

From Integrity to Social Representation

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The British Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy (BIIP) has more than quadrupled its membership in the last nine months. This article is an attempt to frame a personal answer to three questions about BIIP in the context of reflecting on this year's conference. Why is interest in integrative initiatives in the field of psychotherapy burgeoning? What is integration? What is the British Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy?

Why Integration?

In the last thirty years our reflecting on what we might mean by identity, and how we might increase our humanness, has become ever more complex, sophisticated and technical. A multiplicity of models of man and woman, post-modern, polymorphous and paradoxical, have been brought forth, as well as many practical approaches to psychotherapy. Journals addressing ever smaller and more highly specialised aspects of human endeavour have proliferated and publication rates soared.

During the last decade there has been much internecine strife among rival schools, competing for scarce resources to meet the mental health needs of those who are falling through the net of our

fragmenting health and social services. Mental health professionals desperately need unifying concepts which can enable comparisons to be made between the different orientations in order to make coherent bids for public money to fund therapy services. This in turn requires the forging of tools for assessing mental health care needs and matching them to available provision. Therapists have increasingly come under pressure to develop a common language for defining methodologically sound diagnostic criteria, for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and for evaluating outcomes.

The British Institute for Psychotherapy Integration

The Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (Sepi, founded in the United States in 1983) and the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) have been at the forefront of exploring this kind of integration at the conceptual, methodological and meta-theoretical level. The British Institute of Integrative Psychotherapy (BIIP, affiliated to Sepi) is committed to advance exploration, discussion and research into all aspects of mental health

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and mental health care provision in this country. Its aim is to relate these concerns to the wider context of cultural, political, philosophical and spiritual enquiry in a multiracial society.

This year's European conference focused on issues concerning equitable access for disadvantaged user groups. It addressed itself to the psychic pain suffered by people because of poverty, racial prejudice, discrimination on grounds of sexual identification, lack of social support, sexual harassment and abuse, neurological injury, HIV infection, terminal illness, and so on. The scars left by abuse of power within families, institutions, and totalitarian regimes were contrasted with the remarkable acts of courage and moral and spiritual strength that allow victims to become survivors. The burning question is whether there can be life after survival. Therapy must, in the end, affirm the quality of life, creativity and beauty as much as it bears witness to people's inhumanity, and some of the workshops celebrated the expressiveness of the human body and the human voice and our capacity for poetry.

New approaches to training, supervision, therapy, research and community action which speak to these issues were shared. One hundred and twenty-five delegates, from almost as many different backgrounds, voiced their concerns in a way that will give a new meaning to the concept of integration.

Integration: a Seven-level Activity

There is much justified confusion in the field concerning the definition of integra-

tion. J.C. Norcross and H. Arkowitz, members of both SEPI and SPR, have identified four directions for integration: (1) technical eclecticism, (2) common factors, (3) theoretical integration and (4) integration with basic psychological theory and research. I shall add another three: (5) personal integration, (6) professional integrity and shared praxis, and (7) primary transpersonal relatedness and social representation.

(1) Technical eclecticism is about choosing from established sets of practices. Technical procedures developed within one model or theory of human behaviour and psychic functioning are combined with those from another. New 'integrations' are developed, leading to innovative practice.

(2) 'Common factors' refer to the body of observations made about the way therapist and patient go about the business of relating. Specific emotional, cognitive and behavioural changes are noted and investigated, irrespective of theories about the causes of such transformations and the technical means by which they have come about. The crucial factor seems to be the rapport between therapist and client in the context of compatible personalities and a willingness to learn on both sides.

(3) 'Theoretical integrations' arise from comparing, contrasting, and ultimately combining elements and concepts from different theories of human behaviour into a simpler or more highly articulated framework.

Some efforts after theoretical integration run the risk of being confused with an attempt at constructing a monolithic mega-theory which threatens to imprison

the spirit of enquiry, rather than lead to its liberation and to restrict the freedom of practice.

The conference provided a non-partisan platform where questions on supervision, training and research could be explored with both personal passion and professional detachment. In order for the profession to become accountable, to furnish research evidence that psychotherapy, clinical psychology, psychoanalytic and cultural studies have a contribution to make, some unifying concepts are needed. The distinction between mega and meta-theory is crucial here: theoretical integration in the service of clinical practice involves building meta-theoretical frameworks in which individual theoretical positions can be contrasted and compared without losing their individual life, unless they have outlived their usefulness.

(4) 'Integration with basic psychological theory and research' is concerned with placing theory, observation and clinical practice within the matrix of the psychological investigation of human behaviour at large. To give just one example of the impact of research in the field of cognitive, social and developmental psychology: over the last decade there has been a wealth of new research into processes of interpersonal communication, and their profound effect on cognitive learning and performance, which were previously studied as if they were intra-personal processes. Daniel Stern (1985) has been instrumental in spelling out the relevance of some of this research for psychotherapy, and has furthered its integration into our thinking and our practice. Challenging both self psychology

and object relations theory, the new paradigm for intra-personal integration is derived from our understanding of inter-personal attunement.

