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Introduction

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There is a saying for people who plan to undertake the long-distance walking route known as the 'Way of St James': it states that the *Camino de Santiago*¹ begins when you first think of it. That is how the book began; we began to think of it. Since 2006 we have exchanged our thoughts in emails and initial writings, and used a process of peer editing to learn from each other and produce this book. We have found ways to meet in person and listen to each other's presentations (at Brunel University Master Class events and international conferences in 2009, 2010 and 2011), and this had led to our connecting with many other occupational therapists (OTs) who have been using (i.e. thinking and working with) psychoanalysis as a theory and method within their clinical practice.

It has been a rich and rewarding time where each of the authors, at different times and/or in relation to certain specialist topics, has taken the lead. Although we come from diverse professional and personal backgrounds, we share a conviction in the importance of using psychoanalytic theory in occupational therapy. In this we have been good companions and learnt much from each other's clinical work and theoretical discussions. This book is a result of our collaborative desire to make this work available to scholars and clinical therapists, to form a wider 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998), where new projects, clinical discussions and writing can emerge.

At its heart the book discusses the work that we have practised, learnt, thought about and carry within as we engage with clients, students and colleagues. Our hope is that the book will provide a basis for serious study by therapists who are interested in psychoanalytic theory and may have begun their own journey into the internal landscape of the emotional understanding of people and what they 'do'.

¹ The 1000-year-old pilgrimage to the shrine of St James in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela is known in English as the 'Way of St James' and in Spanish as the *Camino de Santiago*. Over 100,000 pilgrims travel to the city each year from points all over Europe and other parts of the world (Wikipedia, 2012).

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There are 13 chapters in all (including this one) and the book has been divided into three overarching themes; theory, application and research. The first section takes the classic psychoanalytic theories (e.g. Freud, Klein, Bion, Winnicott and Bowlby) and considers their influence on occupational therapy practice and thinking. The second section is devoted to an explanation of a psychoanalytic occupational therapy model (MOVI) and this is followed with further discussions of psychoanalysis in clinical occupational therapy practice. The final section describes research methods and projects that have incorporated psychoanalytic thinking in occupational therapy.

Each chapter could be read as an extended case study but we hope there is sufficient cross-reference between the different contributions to make for a coherent whole. In many ways it has been hard to choose the order of work for the linear structure that the book offered. The core of the book lies in understanding MOVI (Chapter 7), an occupational therapy model, and we would suggest that readers develop a dual vision where MOVI can be held in mind as they refer to the earlier chapters on Freud, Klein and Bion (Chapter 3), Bowlby (Chapter 5) and the therapeutic use of self (Chapter 2).

There are certain terms in current occupational therapy literature which have gained professional ascendance – for example, using the term ‘client’ rather than ‘patient’, and ‘occupation’ not ‘activity’ – which we have decided to use interchangeably. This is not a form of political rebellion against the discussions on client-centred practice or the value of understanding occupation, but belongs to the eclectic theoretical background we have used to develop an integration of psychoanalytic thinking in occupational therapy.

We are very grateful for the encouragement that Katrina Hulme-Cross, Rupert Cousens and Sara Crowley-Vigneau, the health sciences commissioning editors at Wiley-Blackwell, have given us during this time. Without their active support we might still have been thinking about writing the book and not have completed it!

Finding our way

In this section, each author introduces themselves to the reader, saying how it was that they began establishing a link between psychoanalysis and occupational therapy. We hope these brief introductions will provide an illustration of our individual (even idiosyncratic) and shared interests in using psychoanalytic thinking in our work as occupational therapists.

