

NWRPA Friday Evening Seminars

We don't want to get all worked up over a tomato stalk again, do we? The Function of Phobia in Therapy by Paul Melia

Friday 10 October 2014, 6.30pm-8.30pm, free to members, £7.50 to non-members

Anxiety is the radical danger to be avoided at all costs: even a phobia is preferable to anxiety. So rather than regarding phobia as a purely negative phenomena this evening is given over to understanding phobia as a protective formation, one that transforms anxiety into fear by focusing on a specific object. Most of our time will be spent talking about an audio recording of a middle-aged comedian describing his life-long fear of spiders. And we'll reflect on what's involved when clients choose to 'work-through' their phobia in therapy.

Paul Melia is a psychotherapist at Therapy in Manchester <TherapyInManchester.co.uk>

An introduction to Sociopathy by Amanda Onwuemene

Friday 14 November 2014, 6.30pm-8.30pm, free to members, £7.50 to non-members

The seminar takes an interest in individuals who whilst possibly devoid of a mental health diagnosis nonetheless display patterns of behaviours and thinking that can be termed sociopathic.

Amanda Onwuemene is the Director of Psychotherapy and Counselling North West and a Transactional Analyst with a private practice in Liverpool and Manchester <pcnw.co.uk>

Talking Points: A Symposium

Friday 12 December 2014, 6.30pm-8.30pm, free to members, £7.50 to non-members

The NWRPA celebrates the beginning of the festive season with a lively symposium: four psychotherapists speaking for 15 minutes each on a therapy topic of their choosing. They'll be plenty of time for questions and discussions. Light refreshments available at this as well as the preceding events.

Venue: The Manchester Institute for Psychotherapy
454 Barlow Moor Road, Chorlton, Manchester M21 0BQ.

Talking Points: Call for papers:

If you'd like to deliver one of the 15-minute presentations in December please email your proposal to Frank Kelley by 30 September 2014

If you want to discuss a possible, and welcome, contribution you can do this by email or phone

email nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com

phone 0161 432 8653 / 0750 8119025.

Continuing Professional Development

The £25.00 annual membership means you can enjoy all ten NWRPA seminars each year and add twenty hours to your CPD.

If you would like to present one of our monthly seminars then you can gain even more CPD hours.

NWRPA 40th Anniversary

The Association began life in the 1970's and we will celebrate our birthday in 2015

This is an extraordinary lifetime for a therapists interest group

watch this space

Donald Meltzer and Analytic Formation

Dr Mark Fisher

Friday 12 September 2014



Donald Meltzer (1922-2004), pictured left, was a psychiatrist and Kleinian analyst who worked with children and adults. He gained an international reputation through his clinical writings and for his work as a teacher and supervisor. This seminar presented some of his thoughts on psychoanalytic training and gave a fascinating insight into the world of psychoanalysis.

Mark Fisher is a member of a new analytical grouping *The School of the Freudian Letter* and works in private practice in Liverpool <markfisher.bacp.co.uk>

Mark introduced the important concepts of Meltzer's psychoanalytic work.

- *Intrusive identification*. The subject wants an under the skin identification with the object. This is a narcissistic rather than a psychotic state. In fantasy it is an ideal state for the subject but awful and invasive for the object.
- *Adhesive identification*. In some ways this is an absence of a relationship, there is no sense of separation between subject and object. It reminded the audience of malevolent relations like stalking and so on.
- *The claustrum* is the fantasy of being contained within something. It is intensely good because it is so containing but also intensely bad because there is no escape and the subject lives in a intense, panicky, claustrophobic state.
- *The aesthetic conflict*. In a Kleinian perspective of the mother infant relationship the infant has both intense needs and an intense lack and does not know whether the mother will come. Thus the infants aggressivity to the bad mother grows. For Meltzer the infant also has a beautiful mother and this mother can have an excess of beauty which is overwhelming for the infant.
- *The preformed transference*. This refers to the client's initial preconceptions about a psychoanalytic relationship which have to be overcome before a genuine transference and countertransference can be established. This was an unorthodox idea and Meltzer recommended that the analyst needs to spend a lot of time talking about what clients mean about psychoanalysis. He thought that the value of a psychoanalytic term is the value it has in describing what actually happens in psychoanalysis.

