

## NWRPA Friday Evening Seminars

### Integrating Psychodrama Techniques Into Your Practice

**Phil Burgess**

**12 February 2016 6.30pm-8.30pm**

**Cost £7.50 or free to members. This includes light refreshments**

Psychodrama is usually seen as a group method. However many of the techniques can be incorporated into individual therapy work. The action methods are used to enable past, present and future life events to be explored in the here-and-now. During this session we will look at the use of metaphor, concretisation, time and space and "being in the others shoes" as well as the underlying principles of creativity and spontaneity.

Phil Burgess (reg. BPA and UKCP) is a psychodramatist and consultant for Arts in Health. Phil has worked with groups and individuals for over twenty years, first as a community artist and then as a psychotherapist. He brings to psychodrama his experience of dance, circus skills, theatre, corporate training, team building and therapeutic massage - see [www.beinginaction.net](http://www.beinginaction.net)

### OCD: Heuristic Research and Poetic Re-Presentation

**Kieran Nolan**

**11 March 2016 6.30pm-8.30pm**

**Cost £7.50 or free to members. This includes light refreshments**

Kieran will discuss his doctoral research in which he used Poetic Re-Presentation to understand how people who suffer from OCD make sense of their experience. This discussion will be underpinned by this question: *What are we really treating when we use psychological therapies to help people with this condition?*

Kieran is a psychoanalytical and integrative psychotherapist who works in the NHS and in private practice. He has been interested in OCD for many years and his research also included his own experience of being obsessive.

They'll be plenty of time for questions and discussion, and light refreshments are available.

Each of these events represent **2 hours of continuing professional development.**

#### **Venue:**

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

Information about the Association is also available on our website at: [www.nwrpa.org.uk](http://www.nwrpa.org.uk)

## Renew your NWRPA membership for 2016

Be a member of the NWRPA for the calendar year 2016 for as little as £25 a year - or £20 if you are a student, unwaged or retired - which represents a generous saving of 66% on the cost of 10 seminars.

If you are already a member you can renew your membership by sending a cheque made out to "NWRPA" to the address at the end of this newsletter. If you would prefer to pay online please email Frank Kelley at [nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com](mailto:nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com) for our online bank details.

If you are not a member please join us. Membership of NWRPA is open to qualified and trainee psychotherapists and counsellors, to members of related professions and to individuals who have a longstanding interest in psychotherapy and counselling. To apply for membership you will need to live or work in the North West of England and subscribe to a professional code of ethics that is recognised by the Association.

To apply for membership please send a brief C.V. along with a cheque to the address below or an online payment as above. Please include details of your training, experience, the code of ethics to which you subscribe, and the name and contact details of a professional referee.

## Three More Words in Therapy: Friday 11 December 2015

Twice a year the NWRPA Friday Evening Seminar uses this format of *three words in therapy*. Three therapists speak for fifteen to twenty minutes each on a single word from the world of psychotherapy and counselling.

### Paul Melia on *Mistake*

Paul spoke on the theme of "*Honour your mistake as a hidden intention.*" His subject was the function in therapy of the mistake, accident, blot, blunder, boo-boo, boob, botch, bummer, bungler, blunder, cock-up, error, faux pas, fiasco, fluff, forgetting, gaffe, goof, howler, lapse, mislaying, misreading, misspelling, misunderstanding, mix-up, muddle, muff, omission, overlooking, screw-up, slip and stumble. Paul Melia is counsellor and psychotherapist at [TherapyInManchester.co.uk](http://TherapyInManchester.co.uk)

Before being a psychotherapist Paul was an art historian. He introduced us to Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891.) He devised a new method of attribution for Old Master paintings. Rather than looking at the principal elements of a painting he would pay close attention to the incidentals of the work such as earlobes, fingernails and the shape of fingers which are usually beneath notice. He believed each artist would execute these details in a characteristic way that copyists would not.

