

Dear friends,

Although the world is not reassuring, we are for the moment “going on being” because our little association most probably responds to the need of free thinking spaces in our globalised world. This year we are opening to new themes and even to Juha–Matti Toivola, our new Scientific Secretary, who tells us how he sees EATGA.

You will find also Ernestina Wolhfart’s Berlin conference that introduces the problem of transcultural group psychotherapy with immigrants, a theme that will be enlarged in the Bilbao Study Day by the therapeutic group experience in Africa of Jaak le Roy. There is also my own contribution to the Berlin Study Day on conformism and prejudice. The Bilbao Study Day offers us the occasion to move to other geographical realities and points of view in meeting with the Spanish colleagues.

We find also, in this newsletter, an introductory paper to the September workshop in Palermo, which will require from us all some efforts in studying and understanding the socio-economical and philosophical dynamics of gift and values. The organisers, G. Profita and Ruvolo, specifically ask staff and participants to share the interest in the central theme (on subjective links in a globalised economy), which means a technical change in the group conduction usually adopted in EATGA.

I understand that we are asked to make an “effort of insight” of our shared transsubjective feelings about what they call an homologating world, a macrocontext, which Kaës calls the meta-psychic and meta-social context.

In our last Milan scientific meeting, our group has taken interest in my explanation of a paper of mine (called “What unconscious for transculturality” and presented at an Italian psychoanalytic panel) in which I took example on our Marsala experience of a large group.

I based this paper on my own therapeutic experience with victims of extreme situations, where I found two basic surviving mechanisms, which I call “adaptation to whatsoever” and “object to be saved”.

In this 2010 paper I make the hypothesis that, in our transcultural large group meetings, some initial “estrangement” shows that we are afraid of undifferentiation (“adaptation to whatsoever”) and tend to defend ourselves through our own cultural belonging (which

becomes an aspect of an “object to be saved”). So, I compare a “normal” transcultural group situations with my psychotherapeutic findings with victims of extreme situations, where I have seen a human extreme tendency to adapt to whatsoever (ex: concentration camps), but, at the same time, (as we can find in the psychotherapy of victimised persons) the subject has been concerned, during his/her traumatic experience, with the destiny of someone else. My supposition is that, through this concern for some other, a basic link of protection is represented and symbolised, in which the victim unconsciously assumes a link of solidarity with some other (Amati Sas, 2003) obviously with one’s own particular cultural style (language, moral values, etc.).

I suppose in this paper that this intrapsychic representation of a relationship is marked by the basic cultural style of the victim, which equilibrates here the tendency to adapt. If, in extreme situations, these two surviving psychic mechanisms are split, in more normal situations they may constitute an intrapsychic conflict between basic adaptive ambiguity (which leads to adaptation to any contexts) and more precise intrapsychic representations of an intersubjective link with some privileged other, which includes one’s own “cultural style”.

So, we may say that “culture” appears at two subjective levels, either in the fear of (or the resignation to) the transubjective adaptability to any cultural present situation, and in an intrapsychic defensive protecting link, which includes cultural belonging. My interest in repeating this is to share with you these hypotheses, and eventually continue the discussion and exploration of these ideas and their ethical consequences.

With my warm expectations of fruitful encounters,

Silvia