***Journal of Analytical Psychology***

**XVI International Conference**  
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**Co-sponsored by** [**The Society of Analytical Psychology**](https://www.thesap.org.uk/) **& Essex University**

**CROSSING BORDERS:**  
**Clinical, Theoretical, Cultural and Political Implications in our Changing World**

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Artist: Lindsey C. Harris

**PLENARY ABSTRACTS**

**FRIDAY 12th APRIL**

**Borders Around Identity:**

**Cultural Expressions of Trauma**

**9.30-9.45: Renos Papadopoulos (UK): Opening Address**

(via Zoom)

**9.45-10.45: Monica Luci (UK/IT)**

**Disputed Boundaries of the Self, the Group, and Their Environment: What we Learn from Refugees about War, Trauma and Culture**

One of Jung’s main lessons for me concerns the mysterious, inexplicable and always out-of-reach nature of the self. In this paper, I will particularly focus on the boundaries of the self and their nature, location, dynamics of maintenance and change in geographically, historically, culturally situated subjects.

The self is a constantly changing living entity and the dynamics I am referring to belong in different and unique ways to every single human being. However, the scale of changes to which refugees must adapt in their life is of such a magnitude that often their lives and suffering enable us to see phenomena that we would otherwise have difficulty perceiving.

The tragic events that often drive refugees away from their homes, such as wars, political violence and persecution of individuals or groups, environmental disasters, lack of security in the living environment, may have different effects on individuals, but every single story and the adaptation of every single person (be it functional or dysfunctional) can be looked at as a process in which the boundaries between the self, the group(s) and the environment(s) are renegotiated, partially maintained, partially changed, and sometimes painfully or traumatically so.

In post-traumatic suffering, of whatever nature and scale, below or above the imaginary line of disorders, the boundaries of self are in play and its character and extension are renegotiated. Trauma, in psychodynamic terms and in its essence, can be described as an irruption into the self of some form of otherness that cannot be immediately integrated into a new framework of meaning, and remains there unassimilated, making the person experience a compulsion to expel this otherness in the form of symptoms. Sometimes this otherness has such a huge impact and depth of penetration into the self that it deeply changes its characteristics and, for this reason, the person’s *self* perception.

The framework of meaning within which the self can live can be the result of individual work, but it is generally also the result of group work in term of collectively shaped cultural and religious meanings. Part of this experience is felt as a “group body,” because it also generally implies some forms of concrete interaction with physical places and material objects, transforming them, to live *in* those space and *with* those objects, hosting the physical and psychic life of group members. In this sense the self is one, it belongs to one individual, but is also shared between two and more subjects, and this double nature characterizes it from its very inception.

If we think about the complexity of these dynamics and the interactions between the self, the group(s), and the environment, perhaps many unsettling phenomena such as war, trauma, terror and conflict on the one hand, and the role in them of the self, group membership, culture and religion on the other, can become more understandable in terms of the disputed boundaries between individual selves, between groups, and even between an individual self and a group, enacted in a given place.

Some clinical vignettes on refugee stories can help illustrate the topic.

**11.15-12.15: Karin Fleischer (Argentina)**

**Stolen Identities, Suspended Lives: Embodied Analysis with Victims of Early Trauma Due to State Terrorism**

Each collective trauma holds its own particularities and forms of horror. When the violence is exerted by the government responsible for the care of the population it is termed state terrorism.

In Argentina, one of the most appalling and cruel characteristics of state terrorism carried out by the dictatorship, which took place between 1976-1983, was the “appropriation” of children. These children, now adults, were not only deprived of their parents under violent circumstances, but also deprived of the truth regarding their own identity. In such situations, when the experience of terror is followed by denial, there are no words to express and contain the emotions, so they cannot be translated into feelings. Then, the body unconsciously carries these affective memories, which remain unsymbolized.

The traumatic experience and its subsequent negation create a profound dissociation between two narratives: the explicit, which conceals the true facts, and the implicit, which remains unconscious and unbridgeable. In the gap between the two, life becomes suspended.

From a Jungian perspective, this can be understood as the interruption on the process of “translation and integration” (terms that I will explore in some depth) from implicit sensory phenomena to an explicit representational narrative. This profoundly affects the development of the ego-self axis. In turn, it creates a special challenge for analytic technique that calls for new ways of listening to, and meeting the patient in, that non-verbal, unrepresented territory.

