that can occur in large groups. Large groups are not psychotherapy, but they can expand our awareness in helpful ways. However it takes willingness on our part to surrender some of our precious hold over our own known world so we can embrace other ways of being more fully.

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Virtual living in mixed realities

Leon Tan

Abstract

Psychoanalysis and psychotherapy as disciplines have been relatively slow in the exploration and analysis of cyberspace phenomena and screen technology mediated subjectivity. This paper takes a tour of five mixed reality scenarios (i.e. where real and virtual spaces mix) so as to stimulate thinking and discussion on the impact of the internet on contemporary populations (at the level of both psyche and socius). It also puts forward the claim that the experiences of virtual living? afforded by cyberspace offer unique potentials for the theory and practice of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis today.

Introduction

The so called information and communications revolution of past decades has ushered in an age of digital communication, 'distributed presences' and 'evocative objects' (Sherry Turkle), 'cyberspace' (William Gibson), 'virtual reality' (Howard Rheingold), 'cyborgs' (Donna Haraway), 'artificial reality' (Myron Krueger), 'simulacra' (Jean Baudrillard), and so called 'artificial intelligence' (John McCarthy) or 'synthetic reason' (Manuel Delanda). Today, as Karen Ferneding (2004) notes, 'to say that we live within a technological society is to state the obvious' (p. 37). Technology progressively mediates our perceptions and experiences of identity and social relationships (we can call this dimension the 'Sensible', to borrow from Jacques Rancière), as well as blurring the lines between virtual and real/ity, challenging standard common sense notions of reality as necessarily material or physical, and the 'Sensible' as bounded by the limits of the body.

Relational technologies such as the 'internet' and its many virtual social spaces or 'multi-user domains' (MUDs) are of special interest in the ways in which they open up possibilities of 'virtual living', community, and mixing realities (i.e. mixing the streams of virtual and 'real world' realities). Our global enmeshment with the internet (over desktops, laptops, pda's, mobile phones, gaming devices such as Playstation Portable and Nintendo DS and so on) makes the notion of a continuous computing environment, distributed across geo-cultural space-time, increasingly viable. Further, the expansion of this continuous computing environment and its embedding into 'real world' situations (for instance in pervasive gaming[1] where gamers play in real world spaces coordinated to activities in a virtual game world accessed by say mobile phone) paves the way for the creative synthesis of the opposition between virtuality / fantasy and reality in the concept of 'mixed reality'.

Psychoanalysis and psychotherapy as disciplines have been relatively slow in the

exploration and analysis of cyberspace phenomena and screen technology mediated subjectivity. Even in the one area that is of high relevance to these fields – that of *technology mediated psychotherapy* – the profession at large has for some time displayed an inordinate amount of resistance to the idea that therapeutic activities could actually take place beyond the so called 'real' face-to-face scenario, let alone in cyberspace. What is of psychoanalytic and aesthetic interest in these techno-social mediations and reconfigurations is of course firstly the significances for contemporary experiences of subjectivity (how are we experiencing and representing our 'selves' today?) and alterity (how are we experiencing and representing 'others' or 'otherness' today?), and secondly the relations between fantasy, virtuality and reality. By presenting and discussing five virtual life / mixed reality scenarios, this paper seeks to stimulate thinking on the relation between virtual and real(ity) and on the dangers and possibilities of cyberspace for the profession. The five scenarios utilize contemporary examples by way of a 'tour' of sorts through some of the domains wherein virtual and real spaces blur in distinctive ways.

At this point, some provisional definitions may be useful for 'virtual life' and 'mixed reality'. *Virtual life* is a term used to designate [1] software based virtual life forms (e.g. *Tamagotchi*, *Aibo*, *Eliza*, *Virtual Girlfriend*) existing in relationship (interactions) with humans, and [2] technology / internet mediated experience (the subject's presences and experiences say in online dating, social networking, therapy, or multiplayer gaming). *Mixed reality* is a term deriving from Paul Milgram and Fumio Kishino (1994) who conceptualized a spectrum or continuum encompassing reality and 'virtuality'. Used in this paper, 'mixed reality' recasts the preceding naïve opposition between an 'authentic' material reality and the 'artificiality' of internet mediated or software driven subjective and social experiences, conceptualizing reality as a mixture of actual and virtual dimensions. Such a proposal can be specifically aligned with Lacanian psychoanalysis, allowing us (as Slavoj Zizek claims) to retroactively realize the ways in which *reality itself was always virtual* - that is to say, how our experience of social reality is always minimally constituted by fantasmatic 'virtual' frames. Without further ado, let us move to the first scenario...

Virtual companions – pets and lovers

Launched in November 1996, *Tamagotchi* enjoys a reputation as the first virtual pet in the world. We could even say that *Tamagotchi* first introduced the idea of virtual companions[2] into popular consciousness. After almost a decade of existence, riding on high brand and product awareness, *Tamagotchi* was recently re-released as *Tamagotchi Connection* by Bandai Corporation. Far from a passing fad, *Tamagotchi* sold more than forty million units worldwide (with America and Canada accounting for 12 million) in less than two years from release (Kusuhara, 2001). The recent re-release, *Tamagotchi* Connection (2004), has over two years achieved 20 million unit sales (Tamagotchi Connection Information Centre, 2006). Cultivating these virtual

companions enjoys such popularity that it has spawned numerous imitations such as *GigaPet* (like *Tamagotchi*, a handheld virtual pet), and iterations with material bodies such as *Sony's Aibo* (a robot dog) and Japan's National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology's *Paro* (a robot seal covered with fake fur that is marketed as a 'warm', 'fuzzy' therapeutic pet for retirement homes). Most recently a *Tamagotchi* iteration *Nintendogs*[3] was launched on *Nintendo's* proprietary platform *NintendoDS* (a portable gaming platform), achieving significant commercial success.

'*Tamagotchi*' derives from the words *Tamago* (egg) and *Tomodatchi* (friend) literally meaning 'egg friend'. The 'Egg-friend' is sold in toy stores and takes the form of a small portable LCD game attached to a key-ring. On activating the game, one is confronted with an egg. Using a set of buttons, the gamer must respond to *Tamagotchi*'s demands, first hatching the egg, and then feeding, nurturing, disciplining, medicating and cleaning up after it. Depending on the owner's actions and perhaps even attachment style, this egg friend eventually develops into 'characters' with differing personalities. For instance, failure in tending consistently to its cries as a baby will result in a creature that frequently pesters its owner. In common with its offshoots, *Tamagotchi* stages a relational structure that invites the 'interactive' participation of the gamer. Like virtual human companions, virtual pets offer, in Bandai's words, an experience of 'virtual love'. This relational scene is expanded in the latest version by the inclusion of infra-red technology allowing the viartual pet 'to become friends[4] with other *Tamagotchi*, visit its friends to give gifts or play games together, and eventually have a possible second, third and fourth generation virtual pet' (Tamagotchi Planet, 2004).

Whilst some of us from older generations may find the notion of relating to such 'inanimate' objects slightly unnerving or even outright ludicrous, Sherry Turkle's (1995) research into children's experiences of 'artificial life objects' already pointed to a radical generational differentiation with children of the nineties regularly perceiving such objects as 'sort of alive' (p. 172). So, what was previously considered admissible to the categories of life and reality in the past was supposedly 'material' (i.e. a real material pet) and now what is considered admissible to life and reality can also be 'virtual' (i.e. a virtual pet like *Tamagotchi*). Are we not dealing here with the cultural trend characterized by Slavoj Zizek as the *virtualization* or *digitalization* of reality[5]? If virtual pets represent a virtualization of the other, then virtual girlfriends or boyfriends (virtual lovers) 'humanize' or domesticate this digitized other, cloaking and sexing 'it' with 'human' features.

Needless to say, aside from virtual pets, the makers of *Tamagotchi* also offer virtual human companions, in a game called *Love-by-Mail*, where subscribers receive letters and gifts from a virtual girlfriend via email. Whilst *Love by Mail* is targeted at a male audience, *My Prince*, also from Bandai, offers virtual love for female users. A particularly fascinating virtual human in the 1990s came in the guise of *Kyoko Date*,

a virtual Japanese pop idol created by the Hori production company. According to Yumiko Iida (2000), 'Kyoko's virtual music concerts, compact discs and videos, and the Internet chat line pulled in large numbers of young male fans' (p. 429). Kyoko's virtual celebrity life anticipated some of the possibilities and sophistication of contemporary virtual life and can be viewed as a precursor to *Vivienne Rose*, the first *Virtual Girlfriend* by Hong Kong based *Artificial Life*[6]. Vivienne was launched in 2004, and is probably one of the most sophisticated virtual companions around today, speaking in over 6 languages, powered by artificial intelligence, conversant in thousands of topics, and available around the clock on mobile phone.

Virtual Selves: massively multiplayer online gaming (MMOG)

In the previous section, we dealt with virtual others in the form of virtual pets and lovers. In this section, we turn towards virtual selves and subject positions. Digital games are one of the most popular forms of entertainment today, and MMOGs are the most social of digital gaming activities, made possible by global internet access. Established MMOGs typically have hundreds of thousands to millions of gamers and can be thought of as virtual communities. Some of the more popular gaming communities include *World of Warcraft*, *Everquest*, *Legend of Mir 2*, and *Dark Age of Camelot* for instance. If with *Tamagotchi*, the virtual self remained hidden, in MMOGs, it acquires high visibility, and it's creation (the graphical fleshing out), maintenance and deployment (or performance) within virtual worlds assume paramount importance. Such virtual 'selves' are called 'avatars' in computer games discourse. Avatars, simply put, are stand-ins or agents for the self in cyberspace. They are a sort of digital prosthesis extending our 'selves' (fantasmatically) into any number of virtual worlds, gaming and otherwise. In a great variety of popular MMOGs, avatars typically incarnate with human-like visual form and gamers typically also use a 'handle' or online name for their avatars. It is not uncommon for players to have more than one avatar and of course for players to create and use avatars of alternate or indeterminate gender[7].

The specific case of mixed realities concerning virtual selves and MMOGs we are interested in was reported in The Guardian Unlimited (*Virtual Trade Gets Real*) on June 16, 2005. It concerns Chinese multiplayer gamer *Qui Chengwei*, who was 'given a suspended death sentence for fatally stabbing someone in an altercation that was over a piece of property that didn't even exist'. The property in question was a special sword 'Dragon Sabre' within the virtual world of *Legend of Mir*. The story is reported as follows:

Qui and a friend had jointly won a valuable Dragon Sabre by battling through a tough quest. The pair lent it to Zhu who, instead of returning it, sold it via an online auction, kept the money (about £480) and ran. Chinese police don't recognize virtual property as real goods, so the question of theft was a moot point. The result was that Qui resorted to a brutal real-life crime (Krotoski, 2005).

Another case involved the game *Lineage II*. According to *New Scientist*, a Chinese exchange student was arrested in Japan on 18 August 2005 'on suspicion of carrying out a virtual mugging spree using software bots to beat up and rob characters... The stolen virtual possessions were then exchanged for real cash'[8]. Japan's police clearly have specialists dealing with virtual crime, as do Korea's police. In the first half of 2003, the Korean police dealt with over forty thousand cyber-crimes, more than fifty percent involving online gaming. It is no accident that Japan and Korea have developed expertise in this area – they are the two most networked and mobile countries in the world.

That the effects of virtual encounters spill over in such a way into social reality demonstrates at the very least the potency, perceived significance, and effects of virtual experiences in contemporary techno-social ecologies. It suggests that experiences we have *through* the mediation of the avatars we create in virtual spaces such as MMOGs or online communities such as *Second Life* or *Myspace* can *affect* us profoundly, and also that perhaps in our contemporary networked lives, virtual and real bleed into each other far more than we are willing to acknowledge. Beyond this, it also suggests that more work can be done on theorizing the relation of virtuality and fantasy to reality. Zizek's idea for example is that our experiences with virtual selves / avatars at the very least allow us to retroactively see how most other aspects of our 'real' lives (and social realities themselves) are constituted by virtualities or fantasies... how we are performing our 'real' selves in our everyday lives as much as we are our avatars and virtual identities online. Perhaps this kind of performance is clearest in the uncertain field of gender, particularly where it is played out on the 'stage' of romance and dating. Are our performances of gender in these situations (i.e. the construction and enactment of what it is we imagine and subscribe to as 'being a man' or 'being a woman') not clearly constituted by fantasmatic coordinates?

