

PRESENTER NOTES

The inner stage and its many Characters

Dr Matthew McArdle

Abstract

Therapy is a playhouse for dramas to unfold between therapist and patient. We as therapists maintain the conditions of the theatre whilst the patient brings many voices and characters to the stage. Through attuned listening and observing we can begin to hear the multi-layered voice, characters, and dramas that our patients may bring to the therapeutic stage.

Brief Professional Biography

Matthew is a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and psychoanalyst in private practice in Melbourne. He is a Training and Supervising Analyst of APAS. He is current Branch Chair of the Melbourne Branch of APAS. He is a past member and moderator of the Working Party for the Specificity of Psychoanalytic Treatment Today (WPSPTT) Through Interanalytic Group Work (a Working Party of the European Psychoanalytical Federation). He is a member of the Two-Way Interest Group exploring intercultural relationships with First Nations Peoples.

The Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Relationship as a System:

Perspectives from Group Relations.

Allan Shafer

Abstract

In this paper I will offer a systemic approach to understanding and working in the psychoanalytic psychotherapy relationship as shaped by group relations thinking. Integrating unconscious systems psychodynamics with a more conventional psychoanalytic approach has meant – in part – disengaging from an historical and traditional view of the patient as object, to a view of the system of the therapeutic dyad as the object of attention in psychoanalytic psychotherapy. My proposition is that the therapy relationship is a micro-open social system that contains a multitude of unconscious internal representations for both psychotherapist and patient. It has many of the properties of other open social systems and I will draw on group relations ideas about boundaries, role, authority, and task as they apply to the system of the therapeutic dyad. Each member brings unconscious and conscious assumptions and role representations to co-create the dyadic system: “I am large, I

contain multitudes.” I will consider how these roles representations and assumptions shape the dynamics of the therapy relationship.

Brief professional biography

Allan Shafer MA (Clinical Psychology) D Litt et Phil

I have worked primarily as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and also as a socioanalytic organisation consultant for over 45 years, mostly in private practice. I am a member of the VAPP and have held leadership roles in the PPAA, APPWA and Group Relations Australia. I have directed or consulted on the staff of group relations conferences in Australia, and internationally. I was associate director of the Tavistock Institute’s 2019 ‘Leicester Conference’ and was appointed Honorary Consultant to Group Relations Taiwan. I have given seminars for the Tavistock NHS Trust, UK; The Psychology Practice, Singapore; Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; Group Relations Taiwan, Taipei; Austin Riggs Centre, Stockbridge, USA; NZIPP, New Zealand; and around Australia for NSWIPP, APPWA and the VAPP.

“Unity in Diversity: the I and the you in the us”

Dr Robin Chester

Abstract

In this paper the conference theme of Unity and Diversity via the Walt Whitman quote is considered within the more challenging concept of Unity in Diversity and how that manifests in analytic theory and in practice. This concept is explored through a consideration of Freud’s ideas about condensation and displacement leading onto important ideas in Bollas (“The Shadow of the Object”) and then Bion’s functions which unite and divide on their way to understanding. Then Winnicott’s ideas about the capacity to be alone are drawn in before, time permitting, a brief discussion of a de-identified case, of a woman trying to find her place inside of herself and in the world, which will be used to draw the ideas together.

Brief Professional Biography

Dr Robin Chester has been a member (training and supervising analyst) of the A.P.A.S., since the 1980’s. He has presented a number of papers in Australia, England and Europe usually focused on an understanding of essentials of our theories and corresponding practice. He has a PhD in psychoanalytic studies (Monash) and has been a lecturer at the Edith Cowan University in Perth and the University of Adelaide. He remains a senior visiting consultant at the Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide.