Drawing upon clinical material, and using an embodied perspective of Jungian clinical work, I attempt to show how the inclusion of the body of patient and analyst enables access to the non-represented, though implicitly encoded, traumatic memories stored in the somatic unconscious. Through an experience of Embodied Active Imagination in the analytic process, I want to show how the patient’s bodily gestures and physical sensations may act as points of departure, which offer bridges between the preverbal-implicit knowledge and the dissociated emotions. This, in turn, may lead to the emergence of new images and symbols, which contribute—within the context of the safe analytic relationship—to repairing and restoring the translating and transcendent functions that were interrupted by the early traumatic events.

I will emphasize how this embodied attitude toward analysis is something that can open up access to deeper levels of the psyche-soma with every patient, and thus become an important development of our analytic attitude that can enrich all our work.

**17.30-18.15: Andrew Samuels (UK)**

**On Analytical Psychology and Politics: A Cutting Edge and Transformative Contribution—OR A Narcissistic Total Waste of Time Only of Interest to Some Analysts and Therapists?**

We have seen a “political turn” in all the psychotherapies in the past 20 years. In a way, this is a recovery and a recreation of their original radical nature. Analytical psychology is included in this critical cultural swing. The Essex conference could be intellectually contextualised as a part of this turn.

I think it is fair to say that I have been in the forefront of this international phenomenon, in my work with**,** for example, the Jungian Analysis and Activism movement, Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility, and the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network. Relevant books include *The Political Psyche* (1993), *Politics on the Couch* (2001), *A New Therapy* for *Politics?* (2016), and *Persons, Passions, Psychotherapy, Politics* (2018). A new book, *Up Against the Wall: Late-Career* *Reflections on Failures in Psychotherapy and Politics*, will appear in 2024.There have been numerous journal articles on the relationship between depth psychology and culture.

So, I am probably a pioneer**—**and an enthusiast for the linking of what I call “therapy thinking” with contemporary politics and culture. But I have also become sceptical and concerned that, in our excitement for the political turn in our field, we analysts and therapists are missing the point about how little we really have with which to contribute. The potential is there, but where are the tangible results? Maybe we don’t want to engage with this embarrassing theme.

I discovered the limitations of the contributions of depth psychology when working as a political consultant with leading politicians, political parties and activist groups in the UK, US and elsewhere. I will describe experiences of this work at Presidential and Prime Ministerial level, and also in connection with working in the UK NHS context at the King’s Fund. (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/>)

In the paper, I’ll share a Manifesto that might help to make the wish to contribute to society on the part of analysts and therapists turn into a reality. To do this, we certainly have to cross some borders! Surely we can go beyond our narcissistic investment in proving our theories right? Surely we can reach out to other groupings beyond the “psy” field, maybe those deploying quite different epistemologies to ours, so as to work collaboratively and in an interdisciplinary vein?

In the talk, there will be reflection and self-reflection, including some stringent and revealing self-criticism. One aim is to construct a conference space in which people can work out where they really stand in relation to psychotherapy and society.

Because this is a conference organised by *JAP*, the paper also offers an opportunity to review the role of learned and professional journals in the project of linking “therapy thinking” and culture. Hence, I will review**—**dispassionately and carefully**—**some experiences in the context of our *Journal* with (a) Jung and anti-Semitism; (b) Jung’s writings on “Africans,” and (c) discrimination against gay men and lesbians in terms of admission to analytical training. How does such a journal and its editors negotiate the publication of work that is somewhat political in nature?

As well as the plenaries, we have two **Break-out Sessions** on Friday afternoon, and two on Saturday afternoon, an optional **Social Dreaming Matrix** will be heldon three mornings (8am-9am), a **Cocktail Reception** on Friday night, and on Saturday night we invite you to attend our **Gala Dinner and Dance** at stunning venue “The Barn”. We end with a **Conference Plenary Session** Sunday lunchtime.

***Programme details:***

<https://thejap.org/conferences/essex-2024-programme>

***Registration link: (Early Bird discount till 31st January)***

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/events/2024/04/11/journal-of-analytical-psychology-international-conference-2024>

***Accommodation suggestions:***

<https://thejap.org/conferences/essex-2024-accommodation>

***Travel:***

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/visit-us/plan-your-visit/travel-to-colchester>

***Colchester tourist info and images:***

<https://www.visitcolchester.com/things-to-do>

***We hope to see you at what promises to be a rich, engaging and challenging four days!***

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