Money, properties, economies

Despite its ultimate virtuality, money is popularly perceived as a very 'real world' issue and object. One can imagine parents admonishing today's teenagers to not waste time in virtual worlds but to make a living in the real world! Indeed chasing money or wealth can often be perceived as 'materialistic'. Today however, there are teens that make livings out of their virtual world activities... building up super characters in online game communities to auction off on *Ebay* for instance. The MMOGs mentioned earlier typically have in-world (virtual) economies linked to real world economies. As the *Guardian Unlimited* reports 'recent estimates indicate that the value of real-money transactions outside the game world, via online auction sites, is approximately US$100M to US$1B' (Krotoski, 2005). The single biggest transaction of 2004 was David Storey's purchase of *Treasure Island* in the virtual world of *Project Entropia*. 22-year-old Storey went on to develop land packages to on-sell at a profit, much as a property developer in real life does. It is perhaps

the blurring boundaries between virtual and real in this specific domain – money – that has motivated increasing consideration and acceptance of the significance and value of virtual life experiences. Cynically put, it is the realization that virtual life experiences are desirable and significant to us and that therefore real world money is to be made from the virtual that drives the mainstreaming of virtual living today.

More recently, the three dimensional virtual world *Second Life* has pushed the blur across virtual and real spaces further. *Second Life* is a little like a MMOG, but it is not a 'game' as such. Instead it is a '3D online persistent space totally created and evolved by its users' – a virtual world with content creation tools enabling users to 'do, create or become just about anything'. There are in world games, social activities, businesses, fashion shows, art openings, brothels and nightclubs. Real time interaction is made possible by broadband internet access, allowing users to manipulate in-world objects and to chat to other avatars in real time. Most significantly, the virtual currency - the Linden dollar – trades directly against the US dollar. Currently for instance, it is trading at $297 Linden to US$1. *Second Life* takes David Storey's rather spectacular 'mixed reality' property trading and makes it a commonplace feature of its online world (which really is no more than a 'gated' space within the larger infrastructure that is cyberspace). Whilst it is free to participate in *Second Life* as a basic user, the complete experience requires that one buys property (land in the first instance) to establish as a base / home. Registration in *Second Life* even requires linking to a credit card. Once set up, one is free to conduct business as well as pursue various entertainments. What kind of mixed reality trading goes on in *Second Life*? Some examples include the clothing designer that sold a one off virtual dress for US$160 and a company *Wells Fargo* launching a commercial 'Stagecoach Island' in *Second Life* in 2005 offering financial advice and solutions to young adults. Most recently, real world universities have purchased islands and plots of land in *Second Life* in preparation to develop e-learning programs and revenue streams in-world.

In thinking about mixing realities, is *Second Life* not the exemplar of a seamless weaving together of real world and virtual world economies? Mixed reality property trading (by this I mean transactions that breach the real world – cyberspace divide generally) evokes all sorts of questions particular to our contemporary cultural moment, in response to the imbrication of cyberspace in the real world. As *The Guardian Unlimited* suggests, these situations 'present questions about the nature of value, ownership and property' (Krotoski, 2005). The pervasive and popular association of property with materiality or physicality means that for many, the idea of mixed reality trading may be extremely disturbing. How for instance am I to safeguard a virtual object as opposed to say my car that I can keep under lock and key in a garage and even outfit with an alarm system? Yet it is not as though we have not always had virtual properties. Patents and copyright for instance are clearly a form of virtual property. Our engagement with the mixing of virtual and reality today however forces a re-evaluation of how we are to consider previously stable and

certain coordinates of our social existence – for instance our houses / properties, our sense of home and community, the value we confer on physical and virtual objects and experiences, and so on.

Rape club: fantasy or reality?

Whilst the previous section mapped the blurring of virtual and reality, this fourth scenario of mixed reality highlights the increasing complexities (and perhaps impossibility) of distinguishing *between* the overlapping spaces of virtual and reality. The scenario here is the traumatic one of rape. Australian news reported on June 7th 2005 that New South Wales Police began investigations of a number of chat rooms in an internet forum on *NineMSN* website called 'Rape Club'. *NineMSN* closed down a number of rape related forums after being informed of 'a 15 month long discussion involving 46 web users or 'posters', discussing rapes and pictures of rapes'. The forums closed were called: 'No Rape No Glory', 'Whitepower/rape rock', 'Ministry's Land of Rape and Honey' and 'Rape Me' (The Age, 2005).

In their investigations, the primary difficulty encountered by the Police is one that has a history in psychoanalysis, beginning with Freud and the difficulty in distinguishing between fantasy and reality in the speech of the patient, in relation to 'memories' of seduction and sexual abuse. Concerning the investigations, Detective Acting Chief Inspector Vivien Crawford said, 'It is difficult in this area of adult pornography where fantasies of rape do occur... and they are not necessarily a crime... clearly just because people fantasize about a particular thing doesn't make it an act that we would be investigating' (The Age, 2005). On the other side, NSW Rape Crisis Centre Manager Karen Willis would have rape fantasy internet discussions and websites outlawed. What would then happen to sites such as www.adultfriendfinder.com, where discussions about all manner of fantasies and enactments regularly occur in the context of online dating for offline sex? Should such sites then be outlawed too? If we pursue Willis' logic to its conclusion, the final question to arise of course is this: *should* we legislate against fantasies themselves? Were it even possible, what would be the effect of such legislation (and how effective would it be), given what we know from psychoanalysis, namely that Law is dialectically related to Transgression? To put it in another way, did Freud not already elaborate the notions of repression and the *return of the repressed*? Repression is not elimination after all.

Technology mediated psychotherapy

Throughout this paper, I have presented a range of scenarios on our tour of contemporary mixed realities. Instances such as the case of internet gamer *Qui* as well as 'Rape Club' demonstrate some of the troubling aspects of our negotiation of the blurring spaces of virtual and real life, sometimes prompting reactionary and extreme responses that figure an attempt to erect a stable boundary between virtual

and reality. It must be pointed out that these sensational scenarios are by no means *commonplace*, and further, that our engagement with cyberspace can also be enriching, stimulating and even therapeutic. This brings us to the final scenario, one that is of direct relevance to clinicians, namely, *technology mediated psychotherapy*.

Technology mediated psychotherapy has a surprisingly long history, in fact, at least as long as the history of the internet itself. It began with the famous ELIZA program collaboratively developed by Joseph Weizenbaum and Kenneth Mark Colby. ELIZA[9] (Weizenbaum, 1966, 1976, O'Dell & Dickson, 1984) was the first software simulated (Rogerian) psychotherapist and its use the 'first well-documented example of humans interacting with computers for a therapeutic purpose' (Grohol, 2004: 52). Interestingly, this first use case is one between human and computer (although those who originally interacted with ELIZA actually thought it was human). Today, the field of technology mediated Psychotherapy includes software driven interventions between human and computer[10] *and* human-to-human psychotherapy mediated by technology. In this section, I focus specifically on human to human technology mediated psychotherapy and its possibilities.

Face to face psychotherapy arguably hinges on the skillful deployment of the 'person' or 'presence' of the clinician in relation to the idiosyncratic presentation of the patient. Similarly, online psychotherapy depends on the successful creation and deployment of virtual 'presence'[11] in cyberspace, through text, over email and instant messenger (IM), avatars, emoticons, images, and even sound, voice and ultimately video stream. Whilst the ability to conduct online psychotherapy has been around for quite some time, it is only in recent years that this 'scope of clinical practice' (online counselling and psychotherapy) has begun to come into its own. If Michael J. Mallen (2004) is right, this can be explained by recourse to the notion of a 'critical mass', that is, 'enough people in our society have begun to use online communication in their lives – the technology has become absorbed into all facets of life, including work, education, and leisure' to the point where 'a panel of 67 psychotherapy experts predicted in 2002 that internet therapy services would be the second fastest increasing service area in the next 10 years' (Norcross, Hedges, & Prochaska, 2002, p. 69-70).

With such predictions, questions naturally arise; does online psychotherapy (and more broadly does our engagement with cyberspace) offer any particular promise? Here I believe Lacanian psychoanalysis offers a specific answer. If the Lacanian philosopher Slavoj Zizek (1999) is correct, online psychotherapy is an area that holds special promise because of the peculiarities of cyberspace and its relation to fantasy and social reality. How so? His argument[12] is that cyberspace opens up certain possibilities:

To stage, to 'act out', the fantasmatic support of our existence... We are thus invited to risk the most radical experience imaginable: the encounter with our 'noumenal

Self', with the Other Scene that stages the foreclosed hard core of the subject's Being. Far from enslaving us to these fantasies... it enables us to treat them in a playful way, and thus to adopt towards them a minimum of distance – in short to achieve what Lacan calls *la traversée du fantasme* ('going through, traversing the fantasy') (p. 121).

If then the patient's engagement with the therapist through the medium of cyberspace allows for precisely such a staging of the fantasmatic coordinates of subjectivity, it is the cultivation of a minimal distance towards such fantasmatic elaborations that holds a key to therapeutic success. A collapsing of such distance may result in a case of mixed realities gone awry as we saw with internet gamer *Qiu*, who was excessively identified with his avatar and virtual life. This treating of fantasies in a playful way suggested by Zizek is similar to what the Lacanian psychoanalyst Dany Nobus proposes in the treatment of trauma - the idea of *destabilizing a patient's identification as a 'victim'*. This precise kind of destabilizing of identifications is made all the more possible when working with a greater visibility of such identifications through their elaborations – representations – performances in cyberspace. Perhaps what cyberspace promises clinically is the capacity for us to create, play with and reflect on multiple virtual 'selves' or presences (and thus with the multiplicity of subjectivity), opening anew the horizon of Lacan's *subjective decentring*. Zizek (1999) claims, 'If we externalize in (cyberspace) our imagination in its very inconsistency, the very fantasmatic frame that guarantees the consistency of our (self-) experience can, perhaps, be undermined'[13] (p. 123).

In an age when 'mental illness, including suicide, accounts for over fifteen percent of the burden of disease in established market economies... (more than the disease burden caused by all cancers)'[14], the therapeutic and analytic possibilities of cyberspace are especially relevant for entire internet generations already busily and creatively occupied with sophisticated, dynamic and distributed presences across the internet and mobile networks. Perhaps a more radical point however, is that in this scenario of possibilities for our engagement with cyberspace, the online presence of a psychotherapist may not even be required for therapeutic benefits to accrue to many of those engaged in virtual living in mixed realities today! Firstly, *subjective decentring* or *destitution* can reflexively emerge simply through individuals experiencing and reflecting over time on the ways in which they might use a range of avatars to perform different 'aspects of self' online *in relation to the Other* and eventually (as in the end of a Lacanian psychoanalysis) realizing 'the other's desire as its decentred cause' (Zizek, 1995). Secondly, the computer screen nowadays opens out onto a profoundly social space.

More recently, the computer has become even more than tool and mirror: We are able to step through the looking glass. We are learning to live in virtual worlds. We may find ourselves alone as we navigate virtual oceans, unravel virtual mysteries,

and engineer virtual skyscrapers. *But increasingly, when we step through the looking glass, other people are there as well* (Turkle, 1995: 9).

What these real others offer through the screen is not unlike what the online psychotherapist can offer… namely a background and field of difference / resistance against which to move dialectically *through* symptomatic identifications across the blur of mixed reality.

Conclusion

The virtual life and mixed reality tour finishes here. I have presented five scenarios demonstrating the entanglement of virtual and real/ity in what is increasingly becoming a continuous computing environment overlaid onto geo-cultural spacetime. My intention has been to touch briefly on a range of areas in order to map the space of negotiation between virtual and real life, and then to create an opening to consider of the significance of cyberspace for the profession of psychotherapy. Whilst some of these scenarios may seem strange, they are familiar and resonant to entire internet generations today. In any case, barring a truly global cataclysm that destroys all ICT infrastructures around the world, cyberspace is here to stay, and there is both a need for, and promise in, research and discussions on its implications for both psyche and social relations.

The thrust of this paper has been to make a case for transcending the opposition between the supposed 'artificiality' of virtual living and the apparent 'reality' of our 'real world' social lives by recourse to the concept of mixed reality. The main resource I have called upon in using this notion of mixed reality is Lacanian psychoanalysis and its insight that the subject's *experience* of social reality has always been virtual / fantasmatic. Fantasy is 'the little piece of imagination by which we gain access to reality – the frame that guarantees our access to reality, our 'sense of reality' (when our fundamental fantasy is shattered, we experience the 'loss or reality')' (Zizek, 1999, p. 122). I want to stress that an engagement with cyberspace does not *automatically* actualize the radical promise of traversing the fantasy and that cyberspace is not *by definition* therapeutic (nor is it by definition dangerous). To a greater or lesser extent, what we find in cyberspace is a recapitulation of the whole spectrum of human possibility, and given the progressive overlapping of virtual and real spaces today, 'mixed reality' offers a creative way of thinking about both spaces and how they commingle.

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(Endnotes)

[1] The term pervasive gaming is used more broadly to refer to a genre of games where the game world 'pervades' the real world through 'location based' activities and also through such things as email exchanges outside the game world.

[2] Of course we have had dolls for a long time but we are here focused on digital companions with a level of interactivity that represents a significant break from traditional toy characters and dolls.

[3] Nintendogs are virtual pet dogs. They can be viewed at http://www.nintendogs.com/.

