

7. This is similarly seen when we follow systematically what actually happens in the therapeutic process, in Group Analytic Psychotherapy. The main process of what we call 'therapy process', is an emotional destructuring, based on the new group security, on the building of new relationships, a process of self-integration and a new level of participation and personality strength. It is the split in the integration of the personality, in the spontaneous functioning of the self, that rendered the person helpless before, destroying his initiative and willpower. This also meant a split and isolation from meaningful and gratifying relationships with others. We see marked positive changes in this area, following the therapy process.

One of the most characteristic points in the therapeutic development of a group in psychotherapy, is the move from a structure of dependence of its members on authority, to a group-centred, democratic and self-reliant structure. This points to the importance of the social dimension in the curative process - and the socio-political source of neurosis.

Group Analytic Psychotherapy has provided us with a deep, humanistic and analytic model of therapy, which is invaluable in training students, both in the clinical and in the academic fields - as the experience in Sweden has been proving to us.

References

1. "The super-ego is the representation of the external social reality (that is, of the existing social order whatever it may be) *within* the individual. . . **W. Reich** 'The Impulsive Character and Other Writings', *New American Library*, 1974, p.85.
2. "The blocking of either an aggressive or libidinal drive produces anxiety but anxiety is avoided whenever the aggression is blocked or turned against the self - in other words, when it has become a self-destructive trend. . . *Ibid*, p.98.

Gaie Houston

The Hierarchy of Horror

As much as a year ago I began writing an article under this title, supposing that I was into a light Thurberish piece that might raise, in some, a fleeting giggle of self-recognition, and in others a stomach-warming flush of complacency at not being into this bag or hang-up or whatever weird word describes for you the weird state I am going to talk about.

I set off on the article as a cheery Eskimo might set out on a sleigh-ride. Mush! Mush! And other appropriate cries. The dogs of invention ran forward over the smooth surface, whisking me and my idea along for a while, until with a nasty lurch and jolt we all just stopped in time to find we were peering

into a crevasse. The dogs of invention exercised their autonomy by lying down and refusing to budge in any direction whatsoever. Which in itself was quite illustrative of the underlying idea of the article. But which did very little to pass the idea on to you.

This time I am setting off more cautiously, keeping the dogs to a walking pace, curbing their tendency to yap and snap and rush full tilt into unknown country. I am carrying a long probe, (Good evening, Sigmund. I hadn't noticed that you were with us. Please sit down. I hope you enjoy the ride.) (Whoops). I often walk ahead of the expedition and test the ground with this probe. The first stretch is familiar to me and is more or less safe; it's the idea I set off with on the first attempt. I'll tell you about it.

I have my good days and my bad days. On a good day I walk into the garden, observe that the leeks need planting out, immediately fashion a cunning dibber from the broken end of a spade handle, fetch a can of water, and two hours later am gazing with satisfaction at the neat rows of evenly spaced blue-green leaves, already, they seem, plumping themselves up in their new spacious dibber-holes, to become numberless pots of delicious winter soup. I go back to the house, and am immediately in touch with how to construct the last scene of my current play. Too pleased to stop for coffee, I go to the typewriter, burn with a steady gem-like flame, and by three o'clock have not only typed right to THE END, but have posted the manuscript to the people who have been asking for it for some weeks. Then I telephone some friends to ask them for supper, just catch Sainsbury's before they close, wash the kitchen floor and give a quick coat of paint to a peeling garden chair.

On a bad day I wake into a near-trance of depressed immobility. (See dogs of invention above.) (Yes, OK, if you must, also see Sigmund Freud. I think we may be near a crevasse.) I just about want to get out of bed more than I want to stay there. I do so, and discover what an evenly-balanced conflict I am in. By eight-thirty I am seated at my desk, arms hanging by sides, eyes set in catatonic stare, respiration superficial, jaw set and shoulders slumped. My stream of consciousness flows like black molasses: O God that play is three weeks overdue and I not only do not want to write the last scene, I don't know how to write the last scene and furthermore I question whether it is worth writing the last scene of a drama which at this moment appears so totally lacking in interest or even plausibility. And anyway if I write the play that will mean that yet another day has gone by without planting out the leeks and all right yes the season is supposed to be a little retarded this year but my seedling leeks are so big and overcrowded that I can practically hear them shouting and shoving each other as they gasp for air and space. In fact as I reflect upon it, it is obvious to me that most of the surroundings over which I am deemed to have control, are in an advanced state of neglect and decay. That garden chair, for example, actually has a bracket fungus sprouting from the underside of the seat. Not a pretty sight. As a member of the British Mycological Society, I might at the very least fetch out a reference book to check whether the fungus is a *trametes gibbosa* or a *polystictus versicolor*. But do I? Do I hell. I stay with my viscous stream, and trickle into the next gloomy awareness, of the state of the kitchen floor, bad enough perhaps to be termed the State of the Kitchen Floor. Maybe Floor is too

light a word for what has become over the weekend a hideous and treacherous terrain, in places as adhesive to shoe or foot as if it had been treated with molten chewing-gum, in others a skid-pan of dropped fat, in others a noisy expanse of crunching sugar. And there are all those people I really ought to have to supper. But how can I invite them to such a vile place? And anyway there's no food in the house.

