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THE ETHNOPSICHOANALYTIC EXPEDITION TO KACHABRI-TALAMANCA /
COSTA RICA

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1. Introduction

As the responsible leader of the expedition in Costa Rica, and ASPAS representative, along with Alvaro Dobles, I am happy about the success of the expedition and its unique implementation as a group experiment. As far as I know, no ethno-psychoanalytical work within the framework of a collective of 13 participants from Vienna, 2 members of ASPAS (Asociación de Psicoanálisis Critico social de Costa Rica) and Ethnopsicho analysts (Alvaro Dobles and Ursula Hauser), and a native Companion (Vilma Calvo Ulate) has ever been carried out, in cooperation with the indigenous ethnic group of the Bribri´s and their association DAZÓKATA.

The focus of our research was dedicated to the INTERPRETATION of the DREAMS and the intercultural exchange between the dreams of the indigenous population of the Bribri´s, and our own dreams as a white, (mostly) European visitor group in Kachabri with our psychoanalytic understanding of dreams.

My professional experience in the field of group therapy and the method of psychodrama on a psychoanalytic theoretical basis, as well as my specialization in Ethno-Psychoanalyses allowed me to organize the project of the research trip.

WHAT IS ETHNO PSYCHOANALYSIS?

This year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of **Paul Parin**, the founder of Ethno Psychoanalyses, together with **GOLDY Parin-Matthey and Fritz Morgenthaler**; I was lucky to make my psychoanalytic training in Zurich with them. Unfortunately, all three have died, but their work lives further and in particular in Vienna, at the SFU (Sigmund Freud University).

The special issue in Ethno-Psychoanalyses considers the researcher him/herself with their emotions and life as SUBJECT of the investigation, and concentrates not only on the 'OBJECT' of the investigation. The qualitative leap which Ethno Psychoanalysis has done in Social Sciences is that the RELATIONSHIP between the persons involved in the research remains in the Centre, and the observation is focused not only on the 'OTHER – STRANGER', but also includes the person of the researcher. In other words, as in Psychoanalyses, the patient - as well as the analyst – are subject of the research, with their feelings, thoughts, memories during the therapeutic process; the subjective reactions of both sides are important in Ethno-Psychoanalytical work. Transference processes and countertransference, the base of the unconscious part of the relationship - but also the culturally diverse experiences and backgrounds, are in the focus. The 'culture shock' is not an obstacle, in the contrary; it is used productively and helps to understand the diversity, difference and special history of both partners. This applies in particular if the researcher comes from a European background, in the relationship with representatives of the 'third world countries'. The violent history of colonization should be made conscious for both sides, to prevent a repetition of the one-sided power, which can happen when exponents of the rich world unconsciously slip in the role of the 'Lord', and the representatives of colonized peoples come in the role of 'slaves'. In a 'Eurocentric' point of view of Science, subjection and

exploitation once again may occur without meaning it, also in the sciences. Who benefits from the investigation and how is it recycled?

This is the political and emancipatory approach of the work of the three founders of Ethno-Psychoanalyses, who were highly engaged in the social struggle against injustice, and were convinced that psychoanalyses, and therefore also the Ethno-Psychoanalyses, are an important instrument for the analyses and the modification of personal and social unconsciousness. Especially in terms of structures of domination and their unconscious social application in society and politics, discovering the 'normalization' process of racism, sexist prejudices and other phenomena of discrimination.

Ethno-Psychoanalyses pretends to make aware unconsciousness, especially in the historical and cultural space, where we can see processes of idealization on the one hand, and the exoticism, displacement of aggressive feelings as well as erotic feelings on the other hand. Ethno-psychoanalyses may be uncomfortable and makes high demands to the researcher; on the other hand, it is fascinating and very important, because only the real encounter with the stranger gives the possibility to recognize 'the own culture' in a different way. Both sides grow in this process; recognize themselves differently, even if this can be painful in the case of the European. However, it is the only way to become real partners and work together in order to improve social justice and to reach a REAL ENCOUNTER.

The work of **George Devereux**: 'Anxiety and method in the social sciences' advanced for the first time the theme of COUNTERTRANSFERENCE and put the subjectivity of the researcher in the center of the problem: anxiety refers to the side of the research team! He thus broke a taboo not to say: he pointed out a repression or denial of the emotionality and the personality of the researchers and thus generated of course great resistance.