[4] It is not as innocent as it sounds however! Does this expanded social scene not somehow recall Freudian scenes of polymorphous perversities – this new feature in the latest Tamagotchi is precisely its ability to mate with up to fifty other Tamagotchi to produce offspring!

[5] From a different theoretical perspective, are we not dealing with what Jean Baudrillard conceptualized as simulation and simulacra?

[6] See http://www.artificial-life.com.

[7] In the vulgar colloquial of gamespeak, the 'mangina' refers to male gamers who assume the form of female avatars.

[8] See http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7865.

[9] A web based Eliza is available at http://www-ai.ijs.si/eliza/eliza.html.

[10] See for instance ANU's free online CBT based program Moodgym at http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au/.

[11] See Lombard & Ditton (1997) for an overview of 'presence' at http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol3/issue2/lombard.html.

[12] Strictly speaking, Zizek argues that such possibilities are available to artistic practice. It applies to everyone precisely as Beuys said 'everyone is an artist'!

[13] See the essay entitled 'Is it possible to traverse the fantasy in cyberspace?' for a detailed account.

[14] See http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/burden.cfm.

Getting in touch : a meeting with whakamā in psychotherapy

Mihiteria Wharetohunga King

Abstract

The knowledge and practice of psychotherapy in New Zealand has strong, fiercely protected roots that originate from outside of this land. For most Māori, if they enter into a psychotherapeutic relationship, it will most often be with a Pakeha, or non-Māori practitioner who has gained their theory and understanding of healing the psyche from these 'other' traditions. However, with the shift in consciousness that is occurring here in Aotearoa, there is a genuine growing desire, particularly among psychotherapists, to know more about concepts that are important for Māori, the tangata whenua of Aotearoa, so that these can be understood, appreciated and tentatively integrated into professional practice and personal worldviews. Metge (1986) believes that understanding whakamā is of crucial importance in understanding and improving relations between Māori and Pakeha. This would surely follow through to the therapeutic relationship and it is therefore timely to begin exploring the concept of whakamā in psychotherapy practised here in Aotearoa. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the concept of whakamā and other supporting or associated concepts, and to invite further discussion of whakamā in practice. There has been no attempt to provide a cross-cultural integration or comparison at this point.

Kaupapa – grounding principles

I nga wa o mua, in those times past, Māori had their own version of soul or spiritual healer. The tohunga-rongoa was responsible for attending to emotional imbalances (Robinson, 2005). This role was held, contained and attributed status within a social structure of tried and tested concepts and beliefs that gave meaning and purpose to life, living and relatedness. The need for healing and restoration remains. Though we may not see the tohunga in the traditional sense, Māori professional practitioners will continue to seek to practice in ways that fit with Māori worldview and philosophy.

When speaking of things Māori, one of my elders taught me 'This is not a 'Māori perspective', this is 'Māori worldview': it is the way we believe it is for all mankind.' Another elder taught me never to be satisfied with just being told, 'This is so.' She taught me that I needed to question: 'Why is this so?' She explained that I needed to 'whakapapa' back (to establish links) to discover the philosophy behind the practice, so that I could establish the origins of this philosophy, whether it was tūturu (fixed, permanent, considered true and authentic) Māori or belonging to another worldview.

My intention with this paper is to provide a Māori worldview that also has relevance in the professional world of psychotherapy.

Just as most other cultures do with their own worldview, so Māori also believe that what is good for Māori is good for all. Perhaps then the concepts and philosophies that underpin Māori worldview can be considered as being Māori in essence yet applying to all of humanity and universe. We can also acknowledge there are many similarities in worldviews across cultures that can be considered 'universal'. My view is that Māori do not possess the 'copyright' on this form of knowledge but they have their own very important and valued words and stories that lead us to the same 'universal' place.

He aha tēnei mea - whakamā? - what is this thing called whakamā?

The word whakamā is derived from two words 'whaka' (loosely meaning "to make") and 'mā', which carries a number of meanings (white, pale, faded, clean, freed from tapu.) whakamā is a verb transitive meaning "to whiten", a noun meaning "shame, abasement" and an adjective meaning "shy and ashamed". (Williams, 1971:161). In this context we can also understand the term whakamā to be the process of "making clean", i.e. cleansing, restoring. So we are describing a process, behaviour, an experience and an outcome.

Metge's research and subsequent publication (1986) provides a significant contribution on the topic of whakamā and is frequently referred to in this paper. She understands whakamā as a Māori concept that relates to the physical, emotional and spiritual experience of how a person or group of people affected by whakamā, participate in their relationships with others and their environment. Being 'afflicted by' whakamā or in a 'state of' whakamā causes disruptions to social relationships and is usually experienced as a negative and/or undesirable state that involves considerable personal pain and distress to everyone involved.

Whakamā could also be considered as a defence against intrusion during a time of distress. The nature of the behaviour of whakamā is to remove oneself. For some it can actually serve to provide space and time to reflect on the experience, the possible causes of situation and precipitating factors.

One of my clients Kiri, (a pseudonym), existed in a state of whakamā for many years within the context of a dysfunctional and distressing whānau dynamic. Although still 'afflicted with' and in a 'state' of whakamā during her early therapy, she came to understand her withdrawal behaviour as a positive aspect of whakamā. She described one of the benefits of being this way as "getting away from the heat", and 'getting some space away from all of that bullshit so that I could work out what to do, how to survive.'

He āhua whakamā - form, appearance and characteristics

(1) The physical and emotional aspects of whakamä

Metge (1986) identifies two aspects of being in a state of whakamā that relate to the 'look' and 'feel' of whakamā. She grouped them under the two categories, inward and outward signs, that define the physical and emotional aspects of whakamā. This is also reflected in this comment from a highly respected Northland kaumātua:

> Whakamā is an outward expression of inward disintegration, an inward unease, because you know you are not what you should be within your group . . . You have a certain place in society and anything that takes you off your base in cultural terms causes whakamā . . . (Marsden, 2003:77)

Metge (1986) was able to define that the outward aspects relate to the person 'looking' whakamā; the behaviour and body language, which can be seen or observed, is clearly visible or directly observable. 'It is like seeing a house that has been shut up: windows closed, blinds drawn, showing no sign of life' (1986:15). She continues with identifying that the inward aspects relate to the person 'feeling' whakamā, the state of mind and feelings that are internal and invisible, 'nga whakaaro whakamā'. The outward signs reflect and are expressions of the inner experience.

Metge (1986) further assigned the outward, visible signs into five groups of behaviours: negation of normal activity and interaction; various ways of cutting off visual communication; small, repetitive movements indicating unease; physical flight, and behaviour that reduces communication and interaction with others (filling the space, defending against). The inward, invisible signs she assigned to nine groups of feelings: shy, embarrassed, uncertain, inadequate, incapable, afraid, hurt, depressed, and ashamed.

The feeling tone of whakamā is generally 'negative and depressed' (Metge, 1986:30) and like the effects of trauma, the state of being afflicted with whakamā varies in intensity and duration, depending on the causes, the person, their sense of self and identity, and the circumstances surrounding the situation (presence of witnesses, familiarity of surroundings, risk or level of threat and intimidation). Again like trauma, if not handled wisely and appropriately, whakamā can become a chronic condition.

Even as an adult when around her family, Kiri described herself as feeling weak and helpless, and she tended to stutter and mumble if spoken to directly. She would try to 'disappear' around others, hoping they would not notice her, always head down, eyes to the ground. In large gatherings she would 'escape' outside as soon as possible and play with the children, and act like she was 'looking after them' when really she was using them to avoid any contact with the 'others' whom she was scared of and hated being close to. She hated the fear and anxiety that would roll around in her

puku, sometimes scared that she would 'throw up', ''cos then everyone would look at me and I would just die'. She noted that if she were 'stuck inside with them' she would constantly pull at her and twist her braid, sometimes until it hurt, while staring blankly at the patterns in the carpet or the cracks in the floorboards.

In stark contrast was her behaviour in a different context. In her 'outside' world, she functioned as a capable, competent professional, managing a business, staff and clientele. The conflict between the two worlds eventually became too difficult to hold.

It was noted by Metge, 'There is a general consensus among Māori that the whakamā experienced in relation to Pakeha and especially in Pakeha dominated settings . . . is especially deep and damaging.' (1986:36). This can be a consequence of an individual's previous experience, their sense of belonging and/or isolation, and the levels of confidence in articulating oneself or being/feeling understood sufficiently in cross-cultural situations. However, it is also important to acknowledge that damage occurs in the context of differences and hence, power struggles and in some cases, the suffering of Māori at the hands of their own is no less painful.

In Kiri's case, she considered that she actually functioned more effectively in a Pakeha setting, for her painful life experience was rooted in the context of her Māori world. However, this in turn led to her to feeling whakamā in any context where she was identified as Māori when in non-Māori settings. She hid her identity as much as possible and often felt trapped between worlds. She said 'It feels too big to go there just yet. If I can't function in a Māori world as a Māori, how the hell can I survive out there as one? They'll eat me alive.' The complexity of the dynamic grows and reinforces the existence of the inward and outward aspects of being in a state of whakamā.

Whatever the cause it is important to note that in any setting where one experiences a pervasive level of discomfort this can lead to an accommodation of the actual or perceived dominant other. When this discomfort is considered irrelevant, or is minimised, misinterpreted, pathologised and misdiagnosed then the problem will be compounded and the struggle continues.

(2) Mana - the spiritual aspect of whakamä

In addressing the spiritual aspect of whakamā we are also introduced to the person, their identity and personality. When we speak of these things we are also introducing the concept of tapu. A discussion of mana would be incomplete without also referring to tapu. The terms tapu and mana are often interchangeable and the concepts in themselves can be confusing and a little difficult to understand.

Robinson's (2005) teachings from his Kai Tahu tūpuna state that laws of tapu (restrictions) were created for the preservation of mana. Mana derives from atua

(spiritual powers) and is therefore spiritual. The tapu is the restriction that keeps power present. To violate someone's tapu is to diminish or destroy their mana or personal power.

Marsden (2003) elaborates on the 'double aspect of authority and power' of mana and he uses the Greek words, *exousia* and *dunamis* to explain. *Exousia* is derived from the verb *exesti* meaning lawful or permitted, and is translated as authority where in the Greek sense, authority means lawful permission delegated by the superior to the subordinate. 'Since authority is considered a spiritual gift delegated by the gods, man remains always the agent or channel – never the source' (2003:4)

Dunamis is derived from the Greek verb *dunamai* meaning 'to be capable or to have power', the ability or power to perform. It can refer to 'power in action, power to perform . . . power of the spoken word. [Mana is] that which manifests the power of the gods' (2003:4).

So drawing on these interpretations Marsden understands mana as 'lawful permission delegated by the gods to their human agents, and accompanied by the endowment of spiritual power, to act on their behalf and in accordance with their revealed will' (2003:4). This delegation of authority is evident in dynamic signs or works of power. Here is his simple yet potent analogy that helps us to understand these teachings on mana:

> A person approaches a traffic crossing and the lights turn red. He has the power to cross but no permission. The lights turn green but his car stalls at that moment. He has permission to cross but no power. His car starts and the light remains green. He has both authority and power to proceed. (Marsden, 2003:4)

Pa Michael Shirres (1994, 1997) spent over 20 years studying and researching Māori theology and knowledge, particularly in relation to tapu and mana. He states, 'to look on tapu only as 'being with potentiality for power' is to leave out the most important element of tapu, the faith element, the link with the spiritual powers,' (1994:5) as clarified in the following statement, 'Ko te tapu te mana o ngaa atua' (Tapu is the mana of the spiritual powers) (1994:6).

He explains further that:

> When tapu meets tapu and one tapu overpowers the other tapu, the intrinsic tapu that has been overpowered is no longer effective and so the extensions of that . . . tapu are no longer effective. The situation is noa . . . in a negative way, for it results from, and signifies, the loss of power of the primary tapu and its extensions. (Shirres, 1994:13)

This is often referred to as the 'trampling' of tapu or mana – 'takahii te mana'. In the

Māori world if this occurs, the person who has been 'trampled' upon has lost mana, or is in a state of diminished mana and is considered noa, 'free from restriction', but in a negative way. The person is then vulnerable and at risk. Restoration of tapu comes about by addressing the forces that have brought this state of noa about, by linking the individual or group back into society, or whānau. These forces are then rendered noa, i.e. made powerless. Tihei mauri ora!

Whakamā and mana

According to Metge (1986) humans are said to 'have mana', be 'mana-possessing', 'filled or imbued' with mana, and likened to a cloak or mantle. Loss of mana is said to weaken a person but not to cause death, as destruction of his mauri (life principle) does. Being in a state of whakamā is related to and a consequence of the loss of mana that leads to a loss of power to act effectively and loss of protection. Further, individual mana is linked reciprocally with that of the group, and the group in turn is linked with the mana of the ancestors of that group. The action of one affects the others and the inner psychological and spiritual wellbeing of the individual is connected to the fulfilment of social obligations and expectations.