Next year's BIIP conference will explore what is actually learnt on the basis of such successful attunement, and what cannot be learnt when such attunement fails. The current working title is *The Space Between: Developing Through Relationships. Theory, Research and Practice. Controversy or Integration?*

(5) Personal integration. If we integrate the four dimensions highlighted by J.C. Norcross and H. Arkowitz, we arrive at a fifth direction for integration which is familiar to humanistic psychotherapists. It is the quest for personal integration, which is grounded in the values of classical and renaissance humanistic philosophy and theology up until the eighteenth century. Then, with Descartes, came what C.S. Lewis called 'the great divorce': wisdom was split from knowledge, art was split from science, the mind was severed from the hand, and thought was divided from 'right action'. Now the humanists of the new age, whose voices are represented in this journal, are celebrating a new consecration of the marriage between heart and mind, between emotion and intellect. Not theoretical but personal integration lies at the heart of this fifth approach to integration.

During the conference questions about integrity and disintegration were related to questions concerning the positive use of power for the empowerment of others and its destructive use for the disempowerment and domination of others. So far it has fallen to inspired individuals to keep the humanistic vision alive.

(6) Professional integrity and shared praxis. A responsible integration between heart, mind and muscle has never yet been achieved at the level of our social and political organisation. This must be a project for the future. The sixth direction for integration refers to a praxis. We engage in practical and ideological transactions centred on needs and desires, emphasising our similarities one moment and asserting our differences the next. We affiliate and we split, we threaten and we confirm one another's sense of personal, sexual, ethnic, cultural, political and professional identity, turn and turn about.

Integration here denotes neither mere products of thought, nor mere processes of self definition but interpersonal and international activities, which through shared work become social actions and human acts.

(7) Primary transpersonal relatedness and social representation. As soon as we recognise that we are already in a state of social relatedness through dialogue, simply through being human, we will gain another new sense of integration, however beset with failures in communication our efforts might be. As Marx pointed out nearly 150 years ago, our sociality is primary. Andrew Samuels, both during the conference and in his book *The Political Psyche*, extended this point by exhorting therapists to practise, not merely study, the ethics of communication by encouraging all citizens of the world to become 'therapists of the world'.

The transpersonal realisation is that we are born into a web of social and symbolic relationships which are worked out and worked through in cultural and economic production, leading to a shared

social representation. Our identity is constituted by what we do and make together, and with our integrity in doing so. The meaning that is made in these interpersonal interactions is transpersonal; it precedes us and it survives us.

The seventh sense of integration relates to the praxis of holding up a mirror for one another with patience, skill and compassion, so that we may help one another to reflect our human image. Each image is individual, special, and unique, yet each mirror is bound by the same laws of reflectivity, given by our shared biological and cultural heritage. It involves making a commitment to taking responsibility for our knowing how to achieve positive regard, empathic listening and thoughtful reflecting. It requires taking responsibility for noticing when we, individually or collectively, deny someone this mirroring, and thereby deny access to the social representation of their identity.

For instance, in the course of the conference we became painfully aware of how little the needs and cultural concerns of black people are mirrored in therapy. A shared commitment to praxis and collaboration has led participants to take steps to set up a research project carried jointly by BIIP, Goldsmiths, NAFSIYAT and other interested parties to find facts and form opinions.

This seventh sense of integration encompasses all others and is the embodiment of BIIP's philosophy. It combines the 'optimism of the will with the pessimism of the intellect', as Freud's great hero Romain Rolland once put it. It confers upon us the courage to be critical and discriminating in the original sense of appraisal. Yet it makes us mindful of our shadow:

how easily we fall prey to the impulsion to be critical in a destructive way and to assassinate the character of those who live

by different images. BIIP's central concern is to promote an integrative attitude of heart and soul.

Further Reading

J.C. Norcross and H. Arkowitz, 'The Evolution and Current State of Psychotherapy Integration' in Windy Dryden, ed. *Integrative and Eclectic Therapy: A Handbook*, Open University Press, 1992

Andrew Samuels, *The Political Psyche*, Routledge, 1993

Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant. A View from Psychoanalysis and Developmental Psychology*, Basic Books, 1985

Wild Will's Wedding

An interview with Mary Maguire and Andrew Gilmore by Beth Shaw

On 14 August 1993 Wild Will Marshall and Phoebe Barlow celebrated their wedding in the gardens of Orchardton House, Galloway. (Will was 'Wild Will' from a school running club he'd been in, where his brother Ed, who died tragically last year, had been known as 'Fast Eddy' and Owen who was to be Will's best man was 'Awesome Owen'.) Mary Maguire and Andrew Gilmore were among their friends who joined in the preparations and celebration of the wedding.

'When we got to Orchardton House on Friday evening, Aloma (Will's mother) was writing a list of what was going to happen the next day on a blackboard. We took our bags up to our room which was

more like a dormitory where we were staying with about 16 other people, and then came down to be given our tasks to do.'

Andrew: 'I went off to the woods to help make a leafy bower for the wedding night. The joke was that whenever anyone went off to take anything to the bower they couldn't find it because it was in a ruined stone folly which was hidden in the trees and the dense undergrowth. We made a tent out of white sheets and later on it was decorated with leaves and the whole place was to be lit with hundreds of candles on the wedding night.'

'The cake was made like a Gaudi cathedral with gingerbread towers which had red jelly windows and there were lights

This article first appeared in The Avebury Avenue, the literary newspaper for writers who meet during the legendary Head for the Hills walking adventures.