

REPORT ON THE SCIENTIFIC MEETING

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Venue: Institute of Psychoanalysis, Basel, Therwilerstr. 8

Members present: Velia Bianchi Ranci, Giovanna Cantarella, Laszlo Kruppa, Alessandra Manzoni, Christoph Rosenberger, Silvia Sas-Amati, Christine Schwankhard Perez de Laborda, Marlene Spero, Mary Spreng-Courtney, Elisabeth von Strachwitz, Juha Matti Toivola (chair), Elio Vero, Ruth Waldvogel, Mary Bruin Wooster, Gerald Wooster
Apologies: Antonio d'Angio, Bettina Fink, Kurt Husemann, Jaak Le Roy, Giuseppe Ruvo-
lo,

Morning Session:

Juha Matti as chairman gave a short introduction and defined our task as an exploration of the

unconscious, collective parts of culture by means of group-analysis. He emphasized, that individuals and cultural groups interact in a circular way with feedback loops.

There followed a brainstorming session which was related to the workshop in Palermo Sept. 2011 and at first it circled round a dream of Juha Matti which he had reported in the large group and which was related to the workshop theme of giving and receiving : Customers were waiting in a line in a department store and before enacting the economic exchange the hands of the cashier or the

customer(?) were chopped off. Lots of subjective associations ensued: Mafia or capitalism or globalization had done this bad thing, punishment for thieves in medieval ages or by the Sharia nowadays, hands means intentionality and showing beyond, to cut off a hand, to get a girl- (according to a Hungarian proverb, money transcends all unconscious stuff.)

Alessandra understood it as „ social dreaming “ according to Lawrence Gordon, who said, that each society beyond individual interpretations, dreams its own issues. Giovanna pointed to the methodological difficulty taking the outside world -economy, society- in the group, which causes anger and anxiety.

A long and lively dispute followed. Was the task-orientation of the conference reached,? It had focused critically around the style of Josef Shaked. He was seen as an outsider with no connection to EATGA, who did not communicate with the staff in advance about the topic of the workshop

Shaked moved gradually from the outer circle to the center of the large group and selected too many special situations, speaking differently to individuals, talking too

much about history etc.-so as Ruth stated in the beginning, English wasn't the language any more, the leader was not the leader any more. For Marlene he was regarded as the scapegoat. Finally Silvia pointed to the impossibility of leading a large group (higher anxiety level, regression, dehumanization), but whatever it's done by doing. Privately Shaked characterized the large group as „zäh“ (sluggish, tenacious), others saw it as a very defensive, gradual approach.

Short papers on personal transcultural work:

Marlene Spero reported about her work with medical research and decision making in the operating rooms of the aircraft industry. She collaborated with teams of Indian doctors and pilots of 30 societies. There are broad scales of intercultural differences, for instance questions of body distance, the role of authority etc. . There is a common task to meet. This facilitates the intercultural work.

Laszlo Kruppa participated in a conference on the Roma in Hungary, but transcultural aspects did represent a black box there.

Juha Matti commented on a paper referring to group-analysis and anarchism he presented at the GAS conference in London. He briefly outlined the historical background from Proudhon and his famous sentence „property is theft“ to Mikhail Bakunin, the Russian antagonist to Marx and his concept of centralisation as well as Pjotr Kropotkin, who put emphasis on the mutual aid in groups and cooperation of the people to survive as a factor of evolution opposed to the Darwinian ideas. Finally Enrico Malatesta(1853-1932)- now not known to Italian EATGA-members. Further he referred to Farhad Dalal- a London group analyst- with his first book „Taking the group seriously“ (1998 Jessica Kingsley Publishers). Both-group therapy as well as anarchism- are aiming at independent individuals.

At the end Elio Vero reported on a conference of his organization SEATA Sept.2011 in Krakow about the change in modes of communication nowadays with the use of information technology.

Saturday Afternoon Session:

Carrying on from Elio's report, brainstorming continued disputing the diverse aspects of the new media. You can receive E-mails at any time and there are programs like skype which are able to connect you to anybody anytime all over the world. This way the dimensions of time and space are virtually made relative. The sense of intimacy alters. On the web you can become more intimate, it's also a source of misunderstanding. You can work out a different life as an avatar.

Marlene mentioned, that many young people just consume it and use it as a distracting antidepressant and as resistance to learning.

Speculations continued, how the web could influence the mother-child relationship and also alter the sense of identity.

On the other hand Juha observed, that for many of the depressed youngsters he treats, the internet was the last resource. For old people it brings the world into their homes. Via Skype, Ruth can have continuous contact with the people in San Salvador and certainly it makes the work of EATGA easier.

There was then lively and sometimes tense group talking and we shifted to what we are doing here and now.