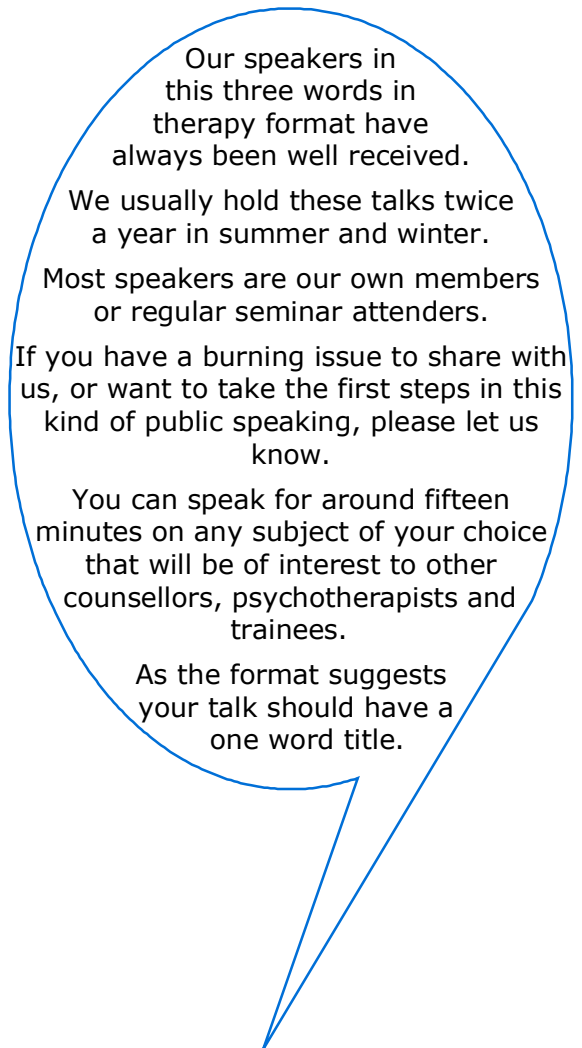
In his training as a psychotherapist Paul was interested in Jacques Lacan's 1955 seminar on Edgar Allan Poe's story *The Purloined Letter* (in *Ecrits* 1966.) A letter is stolen by a Government minister which allows him to blackmail a young woman. The Police believe the letter will be hidden in an elaborately safe and hidden place but did not find it after an extensive search. To gain the reward the private detective Auguste Dupin deduces, correctly, that the letter needs to be close at hand for blackmail purposes and so it will be hidden in plain sight. For Lacan we can look for things concealed in the depths, but what is concealed is actually on the surface.

Paul then referred to works by Sigmund Freud, *The Moses of Michelangelo*, *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. In the Lacanian view these establish the idea that Freud, like Dupin, is not looking at the extraordinary but rather the infraordinary. Freud was interested in mistakes; in forgetting names, misusing foreign words, slips of the tongue, slips of the pen, forgetting our intentions, inadvertent actions and so on.

These mistakes are interruptions of our everyday life, an interruption due to repression. With mistakes we grant an abandoned wish. Paul noted that even these synonyms for mistakes he opened with have vulgar and sexual connotations. Freud gives an example of a schoolteacher who falls in love with a socially unacceptable woman. By mistake he sends his letters to her to his brother and his letter to his brother to her. He reveals his love for this woman to his brother and his doubts about the relationship to his lover.

For Lacan and others there is virtue in attending to mistakes, as artists and philosophers have pointed out. Pay attention to your own and clients mistakes. As with Freud's schoolteacher mistakes can lead to trouble and embarrassment. For therapists and clients they can also be a way of finding our own voices and conveying our vulnerability.

**You can find Paul's PowerPoint presentation attached to the email with your newsletter.**



Our speakers in this three words in therapy format have always been well received.

We usually hold these talks twice a year in summer and winter.

Most speakers are our own members or regular seminar attenders.

If you have a burning issue to share with us, or want to take the first steps in this kind of public speaking, please let us know.

You can speak for around fifteen minutes on any subject of your choice that will be of interest to other counsellors, psychotherapists and trainees.

As the format suggests your talk should have a one word title.

## Three More Words in Therapy

### Frank Kelley on *Unconscious*

I am a retired NHS psychodynamic counsellor. As therapists we are aware of the richness and usefulness of the ideas about the unconscious from the founding of psychoanalysis onwards. I have some reservations about the nature of the unconscious. These were originally theoretical but later came to cast a different light on therapeutic practice.

My professional life has been founded on the usefulness of understanding the outer and inner life of my clients including their unconscious. What Freud did was not just to establish a theory of the unconscious but also the method of psychoanalysis. This was both a therapeutic procedure and, as Freud often insisted, a research method. The structure of analytic sessions provides the setting to discover the unconscious, to explore the inner world of the analysand through the use of free association and the interpretation of dreams and the transference and slips of the tongue.