I understand that Dame Whina Cooper once said, 'we are mokopuna of our tūpuna' (personal communication with Malcolm Peri). She is reminding us that as a reflection of our tūpuna, our role and responsibility is to uphold their mana and that of the spiritual powers, that being mana which has been gifted to us.

The Dynamics Of Whanaungatanga teachings articulate this through the identified goal of whanaungatanga, being 'to address, restore and enhance te tapu o te tangata [people/person and hence tūpuna also], so that they may have the mana to achieve their potential.' (Te Hiku o te Ika, 1995).

Importantly Metge (1986) advises us that given that mana is a spiritual force with spiritual implications, whakamā cannot be understood purely as a psychological problem. Shirres (1994) describes it as a process of achieving hohourongo, entering into peace through the restoration of violated tapu. He also says 'The real sign of a person's mana and tapu is . . . that person's power to manaaki, to protect and look after other people.'(1994:16). Like psychotherapy, where it is accepted that problems occur in the context of relationship and therefore the focus of healing is in that context also, so it is with whakamā. Different cultural beliefs will lead to different views on how this is done (who is responsible, who should be present and active, where should it occur, how long should it take, etc).

Causes of whakamā

Whakamā is not just an individual experience. A group can also feel whakamā for an individual, or there can be a 'group-whakamā', as a consequence of a group

behaviour or decision. In either case it can be observed in both individual and group behaviours. Where there is a loss of power there are questions that need to be asked. Metge (1986:38) again fills a gap here. She understands the need to distinguish: (i) whether the person/group is whakamā on their own behalf or on that of others, (ii) whether the whakamā person or group incurred the whakamā themselves by their own actions or inaction, or was it inflicted upon them by others, and (iii) whether or not actual wrongdoing is involved.

She then assigned the range of causes of whakamā into six groups (1986:38): (i) perception of lower status, (ii) uncertainty and confusion (especially in relation to conflict between traditional and modern ways), (iii) recognition of fault, (iv) being put down, (v) being singled out – inferior, superior or different, compounded by invasion of personal boundaries or an element of tapu, and (vi) on behalf of others – for or because of other.

There are two important points that were highlighted for me in this area of Metge's work. One was that whakamā could arise in any situation where there is an opportunity for comparison – as in the saying 'to suffer by comparison' (1986:42). It becomes obvious then, that if we are not secure in our identity or sense of self, if we feel inadequate in comparison to others, if we are easily swayed by others perceptions particularly of ourselves, we may be more vulnerable to being afflicted by whakamā than those who are more secure in their identity and self. Metge articulates the vicious cycle of whakamā where 'whakamā begets limitation of achievement, which begets more whakamā' (1986:110).

The second point is that the initial exploration of causes was not about attributing blame. In this context the attribution of blame comes after the identification of whakamā, not before.

Whakamā and restoration in practice

Without a doubt, the loss of mana for whatever cause or reason adversely affects the physical and mental health of individuals and groups and their capacity to act effectively. This well-known whakataukī describes it well: "Tama tū, tama ora; tama noho, tama mate". Son standing, son well; son sitting, son sick. Therefore, if your son is standing, he is active and able to function. He is well. However if he is still and inactive, there is something wrong and follows that something needs to be attended to.

As psychotherapists practising in Aotearoa, New Zealand, we can begin to consider our role and responsibility when it comes to the healing process, from the perspective of working with and acknowledging whakamā. Am I, in my professional role, willing to explore the extent and causes of whakamā? What am I, as an individual responsible for, what can I do and where appropriate, what help am I willing to accept?

Again drawing on Metge's research (1986) here is a summary of the thoughts of her interviewees on the restoration process: (i) the first step is to assess the cause and intensity of the whakamā. (ii) The first move can be made by the person causing the whakamā or by witnesses. (iii) If the person brought the whakamā upon herself by doing something wrong, it is suggested that the person should suffer or be punished by whakamā. "Waiho, mā te whakamā e patu." (Let it be, she will be hit by whakamā.) Or, "Waiho i a ia mā te wā." (Leave it with her. Time will put it right.)

However, if the ultimate, underlying cause of whakamā is a relative lack or loss of mana, the essential ingredient in it's healing is the expression of aroha therefore: (i) Encourage distractions or diversions to minimise emotional distress. (ii) Help find 'escape routes', as a way of maintaining dignity. (iii) Be watchful and provide support and reassurance by presence. (iv) Leave the person alone but maintain connections. (v) Leave doors open to return.

Then if the process seems to be taking too long, reassess. If signs of readiness are detected, begin the process of restoration, mainly with physical contact, by providing physical expression of comfort and support, the expression of aroha. Although outwards signs may cease, the inner feelings may linger and continue to affect performance and wellbeing and resurface in trying situations. You need to be prepared to keep a watchful eye and continue to express aroha.

While the concepts of tapu and mana have been discussed, attention to the inclusion of aroha is another important factor. Aroha is focused energy, compassion, respect, love, acceptance and generosity. The collective concepts of tika, pono and aroha are also important. I understand this as meaning to do what is right and just, at the right time, for the right reasons, with right intentions and in a loving and compassionate way.

This reminds me of a delightful short story of Tolstoy's, about the Emperor's three questions (in Hahn, 1991:69-75). The emperor believed that the answers to these three questions would solve all problems: What is the best time to do each thing? Who are the most important people to work with? What is the most important thing to do at all times?

Short story even shorter, the answers he discovered were: (and it really is worth reading the story as to how this came about) there is only one important time and that is now because the present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person you are with, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future? The most important pursuit is making the person standing at your side happy, for that alone is the pursuit of life.

In retelling this story, I believe Hahn is inviting us to consider how we use each moment of our time on earth, how to be of loving service to others. This for me is the essence of aroha in practice.

Rangimarie Rose Pere made what I consider to be a profound statement that really cuts to chase. She said "We must be prepared to let a person explore the dimensions of [their] mana" (Metge, 1986: 70). She was referring to the need to remember our own mana as an individual alongside that of our tūpuna and of the collective. As a mokopuna of my tūpuna, in order to know my roles and responsibilities I need to know who I am, where I stand and from whom I derive my mana. I need to know and understand where I fit in to the scheme of things as I stand between the past and the future. I know this from whakapapa and from being in relationship with my whānau, my tūpuna, and my spiritual guides. When we speak of whakamā we are speaking of mana and this is surely a goal of therapy worth consideration – to explore the dimensions of our mana.

Comment

It is interesting to note that endurance of whakamā (Metge, 1986) is often understood as both admission of fault and part of the punishment that purges the offender of guilt. If others, particularly authority figures, interpret this differently, the affected person can feel misunderstood which then leads to further difficulties between parties as stated here:

> If you want to regain your place in Māori society you have to make restitution. Your restoration will come only with a change in behaviour . . . [however] In Pakeha society you get punished but your behaviour doesn't have to change. You've paid for it . . . that's it; you are free to do it again. With this level of confusion and conflict it is no wonder that it is hard to resolve whakamā in cross-cultural situations. (Metge, 1986:115)

Another interesting point has been raised in our psychotherapy circles, and that is, is the experience of whakamā only something that Māori experience? I have also heard similar questions and statements relating to wairua, aroha and mana and it raises some of my own.

If only Māori experience these things, what does everyone else experience? If we are to eat, sleep, sing and pray together, does that mean that only Māori can e kai, e moe, e waiata, e karakia and not others? Do I mimi and you pee? Do Māori have wairua but not non-Māori? Where would we draw the line and would we want to? Why would we want to separate Māori and others from a universal humanity? Is this more about the fact that given our history, that there are deep, generational wounds, particularly for Māori and that maybe Māori would feel these things in a more spiritual way than they consider Pakeha do?

Knowledge (matauranga) is different from knowing (mohio). Matau is the word for hook. In discussing knowledge, or matauranga, the hook relates to catching the knowledge. It acknowledges the first stage of learning. It has yet to be digested, taken in.

According to Marsden (2003:79) the ancestors believed that when the illumination of the spirit arrives in the mind of the person that is when understanding occurs – for knowledge belongs to the head and knowing belongs to the heart. When a person understands both in the mind and in the spirit, then it is said that that person truly 'knows' (mohio). If we are describing matauranga and mohiotanga, can these beautifully rich concepts only occur for Māori? I would hope not and I could not comprehend why having wairua or experiencing whakamā would be any different.

However I suspect that what seems to be missing in the use of these concepts is an understanding of the philosophy, the origins of why and how the practice or concept came about, along with the spiritual underpinnings. Without the framework or bones to a story there is nothing to hold it up. As humans, we will naturally draw on our existing philosophies and worldviews to make sense of our world and herein is where things become distorted.

The more common use of Māori words in everyday life, like mana and aroha is music to my ears. However as Marsden alluded to above, the mouth can speak what the heart doesn't yet know. The bones, the ko-iwi, provide the connections, grounding the philosophical aspects. But without the meat, the soup just doesn't quite cut it.

The following statement provides an interesting argument:

Ahakoa ko wai te tangata e eke mai ki te marae, me karanga, me mihi, nō te mea he mana tōna. Nā reira, ka tika tēnei kōrero, he mana tō nga tangata katoa. Translated this means whoever comes to the marae, call him on, welcome him formally, because he has mana. So this saying is right, all human beings have mana. (Metge, 1986:65).

The first part argues that this should be done because of the *existence* of mana in the person. The second sentence goes one step further; validating the truth of the initial statement by saying that this is so because mana exists in *all* human beings. And if this is so, then I suggest that all human beings have potential to experience whakamā.

The kaupapa at the beginning of this korero suggested that perhaps "concepts and philosophies that underpin Māori worldview can be considered as being Māori in essence yet applying to all of humanity and universe" and that Māori "have their own very important and valued words and stories that lead us to the same 'universal' place".

From experience I suggest that one of the other difficulties has originated in some of the very painful histories of Māori-Pakeha relationships since the time when they first spotted each other across the water. Do Māori trust that Pakeha will treasure Māori taonga (these concepts and words) in the same way? Perhaps Pakeha might try and control it, and then once they have control, they will change it or distort

it. And then they will claim ownership and tell Māori this is how it is. And Māori worldview will have been invalidated, trampled, discarded. Again. Do Māori want to let Pakeha share their 'stuff'? Will it be safe in Pakeha hands?

This I believe is Māori fear, just as Pakeha fear what it means to enter into power sharing with their Māori Treaty partners. Or coming into the Māori world, of experiencing feelings of inadequacy, incompetence and powerlessness, of being in their most vulnerable places and spaces, in front of Māori. The fear that maybe Māori will turn on them and return the suffering that they endured– tit for tat, an eye for an eye, echoes of utu bouncing off the mountains and sliding down the valleys. The fear that there shall be no escape or respite from the darkness of the raging shadow of the noble savage, the native that has been feared for centuries.

Māori must overcome the desire to repeat, that which has occurred to them even though the opportunity presents itself. It has been, and in most cases still is, an unlevel playing field. The lines keep shifting along with the goalposts. But that in no way leaves Māori as the victim and we should not view ourselves or be treated as such. The story of Te Whiti-o-Rongomai and his stand at Parihaka (Scott, 1975) is a Māori model for understanding how to define and maintain identity with dignity. Crushed though he was, he practiced passive resistance. If you read nothing else about Māori, and NZ history, this is an absolute must.

I believe that Pakeha and non-Māori must overcome their avoidance of truly knowing and understanding their motivations in bicultural interactions. Overall, we must all find ways of respecting each other's worldviews and struggles in a way that avoids any trampling of mana. For if we don't then it is conceivable that we will all exist in a state of diminished mana, and be suffering from and afflicted by whakamā. Considering our history, I suspect we already are. We get involved in battles, shaming and blaming, trying to quantify and qualify our pain so that we can somehow win the 'biggest loser' competition. And if this goes on, how will we recover, as a nation of peoples? Who will save us from our pain and torment?

Conclusion

This article is by no means the final word in discussing this concept, nor the many others that arise within the discussion. This is just one Māori view – mine and while drawing on the wisdom of others I am also claiming what is now my understanding without excluding other voices.

My goal here has been to enrich your understanding of some aspects of Māori philosophy. In thinking of some final words about preventing whakamā, I can't resist one last list of questions: 'Before you speak, think: Is it necessary? Is it true? Is it kind? Will it hurt anyone? Will it improve on the silence?' (Sai Baba, 2006).

And in taking responsibility for restoring your own lost or diminished mana as a professional healer, 'You are the only problem you will ever have and you are the only solution' (Bob Proctor, 2006).

Kia tau te rangimarie. Let peace reign.

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The violent mind

John Bryant

Abstract

This article will discuss the complex interaction of experience and biology in the formation of the violent mind. The practice of psychotherapy reflects the philosophical emphasis of hermeneutic phenomenology upon sensitivity and relationship to lived experience. Phenomenology searches for pre conscious experience. Hermeneutics shapes meaning and gives significance to such phenomena. This commentary emphasises themes of shame, fathering and remorse as they arise from a series of insightful interviews with men about individual experiences of violence. The influences of neurobiology and attachment theory are used to understand the dynamic forces behind these themes and the role that neurobiology and attachment theory play in understanding violence.