Lindsey Nicholls

In 2002, after my rather clumsy presentation at a mental health conference on the use of dreams in clinical work, I was generously invited by Jennifer Creek to contribute a chapter on my work for her forthcoming book, *Contemporary Issues in Occupational Therapy* (Creek and Lawson-Porter, 2007). It was a professional lifeline for me as I had recently moved to the UK from South Africa

and found myself floundering in a discourse full of positive affirmations and seemingly (only) conscious intensions. Any consideration of the unconscious aspects of clients and professionals had been subsumed by an emphasis on partnership working and recovery. I attempted to give voice to my concerns about this loss of thoughtfulness about the unconscious:

I have had an interest in and involvement with a psychoanalytic view of occupational therapy for so much of my professional life that I can no longer see clearly without these conceptual lenses.² It has been a concern to me that over the past 40 years a psychoanalytic discourse in occupational therapy has almost completely disappeared from our professional literature, except for a few voices (Banks and Blair, 1997; Cole, 1998; Collins, 2004; Daniel and Blair, 2002a; 2002b; Creek, 1997; Hagedorn, 1992), and it has been my wish to persuade occupational therapists to consider (or reconsider) what psychoanalysis can offer us in our endeavour to alleviate the suffering of our clients and support their sense of purpose in day to day life.

(Nicholls, 2007, p. 58)

When I wrote this entreaty to the profession, much admiring and quoting Margaret Daniel's work, I didn't know we would meet, that she worked as a clinical specialist psychodynamic occupational therapist in Glasgow and that we would become friends. I didn't know that Julie Cunningham Piergrossi and Carolina de Sena Gibertoni were working in Milan, Italy, using an 'occupational play space' in which children and adolescents could discover aspects of themselves through their choice of objects and activity in the containing presence of a psychoanalytic occupational therapist.

Then a wonderful synchronistic event took place. In 2006 I was the first speaker in a group of four papers at the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) in Sydney, Australia. My paper used the layered story from the book *Life of Pi* (Martel, 2003) as an illustration of the concerns I had with some of the concepts in 'client-centred practice': that it can ignore unconscious motives, ambivalent emotions and contradictory behaviour (see Chapter 2). The paper seemed to go well and when I sat down a woman moved to the seat next to me, clasped my wrist and asked me where I was going. I was a little alarmed at the strength of her grip and told her I would be staying until the end of the session. 'Good,' she said. 'I

² The idea of theory (structure) being used as a lens through which to view the world – 'a pair of spectacles with a specially tinted filter' – comes from Hagedorn (1992, p. 14).

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didn't want you to disappear.' It was Julie and she gave the last talk in the group of four papers.

Julie's presentation described the response postgraduate students had to learning about the MOVI model (see Chapter 11). MOVI incorporates an understanding of the conscious and unconscious choices, actions and words of patients within a containing environment of a 'play space'; a room full of activity choices and a therapist. While hearing about their work in Italy, delivered in Julie's eloquent, measured voice, I began to cry. This work took into account the conscious and unconscious aspects of the client and therapist, through the communication involved in 'doing' something together. MOVI captured a way of thinking and working that was an alternative to the highly contested ground taken by other practice models (e.g. the MOHO, KAWA and CMOP). But in truth, my tearful response to her talk was because I no longer felt alone.

It was through Julie that I met her colleague and collaborator, the Italian author Carolina de Sena Gibertoni, and this completed the initial learning group. Carolina's knowledge and application of core psychoanalytic theory in occupational therapy has been important in locating the book in the classic psychoanalytic texts. I have valued what each author has contributed in their understanding of theory as lived through the experience of working with clients and activities in the intimate relational space of emotions.

Perhaps I can end my introduction with where I began: by paying attention to the unconscious. It has been in my personal analysis that I have found an inner coherence and capacity for creativity. My experience of psychoanalytic psychotherapy has given me a deep belief in the efficacy of this approach to working with others.

I have never doubted the existence of the unconscious; in fact it was quite a relief when I realised during my first experience of an analysis, at the age of 23, that my dreams, thoughts and feelings were a language that I had not yet learnt to understand, but that were available to me as a guide to my internal life. Perhaps it is this investment in one's own internal life that is the most daunting and fulfilling in working within a psychoanalytic framework with clients. Bion (1991), an analyst who is considered a prodigious and original thinker, wrote in his autobiography that having recognised his most primitive self, capable of almost any heinous crime, he could better understand his clients and their struggles.