Because I like philosophising, I have always had some philosophical doubts about the unconscious. These doubts came at different times and were focused around specific thoughts.

**The first** is the dictionary definition of the word unconscious. A non analytic definition is *an unconscious thought or feeling is one you do not know you have*.

**The second** is a word used by Wilfred Bion. Therapists often refer to his ideas of unconscious alpha and beta elements and functioning. What is often left out of these references is that Bion often used the term *hypothetical* when referring to these elements and functions.

**The third** is an old psychoanalysts' joke. The joke is that a Freudian analysand turns out to have a Freudian unconscious; a Kleinian analysand turns out to have a Kleinian unconscious and so on.

These doubts led to several thoughts.

I want to use the word unconscious in a very literal manner of being thoughts and feelings you do not know you have.

There are an awful lot of different landscapes: Freudian, Jungian, Kleinian, Object Relations Lacanian, Transactional Analysis and so on. All seem based on using psychoanalysis as a research method and discovering the truth of the unconscious; but there are so many different truths and no obvious way, other than our allegiance to our school of therapy, to decide between them.

This also led to a strand of thought about where do unconscious thoughts come from. At one time I would have said that obviously they come from the unconscious. However these doubts mean I cannot be sure where unconscious thoughts come from.

I asked myself what I can be sure of. I can be sure that new feelings, thoughts and fantasies emerge during counselling because I heard and saw it happen and so did my clients.

I can now set aside these philosophical knots and doubts. We humans are endlessly creative and counselling provides a setting where counsellor and client can come up with new ideas that may be helpful, may reduce suffering and contain painful and confusing thoughts and feelings. To engage in a purposeful and creative and collaborative activity feels better than searching for the truths of the unconscious.

**You can find Frank's notes for this seminar at the end of this newsletter.**

### Katherine Skaife on *Dissociation*

Kath is a psychologist in secondary care with the NHS Mental Health Services in Bolton and has a specialist interest in trauma. Dissociative identity disorder (DID) was previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder. There is controversy about the existence of this disorder and little consensus about its nature among psychiatrists. Written accounts go back many years but this disorder became known in the 1980's through the books *Sybil* and *The Three Faces of Eve* and later through *Osiris Complex* by Colin Ross. Kath also recommended reading *The Inner Child* by Alice Miller.

Kath talked about dissociative identity disorder as a multiple response to early trauma. This abuse is usually severe and complex such as repeated abuse by paedophiles or multiple abusers.

DID is not about separate fully formed personalities. Clients have fragmented versions of a personality with amnesiac barriers between the fragments. The amnesia comes when another personality dominates

## Three More Words in Therapy

the body leaving the usually dominant personality without consciousness of that period of changed domination.

Clients come to therapists because of the sheer amount of trouble caused by the different personalities or because people who know them well suspect what the problem is. Often it is solely the functioning personality that goes to therapy. The therapist needs to convey that they are open to the different personalities that may later emerge. The personalities can be asked to sit down together and work collaboratively. It can be useful to map the different personalities so that each can tell their story. Therapy is working together on help not cure.

People with DID have been diagnosed with schizophrenia. In this case the voices are from a different personality to the functioning one. Some of these personality fragments are parts of the personality that protected the person from the abuser. The person may also have periods of missing time when there were switches between personalities. This can happen when there are specific triggers, some of which will be related to their experience of abuse. Some of these triggers may be ones that abusers created or triggered during the childhood abuse.

The person with DID will also experience somatic forms of trauma and all the psychological results of abuse; anger, guilt, shame and a confusing love for the abuser. All of these will have contributed to the secrecy of abuse. So permission to speak is the key to therapy.

**You may like to read summaries of our seminars from previous newsletters  
Please go to our website at [www.nwrpa.org.uk](http://www.nwrpa.org.uk)  
In the news section you will find an archive with the last three years of newsletters**

**If you would like a CPD certificate for any of the NWRPA seminars  
email Frank Kelley at [nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com](mailto:nwrpa2010@ntlworld.com)**

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## Three More Words in Therapy: Frank Kelley Seminar Notes

North West Regional Psychotherapy Association

Friday Evening Seminars

3 More Words in Therapy: Unconscious

Friday 11 December 2015

I am a psychodynamic counsellor, or rather was as I retired a few months ago. My professional life has been founded on the usefulness of understanding the outer and inner life of my clients including their unconscious. I am sure people here value working in this way too.