For four thousand years of Western history since the time of Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Justinian, Hammurabi and Moses, lawmakers and philosophers have pondered how to diminish violence. Legislation has been created according to the moral and legal prescriptions at which they arrive. Whilst a few societies have virtually eradicated violence[1], most have failed. The 20th century proved to be the bloodiest century in human history, with more humans killing other humans than in all previous centuries combined. We now have the technological capability to extinguish our species and are indeed destroying many others (Gilligan, 2001).

On a national level the phenomenon of violence and how to legislate for it is one of the biggest and most emotionally polarising issues currently facing New Zealand society. Its importance is highlighted by the high profile of violent crime in the media. Statistics suggest alarming levels of domestic violence including spousal abuse and child abuse, otherwise known as violence against intimates. For example, Binning and Oliver (2006) report: 'Acting Assistant Police Commissioner Roger Carson is looking at police issuing on-the-spot protection orders when they attend domestic violence incidents. It is hoped this could help to deal with a problem, which, says Mr Carson, has claimed 29 lives, and affected 62,000 children in the past year.'

Human beings are complex and puzzling creatures. We can create, nurture, protect, educate and enrich. Yet we can also degrade, humiliate, enslave, hate, destroy and kill. A man dressed as Santa can lovingly set his stepdaughter on his knee one day, and brutally murder her a few days later (Alley, 2003)[2]. Of all types of violence that I have encountered both personally and professionally, domestic violence is the most difficult to comprehend because it is most likely carried out in and around the sanctuary of home, and it involves people we would normally expect to nurture and

protect. Violence in this arena is even more tragic because female violence, although not as extreme as male, dramatically increases (Fletcher, 2002).

Nurture via nature

Evolutionary explanations for the phenomenon of male aggression have traditionally emphasized a survival instinct encompassing territoriality, competition for food, procreation, the establishment of paternity and the protection of offspring (Wilson & Daly, 1993). Such understandings provide the impetus for a continuing debate that hinges upon beliefs and theories about whether human behaviour is a product of either nature or nurture.

'I'm depraved, on account I'm deprived,' says Riff, a gang member, from the film *West Side Story* (1961), echoing another viewpoint of commentators on violence who assert that it is an underprivileged background that leads to the development of violence in adults. Many studies stress that violence is part of a historical process and not only born of biological determinism (Kalmuss, 1984; Revitch & Schlesinger, 1981; van der Kolk & Fisler, 1994).

Exploration into the causes of violence indicates that individual reasons for violent behaviour can only be seen as one constituent part of a complex psychological, biological and sociocultural matrix. These include factors in the internal state of an individual such as an evolutionary proprietal tendency and related sexual possessiveness, attachment issues, shame, drives, genes, hormones, and neural factors. Social influences such as psychosocial disadvantage, unstable and violent parenting, male identity conditioning, relative poverty, alcohol, drugs, patriarchal culture, and media violence are also implicated in violent outcomes. Two of the most compelling ways to understand violence come from an integration of the science of neurobiology and the discipline of attachment theory.

Neurobiology and attachment perspectives

> A child forsaken, waking suddenly,
> Whose gaze afeared on all things round doth rove,
> And seeth only that it cannot see,
> The meeting eyes of love.
>
> -----George Eliot

'Human infants are born to bond' (Fletcher, 2002, p. 149). This statement is predicated upon an understanding that from birth babies can recognise and tune into familiar faces, voices and smells. In a process of mutual attunement known as attachment, the whole relationship of self-other is incorporated into the child's developing psychic structure[3]. The originator of attachment theory was childhood development

researcher John Bowlby (1906-1990) who concentrated upon the influence of the emotional environment of the home as a major influence on the future development of infants (Karen, 1998). In the last two decades or so, researchers of neurobiology have gathered strong evidence to support clinical experience that the way in which infants and their caregivers relate has a significant effect on neurobiological development and, as a consequence, upon the child's future functioning (Siegel, 1999; Fonagy, 1999; Perry, 2001).

Brain researchers generally see the first three years of infant development as of primary importance because 'of critical and sensitive periods of brain development' (Perry 1993, p. 16) during which more than 85% of neurobiological development takes place. It is a time of prime importance when gene activation signals vital parts of the brain to develop neural pathways that determine the future function and structure of the brain. 'The activation of neural pathways directly influences the way connections are made within the brain' (Siegel, 1999, p. 13).

When a child is in a persistent state of fear and alarm that results from exposure to violence, the primary areas of the brain that are processing information are different to those in a child from a safer environment. The child who is in this state is less efficient at processing and storing information and is more prone to cognitive and emotional distortions. Perceptions that others present some kind of imminent threat or slight may have been accurate where these children came from but are now, in the adult world, often out of context. Fonagy, Moran & Target (1993, p. 74) give a developmental explanation[4] for violence connected to the child's need for parental contingency:

> The angry outburst of the toddler is not mainly a call for protection, it is also a self-protective response to insensitivity on the part of the caregiver, felt at the moment to have undermined the child's nascent self-image...The normal anger response, however, turns to aggression when insensitivity is pervasive. The defensive shield of anger is called for so frequently that the oppositional response becomes integrated with the child's self structure. Self-assertion immediately yields aggression.

This passage conveys the pattern of building aggression that likely develops into a feature of the person's life as he ages. Anger can have an important function within the attachment relationship for limit setting but an elevated level of aggression threatens to break the attachment bond. In Bowlby's (1973) formulation this type of aggression—known as dysfunctional anger—lies at the heart of insecure attachment.

However, many children become anxiously attached but do not become violent[5]. Fonagy, Moran, & Target (1993) argue that in order for aggression to turn into physical violence another crucial component must predispose such individuals to act on bodies rather than minds alone.

> It is this inadequacy of their capacity to think about aggression in relation to attachment that pushes them into violent acts in intimate relationships (Fonagy 1999, p. 3).

The ability to reflect upon and interpret the mental states underpinning the behaviour of others, known as reflective function or mentalising (Fonagy 1999), is developed in the presence of and through caregivers. According to Fonagy & Target (1997), the capacity for reflective function is responsible for whether or not we are securely attached and whether, if we are insecure, we develop the propensity for violence.

Shame and violence

> There is an empty place
> in my metaphysical shape
> that no one can reach:
> a cloister of silence
> that spoke with the fire of its voice muffled.
> On the day that I was born,
> God was sick.
> -----Cesar Vallejo (1990, p. 171)

Sydney E. Pulver (1999, p. 287), in debating the question of shame as the central affect of disorders of the self, suggests that

> two central activators of shame affect are, first, a sense of contempt or disgust by a significant other and, second, an experience of some defect within the self.

Shame can attack the very heart of our being and the power of shame to bring about the most violent of reactions. For example, the biblical story of Delilah's accusation leads her to the very violent act of blinding Samson, because it is in his eyes that she feels shamed: ' thou hast mocked me' (Judges 16:10, KJV).

The philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) identified the desire for recognition as a major motivating force behind all human history. In his view, the self is socially constructed, created in interpersonal interaction, and what people need is 'not only security and material necessities but mutual recognition' (Solomon & Higgins, 1997, p. 96). 'Recognition' which means literally to be 'looked back at' (re-cognise) is a synonym for respect, pride, honour and attention. Inattention or disrespect is to be 'dissed' in the vernacular of many 'staunch' men. 'Dis' is the old Roman word for the underworld. This prefix occurs often in psychological literature in the word dys-function and certainly creates hell in those who experience of feeling unworthy,

unloved and misunderstood (Gilligan, 2001). Viktor Frankl (1985), in *Man's search for meaning*, states: 'Indignation is not about cruelty or pain, but about the insult connected with it' (p. 44).

The need via relationship to be believed or 'seen' is echoed time and again in participants of this study's words. For example, in one man's ominous threat just before he brutally assaulted his wife, 'if you don't hear me then you'll feel me'. The fact that much mythical violence seems to focus on the eyes through which we see and are seen by others may be linked to strong evidence from developmental psychology (Holmes, 2002), that early baby/parent eye contact provides emotional resonance which is essential for building a secure, healthy sense of self.

Vince's relationship with his mother illustrates how insults to the self may be experienced:

> *There were lots of incidents where my mother hit me if she said I had a big mouth because she started unloading as I called it she started saying what I'd done wrong... Not only what I'd done wrong but how I was wrong and how I was not worthy and I was not a good son to have and um usually as she was loading herself up and getting rid of her anger. ... I was not heard and I think that was the biggest abuse that my mother did, not necessarily the whacking, not necessarily calling me a dork or saying I wish I never had you but just the fact that she showed no interest in me at all.*

For Vince, a childhood memory of not feeling heard is more potent than painful physical and verbal abuse. Frazier (1974) discusses the debilitating effects upon those who had not experienced extremes of physical abuse or neglect but had experienced a degree of emotional abuse in which parents projected their own shame onto their children, which was just as damaging. The 1995 Domestic Violence Act in New Zealand changed, upon evidence of damage to the developing brains of children, to include verbal as well as physical abuse as grounds for legal protection.

The consequences of childhood shame are evident in Vince's later life.

> *I felt that she was...doing something not right on the farm...and I kicked her in the face in the paddock. I can't remember but it had to do with the fact that she wasn't listening to me...I felt unheard or not listened to...*

Vince is unable to create a space between the painful feelings that growing up with his mother has engendered and the feelings of rejection he experiences from his wife. He is overwhelmed as the horizons of past and present meet and his words echo, through the years, his feelings of being 'unheard'. What he takes as a personal insult turns to rage and then violence in an attempt to stave off shame producing rejection. As these feelings are evoked, it is as if time has frozen; at this moment

childhood and adulthood are undifferentiated. The once protesting and powerless little boy is now a man—a lethal destructive force.

Brain researcher Daniel Siegel (2002) informs us about the feelings behind such violence by explaining that pervasive insensitivity or lack of contingency on the part of the caregiver often leads to a gradual embodiment of toxic shame in the child. Aggression is an attempt to fend off painful feelings of injury to the self. These feelings are often so acute and unavailable to conscious rational thinking that the sufferer feels others are treating him with contempt and disdain, even if they are not. For some men, violence is not necessarily sporadic or carried out in a fit of rage. It is a way of life, an event waiting to happen. For those who continually use violence as a means of countering shame, even a minor sign of disrespect or perceived disrespect can trigger a brutal reaction.

Colin dramatically reinforces the viewpoint that respect from others is vital to his sense of self-respect. In fact, in prison his survival depends upon it:

> *I had to get round with a black eye for two weeks and that's ugly mate not in jail it's no good you know because people think, oh yeah. That's why you gotta back up in a scenario like that because otherwise it reflects on your credibility it reflects on your reputation you know, it reflects on your mana you know especially in that environment you know you've got to fix it straight away. Otherwise um you're not looked at with the respect maybe you deserve or you feel you deserve. You're just a heap of shit you're a heap of shit like you're nothing; in Mäori terms he tangata kore take is a person that has no substance, you're worthless, you're a slave right...You intimidate people ... Oh yeah you have to do it what comes out of your mouth you must do. Especially in there cos you are judged by what you do and what you say.*

In the inhumane environment of a maximum-security prison with rigid rules, sterility, and other violent men, lived space is a continual reminder of the need for vigilance and the imperative to gain respect. For Colin, the macho code of masculinity in jail gets confused with mana or genuine self-other respect. The type of mana that Colin is describing is founded upon fear. It is knowing that others fear you, or fearing that they do not, that motivates the drive for power and self respect. In that world no one is immune and just about all self worth, according to Colin, is predicated upon notions of power over others, fear and revenge. The reality of 'what you do and what you say,' is omnipresent and nothing is forgotten in a bid to avoid the humiliation of being seen as subservient, of becoming *he tangata kore take* [a person of no substance]. Everything in the paranoid confines of prison involves maintaining and promoting proof of masculinity.

Fathering and violence

Colin's values were inculcated long before he went to prison:

> *I was the closest and whup hit me on the nose right up against the wall BANG fuuuuuck. One thing with dad he was very strong he was short and stocky a very powerful man he could lift me up with one hand you know he could grab you round the throat and he could lift you up he was very strong and very intimidating ... He was a man's man and he was respected by a shit load of people.*

In this excerpt Colin is reflecting upon intergenerational violence and what it was like returning to live with his birth father. There is a mixture of his fear of his father's violence and an admiration for it. This respect/fear ambivalence is linked to Colin's perception of his father's masculinity.

Bruce Perry (1993, p. 18) offers a psychobiological explanation for the phenomenon of violence being handed down.

