

**INTERVIEW with MALCOM PINES***Ruth Waldvogel*

Dear friends and colleagues, Some weeks ago I was in London to interview Malcolm Pines about the history of EATGA and I would like to share with you some thoughts about the importance of collecting the history of EATGA. Christina Schwankhardt has already sent us a compilation of her administrative papers from 1982 – 1990 which I very much appreciated as it gave me an overview of those years.

First of all I would like to thank Malcolm very much for the lovely warm welcome I got at his home. It was a very interesting weekend which gave me the opportunity to learn a lot about the origins of EATGA and become aware of how important the “recuperación de la memoria histórica” (recuperation of the historical memory), a concept I got to know in Latin America and by which one tries to understand the present through the tide of events of the past. There is indeed a lot of material around and I think it is essential to revise the archives of EATGA members which Christine has already begun. In the following I just would like to pinpoint some of my observations concerning the task of collecting the incidents, meetings and visions of the almost 25 years of our history. It is not meant to be a final report about my interview with Malcolm but I hope to add some thoughts to an ongoing process of recollecting our history and making it available to all members of EATGA.

When in 1982 Malcolm Pines and Elisabeth Foulkes started with the idea of the association the world was very different from today. Europe was divided and nobody expected a change in the near or even medium future, but it was a time where new hopes of a cooperative Europe emerged. The “fall of the wall” and the rapid globalization might be a change, which I think we are only beginning to understand its full dimension in terms of transculturally. It would be important to reflect on the different perspectives between those who participated in the process right from the beginning and those who joined later.

Malcolm belongs not only to the founder-generation of EATGA but also to the founders of group-analysis. For my generation, which had its formation in psychotherapy in the 70s and later, group-analysis is something well established and an integral component of the training. I think that this makes a difference in terms of appropriation of the subject and the way we deal with it in terms of idealization and respect of the work of the “fathers” of group-analysis.

The fact that the French left the association has amongst other issues also to do with different viewpoints about the role of the group-leader or therapist whether he or she should interpret the role in a more horizontal or more vertical way. I think this is an expression of a different sociopolitical attitude as well as individual and cultural and I would say also an intercultural question which should eventually be investigated further.

The difference between inter- and transcultural was often intensely discussed and today we mostly speak of the transcultural issue. Perhaps we have lost an important differentiation and by that a tool to understand conflicts and misunderstandings between people from different countries.

The predominance of English and French as official languages. There were long discussions about the meaning of avoiding German as part of the unresolved past. This difficulty still persists as a small-group meeting recently showed where with only German-speaking participants there was a conflict whether to speak English or German. Also the playful attempt when everybody starts to speak in his or her own language alludes to an unresolved problem in the communication.

These are just some points which I would like to address in order to show how important rescuing our history is. As I belong to the ones who joined EATGA in more recent times, it is of great importance for me to be aware of the past, to learn of the history of EATGA in order to understand better the functioning of the association and its characteristics.

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