The idea of the unconscious has a long history. The term itself was coined by the 18th-century German Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schelling and later introduced into English by the poet and essayist Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

What Freud did was not just to establish a theory of the unconscious but also the method of psychoanalysis. This was both a therapeutic procedure and, as Freud often insisted, a research method. The structure of analytic sessions provides the setting to discover the unconscious, to explore the inner world of the analysand through the use of free association and the interpretation of dreams and the transference and slips of the tongue.

What Freud discovered was the unconscious world, unconscious because of repression, because oedipal conflicts are painful and unacceptable to our conscious mind.

Freud said psychoanalysis was a research method that helped psychoanalysts discover the nature of the unconscious. What Freudian psychoanalysts discovered was the Oedipus complex, the nature of defences, the structure of Id, Ego and Superego, and the illogic of primary process thinking.

I have always found psychoanalytic ideas about the unconscious helpful both in counselling and more generally in understanding the more irrational aspects of our human nature.

However, because I like philosophising, I have always had some philosophical doubts about the unconscious. These doubts came at different times and were focused by specific thoughts, which I will list.

**The first** is the dictionary definition of the word unconscious. It struck me when looking these up as part of writing this talk how psychoanalysis has affected the meaning of this word. For example the Oxford English Dictionary has: *The part of the mind which is inaccessible to the conscious mind but which affects behaviour and emotions.*

The dictionary meaning I had in mind in relation to these doubts was in the Cambridge Online Dictionary: *An unconscious thought or feeling is one you do not know you have.*

**The second** is a word used by Wilfred Bion. Psychoanalysts often refer to his ideas of alpha and beta elements and functions. These refer to deeply primitive experiences which are closer to bodily experiences which can be expelled as projections or undergo transformations which allow them to be thought. What is often left out of these references is that Bion often used the term hypothetical when referring to these elements and functions.

**The third** is an old psychoanalysts joke. The joke is that a patient of Freud will turn out to have a Freudian unconscious, a patient of Klein will have a Kleinian unconscious and so on.

### Three More Words in Therapy: Frank Kelley Seminar Notes

These lead to several thoughts.

I want to use the word unconscious in a very literal manner. In the Cambridge Dictionary sense of thoughts and feelings we do not know you have.

That in psychoanalytic theory there are unconscious processes but rather than being talked about as unknowns or even unknowable they are talked about as familiar landscapes which we all know about.

There are an awful lot of different landscapes: Freudian, Jungian, Kleinian, Object Relations Lacanian and so on. All seem based on using psychoanalysis as a research method and discovering the truth of the unconscious, but so many different truths.

This brought back ideas from being a Sociology student forty years ago. This was that in the physical sciences our object of study is independent of the way we think about it, but in the social sciences we are thinking about ourselves and our world using the very same thoughts that we use to construct ourselves and our social world. Hence there is potentially no limit to the ways in which we can understand our inner lives.

As I said I like philosophising and am happy to think in this multiple world way about psychodynamic ideas. It also fits in with my counselling training which said to treat all the psychodynamic approaches with equal respect because different clients may well find different approaches useful.

I like philosophising but then wondered if this was just philosophising or whether this would say something helpful about my work.

However it also led to a strand of thought about where do unconscious thoughts come from. At one time I would have said that obviously they come from the unconscious. Now I am not sure.

While pondering this I asked what I can be sure of. Well . . . I can be sure that whatever new thoughts, feelings, fantasies emerged during counselling emerged in the process of counselling. Unlike the unconscious which is unknowable and hypothetical this material emerged in the course of a session. I can be sure of this because I heard and saw it happen and so did my clients.

I now feel happier. I can set aside these philosophical knots I was tying myself. It also gave the thought that we humans are endlessly creative and that counselling provides a setting where counsellor and client can come up with new ideas that may be helpful, may reduce suffering and contain painful and confusing thoughts and feelings. To engage in a purposeful and creative and collaborative activity feels better than searching for the truths of the unconscious.

Frank Kelley