The 'positivist' mainstream in Social Sciences exists also in psychology, and therefore pushed psychoanalyses in a corner of the academic institutions. How should 'subjectivity' be statistically recorded and evaluated? How emotion and

creativity possibly could be put in a computer program, and how could the method of 'free associations' and a 'floating attention' (by the analyst) be taken seriously?

We can be proud and happy that we have found a support for Psychoanalyses and Ethno-Psychoanalyses in the SFU, and a place, where we could realize our investigation with the BRIBRI people, even in the special way with which we have worked in our ethnopsychanalytical research; thank you Alfred Pritz!

I refer to PSYCHODRAMA, a method that involves the body, movement, and especially the group dynamics. If we want to make aware unconsciousness, and reach CONSCIOUSNESS and hopefully a CHANGE in the behavior of personal, social, and cultural context, Psychodrama is highly effective, because the body has a language, which we usually ignore. Psychosomatic symptoms are covered as quickly as possible with a pill, instead of asking what is the significance, the cause of the pain; the 'medicocentrisme' (Parin) is to silence for instance migraine. In the group work we contribute to the collective memory, to historical and cultural awareness and question what is 'NORMALITY' on a cultural and transcultural background.

Jacob Levy Moreno^[1], the founder of psychodrama, spoke about 'cultural clusters', unconscious forms of behavior; focusing the prejudices, clichés, not reflected attitudes that show up not only in the verbal expression, but also in the body behavior and group dynamics. An important proportion of the psycho-dramatic work is the discovering, questioning and to change such 'cultural clusters', especially with the inclusion of the body language, the facial expressions, and the dynamics of the relationships in the group. The dramatization of everyday scenes enable the analysis of unconsciousness and therefore emotions and experiences, which for the time being cannot be verbalized, but in Psychodrama we can waken up and remembering even some of the earliest childhood experiences.

A cultural change focusing the gender issue becomes visible in the surrealist theatrical representation of the relationship between the various exponents of different cultures when the protagonists exchange roles, if men take women's roles

and vice-versa women play men's role, when a colored women in the role reversal represents a white European psychologist, as an example.

The hidden and forgotten sources of our feelings, repetition and unconscious adjustment mechanisms on social roles primarily serve the narcissistic aims, and also try to cover the violent part of history and culture. Here we can see the opposite hidden faces behind the 'good motives': In the most pious altruism the camouflaged egocentrism, in the most revolutionary heroism we discover petit-bourgeois desires. In short: we learn to distrust even the 'best feelings', as **Parin, Parin Matthey and Morgenthaler** have expressed it in the title of one of their books: 'Fear your neighbor as you fear yourself'!

Here, I want to mention **Frantz Fanon** from Martinique, the French colony in the Antilles, who could study Psychiatry in Paris, where he has experienced racism in his own body and soon joined the Algerian liberation war. He wrote: 'The condemned of the Earth' and a smaller book with the title: 'Black skin, white mask', pointing out the unconscious identification of the oppressed with the aggressor. He describes this phenomenon similar to the essay by Paul Parin on the unconscious adjustment mechanisms, which can lead to the rejection and denial of the own origins. Fanon put the problem in extremely clear words: to overcome colonialism, two colonialists must be killed: the real 'outside', and the internalized one! '.

We experienced this complex and difficult challenge during our research in Talamanca; we suffered, enjoyed, sweat, laughed and sometimes didn't understand anything, but lived this process in the jungle intensely in a personal, social and group dynamics way. At least, nothing remains 'in the same place'; we understood what Mario Erdheim calls 'the social death' in the identity of the researcher before and after the expedition: the self-image is floating away and one becomes strange of oneself which is difficult to bear and often results in resistance and 'to abandon' the expedition, instead of engaging in the process of change. Fortunately, all the crisis we experienced and shared together could be contained

through the daily group work with dreams and psychodrama, and nobody got sick during the whole month!

Now I want to present you the dreams which I announced:

Dream: DON FAUSTO: 2.3.16 evening in the USURÉ / the Holy House

I am on a path in the jungle, 2 Europeans (men) meet me, they carry machetes (knives) in the shaft. One goes by quietly, the other says to me: stop, give me everything you got, otherwise I hurt you everywhere. They look like our group, white, but they speak Spanish. I am not afraid, because our group of white people is here, they are many and are friends. I escape on a small road, a shortcut, the Spanish can't see me.

Dear colleagues, may I ask you to make your associations?

After this dream of the BRIBRI man, my colleagues who participated in the research, Lisa Huebner and Michael Urban, will present their own dreams!

^[1]Moreno, Jacob (1973): group psychotherapy and Psicodrama, Stuttgart