(Nicholls, 2010, p. 32)

Julie Cunningham Piergrossi

The event that started out the adventure of this book for me was my meeting up with Lindsey Nicholls (already described by her) in 2006 at the World Congress in Sydney. By pure chance we were presenting our papers in the same session and she spoke before I did. I remember listening to her psychoanalytic discourse and being both astounded and delighted at how it fitted together with my own thoughts. At the same time she was opening my mind to new ideas and I remember running up to her immediately afterwards and asking her not to leave until I had spoken, that I needed to talk to her. I was afraid she would be lost in the more than 2000 therapists present and that I would never find her again. In the general discussion following my talk she asked me two pertinent and thought-provoking questions which are always such a gift in a situation like that. Later we began to talk together and we haven't stopped since.

My interest in psychoanalysis began when I studied occupational therapy in the USA back in the 1960s and has never wavered since, even though my profession has changed immensely in the intervening years.

When I arrived in Italy in 1969 I became part of a group of psychoanalysts called 'Il Ruolo Terapeutico', with whom I began my training which is still ongoing. My case presentations, in supervision together with colleagues who are psychoanalysts, have always aroused curiosity in some and consternation in others. It was difficult when I heard people I respected tell me that the presence of the activities and the materials during the therapy sessions could be an impediment to the therapeutic process. In 40 years of working together things have changed as I have learned to put words to my 'doing' and my colleagues have accepted the fact that baking a cake can have psychoanalytic potential.

'Ruolo Terapeutico' was instrumental in making clear for me the importance of the structure of the therapy as a container for the process, a concept which led to the understanding of choice as part of the setting (the structure) of the occupational therapy experience using the Vivaio Model (MOVI).

I am especially grateful to Sandro Bonomo for his continual support of my work. It was Sandro who helped me to really understand the emotions around choices, especially concerning the complex aspects of unpredictability and its therapeutic value. My psychotherapist colleague, Elisabeth de Verdiere, was another strong supporter of occupational therapy with a psychoanalytic theory base and helped Carolina and myself in the founding of 'Il Vivaio' and in developing and carrying out the training programme for MOVI. The constant exchange with Carolina during the development of our model is a natural part of my existence,

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and much of my learning has come from her. Supervision, written contributions to a professional psychoanalytic journal, reading groups, seminars and my own personal psychoanalysis have helped me on my way, and of course my best teachers have always been the children and their families who came to me for help.

I can never think about myself as psychoanalytically trained without thinking first about myself as an occupational therapist. I think I have been an occupational therapist from when I was a child playing with my grandmother's box of odds and ends. I have always loved 'doing': cooking, sewing, woodworking and just making and fixing things. Being able to use 'doing' (which has always been therapeutic for myself) for helping others has been a privilege and a huge stroke of luck in enabling me to have a job I love. Because occupational therapy did not exist when I arrived in Italy, part of my time has always been dedicated to developing and teaching the basic profession. I have always strongly stressed the importance of keeping occupations in occupational therapy.

As an American living and working in Italy I have had the privilege of knowing two cultures well. The Italian influence on my life and work has been enormous, and living in a country with people so relational and expressive of complex emotion has contributed to my understanding of that part of myself which in turn has helped me in my work with very sick children. At the same time, my American part was always encouraged by Carolina, who never tired of pointing out to me the positive aspects of my first and formative culture and how important it was to combine the two.

This book is a continuation of my 'conversations' with Lindsey and my exchanges with Carolina in an ongoing search for ways to further develop and implement clinical excellence in psychoanalytically oriented occupational therapy.

Margaret Daniel

I remember being interviewed to become a member of the Scottish Institute of Human Relations in Scotland and being asked how I knew that I had an unconscious. This thought still stays with me as a question that I only manage to glimpse at in myself, but can see much more easily in someone else, through slips of the tongue, forgotten agreements or an off-the-cuff remark. I am curious to know more about how our unconscious influences us, something we cannot see or be aware of in ourselves, yet which has such an impact on our experiences and choices, professionally, organisationally and socially.