> If the child is raised in an unpredictable, chaotic, violent environment it is highly adaptive to have a hyper-vigilant, hyper-reactive arousal system; if primary relationships are characterized by violence, neglect and unreliability, intimacy becomes maladaptive; if a young child is frequently assaulted, it becomes adaptive to over interpret non-verbal cues, to quickly act on impulses, and to strike out before being struck. The symptoms of hyper-vigilance, cognitive distortion, physiological and behavioural reactivity, intimacy avoidance and dissociation commonly seen in traumatized children were all, at some time in the lives of these children, necessary, adaptive and appropriate responses to traumatic stress.

If the way in which we embody influential people at a young age gives us a blueprint for future thoughts, feelings and actions, then, at least in our culture, it is self-evident that parents and caregivers would have a significant impact upon a child's development.

Van Manen (1990) discusses the etymology of the word 'parenting' as having connotations of origin or source. To parent (*parere*) means to originate, to be the source, the origin from which something springs. He speaks of the pride of bringing a child into the world but recognizes it as a gift emanating from something 'larger' than oneself that made it possible to have this child in the first place. Marcel (1978) expresses the gift as a call to make a response. Van Manen (1990, p. 60) describes this call:

> They teach their children that the world can be experienced as a home, a place for safe dwelling, a habitat in which human beings can 'be,' where

> we can be ourselves, where we can have habits; ways of being and doing things. So to bear children is, in a broad sense, to provide place and space for them to live, to be. The child is carried, borne inside the womb at first, then it is borne into the world where it remains, for a while at least, most helpless dependent, in need of nurture, warmth, caresses, holding fast and safe outside the womb.

Van Manen (1990, p. 84) concludes his talk on the nature of parenting with,

> A child who feels abandoned *or abused* [my italics] by the parent may never receive the meaning of inner rest, of being guarded by the existence of a center, a safe haven.

What does this mean for Colin as a son and as a father?

> *I've hit every one of them every single one of them ...//...I thought about saying sorry but I just ain't got the balls. Oh you know I'm letting myself down. I'm being submissive, you know, fathers don't apologise to their kids and anyway I'm sure they deserved it and they've forgotten about it and moving on so that's my attitude...But I'm not real proud of what I've done and you know... It's just sometimes I don't know what to do, how to make things right how to fix things up so I just don't do nothing...*

Colin illustrates the tension he holds between being 'a man's man', and having remorse for his violence towards his own children. Ironically the desire to not be seen as submissive leads him to feeling emasculated—'I just ain't got the balls'—rather than as a much needed confirmation of his manhood. Colin feels guilty for his former actions but his inability to show remorse to his children leaves him feeling ashamed. He is caught between the way his past has shaped him and how he wants to be.

Perry (2003, pp. 3-4) informs us that childhood is a precarious time in which the taken for granted sanctuary of home and protection of adults can easily be upset:

> The home is the most violent place...Persisting fear and the neuropsychological adaptations to this fear can alter the development of the child's brain, resulting in changes to physiological, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and social functioning.... Any factors that increase the activity or reactivity of the brainstem (e.g., chronic traumatic stress) or decrease the moderating capacity of the limbic or cortical areas (e.g. neglect, alcohol intoxication or brain injury) will increase an individual's aggression, impulsivity and capacity to be violent.

Based upon this analysis the following excerpt may give us an insight into Bill's extreme violence in adulthood:

> *I must have been about 4 when my dad left, he was an alcoholic...and um yeah my stepfather was the one I remember being violent. I was scared of him up until my early teens and I slept with a knife under my pillow from about for about six years, I've even said to people if I ever met him I'll kill him... She was having a bath and you know they'd had an argument and D. my stepfather um I remember him yelling at her ... I must have been about 13 then ... and I got up from my bed and he grabbed her by the hair cos I heard the pshh of the water and he pulled her out of the bath and she was menstruating. So while he's dragging her along the linoleum floor and he's punching her in the head and she's just bleeding out of the mouth and nose but I can remember...(crying)...sorry mate...her bleeding out of the head, and the vagina at the same time...you know all these punches on her, 17 stone big man, big hands...just raining..raining down on her .....it's like he was painting the floor or something yeah was yeah I came in ...A counsellor once asked me how long have you been angry mate and with such a candid question it took me aback and I thought about it and I said probably for most of my life ...*

An environment such as this must have been very toxic for Bill as a young boy. A stepfather capable of such terrible violence dramatically compounds the loss of his real father. The young boy's environment is pervaded by the sense of a terrifying giant of a man who is out of control. How would he know when the next outbreak of terror would occur? Through the reactivity of his brainstem and the reduced moderating capacity of the limbic and cortical areas of his brain, his concentration is narrowed down. Lived time, which includes a future perspective of vision, hope and expectation for most of us, is telescoped into dealing with the constant threat of danger of the immediate present.

In Bill's childhood there would be little time for peaceful, reflective play and stimulation, for a creative imagination that is so vital to a child's development. Instead a perilous cocktail of pervasive caregiver insensitivity, a defective sense of self, and macho social values permeate his future behaviour:

> *If it hadn't all happened so fast they started to push and shove and then the screwdrivers came out and we laughed at them and out came the knives...*

Bill's life experiences have conditioned him into being triggered into a mode of functioning much like a reptile would behave under threat. His here-and-now experience is reduced to the very limited survival strategy of fight or flight. Although Bill is responsible for what he does at such times his ability to choose is compromised because the part of the brain responsible for a range of solutions is no longer in control. This primitive response is reinforced by his need to fight in order to promote and maintain his self-esteem and his sense of masculinity. In adulthood Bill often seeks situations that trigger his already highly aroused condition into extreme levels

of emotional shutdown and violence. Male role models for optimal adult maturity, including safety, security, dependability, and stimulation, were missing and instead actually encouraged a state of chronic alarm.

At the beginning of Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus is sitting on the seashore in the midst of his unplanned travels following a long, difficult war, wishing to be home with his son, his father and his wife. In his longing and melancholy he asks the question: 'Does any person know who his father is?' Where do I get those feelings of protection, authority, confidence, know-how and wisdom I need in order to live my life? How can I evoke a father in a way that will give my life the governance it needs? (Moore, 1992). Too often in my work I come across men who struggle to find a vision for their manhood.

Self-Knowledge and remorse: the road to freedom

> If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find sorrow and suffering enough to dispel all hostility.
>
> -----Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (McClutchy, 2000)

Until now I have demonstrated only the destructive aspect of shame that arises from the data. Alan Schore (1994) proposes that not connecting with a child's active bid for attunement leads to toxic shame. Siegel (1999, p. 280) proposes a different type of shaming interaction: 'These types of transactions are necessary for a child to learn self-control and then to modulate both behaviour and internal emotional states in prosocial ways.' Shame, in this very specific sense, is not considered damaging; it is our moral gyroscope.

Just as a lack of knowledge of self lies at the heart of the emotional drive toward intractability, so lack of knowledge of the other is the key to alienation. We learn about self through knowing others, and vice versa. Impairment of knowledge of the other damages knowledge of self, and vice versa. For the repair that needs to occur when a rupture has taken place is highly difficult, if not impossible, when ones self-reflective capacities are diminished. Repair is a key aspect of successful relationships and is a vital component of healthy parent to child and *therapist to client* (my italics) transactions (Karen, 1998). Vince expresses the double bind of this inability,

> *S and I were together for 20 years by that time...and at that time I did not have any knowledge of the depth of the damage that I had done to her.*

This statement reveals that Vince's experience of ignorance and alienation started long before his wife's departure. Bill reports an episode in which he is finally arrested for assaulting his wife and experiences that time has a sense of the surreal as he goes into a state of disbelief, shutting down, and depression. In reporting these events he

has not yet spoken of sorrow but only of his own suffering. The following excerpt demonstrates a deeper sense of responsibility for what he has created in another:

> *Now when I see him, it bothers me because all I just see is fear on him now and I go up to him; ' hi how ya going mate, give me a call' and he doesn't, he goes 'yeah, yeah' at the time and I feel bad he feels like that now.*

It is promising that Bill has embodied being bothered and feeling 'bad' as a response to his violence, that he has no sense of macho satisfaction in the other man's fear. This remorse is a sign of recovery, as is protecting and helping others:

> *...I've also seen a lot of domestic violence with my mates...and their partners. I remember S chasing J with an axe, if I hadn't of stood in his way he would have killed her...He's never done anything about it... We talk about it and I say to him 'you're losing the battle mate, every time you touch her you're losing the battle with yourself' and sometimes I think it's clicking with him but it doesn't last, it doesn't last ... I look at it the way that I think of it it's like my real father's alcoholism you've gotta be aware of it all the time. But because I am aware of it has served me so much better ... I've still got a lot to learn...*

Bill's expanded horizon offers him the capability of also being able to influence other people's lives by helping to generate a consciousness of the 'battle within', knowing that ' you have to be aware of it all the time'. 'It' is the underlying emotions like grief, fear, guilt and shame that lead to violence. Bill is committed to gaining wisdom and compassion to help his friends whilst retaining a sense of realness and humility in knowing his limitations.

What is the catalyst for self-awareness and the development of higher human qualities such as empathy, compassion, wisdom and sensitivity to others? It seems that for perpetrators of violence, the mechanisms for such transformation are connected to feelings of extreme suffering such as shame, guilt, grief, or the loss of important others. As one gains a growing sense of his history and an ability to think about the self and the self of others, a person discovers the meaning behind his thoughts, feelings and actions. A person's invisible, unformulated sense of worthlessness and fear is given a shape and a form. Colin responds in an entirely new way as he gets in touch with feelings about his own father:

I enjoyed his company but I never had that father-son relationship that I wanted and I told him that as he was dying: ' it's a real pity dad that you and me couldn't have been what I wanted'. Ahh I just wanted him to say things like ...well you know ...yeah (crying) ... yeah.....I think ah...I think all the boys were like that they wanted ..... more .....Yeah if I had my time over again I'd do things differently you know with him I probably tell that him that I loved

him...that might have...see we didn't talk .....no we didn't talk ...

Sharing feelings on this level is unheard of for Colin. His experience has been permeated by the male code of masculinity, which shames men for feeling vulnerable. This way of being encourages the suppression of feelings such as remorse and grief. Colin, until recently, has been condemned to a life of silence and suffering—'we didn't talk'—that he has managed and contained with alcohol and violence.

Shame and grief are not only precursors to but also an integral part of developing a conscience. Remorse is a painful reminder of wrongdoing. Lewis (1971) promotes the idea that shame is inherently a social emotion. She asserts that human beings are social by biological inheritance and that, just as the instinctual emotion of fear signals danger to life and limb, shame also signals a potential threat to survival, especially for an infant, as a threat to a social bond. The therapist's careful and sensitive handling of shame dynamics cultivates the interpersonal bridge that connects individuals who could otherwise lead alienated and perhaps violent existences. The men's telling of his-stories encourages vulnerability and facilitates the self-knowledge and remorse that attenuates violence.

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Endnotes

[1] For example, Anabaptist sects, the Hutterites, Mennonites and the Amish have almost non-existent levels of violence in their communities (Gilligan, 1996, p. 226).

[2] Related to the murder of Coral Ellen Burrows. Reported in the Sunday Star Times, December, 14, 2003, p. 1.

[3] Some theorists refer to intrinsic self-other perceptions as 'internal working models' (Bowlby, 1982) or 'core relational schemas' (Baldwin, 1992).

[4] Object Relations theory describes the child's mental representation of the mother (object) child relationship. The originators of this theory include Klein, Fairburn, Winnicott and Balint (as cited in Karen, 1998).

[5] Broussard (1995) researched working class samples of children who are anxiously attached but who did not subsequently become violent.

The relevance of play to the teaching and learning of psychotherapy

Anne Mc Dermott

Abstract

I draw on my backgrounds as a kindergarten teacher, psychotherapist and supervisor to examine how play is relevant in the teaching and learning of psychotherapy. Specifically, the role of play in supervision is explored. Within the supervisory relationship I examine the kinds of learning spaces that enhance or impede development. This paper is an expanded version of a paper published in Psychotherapy in Australia (2005) *12(1),* 28-31.

Introduction

If the teaching of psychotherapy is concerned with the growth and development of the psychotherapist, central to this paper is the question of how the supervision relationship might enable or inhibit this kind of growth. Casement (1985) states, 'No-one can make another person grow. One can only enable growth or inhibit it' (p. 183).

How is play relevant to the teaching and learning of psychotherapy? I draw on my background as a kindergarten teacher in the late 70s and 80s where we were taught that children learn through play. The environment of the kindergarten was one of 'free play'. This meant that the children, aged 3-5, would arrive to an environment full of educational opportunities, using toys, blocks, collage, play dough, sand play, fingerpainting, books, puzzles, musical instruments, carpentry equipment, dress-ups etc. We learnt that play is children's work. Stone and Church (1975) state:

> Adult education values the useful activities of the adult as serious work while the activities of the child are considered frivolous play. However, pre-school education values play as serious work for learning. Play is not oriented to achievement or final products, or as monuments to what the child has done. Rather it is the process of play itself which is the learning vehicle (p. 231).

