

Neville Singh belongs to the second generation of Edinburgh-based practitioners who knew Jock Sutherland, having been a member of a multi-disciplinary group of Royal Edinburgh Hospital staff who met with Jock during 1973 for support and supervision.

Neville is currently Staff Counsellor for Lothian Primary Care Trust and, in a modest way, he has been fulfilling one of Jock's hopes: to bring non-reductive psychodynamic understanding to a wider professional and public audience, since 1978.

Neville is a member of SIHR. While Honorary Librarian of the Institute, he was responsible for acquiring and transferring the psychoanalytic libraries of the late John Bowlby and Jock Sutherland. He describes these two ventures as definitely labours of love. From 1986 until his death, Jock and Neville met regularly for "conversations" about their mutual interest in philosophy and psychoanalysis. (In time, Jock may be recognised as a philosopher of psychoanalysis),

In this re-visit of the 1969 paper, Neville is reminding us of the broad scope and continued relevance of Jock Sutherland's reflections on psychoanalysis-in-society.

PSYCHOANALYSIS IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

by

J.D. Sutherland.

Int. J. Psychoanal. (1969)

A Re-visit Thirty Years Later

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Introduction

For quite some time I had been meaning to re-read Jock's 1969 paper. Then came 1999 which coincided nicely with the 30th anniversary of its publication. Also, from the perspective of the continuing evolution of society and its structures, it occurred to me that we are now in an **advanced** post-industrial society, with its inherent complexity, challenges and uncertainties. Furthermore, in the contemporary dynamic/problematic melting-pot of socio-political-cultural ideas we are living in a **post** post modern age. That is, we seem to be tacitly retrieving the genuinely beneficial ideas of modernism like ideals, hopefulness, open-mindedness, critical-constructive dialogue/debate, after two decades of epistemological nihilism (akin to attacks on thinking) and a perplexing-perturbing endorsement of moral relativism/moral indifference by the intellectual community. It is as though the Ego Ideal disappeared in contemporary intellectual discourse, except in outposts of "old-fashioned" Freudian metapsychology. Incidentally, we need to remember that metapsychology is also concerned with the human psyche-in-society: witness, for example, the pressing current problem of psycho-social adaptation presciently explored long ago by Heinz Hartmann (Do we still remember him?). Jock Sutherland's principle of **responsible** autonomy comes to mind.

During one of our regular theoretical conversations in his twilight years Jock reflected that even though he disagreed with the conceptual model of psychoanalysis he always respected Hartmann's capacity to conceptualise beyond immediate clinical concerns, thereby addressing social-historical reality as well, including politics. How else could a major theorist-metapsychologist have delivered a public lecture on "Psychoanalysis and Moral Values" in the hey day of American Capitalism (1960)! Robert Waelder was similarly gifted. Very interestingly, Heinz Hartmann would have been Medical Director of the New York Psychoanalytic Clinic around the same time that Jock Sutherland was Medical Director of the Tavistock Clinic.

Ironically, there is a re-emergence of discussions about, and active participation in, civic virtues and democratic civil society here in Scotland e.g. the Scottish Civic Forum by the ordinary lay public not familiar with the concept of the Ego Ideal.

Jock Sutherland was compassionate and humane but also rigorous and discerning theorist of an **inclusive** psychoanalysis which, like the wider society, is concerned with the vicissitudes (internal and external) of human relatedness and human estrangement in a changing world. This is exemplified in the perceptively broad scope of his writings including the 1969 paper which I decided to re-visit out of personal interest. This re-visit is a kind of appreciative remembering/ retrieval/ recovery.

I am reminded that the philosopher Martin Heidegger challenged thoughtful persons to consider "The End of Philosophy and the (recovery) of Thinking". Might there be some faint echo of that challenge for psychoanalysis-in-society today?

The Paper

Interestingly, Jock observed in the paper "We may have to contemplate being more involved in creating opportunities for sections of the public to learn more about psychoanalytic knowledge - and the mass media make quite new possibilities in this respect. It is particularly important that psychoanalytic thought should permeate to a far greater extent than at present our views on education. Instead of being pejoratively linked in the public mind with neurosis, is it not timely for its 'image' to be more identified with personal growth and development, i.e. with education?" Regarding Jock's use of the word "image" above, some of the ideas contained in this 1969 paper were later crystallised in the Edith Weigert/Malcolm Millar Lecture "The Psychodynamic Image of Man".

Jock's paper (together with others' equally prophetic observations of that time) pushes us to think and re-think our human situation now - both local and global - on the threshold of the 21st century. He noted in the paper's very first sentence "Our changing society has become a byword, and the nature of the changes are such that sociologists view these as representing the emergence of a new social order". He then observed presciently "Striking are the changes in the existential quality of life for the individual". It may not be fully appreciated that Jock remained passionately and intellectually attuned to the existential dilemma-theme-challenge alongside the psychoanalytic outlook. Indeed, he was ever mindful of the "Existential Core of Psychoanalysis". Jock continues "Our patients accordingly come less troubled by conflicts over instinctual impulses than by the bewilderment of a divided self. They present the schizoid futility of people alienated from those committed and responsible relationships to others, to themselves and to their achievements, that give zest to living, and satisfaction and happiness at each stage of the life-cycle". The foregoing could apply with equal relevance and seriousness to life in groups, institutions and organisations at the present time.