Donald Meltzer was establishing his ideas at a time when there was a great orthodoxy about the practice of analysis. Meltzer added to this standard practice what he called an interruption technique. In certain circumstances he thought carrying on an analysis could be counterproductive. If the client was drifting with a transition Meltzer would negotiate a stop to the analysis. He would have infrequent contact with the client and then agree a time to resume analysis. He found this fruitful but with the prevailing orthodoxy this was generally seen by psychoanalysts as heresy.

Meltzer did not develop his ideas in isolation. He was one of a group of psychoanalysts influenced by Wilfred Bion, including Esther Bick, and Meg Harris. With Bick he introduced the influential child observation course at the Tavistock Institute. Mark believes that Bion was the greatest British analyst and that his ideas were very difficult but were managed and popularised by Meltzer.

He began as Freudian psychoanalyst in the USA and came to Britain to have analysis with Melanie Klein. He was extremely frustrated by the training in this country. A candidate first had to become a patient and complete an analysis before training. Training meant having a further training analysis and having a report from your analyst sent to the training committee. In each of the British Training Institutions, Freudians, Kleinians and the Independent Group, there were only a small group of training analysts. There was no supervision in the training and discussing clients was done in analysis. Even today there is still no rule within psychoanalysis for how much supervision you should have. While there was an orthodoxy there was not a clear training syllabus and not even a clear way of recognising when you have qualified as an analyst.

Meltzer thought this produced a strange church like atmosphere and was a way of transmitting a coherent school of analysis and a very powerful way of maintaining orthodoxy and stifling discussion. These Institutes have been described as oligarchies. Generally discussion was replaced with listening to senior analysts. Effectively trainees were followers of charismatic leaders. He also thought, especially as he had an enduring interest in the arts, that psychoanalysis was overly medicalised. He thought that an

appreciation of poetry might be better for a psychoanalyst than a knowledge of medicine and might lead to a greater understanding of the language of clients.

Donald Meltzer advocated a more flexible training, more oriented to what individual trainees needed than a fixed syllabus. He advocated having ateliers rather than Institutes. He practiced group supervision where close attention was paid to what happened in analytic sessions rather than discussion of psychoanalytic theory. Bion also refused to discuss psychoanalytic theory in supervision. Importantly trainees would also learn from their peers.

For many counsellors and psychotherapists today this would be a familiar form of training supervision. At that time Meltzer's method of supervision was a radical and threatening change from psychoanalytic traditions. The existing Psychoanalytic Institutes were worried that Bion and Meltzer would split off and form their own training body. Meltzer was banned from training. He remained a member of the international Psychoanalytic Association but not the British Psychoanalytic Association. Bion died soon after.

Meltzer thought that the organisation of training bodies meant they were prone to blocking opposition, to becoming moribund and suffering from breaks and splits. He knew that even the most thick skinned analysts were hurt by these organisational conflicts. Mark noted that Britain has been unusual in having three Psychoanalytic Institutes; all other countries have one.

After talking about these historical and continuing conflicts Mark ended with a positive view. While Meltzer had struggles and conflicts throughout his working life he has the legacy of child observation and his example of supervision and supervision in groups. More personally Mark said that being an analyst was a beautiful thing. Years of analysis have shown him that life is more complicated than he ever thought, and more beautiful. Free association is endless and can be lived in fine detail over sustained analyses. It makes him aware of a lot of different universes and that clients come to analysis to invent another one for themselves.

Mark referred to a number of books during his talk. These include:

Donald Meltzer with Meg Harris Williams: *The Apprehension of Beauty: the role of aesthetic conflict in development, art and violence* (1988) Perthshire: Clunie Press

Donald Meltzer *The Claustrium: an investigation of claustrophobic phenomena* (1992) Perthshire: Clunie Press

A. Hahn: Editor *Sincerity and Other Works: Collected Papers* (1994) London: Karnac. This contains many of Meltzer's papers.

Castella, R., Farre, L., Tabbia, C. (2003) *Supervisions with Donald Meltzer*. London: Karnac.



Contact the Association:

Frank Kelley,
Secretary NWRPA,
53 Milford Drive
Levenshulme
Manchester
M19 2RY

Phone: 0161 432 8653 (Evenings)

Email: nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com

Website: www.nwrpa.org.uk