The training drew significantly on the work of Jean Piaget. Piaget developed a taxonomy of play and considered that children displayed different levels of play appropriate to their developmental stage. The training also included a lot of experiential learning through play. We literally sat on the floor with blocks or manipulated play dough. If children learn through play, does play have a role in the teaching and learning of psychotherapy? If objects like blocks, playdough and dress-ups are props for childhood play, what are the props for adult learning through

psychological play? How is play relevant to the development of the psychotherapist and what kinds of learning spaces enhance or impede this development?

Supervision

Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958) comment on the implicit agreement that is supervision:

In the case of the learning therapist the entering into a supervised relationship implies a willingness to offer to joint scrutiny the sector of themselves that compromises their professional helping function in order to achieve their goal of learning and increasing psychotherapeutic skill (p. 138).

When I first met my supervisee Linda I found myself returning to thoughts of my days as a kindergarten teacher. It was her bossy, controlling and entitled manner that captured my attention. Fond memories returned of that time as a kindergarten teacher in the 'family corner'[1] with preschoolers. I easily imagined Linda as a four year old dressed up in her mother's clothes, bossing her peers about. "Now I'll be the mother…you be the little girl. When I say this, you do that…" Struck by my reverie[2] I developed an appreciation of Linda's defensive style, or what Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958) describe as 'the learning problem' (p. 137). She could be described as a parentified child, having learnt a role of caretaking and controlling others, perhaps in an attempt to protect herself from anxiety and distress. I considered how this style might impact on her work with clients. I wondered how I might make use of this initial counter-transference and enable Linda to reflect on her own processes. How might we use our relationship to enable Linda to come more fully into relationship[3] with her clients?

My initial identification was situating Linda within a pre-school educational environment which emphasises the importance of learning through play. This environment collapses the dichotomy of play and work. Today, play, although regarded as serious, has traditionally been devalued as an occupation of childhood which is not particularly useful. I recall a colleague of mine taking pride in producing creative handouts for the class. He had spent some time 'working' on the computer, creating an impressive document. "Look what I've done," he said with delight. His delight with his creation reminded me of a child at play. Donald Winnicott links play to psychotherapy. Winnicott (1971) states:

Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play (p. 38).

One of Winnicott's significant contributions to the theory of play is his notion of

potential space. He describes this space as an area of illusion, a reality different from that of ordinary life and it exists on the boundary between external and internal reality. Modell (1990) states:

> This potential space represents the subject's transformation of external reality, creating something that belongs to neither 'subjective' nor 'objective' reality...This potential space, this shared reality, is a playful or illusionary intermingling of the inner world of two participants... (p. 29).

For Winnicott, the aim of treatment is to provide a setting 'in which the patient is able to be maximally creative' (Modell, 1990 p. 29). Winnicott describes play as an interaction that explores reality. He states that the capacity for play, in relationship, enables or inhibits the authentically experiencing self. Winnicott considers that it is through the interaction with the environment that the baby learns whether they are safe or whether they may have to respond with compliance. This compliance could lead to isolation of the infant from its own spontaneous and life giving core (Winnicott, 1948). This compliant (false) self develops at early stages of relating when there is not 'good enough' mothering. Is it the capacity for authentic relating that enables play?

Learning Psychotherapy as a Relational Process

Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958) highlight the importance of the relational process involved in the problem of teaching and learning psychotherapy. In their discussion of teaching techniques of supervision, Ekstein and Wallerstein suggest supervisory techniques not be viewed as either 'teacher-centred' or 'student-centred' but rather in terms of 'process-centred' techniques. They consider the supervisory relationship to be multi-faceted, including relationships between the therapist, client, supervisor and administrator. They maintain that teaching psychotherapy 'is not teaching a series of specific interactions, but is teaching how to carry on psychotherapeutic activity' (p. 10).

Schindelheim (1995) describes the importance of the teacher being open to the creative moment. He describes the significance of 'knowing something in my head, or even by heart, and having it in one's bones available for use' (p. 153). Poetically, he describes the teacher 'who found me in my experience of being taught (who) thereby allowed a deeper learning' (p. 165). In learning from his experience he states:

As a teacher I have found that creating room for that experience requires a suspension of my illusion of knowingness. This allows for a dissolution into a moment of discovery that is similar to that of the learner (p. 166).

How might both supervisor and supervisee let go of a propensity for defensive 'knowing', and instead allow a play space between them? Bion (1992) maintains that experience is the foundation of real learning. He contrasts learning 'about' things with being able to learn from the experience of 'the-self-in-the-world'

(Waddell, 1998 p. 95). Bion maintains that no psychoanalytic theory could contain what psychoanalytic experience could teach us (Bion cited in Green 1998 p. 661). He considers the importance of learning how much we don't know and referred to Keats (1817) notion of negative capability, which is: 'when a man is capable of living in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason…' (Keats quoted in Bion, 1970, p. 125).

To engage in the supervisory relationship, in which there is life, the supervisor and supervisee each require a mind that can play, that can be spontaneous and freely moving. Bion (1992) was interested in the difference between thinking and psychical activity. Rushing to action, he maintains, is an indication of the psychotherapist's lack of negative capability. It is this model of action rather than particular acting out which enlightens their psychic processes. He refers to the notion of thoughts without a thinker. The idea of thoughts without a thinker draws attention to the supervisee who is psychically busy but who remains unable to process or think about their own thoughts or experience. In this situation the supervisee may need to project their thoughts into an 'object that can think'.

Bion (1962) considers that learning depends on the capacity for an integrated container that is not rigid. This, he says, is foundational for the state of mind which can retain past knowing and experience and also be open to new experience. Bion draws on the initial mother-baby relationship and considers this 'container/contained' relationship as learning experience which constantly recurs in various forms throughout mental development. He suggests that the mother's capacity to contain the infant's fears (the contained) renders the original anxieties more manageable. If the mother is unable to contain the baby's projected material, the mutually communicative capacity is disrupted, resulting in less linking and less understanding.

In contrast, Linda's relationship style appeared to be one of dominating the other to avoid truly coming into relationship with herself or the other. It appeared that Linda was unable to play in a creative sense, but rather she 'took on' the role of a 'psychotherapist' who would administer techniques onto the client, perhaps as once she 'took on' the role of the 'mother' as a child. She seemed frightened of allowing herself to feel.

Phil Mollon (1989) discusses supervision in terms of providing a certain kind of space. This space, he suggests, offers an opportunity for learning through reflection and attention to inner thoughts and experiences. He states: 'The function of supervision is not to teach a skill directly, but to create a "space for thinking"- a kind of thinking which is more akin to maternal reverie, as described by Bion, than problem solving' (p. 62).

Meares (1992) describes the play of psychotherapy as 'the fostering (of) a form of mental activity which is non-linear, non-logical and which is found in states such as

reverie' (p. 34). How might Linda develop this capacity to play in her mind? Meares (1992) suggested that the play space is developed through a kind of environment whereby the space is not constantly disrupted but is properly and securely established[4]. 'This state is broken into by moments of anxiety, so the principal therapeutic task is to deal with these intrusions of anxiety in order to allow the healing form of mental function to begin again' (p. 34). Therefore the capacity for play can be affected by anxiety and the qualities within the self, within the context, and within the quality of relatedness to the other.

> It follows that where the play space is constantly disrupted, so also will the evolution of the self be impeded...the more severe the disturbances of personality development can be conceived in terms of a field of play which has never been properly or securely established (Meares, 1990 p. 36).

Modell (1990) draws attention to the importance of clear boundaries[5] to provide a secure setting,

> Play is fundamentally paradoxical in that the essence of play is its freedom and spontaneity, but it is a freedom that must occur within certain constraints... Play illustrates the profound truth that *freedom exists by means of constraints* (p. 27).

Therefore, the work of play in supervision involves a structured, delicate relationship between supervisor and supervisee. It requires a secure, trustworthy environment that fosters creativity, authenticity, curiosity and exploration. This contrasts with the demand to adapt. Perhaps the opposite of play is not work, but compliance and adaptation.

Adaptation

Linda preferred to ingest knowledge, inviting me to tell her the 'answers', to 'do it' for her, to rob her of her opportunity for imagination, discovery and mastery. Winnicott (1971) warns us against acting on this type of invitation, '...the significant moment is that in which the child surprises him or herself. It is not the moment of my clever interpretation' (p. 51).

Consider the impinging supervisor who 'knows' and needs to be both appreciated and admired, who considers herself 'benevolent' and 'right'. Unable to provide a protective maternal presence (Winnicott 1969; Casement 1985; Modell 1990; Bion 1992) that can, for example, survive the supervisee's envy or hostility, the supervisee may instead be encouraged to adapt, comply and be grateful to the environmental demands elicited by the narcissistic needs of the supervisor. In this relationship there is little room for play. Rather there is an idea that psychotherapy can be 'taught' rather than 'thought' (about) or played with.

The learning of psychotherapy is an anxiety evoking endeavour (Adler 1989). Adler argues the importance of the capacity to tolerate ambiguity and 'not knowing' in psychotherapy. He contrasts the therapist's feelings of uncertainty with 'pathological certainty' which the therapist can use to defend himself against difficult feelings. Adler states that

> the analyst's ability to be aware of his feelings of vulnerability, anger, shame and guilt help him detect tendencies to protect himself by 'knowing' with certainty that his theoretical or clinical formulations are correct (p. 100).

Defences against learning can encourage compliance and the 'false-self', or a kind of copying that prohibits real connection. Symington (1996) describes the process of mimesis as the copying of one animal by another, it's purpose being to deceive. 'The Asilid fly mimics the bee in an attempt to avoid it's predators; the laminex table in a canteen displays the grains of wood, so diners feel they are eating fine food while seated at a wooden table' (p. 116). This brings a question about the role of imitation, rather than adaptation in play. Is there a place for imitation in the teaching and learning of psychotherapy?

Imitation

The developing therapist must learn the 'analytic attitude' which includes patience, trust in the analytic process, interest in the client and respect for the power of the client's resistance. Moldawsky (1980, p. 126) suggests that the best way for the supervisee to learn these qualities is by receiving the same in the supervisory relationship.

The relationship between learning and development has been extensively explored by Vygotsky (1978). He says that 'learning is more than the acquisition of the capacity to think; it is the acquisition of many specialised abilities for thinking about a variety of things' (p. 83). Vygotsky maintains that when a child learns to perform an operation he assimilates some structural principle that not only improves one function but can affect the development of another. 'Consequently, in making one step in learning, a child makes two steps in development, that is learning and development do not coincide' (p. 84). Thus, claims Vygotsky, learning precedes development and the capacity for learning affects development.

The child 'learns to learn' from the earliest relationships with caregivers. Vygotsky (1978) considers that imitation can be in the service of development and describes the place for imitation in learning.

> Children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their capabilities. Using imitation, children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults (p. 88).

We can think of examples of this kind of imitation that enhances the development of the young child. Consider the child who watches their older sibling reading a book. The younger child then tries it out. He picks up the book and looks at the pictures, learns to hold the book the correct way up, learns how to turn a page, learns to follow the print from left to right, relates to the text and so on. In supervision, an example might be that the supervisee notices how the supervisor gives themselves space for thinking, and does not rush into psychical[6] action. The supervisee may be able to notice and think about this and 'try out' giving himself more space in his sessions with his clients. Vygotsky (1978) described this as the zone of proximal development, and stated that 'good learning' is that which is in advance of development. He described learning that 'awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers' (p. 90). In 'trying out' the idea of allowing space the supervisee can then begin to develop such capacities as tolerating anxiety and ambiguity. Waddell (1998) described good learning as:

> The child's resiliently seeking understanding by engaging with his or her experience of a secure, inner sense of self, derived from a capacity for introjective identification with good and thoughtful qualities of mind (p. 96).

Similarly, Haesler (1993) regards supervision as central to the psychotherapist as it is a process of gradual internalisation of the supervisor's functioning 'and this inner functioning of the internalised supervisor will be crucial for the competent functioning of the psychotherapist' (p. 554). Haesler (1993), Waddell (1998) and Vygotsky (1962) point to the idea that it is the subsequent development through imitation, or lack of development, that indicates whether or not good learning is taking place. Defensive imitation reinforces the false self, while constructive imitation is the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky 1962), enabling thinking about a variety of things and enhancing both learning and development.

Levels of play

Piaget (1951) developed a taxonomy of play in childhood that includes three levels: a) practice play, the child repeats an activity, b) symbolic play, the child plays with toys and things, apparently ignoring the mother, c) games with rules: the child interacts and contributes to others' play. As I consider the idea of levels of play in the teaching and learning of psychotherapy, some parallels may be drawn to Modell's (1990) three levels of relatedness in psychotherapy. Like Piaget's levels of play, these levels move from being solitary to being co-operative. Modell (1990) describes these levels as a) the dehumanisation of the object, b) self-containment in a state of contiguity, c) shared creativity. It is a synthesis of these two models which has produced a model of learning through play in supervision.