Jock's concerned reflections on the contribution of psychoanalysis in the post-industrial society happened to coincide with the various ideas being put into practice in developing community mental health. It was the time when the helping professions, especially social work, were seriously assimilating and integrating psychoanalytic - more broadly psychodynamic - knowledge in their attempts to understand and to alleviate psychological (personal) distress and stress. (Interestingly, Jock used the word "stress" often in the 1969 paper). He observed "It would be universally agreed that the kind of therapeutic work that a social case-worker or other professional helper can carry out appropriately does not attempt what the psychoanalyst does. This limitation need not be further considered because what is normally attempted by others has its own validity as well as being so often the only help available. It must, however, be admitted that the attitudes sometimes conveyed by psychoanalysts that this kind of work is a poor substitute for what more thoroughgoing analysis might achieve, is more a professional fantasy than established fact." He goes on "For many, psychological help, and particularly in crisis situations, is probably best

given by the kind of relationship the good social or other professional worker can make - one in which the whole person with his own resources and those of his life space are kept firmly as the focus of concern. The main danger here is thus not in the nature of the new facilities provided by well-trained professional groups. It consists in their too rapid expansion in response to public demand - with a dilution of standards and attempts to assert that less help than is really needed constitutes adequate services". That last sentence speaks volumes in the current climate of mental health services "on offer" to persons in psychological need.

There are lots more insightful observations contained in Jock's 1969 paper which remain powerfully relevant to us in the psycho-social-educational professions. I will proceed to lift them out of the text, with occasional comments of my own on their various resonances with current ideas and questions about psychoanalysis/psychodynamics and beyond.

"There is a fairly common assumption that getting patients into groups will of itself be adequately helpful to them. It does not apparently matter whether the professional leader has and psychodynamic training or not; all he has to do is to get people 'communicating more freely' - one of the clichés of today, as fashionable as it is often devoid of articulate purpose".

"In turning to the nature of the society we are entering, I mentioned at the outset that the social transition upon us is of a nature that warrants the conception of these changes as moving towards a new order. These changes are familiar to all of us; but their familiarity does not remove the need for us to try to make more specific their nature and hence to take more appropriate actions to manage constructively their effects".

"The changes made by the psychoanalytic method, however, have traditionally been within a relatively stable social environment...The issue at stake is what we have to offer, by contrast, to people experiencing movement and change as part of their milieu." "We have to ask ourselves if we are really keeping psychoanalytic knowledge in step with the times...We must ask ourselves whether or not it is out of line with modern behavioural science - and keep in mind that not all our critics have only resistances as the determinants of their

thought processes". Recent developments in cognitive science have much to offer psychodynamics for understanding the rich complexity of psychological functioning. Already, cognitive scientists and open-minded psychoanalysts are exploring and discovering convergences between neuro-physiology and psychoanalysis. Very interestingly, Jock noted in his 1969 paper "the biological roots and the structuring of the personality then seem to get discarded in favour of what societal processes can do." We remember that Jock was the great integrator and we may bear that in mind as regards the Institute's plans and prospects for future shared endeavours.

"A lack of congruence with the current scientific world is fostered by the organisational forms of psychoanalysis. These consist almost entirely of training institutes, and even though several of these conduct research programmes, the latter are frequently confined to the data obtained within the psychoanalytic situation." We are reminded that Jock had trained originally in science!

"Taking the changing emphasis for the individual, we see him as moving from an independent, self-controlled, achieving person who has to endure a good deal of restriction - both from his outer and inner environments with associated tensions and distress - to one who will be much more interdependent, more self-expressing and self-actualising, and with much more freedom as a result to enjoy living."

"If the integrity of the self is threatened, change is resisted - often violently, in keeping as it were with the defence of our most precious possession. With so much change in the fabric of society, it seems highly likely that it is the threat to the self that is most closely related to the many manifestations of anxiety that we see around us."

"The formulation of a good account of the development and functioning of the self would be of major value in helping society to cope with some of its current ideo-existential problems. A whole area that is pressing for more clarification is the study of the dynamics of the ego-ideal. Our patients have perhaps led us, understandably enough, to be preoccupied with the ego, the super-ego and the instincts, The ego-ideal is as it were at the interface between much of our self-feeling and the values in society which are congruent with it."

"The situation in the field is one of widening awareness of the nature of psychological stress and one that is now prompting remedial action. We also have to keep in mind that increasing permissiveness will mean much more need to seek professional guidance."

The final section of Jock's 1969 paper is headed prophetically "The relationship of the mental health services to the community: ecological strategy". I will quote it in full.

"A widespread network of therapeutic services will clearly be of the utmost significance in the community's striving for constant betterment. The people seeking help represent those who for a great variety of reasons are unable to function as they would wish in their community. The data available in all of the therapeutic agencies must therefore be fed back to those in all key positions concerned with the improvement of our society. To do so involves much further work, e.g. to elucidate some of the general processes underlying the very complex array of specific manifestations of disorder. The knowledge gained in the therapeutic centre about the intrapsychic factors in 'breakdowns' has to be subjected to the expertise that social scientists can bring so that the social forces affecting the community can be identified. This could be achieved by having the specialist therapeutic centre as one unit in a complex - a group of units whose overall mission could be described as the study of human relations. The resources of this larger complex would be such that studies could be made of an appropriately comprehensive kind. This complex would, in addition to maintaining active internal scientific exchange, seek relationships with the relevant sections of the community, especially with those concerned with the planning for the main services affecting the social and physical environments."

This is as good an articulation of a specific ecological strategy as one could envisage in an advanced post-industrial society. In fact, Jock Sutherland's important paper merits careful study in its entirety.

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