On one bad day of this kind, I rouse myself just enough to adopt a behaviourist approach to what was going on, or rather mostly not going on, in my conduct of my life at that moment. Very slowly, with the maximum frustration of not finding a decent bit of paper, and then not finding a biro with any ink in it, I finally constructed a Hierarchy of Horror. When I have had conversations with behaviourists, it has twice happened that I have liked little of what they have said. And I have an impression that they have liked little of what I have replied. I have tended to accuse them of immorality or amorality, of low political awareness, and of an unthinking reinforcement of the status quo, at the expense often of the person they are treating. Still, a Hierarchy of Horror, or as they usually call it, a Hierarchy of Anxiety, seems to me a useful construction. As you probably know, you make it by writing down what for you is the absolute vilest or scariest action or state connected with whatever it bothering you. If for example you are a bit funny about water, then your scariest encounter with it might seem to be to swim with your head under, or maybe to dive in. You gradually devise a list of things which are less and less scary, or more and more contemplable, perhaps with the easiest step in your hierarchy turning out to be sitting at the edge of the pool with your legs in the water. Which you might then experiment doing, until you felt good enough about that to want to try your next encounter, and so on.

I pondered over what seemed the most repugnant, overwhelming and non-do-able of all these oughtish phantoms lurking in my consciousness to torment me. Then I laddered down in ghastliness, slowly composing this hierarchy:

Write outline of book on the state of women.

Write play.

Invite friends.

Plant leeks.

Paint chair.

Wash floor.

Do shopping.

At this point I stopped, without having discovered anything I would actually consider *doing*, rather than playing around with and rank-ordering. Though I could see that it would be even nastier to wash the floor than go shopping, I had not the slightest urge to tackle either. Yet I was not at all pleased with what I was doing at the moment. So what **did** I want to do? I waited

for the wisdom of the organism to assert itself. All that came up on the ticker-tape of the soul was MAKE A PIECE OF TOAST AND BUTTER.

I did so, and carried the message to its obvious conclusion by also eating the piece of toast and butter. And having a cup of coffee to go with it. And then eating the chocolate digestive biscuit someone had left in the tin. Then trying the other tins to see if any other combinations of refined sugar, animal fats and starch were lying around for me to ingest. I returned to my desk and list, and after a time thought to add the actions I had just taken to it. But I did so with hesitation, not sure if the copious snack I had just eaten was part of this hierarchy, or merely a side step, an avoidance of it. Then I went and did the shopping.

All this inspired me to write a short piece in which I could share what seemed to me an extremely useful discovery about making constructive use of gloom-provoking internal threats. At this stage it seemed to me that if, every time I experienced a deep sinking feeling at the thought of doing something or other, all I needed to do was to find out what other thing I would like to do even less. Provided that I kept in my awareness the need to make a dental appointment, I might thankfully scurry into the less hateful activity of taking my coat to the cleaner's. The art of getting through bad days, I decided, lay in devising Hierarchies of Horror. And the art of devising effective Hierarchies of Horror lay in bringing into awareness large challenges that I could avoid by taking up smaller challenges.

It was only when I came to write about all this that I noticed, with acute discomfort, that Sigmund Freud had somewhat crept on to the sleigh. Unlike many humanist psychologists I talk with, I hold that man in high esteem, except for a couple of his fundamental ideas. As soon as I have written that I remember a French *bonne-a-tout-faire* who was my only regular companion for about six months of my life. Her thoughts on religion were a little like mine on Freud, it now seems to me. She was, she said with conviction, a Good Catholic. And she added, with as much conviction as in the first statement, 'Of course, it is quite obvious that Joseph slept with Mary; but that alters nothing.' Maybe it does. Maybe it doesn't. But I doubt if the Pope would have been overjoyed at her interpretation. So I honour much of Freud's writing, while refusing utterly to buy his notion of a Good v. Evil struggle within us, or an Eros v. Thanatos, Life v. Death struggle.

Yet now as I looked at my Hierarchy of Horror, I could see that everything I perceive as creative was at the unattainable top of the Hierarchy, which descended through a reluctant list of dissatisfaction-removers, rather than satisfiers, down to actually self-destructive goings-on-in my case, redundant eating. Tentatively, I asked other people who were in a low place to make themselves a Hierarchy. The same kinds of result came out. One person could only visualise lying in bed as an attainable activity, or lack of it. Another would only commit himself to waiting for opening time. And yet doing these things, or over-eating, only resulted in greater self-disgust, and less inclination to self-esteem, spontaneity, relating, assertion and all the other ways of going on that most readers of this journal are likely to recognise as desirable. In other words, I began to have a nasty impression that Thanatos had got

in among us. That is the crevasse that opened its icy grin of gallows laughter into my last attempt at writing about this topic.