Poetic Encounters in Psychoanalytic Infant Observation

Carolyn Coburn

Abstract

Throughout the layers of nuance in Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* we find reflections analogous to the psychotherapeutic encounter as the poem hones our senses and takes us on a journey into an exploration of what the meaning of 'I' might entail. This poem grapples with the notion that the achievement of speaking and writing from the position of 'I' is always a paradox. It cannot be defined nor contained as a singular endeavour and it is one that is continually evolving. Like creating and reading a poem, the psychoanalytic process also takes an immense fortitude to withstand the contradictions inherent in listening as an 'I' speaking from an 'I' and becoming 'I'. With these notions in mind my paper plays with these themes in order to expand on *the totality* of the practice of psychoanalytic infant observation so that it may sit more creatively alongside developmental and attachment theory and traditional psychoanalytic thinking. I propose that the content and evocations of the infant observation process be approached by the observation group as if they are listening to or reading a poem, or hearing a dream, with the attendant holding of ambiguity and contradiction that is central to literary criticism held as a central precept. In this way a broader reflective space for the group and the process of the infant observation to gradually unfold is made possible. We might then draw the conclusion that the first *Song Of Myself* originates from a story that begins with the infant imagined, bound to creativity and transformed through dreaming. My thoughts and vignettes from over 20 years of facilitating infant observation group seminars will be used to illustrate *encounters with the poetry* of psychoanalytic infant observation.

Brief Professional Biography

Carolyn Coburn is a child, adolescent and adult psychoanalytic psychotherapist working in full time private practice with parents and their infants, children, adolescents, and adults. Carolyn is a long-standing lecturer and supervisor with *Mindful* The University of Melbourne Child Psychiatry Training Program, Monash University Masters of Mental Health in Child Psychotherapy Studies, and the Child Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australia. Carolyn has led seminars in infant observation for over twenty years for CPPAA candidates, Child Psychiatry trainees and more recently for ANZSJA candidates. She was a founding and long-standing member of The Royal Children's Hospital Child Psychotherapy Department in Melbourne and also worked for many years a supervisor for The Family Mediation Centre and Maternal and Child Health Outreach Nurses. Carolyn has twice been President of the Child Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australia.

Cultivating Understanding and Compassion in Diverse Communities: An Opportunity to Promote Ethical Thinking in Everyday Psychoanalytic Work

Leonie Sullivan

Abstract

My paper relates to a theme of Unity and Diversity in that I will put forward a case for the generative effect of working with difference; in group situations, psychoanalytic community outreach, committee and clinical work. I assert the benefit of making use of the agreement about the group or psychoanalytic task. I will describe a common thread, based on offering “a classic Balint group” across a variety of settings. The area of additional relevance and interest to be described, is that of enactment and its relationship in promoting a culture of ethical thinking as part of everyday work in health care. In providing an opportunity for participants to develop from the usual Balint membership, another aspect of the work has been noticed as a potential benefit. This comes from the experience of seeing oneself from the outside and others from the inside, which can address blind spots as well as leading to cultivating understanding and compassion for oneself, patients and colleagues. This can promote thinking ethically in day-to-day work.

Brief Professional Biography

Leonie Sullivan is a member of the Australian Psychoanalytical Society and a PPAA member. She is a board member and vice president of the Australasian Confederation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies. She is in full time private practice in Sydney and since 2012 has been a visiting professor for the advanced psychotherapy training and IPA study group in China. She is an accredited Balint group leader and educator and a founding member of both the Australian and New Zealand Balint Society and the Chinese Balint Federation. Her interests are in the use of groups in mental health settings and the application of psychoanalytic thinking in the community, especially in rural and remote settings. She is the Asia Pacific Representative for the IPA in the community committee on Prejudice, Racism and Discrimination.

“I stop somewhere waiting for you”: Unplanned Interruptions in Analytic Processes

Jacinta Frawley

Abstract

How might we experience and consider unplanned interruptions within long term analytic work?

All depth psychologies prioritise the importance of the analytic frame. Analyst and analysand meet regularly, consistently, predictably to shape a holding container into which all manner of thoughts, feelings, experiences, and hopes can be poured, accepted, considered, and transformed. Recognising the importance of the transference relationship, breaks of all kinds are carefully planned, and therapeutic endings are anticipated and tended to.

Yet analysts are human beings and can become ill or even die suddenly. In recent times Ethics Committees have drawn attention to the need for professional wills and clinical executors to support analysts and analysands in the face of the analyst's sudden unavailability. This paper will explore beyond these useful and necessary practicalities and into the lived-experience of unplanned interruptions for analysts, analysands and the wider training and organisational group.

Brief Professional Biography

Jacinta Frawley trained as a Jungian Analyst in Zurich, Switzerland, and is a Training Analyst with the Australian New Zealand Society of Jungian Analysts (ANZSJA). She is a former Director of Training, C. G. Jung Institute, ANZSJA and is currently Convenor of Ethics. Originally trained as a social worker, Jacinta has practiced for over forty years in Australia, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. She has been in private practice in southern Sydney since 2001.