Playing Alone - Repetition

Piaget (1951) refers to the first level of play as repeating an activity, while Modell (1990) describes the first level of relating as the dehumanisation of the object. Modell states that in this stage the personhood of the object remains unperceived and unacknowledged, and accordingly the guilt that is evoked by the impulse to destroy the object is not experienced. In this first level of play the supervisor (or supervisee) may be exploited as a non-person (p. 115), especially when this is the participant's repetitive way of being in the world. Shared play seems unlikely. An example of playing alone is the following interchange in supervision. The supervisee is working with a terminally ill client and has recently read a book on dying. She states, "Dying needn't be difficult". The supervisor comments, 'Good!'

Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958) describe learning as involving personal change which is impossible without affective components. Resistance to the affective components, which must be considered for personal change, is what Ekstein and Wallerstein describe as the working through of the learning problem. They write:

> ... the predisposition to react in a particular patterned way toward the patient- *the learning problem*- may be projected into the relationship with the supervisor as a characteristically limited way of reacting and of learning, and pose therefore a specific *problem about learning* (p. 139).

Ekstein and Wallerstein (1958) write that as much as we want to learn 'learning implies change, and however much desired, change is simultaneously feared' (p. 141). This vignette illustrates lack of affect, lack of relating and lack of openness. The issue of death is not explored, rather it appears controlled. Rather than being open to something new, the participants defensively avoid using thoughts and feelings. They avoid relationship. Both remain locked in phantasies of omnipotent control.

Playing Alone in the Felt Presence of Another

Modell (1990) describes the second stage of relating in psychotherapy as 'Self-containment in a state of contiguity (the sphere within the sphere)' (p. 118). In this level of relatedness, the supervisee remains within his self-contained cocoon, yet they are consciously aware of being held by the larger sphere of the therapeutic setting. For Linda to rely only on herself for safety she depends on phantasies of omniscience and omnipotent control. The safety of the supervisory environment may offer a second chance to create an inner world that is not a response to environmental danger (p.118). Winnicott (1971) describes a capacity to be alone. In this capacity to be alone, he says, the infant develops the capacity to be in 'potential space'.

> *This experience of a containing space includes the experience of the space in which we work creatively, the space in which we relax 'formlessly', the space in which we dream, the space in which we play...(Ogden, 1985, p. 356).*

This is not a space which defends against the other, but rather it is an inclusive space.

Winnicott (1958) states that being alone, working in solitude or the capacity to reflect in the presence of another are examples of transitional phenomena, that is, the capacity that emerges through the child's internalisations of interactive moments with the caregiver. Winnicott considers these times are fundamental to self-differentiation. In these times the supervisor can notice the supervisee exploring quietly in the presence of the supervisor. For example, the supervisee says 'Dying needn't be difficult.' The supervisor hears and feels an unconscious wish and fear. The supervisor notices and thinks about these conflicting thoughts and feelings and quietly and empathically reflects to invite further exploration 'Mmm... ...death...'

Yerushalmi (1992) writes that the literature around the issue of supervision regards the supervisory encounter as a developmental process, whereby the reconstruction of relationships like the parent-child relationship takes place. He emphasises the role of the care-taker in the experience of the infant, and accordingly he stresses the importance of the supervisor, like the mother, not intervening but remaining silent and attentive. Yerushalmi writes:

> In such moments, the supervisor should convey a presence, participation and empathy, but in a silent way... Just as infants who are not left on their own will not find their own selves, developing instead false selves, so the supervisees who are not left on their own to discover their professional selves in the marginal presence of the supervisor will not develop true professional selves (p. 262).

In this holding space the supervisor provides a function that is more like a background or atmosphere for the supervisee. This background is used to facilitate the development of internal mental functioning or reverie[7]. The teaching and learning of psychotherapy requires certain kinds of spaces. This space, the play space in supervision, depends upon certain qualities within the self, within the environment and within the quality of relatedness to the other. This capacity for play may be limited by deficits within the trainee, trainer, or both. Paradoxically, it seems that at times supervisees differentiate themselves by playing alone in the presence of the absent supervisor and in the absence of the present supervisor. There is an unnoticed but containing space within which, supervisor and supervisee are both playing alone yet together.

Co-operative Play

Aron (1993) considers that Piaget's great contribution to psychoanalysis is his understanding of the development of operational thought. 'What we need to do to resolve conflict or to heal a psychic split is, in Piagetian terms, to simultaneously

decentre from our immediate perception of the situation in order to attend to a contrasting dimension of experience' (p. 289). Aron states that one of the problems in psychoanalysis is the tendency to deal with the complexities and ambiguities of psychic life by 'simplifying, dichotomising and splitting by resorting to 'either-or' instead of 'both-and' (p.289). Modell (1990) also pointed to the importance of bearing different realities in psychotherapy:

> if the patient makes use of the analyst only as a self-object, reflecting back what is already known, there may be a strengthening of the sense of self, but the patient will not benefit from the analyst's construction of reality (p. 120).

Combining these ideas, it would seem that part of the supervisor's role is to invite the supervisee to play with difference or contrasts. Modell (1990) maintains: 'This state of relatedness requires *the ability to merge playfully with the analyst yet retain a sense of separateness'* (p. 120). Modell describes the third level of relating as 'shared creativity' (p. 120). He states that this level results from the interplay of separateness and merging. In this stage the supervisee is able to welcome the supervisor's interpretations, or creativity, and will not experience this as an impingement or intrusion. Just like children at play, this level of play is cooperative. It is a state of relatedness that requires the ability to merge playfully yet retain a sense of separateness. For example, the supervisee states, 'Dying needn't be difficult.' The supervisor notices her own feelings of sadness and irritation and thinks about this. What might it mean? She thinks about the supervisee's defensive lack of affective attunement to the client's experience and wonders about this. She meets the client's words and invites further exploration, potentially inviting difference. Eventually, she says, 'For whom?'

Winnicott (1969) suggests that the acceptance of the externality and separateness of the object is supported by the mother's acceptance of the baby's hatred. This process enables the object to be 'used' in a constructive sense, rather than merely related to as a bundle of projections: 'Obviously the idea of the use of an object is related to the capacity to play' (p. 711). Thus, to make use of the supervisory relationship, we are also invited to tolerate and make use of difference, to be disagreed with, to be envied, hated. Some might say we need to be able to hate and be hated well. In this type of relationship the supervisor and supervisee may each be made use of as a separate person with something 'different' to offer, rather than simply functioning as a 'self-object' (Wolf, 1989)[8]. Mollon (1989) comments on the task in supervision:

> Thus the supervisors' task is to help create a space for thinking, a space for reflection with a tolerance for not knowing and not understanding-a space for reverie in which peripheral thoughts, feelings and fantasies in relation to the patient can be bought into awareness and examined (p. 62).

In my experience of supervision we move through different levels of play and relatedness at different times. Sometimes I feel alone in the comforting presence of the other, sometimes we delight in each other and create something new together, and sometimes we unconsciously repeat known formulations to avoid the feelings and anxieties of facing something new. Stern (1983) writes about our fear of the new. He says that 'anxiety leads us to search out the familiar and comfortable in experience, and throw out the rest' (p. 74).The work of play requires the capacity to explore the new, to be open to the unfamiliar and unexpected. The supervisor and supervisee, by creating between them a world of curiosity, rescue the true learning experience from what Stern (1983) describes as the 'oblivion of the familiar' (p. 95). The task is to develop and attend to the play spaces, within ourselves as supervisors and within the spaces we create with our supervisees to enhance the creative learning endeavour we call psychotherapy.

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(Endnotes)

[1] The 'family corner' is a corner of the kindergarten which is set up as a small house. The size of the furniture and equipment is reduced to be compatible with pre-school children. This space encourages dramatic play.

[2] Bion (1962) equates the therapist's 'evenly suspended attention' with the mother's 'reverie'. The mother's function is to contain those aspects of the infant's experience. If she is emotionally available to her infant she is able to process the infant's projections and to make sense of them by means of her 'reverie'.

[3] Clarkson (1993) states that intentional use of relationship should be much of the training in psychotherapy.

[4] For the reader further interested in the importance of the analytic setting refer to Green (1975).

[5] Constraints in supervision include such things as the length and time of sessions, the payment of fees, the ethical and professional nature of the relationship.

[6] Bion (1992) refers to psychical action as the busy mind incapable of negative capability.

[7] Vygotsky (1962) considered that the monologue of symbolic play in early childhood does not simply disappear but that it is eventually internalised and becomes the language of the inner world. 'Seen in this way the child's language while playing is a form of mental activity found in adults such as reverie' (p. 90). Before this milestone is reached toys and props are 'the vehicles of , and necessary to, a particular kind of mental activity which is comparable with the inner life of an adult' (Meares and Anderson, 1993. p. 596). However, once language is internalised, play can be an intrapsychic and imaginative activity that is free of the need of things.

[8] Wolf (1989) describes self-object as neither self nor object, but the subjective aspect of a self-sustaining function performed by a relationship of self to objects who by their presence or activity evoke and maintain the self and experience of selfhood.

Contributors

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Margot Solomon is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, a member of NZAP, NZIPP, PPAA, IARPP and a group member of GAS. She is the head of school of psychotherapy at AUT University. Her teaching areas are relational psychoanalytic psychotherapy, group psychotherapy and clinical supervision. She has a small private practice that includes group work.

Mary Farrell works as an intersubjective psychodynamic psychotherapist in private practice in Auckland, New Zealand. Her first career was as an actor, theatre director and lecturer in theatre studies in the UK. She completed her training as a psychotherapist sixteen years ago, immigrated to New Zealand in 1995, and has been a member of the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists since 2000. She is also an author, and her stories, articles and poems have been published in various magazines and newspapers over the years, and broadcast on the BBC and National Radio. Her first full-length book "Acts of Trust – Making sense of risk, trust and betrayal in our Relationships" was published by Exisle in September 2005 and is widely available in leading bookshops in New Zealand and Australia.

Mihiteria Wharetohunga King comes from a long line of tohunga-rongoa and identifies as Te Rarawa from the Hokianga through her father. She is Ngati Te Reinga from Waihou and Te Waiariki from Panguru, and also acknowledges her Native American tupuna. Mihiteria has connections to Bournemouth, England through her mother. Mihiteria is a psychotherapist in private practice and a provisional member of NZAP and specialises in Diabetes Lifestyle Change. She yearns to be living on her land up North (watch this space). She seeks to do what she can to stay in relationship with her Treaty partners in NZAP, as an individual and as a member of the Māori nation.

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The notes that follow are intended to guide contributors in preparing manuscripts for submission to *Forum: The New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists*.

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The editors welcome the submission of papers, commentaries, research notes, letters and book reviews from the Association's members and applicants, and from others outside the association with an interest in the field of psychotherapy. Along with their submission, contributors are asked to include an **abstract** and an **autobiographical** note, each no longer than 120 words.

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The length of the manuscript is to be no more than 5000 words.

Required format of manuscripts

Layout: Manuscripts should be **double spaced** throughout on one side of A4 paper, with margins of at least 20mm all round. The font used should be **Times New Roman**, and the font size should be **12 point**.

Endnotes: These should be typed on a separate page following the text, and numbered consecutively throughout the text, with numbers positioned as superscripts.

Tables and drawings should be in black ink or laser-printed, and clearly labelled to indicate their place in the text.

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Quotations: These must always be acknowledged, and full references provided to identify their source. For quotations of 20 words or less, the quoted passage is enclosed in single quotation marks without a change in line spacing, e.g.,

This client's state of mind might be summed up in Phillips' conclusion that 'adulthood...is when it begins to occur to you that you may not be leading a charmed life' (1993, p p. 82).

Longer quotations should be set out, without quotation marks, as a separate paragraph, with single spacing and indented 7 spaces from the left margin (not from the right), without the usual opening-paragraph indent.

> The seduction theory had to do with the effect of manifest environmental evils on people's mental balance; the theories of infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex were elements in a radical and quite fantastical conception of human nature which says we are ruled (and sometimes unhinged) by events that we only imagined as small children... (Malcolm, 1984, p. 77).

Citations: The source of ideas from the work of other writers must be acknowledged in the text, and all such sources should be included in the list of references, e.g.,

Malcolm (1984) set out to chart the complex and sometimes explosive responses of Eissler, Masson and Swales to Freud's archival legacy.

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A chapter in a book

Flanner, R.B. (1987). From victim to survivor: a stress management approach to the treatment of learned helplessness. In B. van der Kolk (Ed.), *Psychological trauma* (pp. 13-42). Washington, D. C.: American Psychiatric Press.

A journal article

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Culbertson, P. & Shippee, A. (Eds.). (1990). *The pastor: Readings from the Patristic period.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

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Web sites

American Association of Pastoral Counselors. (1994). *Code of ethics*. Fairfax, VA: Author. At http://www.aapc.org/ethics.htm. Retrieved 7/05/06.

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