My journey has been mainly based in Glasgow, where I am a Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist in Psychotherapy. I have worked for over 35 years in the NHS where my career has been devoted to Mental Health and especially to the field of psychotherapy. I built up further training at the Scottish Institute of Human Relations and I have attained senior accreditation as a psychodynamic counsellor with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). I went on to gain a Master's degree in Psychoanalytic Studies from the University of Sheffield, in which I attempted to unite the dialogue between psychodynamic thinking and occupational therapy. In expanding my unique post as a clinical specialist I needed to find a way to identify and meet with other likeminded occupational therapists. This was limited in Scotland and an opportunity came about to develop a website called the National Exchange for Psychodynamic Occupational Therapists (NEPOT), which is a self-regulating intranet community that is located within the NHS Mental Health Specialist Library and aims to link and provide support for occupational therapists interested in psychodynamic thinking.

As a Member of the Scottish Institute of Human Relations I have been involved in the training of psychodynamic counsellors and worked in organisational consultancy projects which took psychodynamic thinking out into the voluntary and public sectors. It is in keeping with its founder, Jock Sutherland's philosophy of taking psychodynamic thinking beyond therapy and into the community. I was invited to become a Trustee of the Sutherland Trust, which carries on Sutherland's ideas by supporting human relations work in health, education and social services through the application of psychodynamic ideas and practices. One of the lectures introduced me to Dr Una McCluskey and her research work on adult attachment. I decided to join one of her groups for professional caregivers and have gone on to do further training in York in this approach and theory, which she developed in collaboration with Dorothy Heard and Brian Lake (Heard, Lake and McCluskey, 2009; Heard, McCluskey and Lake, 2011). For occupational therapists I believe this approach endorses how creative activities can validate and restore a person's sense of well-being. It also links with my work and interest in supervision, where a collaborative approach can enhance learning.

My connections to the other authors came through a chance meeting with the then Director of Occupational Therapy at Brunel University, Christine Craik, who was my first Head Occupational Therapist. She drew my attention to an article she thought might interest me, recently published by her colleague. I read Lindsey's article (Nicholls, 2003) and excitedly made contact as I had

discovered someone else who was writing about the influence of the felt experience. This too was how I had felt on reading Julie and Carolina's work (Piergrossi and Gibertoni, 1999) while studying for my Master's. The chance of meeting and working with them was an incredible opportunity that I would never have imagined possible and has led to a cross-fertilising of ideas and interests.

I am ever indebted to the patience and generous feedback I received from my colleagues in occupation therapy, nursing, counselling and psychotherapy. I am also appreciative of the time that people took in reading over the material and helping me to fine tune my thoughts. Special thanks go to Samantha Flower, Sheena Blair, Sue Jervis, Eileen MacAlister, Una McCluskey and Paul Arnesen. I also need to thank my son, Kenny, for his support and endurance throughout this task.

Carolina de Sena Gibertoni

It was 1980 and I was visiting an Italian friend in London. We were having breakfast when her telephone rang and surprisingly it was for me. Who could be calling me in London? It was Gianna Polacco from the Tavistock Clinic, to whom I had written some time back, and she was arranging an appointment with Lina Generali Clements for an admissions interview for the Tavistock training programme in Milan. This was the moment that began my tie to the institution which illuminated my path of knowledge and contributed to transferring psychoanalytic concepts to our profession (occupational therapy).

I was working in Milan together with Julie Cunningham (who had come to Italy from America) and Elisabeth de Verdiere, a psychoanalytic psychotherapist working with severely disturbed autistic and psychotic children and adolescents. Julie had introduced me to occupational therapy using a model based on Gail Fidler's work. I became aware of areas of shadow, obscure aspects of what we were doing, curiosities that seemed to demand responses.

I had completed my own personal analysis and knowing myself better helped me to establish a different kind of relationship with my young patients and with their parents; it was as if their emotions and mine were entering and demanding space in the setting. I was continuing my training with Donata Miglietta e Mirella Curi Novelli in analytic psychodrama, and participating in psychoanalytic study groups with Corrao, Gaburri, Napolitani and the Roman group connected with the journal *Quaderni di Psicoterapia Infantile*. The Italian world of psychoanalysis was very lively. However, child psychoanalysis in Italy was just

beginning. It was an experience that came from afar, particularly from the British world, and I felt the need to know more about children, to begin a training course like that proposed by the Tavistock Clinic. The appointment with Lina Clements had great importance for me, but how would the admission interview go?

