

EATGA/AEATG Workshop

Palermo, 9-11th September 2011

First announcement: SAVE THE DATE!

INTERSUBJECTIVE LINKS IN THE GLOBALISED ECONOMY*Has the logic of economic exchange in our globalised world the power to destroy the culture of the inner life?*

The theme of the workshop is identifiable with group-analytical research on the problematic VALUES of our time that refer to the conflict between the culture of the gift/link and the culture of the exchange/ market. This conflict is perhaps unavoidable, although it recurs in different forms in different eras.

A starting point

The theme and the research hypothesis start from the following preliminary remarks:

EATGA's research is founded on the psychoanalytic way of thinking about the role of culture in the mental process. It refers particularly to the study of the cultural matrix of the identity and of the transcultural and trans-subjective processes.

This research is based on the following assumptions:

The psyche is rooted in the nature (body, matter, world), but its "nature" is of a cultural order. It is impossible to distinguish the concept "psyche" and its representation, from its (imaginary, symbolic, cultural) substance. The identity is founded on identifications (ideal of the ego) and on differences (sex, generations, culture). It is a process that develops by hybridizing with the secondary groups and the encounters with others. Therefore the psyche and the identity do not belong to the individual but are the transpersonal elements of the biological evolution and of the processes of cultural construction. The individual psyche and identity are built and develop in relation with the (cultural) heritage of preceding generations, and in relation to the (individual and collective) capacity for elaborating them and of producing new symbolizations, and thus available for producing experiences in the present and projecting into the future.

Among the key symbolizations of cultural dynamics, the 2011 Workshop will focus on two concepts: values and links. The first is central in thinking about the content of identification processes, especially in the search for the "ideal" i.e. what is desirable and in the search for values more or less consciously shared; the second concept determines the relationship with the other (who is the other for me, and vice versa; into which frame an interpersonal intersubjective exchange can take place).

Some thoughts on the particular cultural phenomena of contemporary world

What characterizes cultural dynamics (the values and the links) of the contemporary world? What is the cultural form of the links and of the identity emerging in the contemporary world? What is its relation to the traditional shape of the existing and differentiated local cultures?

We can point to two different macrophenomena of our contemporary world:

First: the massive and unstoppable encounter between different cultures, different identities and subjectivities. Such an encounter gives birth to a difficult and conflicting process of crossbreeding, and here as yet we have inadequate symbolic competence .

Second: the logic and language of the market and financial worlds dominate. It is largely shared, transversal and impersonal regarding the local cultural identities. It can determine large social movements (migrations, exchanges, conflicts) and penetrate every aspect of social life.

The anthropologists who study the processes of exchanges and the kinds of links in traditional or modern cultures, differentiate two fundamental paradigms: one relates to the gift exchange, and one to the commercial exchange. These two paradigms can co-exist, - at times competing, or opposing in an incompatible way.

In the contemporary western world, and in most of the regions connected to it mainly via commerce, the concept of the free exchange of material goods (free market economy) tends to assimilate the relational and symbolic exchange, so that the interpersonal and social links are permeated by its logic.

Also imperialistic invasions by the great powers are no longer present. But the financial world and the market place have become the real imperialistic powers, crossing state boundaries, and partially independent from them.

They are able to influence and lead social and economic policies. They influence individual and collective lives and have a direct effect on the relational, affective and emotional life.

The worlds of finance and consumerism encourage globalisation which spreads an agglomerating and impersonal culture. This culture gradually and inevitably substitutes for traditional differences within local cultures. Are we then faced with a “trans-culture” that devours and annihilates ethnic and traditional local cultures, or which reduces them to residual elements? Will the local cultures be able to “resist” maintaining and producing specific and alternative values and meaning? Will the languages, for instance, preserve the rich and specific group culture, saving it from a real cultural apocalypse? Can we still detect the particular aspects of the alternative and original culture?

Since the globalisation in the name of the free market, tends to cancel out solidarity and affects, who will take on the task of preserving and promoting the culture of interpersonal and social relationships ? Perhaps primary groups, local communities, religious groups, professional groups, political ideologies...?

Psychoanalytic culture, which values the subjective internal world, and interaction with others, must cope with this change, otherwise it will die out, as is happening with local and traditional cultures.

Where can we place the care of the self and of psychotherapy in this changing world? Can our profession aim to produce critical thought in order to produce perspectives that the

market logic tends to destroy?

According to Freud, the values of the mass destroy critical thought and individual will: can we keep alive our thinking capacity in the face of these financial transnational events?

Can group analysts save and reintegrate the values of subjectivity and intersubjectivity whilst dealing with the effects of individualism consumerism, utilitaristic relations,

In order to be able to do so, they must recognize the anthropologic levels of the cultural transformations both in society, and within themselves.

As individuals and professionals we are immersed in the contemporary world's paradigms: the gift and the market exchange. How does this fact of being immersed in these paradigms work in the therapy setting?

What is the meaning of payment? What are the motivations and the personal and symbolic gains we expect from our work and from our patients, also in relation to other professions?

The same theme is central for EATGA's workshop: what interest and expectation will the participants and staff place on the workshop? Why do we meet? What do we really want to exchange? What is the role of payment? What do we earn?

WORKSHOP SETTING AND LOCATION

Following EATGA tradition, the workshop could be divided into small (or median) groups and the large group.

The workshop will take place in

PALAZZO STERI CHIARAMONTE

an impressive building dating back to 1300, where the Inquisition was located in Torquemada's times, now headquarters of the University Rectorate, and in the Hotel de France, now the University guesthouse, once prestigious hotel (it hosted Freud, Ferenczi, Oscar Wilde, etc.). Both buildings are situated next to the magnificent Piazza Marina.

Rooms at the University guesthouse will be available for participants at the price of €35 per night.

The price for the workshop will be €250 before 15 May, 330 afterwards.

Participants coming from Eastern countries and students: €150 before 15 May and €200 afterwards. More information will be given in the final program

.For inquiries, contact Giuseppe Ruvolo, g.ruvolo@unipa.it.

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