When it comes to resisting change, I'm ready to claim to be as stubborn as a bulldog, slippery as an eel, devious as a politician. The more I display these qualities, the bigger the change I know to be lurking where I am keeping it - just on the edges of my consciousness.

All right, yes, I do perceive myself and other people to behave as if there is dichotomy, as if at a very deep level we are dialectical animals. And the evidence keeps coming at me, in the concepts students let slip, in the place where construct theory ladders-so often lead, that love of life, instinct to life, posit love of death, wish for death. Yet for a number of years I have had an unswerving faith and knowledge - the only words which will approximate to the strength of inspired knowing I have felt - that apparently wanton destructive intents and actions, usually called evil, inevitably stem from muddle. Patient work, I have believed, and it seems to me, often proved, always results in the discovery that irrational hates or fears or whatever, originate in a life-preserving functional response, which has in a demonstrable way got stuck in someone's repertoire of responses, to be brought out irrationally in later life. When the muddle has been seen and sorted, I have many many times seen people both want to and be able to change their responses into something that obviously gives them more satisfaction, as well as looking to an outsider to be more useful or enhancing.

So I have snarled at analyst friends who speak of their belief in evil as an intrinsic part of every person.

Now I suppose I could argue that death wish and evil need not be the same. Death wish is perhaps a recognition of the cyclic, the rhythmic nature of matter or energy, which are finally the same thing, it seems. We are made of dust and will return to dust, and our bones and tissues know this even when our consciousness deny it. Alongside and alternating with our life-making, perhaps there is a yearning within our organism for the quiet and rest of sleep or death.

And yet. And yet. I know that I want to live with a child's intensity, so much a part of all that I am doing that I am self-forgetful until I drop in my tracks, as a child falls asleep on the back door step on the way in to supper.

I know too that when I waken into a bad day, I have certainly been triggered there by some clues of sound or temperature or inner chemistry, which return me to the worst times of my childhood: "You are a wicked, bad child, and Mummy doesn't love you any more."

"O love me, please love me!" (Feeling abject despair, BUT EVEN THEN KNOWING THAT A FRAUDULENT GAME WAS BEING PLAYED ON ME) "Mummy's not going to speak to you, not one word ever again." "Please speak to me, please speak to me! I'll be good!" BUT SHE DID NOT WANT ME GOOD. SHE WANTED ME UNHAPPY. So I was UNHAPPY AND THUS GOOD.

Where I have arrived is at an affirmation of my belief that evil destructiveness, (which is different to me from de-structuring) is the result of a kind of unbalanced learning. I feel secure again of what I am saying. But I carry a clear awareness of having written of my resistance to change, a few paragraphs back. So I do notice old Thanatos poking his nose over the top of the garden wall to see if I'll recognise him.

So what I want to end with, it turns out, is a short fanfare for Eros and the love of life. He's the fellow who has the coffin lid dropped on him on Bad Days. And Thanatos is the one who is dancing like a skeleton on the grave.

At such times, the charm, the spell, the specific, the medicament, the courses of treatment - whatever synonymous phrase suits you - that I prescribe, is the immediate performance of some Eros-strengthening action. That will bring Eros straight up through the coffin lid like a geyser, (I am glad that Freud is helping me so assiduously with the imagery), and it will have Thanatos back in the dust where he belongs. And yes, all right, one day I shall belong there too. But that day is not yet. Eros rules. OK?

There's the dust. There's the grave dug and waiting and as far as I can see inevitable. So in that case I don't need to divert any energy into courting my own demise, being half in love with easeful Death, or whatever. Yet I let the old skeleton get his bony hand round my ankle and yank away at it. Down sir! I have some living to get on with. Get off! It's Eros's turn.

Hazel Guest

Sequential Analysis

Sequential Analysis is a therapeutic method created about ten years ago by a psychiatrist, whose name I may not mention here because of the BMA's rules about advertising. At that time he had persuaded a small group of friends including myself, to act as his guinea-pigs, testing his procedures on ourselves. This necessitated our learning how to give sessions to others so that we could wear two hats at once - or rather alternate them in rapid succession - and give sessions to ourselves.

The sessions are monitored by using a skin resistance meter, the electrodes of which are held against the palm of one hand. This device is used for a number of purposes. Firstly it enables the therapist to choose for discussion that topic which is most likely to be beneficial to the client. Secondly it enables the therapist to know whether or not he is on the right track, whether his questions are relevant, and whether or not a topic has been exhausted of all its restimulative content. Thirdly it enables the therapist to help the client identify something in his mind that he is trying to remember - the sort of thing that is 'just on the tip of my tongue but it won't quite come'. With the help of the information provided by the meter, the therapist can often help the client to grasp the elusive thought by its tail so that he can take a look at it.