It was a foggy Milanese afternoon and I remember the surprise when the door was opened by an elderly lady with a kind smile. She had me sit down and guided me easily into a conversation. After about an hour she told me I was suitable and could present a request for admission either to the course which would be starting in Milan two years later or to the one in Rome, where all of the teachers would be coming from the London Tavistock Clinic, which would begin that same year. I did not hesitate: if my application was accepted, I would choose Rome.

And that is how it all turned out. It was not easy for me. I was working; I had a family with two young children; the trip to Rome from Milan was long and costly; and there was an enormous amount of studying and preparation between one meeting and the next. But it was worth it! I presented my weekly 'Baby Observations' to Marta Harris and Donald Meltzer, and what I learned was often a surprise for me. Their seeming disagreements, fresh and lively, revealed two different points of view, full of wisdom in respect to how much movement could be seen in the observer, the baby and the whole context. As meeting after meeting passed in Baby Observations, learning to observe, paying attention to detail, finding an emotional resonance, became the instruments that would accompany me in my whole working life.

I took part in the Tavistock training for many years, attending seminars with Francis Tustin, Jeanne Magagna, Gianna Polacco, Menzies Lyth and Anton Obholzer in a precise training for working with groups. The Tavistock training, together with the Italian contributions, permitted me that 'fertile contamination' with occupational therapy which, up until then, was still confined to the goal of functional independence. I felt that it was time to release our occupational therapy from its medical constraints by giving it the new role of contemplating the dynamics of relationships that are born during clinical practice.

The rest is written in this book. For long decades Julie and I have worked side by side, exchanging ideas and presenting at national and international congresses. We have had continuous interaction with Italian colleagues, psychoanalysts and students both within and outside of the university in therapy rooms and in various institutions. The emotions that were discovered in our occupational therapy practice found a specific theoretical location when a relational model of occupational therapy (MOVI) was born.

In recent years, following the happy coincidence of their meeting that Lindsey and Julie recount, we have participated in the Brunel Master Classes on Psychoanalytic Thinking in Occupational Therapy (2009, 2010, 2011). This has been an enriching experience, an exchange of thoughts with a common base that the far-sightedness of Lindsey willed into a book. And I stop here.

If I think about it, the English and American influence on my working life was fundamental. And yet . . . I still cannot speak English with the same fluid thoughts that my mind has allowed.

Finding the words

As we have said earlier, this book was written to begin a conversation with our colleagues. Since 2006, when the four of us established a correspondence, we have had many contributions from – and lively discussions with – clinical and academic therapists, at the Brunel master classes and international conferences. Our book offers an opportunity to engage with the thinking and clinical work undertaken by occupational therapists who engage with the relational and symbolic world of the client. The case examples, embedded in every chapter, pay careful attention to the emotionally nuanced events that take place within and between therapist and client, and what is done (or not done) in the therapeutic encounter. It is within this relationship that a shift or change can take place in the inner world of the client. This is essentially slow, painstaking work where small emotional gains can be measured in the patient's capacity for creative thought and/or play. It is deeply rewarding work and, because therapists need to understand the conscious and unconscious experiences of the client, it is helpful for the therapist to have their own psychodynamic psychotherapy and supervision.

Conclusion

Once begun, the work of analysis through acknowledging feelings, thoughts, associations and reflections never ends. This work is the essence of relationships (love) and creativity (art, poetry and music). Freud stated that that wherever his theory led him, he found a poet had already been there. T. S. Eliot (1959) captures the struggle to articulate what is known, learnt from experience, better than any theoretical paper on the subject. As Palmer (1979) stated, using Eliot's work from East Coker, 'Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt . . . Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure' (p. 171). This quote seems to describe how difficult it is to articulate (find the words for) the discoveries of what it is to be human. This knowledge seems to be in a state of being found and lost, only to be found again. We are hoping that psychoanalytic thinking, which was present in the early theoretical papers on occupational therapy (Fidler and Fidler, 1963), will be found and enjoyed again by a wide collection of therapists.



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