Silvia pointed out, that our common experience in groups is our richness, but we share it on different levels and it's difficult to link. Giovanna argued, that the collective thinking we are carrying out is a unique, but frustrating labour. We are very often in a schizoid-paranoid position, but by continuing we get into the more creative depressive position. Elizabeth and Alessandra stressed that we get used to living with individual differences through our group practice.

Interview with founding fathers and historical review:

Giovanna finds it difficult, to interview Rene Kaes, because he left long ago and took some EATGA-material with him.

Christine will do an interview with Jaak Le Roy and Laszlo will organize an interview with Kurt Husemann. Marlene reported about her meeting with Jean-Claude Rouchy in Paris in March 2011. He gave her a very warm welcome and explained his views on EATGA. 1980 GAS expanded to „overseas“ and the idea of an association on transcultural topics emerged. There were 9 founding members-among them Malcolm Pines, Dennis Brown, Jaak Le Roy, Pigot(?), J.-Cl. Rouchy et al. ,who spent 3 years in discussions and didn't know, how to do it. At last EATGA was founded in Belgium 1984, the first conference was in Maastricht 1985 with strong emotional clashes concerning the Fascist past. (1984 was also the first IPA-congress in Germany). The staff consisted at that time only of English and French; there were already large and small groups and a silent observer. Up to the time of the workshop in Heidelberg there was no German-speaking group.

Rouchy also remembered a symposium in Bologna, where the conceptual differences between English and French became very evident. The French wanted to analyse the conflicts, whereas the English preferred to think in terms of containment, matrix and family. There were heavy tensions in the board mirrored by tensions in the groups. There were also huge fights between Rouchy and Malcolm Pines as well as with Le Roy and Kurt Husemann, which from time to time struck below the belt and reached Shakespearian dimensions.

Why the French left? At the time of the workshop in Oxford 1991 lots of new members came to GAS, which was closely interwoven with EATGA, which also gained new members. The French felt more and more on the periphery. In France new associations built up, interest outside of France sank and with Rouchy most of the French left.

Jaak Le Roy followed as president, afterwards Kurt Husemann, but cooperation was quite difficult. EATGA went through a difficult hard period.

Ruth briefly commented on her interview with Malcolm Pines, who omitted all conflicts and concentrated on research projects. She also talked to Dorothy Brown, but on respect she didn't go through the files of Dennis Brown. The book of his collected papers was handed round. He was an integrating person and suffered from these conflicts. Jaak and Dennis had applied for funds from the EU for research projects, but without success.

To sum up, historical work like this is important, because there is a transgenerational transmission of problems in organizations. Christine suggested a bibliography of all the writings of the early members important to EATGA.

Sunday Morning Session:

The delayed discussion about the Study Day in Bilbao took place following a summary prepared by Christine.

The brilliant paper of Jaak Le Roy as the central theme was largely forgotten-maybe because the gap between Africa and Europe was too big. But Jose Guimon, who implemented group-therapy in the Basques Provinces, drew a parallel between the colonialism, under which both Congolese and Basque people suffered. Also EATGA with its language and concept was partly perceived as the invader and oppressor. Remember the dramatic scene in the large group, as a furious Chilean wanted to leave, and Kurt like Moses reminded everyone of the rules.

But it also mirrored difficulties in the preparation, which solely rested on the shoulders of Christine, who 20 years ago lived there- now no EATGA-members live there. Communication with other board-members was complicated, no one wanted to lead the large group and as Giovanna mentioned, it was only at the last minute that we saw our names on the door. The Basques were curious and gave a cordial reception, but then clashes occurred. They expected experiential groups. It appeared that the concept of the study day was not clearly enough indicated. In the small groups there was nevertheless an intense emotional exchange, songs were performed, but as Marlene observed, the dance of the ribbon in the large group was suddenly cut and we didn't listen sufficiently to them. Finally it was suggested, that Christine send our report to the Boards of their organizations and we try to propose a dialogue. Alessandra proposed a second attempt – perhaps a workshop in Biarritz.

Future Events:

The next Study Day is planned for Trieste 9th-11th March 2012.

It was made clear, that the Scientific Day is collective thinking only for members and dealing with current work, whereas a Study Day is theme-oriented towards the opening evening lecture.

Trieste was characterized as a city from nowhere, an area of many border changes, between Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Italy-open to the East and South East.

There were many propositions for the lecture, which all aimed at linking the issues of economy, sociology and group psychology. Gerald suggested “economy, future of Europe and the rivalry of siblings”, Mary proposed a sociologist Mr. Heckmann or Margerita Haag(?), Elio proposed an open-minded economist Ricardo Illei. The topic of the homeless Roma, who cross all borders, was again on the agenda. Finally it was concluded, that Silvia with her connections to a university should have the last word and . Trieste would be preferred.