

Finding me through us in art

Jag tror på den ensamma människan,
på henne som vandrar ensam,
som inte hundlikt löper till sin vittring,
som inte varlikt flyr för mänskovittring:
På en gång människa och anti-människa.

Hur nå gemenskap?
Fly den övre och yttre vägen:
Det som är boskap i andra är boskap också i dig.
Gå den undre och inre vägen:
Det som är botten i dig är botten också i andra.
Svårt att vänja sig vid sig själv.
Svårt att vänja sig av med sig själv.

Den som gör det skall ändå aldrig bli övergiven.
Den som gör det skall ändå alltid förbli solidarisk.
Det opraktiska är det enda praktiska
i längden.

Gunnar Ekelöf [ur] *Färjesång*. *Dikter*.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to read and reflect upon the work and knowledge Ingalill is presenting us with this paper. At first I wondered why I, considering myself of poor ability to paint and draw, accepted this. I can really be bothered and inhibited, asked to transform inner images to some kind of painting or figure. As Ingalill says, luckily art finds me. We are touched and affected by others creativity, communication of their inner world and interpretations and for me especially by music, literature and poetry, paintings and photos.

So I was thrilled realizing that Ingalill began with a quote from Winnicott. Ogden (Conversations at the frontier of dreaming, Karnac 2001) advise us to read Winnicott aloud, slowly like poetry. Winnicott, he says, does not write for the most part, to come to conclusions. Winnicott writes to create experience of ideas he is playing with.

The reading of this paper has been a journey into warm memories and uncomfortable reflections in my experiences as conductor. Our Greek colleague Konstantinos Liolios is comfortable working with art in his groups and it was a good curious experience to join his workshop in IAGP Congress in Malmö last year. A group session that started with the conductor reading a poem aloud. The group session was rich with personal communications and associations following the poem touching us. Liolios refers to Aristoteles “Poetry is more philosophical and of graver import than history; for poetry expresses the universal, while history only the particular”.

Another colleague of ours, Morris Nitsun, also is a painter



Desert house

Not to be found is a disaster. In my work, before my group-analytic training, I supervised for many years a group of occupational therapists in their work with art-therapy at a psychiatric clinic in Lund, Sweden. Their patients benefited from coming together as a group and from finding themselves, their personal selves', by having intersubjective needs, our innate primary motivational system fulfilled (Stern, Ögonblickets psykologi, 2004, 2005 N o K) They were offered an intermediate area, a playground, through the mirroring and sharing that a group can offer. A medium for this was "The Fairy tale of the Hero", drawing pictures in a sequence; the Hero; the Hero's mission; what obstacles the Hero meets; what tools or weapons is used and help received; outcome of the mission; and the ending, what is there in the future.

The group could reflect, mirror, compare and experience a lot of feelings together through the pictures creating fantasies and emotions. They feel themselves and their potential self, being seen and found, mirrored and mentalized by the others in the group.

I think it is fair to compare the joy of hiding and be found, with the capacity to be alone. That is, to be ones potential, less dependent self, a capacity to be alone can evolve only with the experience that another is present. For the capacity to be alone, there must first have been an experience of being alone when someone else is present. With the capacity to be alone, we can play with hiding and the joy of being found. Hide and seek. Rose can tell us about this.

About art, and you refer to Aristoteles, art is not about the appearance, but about the inner experience and significance we want to feel and find. Foulkes understood symptoms as a sign of broken communication, and our need for communication, to be real and healthy selves. Sullivan noted, that it takes people to make one sick and people to make one well again. Art is to express, connect and communicate, whether we try to create art in some form or we are found by art. I suggest, music and literature being the most common I suppose, it is our need for a play and balance between right- and left brain communication. A neuropsychological part of our need and possibility to become our potential self.

In group therapy, the group offers the possibility for the individual to extend, discover and use the language, to put feelings and hidden unknown emotions in to words. Language, a word, is a symbol, a signifier that represents something. Language is art as symbolizing, making it possible to contain something real, a concrete object or a feeling, emotion in the body. We have “agreed” in separate groups, read societies, what words to use to be able to communicate. Translation from one language to another is one thing, but we always translate the meaning of the words the other uses. We have to mentalize and be mentalized. This is quite economic, that I don't need to go and get an elephant to communicate what I mean when using the word elephant. If the words and the common agreed meaning with what the word represent, symbolizes, - if this becomes to personal, due to insecure attachment and a breakdown of the grammar - the grammar as rules that we have agreed on to be able to meet and also as a vehicle for our need for intersubjectivity and connectedness - if to personal we become utterly alone. This is madness, when the words only represents something isolated personal. Art makes it possible to share experiences of life outside and inside, so important for our group and heard instinct.

A member in my group has recognised his need to step in, as he calls it, out from his private and dare to share and be part of humanity, seeing that his need for protection from other person's statements is making him a loner. A big prize to pay for being safe from what he has experienced at impingements and not being seen as he is. Off course he is a nuisance for the others in the group, and we talk about being afraid of him and how this fear of being criticised by him is a mirroring of his fear of intimacy and being seen, and need to defend himself. In this way he is our scapegoat, but he has not left us. Others have, and this confirms his view of being a terrible person, a loner no one can dare to stand or love. At the same time we have to work with how this being a scaring one and a scapegoat is a defence for intimacy. A risk to take to be more known and seen, connected. He ends up then feeling utterly alone and that the group is meaningless, it cannot be of help. This is my Rose in my group. I find and admire that Rose really fights for being seen and steps in. My loner has just discovered that he needs to

dare to step into the group. An important moment making this thought less frightening, was when another member told how valuable he had been for him. And it has been very valuable for me that you have shared your work and not have been afraid to show yourself.

With your Rose and my angry loner, I think we could refer to Winnicott's notion of incommunicado. This is his way of letting us understand the existential circumstance that, however much we connect and communicate, we are alone, unique and separated. Lacan would say this constitutes our lifelong search for fulfilment, however futile it is. We need at the beginning someone who thinks us, a state of going-on-being and after our concrete experiential thinking has developed into symbolic thinking - which develops if the Other is there with holding and a containing function - our need to be found - we can move into the world of symbols. With the capacity to use symbols, the direct connection with the other is lost. Inside somewhere is the notion of incommunicado. And there is no return, once the symbol has entered. Think of the stars. When we have learnt that a constellation of stars is given a name, it is difficult not to see the pattern. As individual subject I can only imagine the others wishes, thoughts and feelings, through myself. We cannot inform the other subject of our inner world, only indirectly.

Earlier in my group a member had severe difficulties to talk and share. When she missed a session, very seldom, her absence was not present and present with her body, the group really tried in different ways to draw her into the communication, socialize and work with the group's feelings of isolation or rejection. We could talk about, often not, how this affected us all, in terms of her power, her loneliness, her monopolizing and therefore the attention she received, which she dreaded manifestly. The group experienced her experience of insecure attachment, with parents not talking with each other, living in a house separated from each other on different floors. She was a twin, the group discovered and she let the group discover it, when quite intensely talking once about a good weekend together with her sister recently. We were all worried and helpless that we could not offer her a twin in our group and that we and also she, could not let her be found by the

group interactions. She stayed for a more than a year, stopping because she had to move, with a little better experience of handling her intention to be able to speak with people, let herself to be known but she left also with a sense of failure, due to her defensive self-criticism.

The fear of showing oneself, to share, be recognized and validated, both to be found and not be found, is more apparent and at stake in a group I think, which makes our group work so valuable. Ingalill tells us about the art of conducting.

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