

Prague Neuropsychanalysis Group:

From Moravian Screen Memories to Groups, Complexity, Psychosomatics and Bi-Logic

This is the first bulletin of the Prague Neuropsychanalysis Group (PNG), working with the Czech Psychoanalytical Society (ČPS). A heightened interest in the relation of neuroscience to psychoanalysis followed the conference marking the 150th anniversary of Freud's birth in Moravia held in Prague in May 2006, entitled *Freud's Screen Memories in the Light of Contemporary Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences*. Neuropsychanalytic papers (see: <http://www.psychoanalyza.cz/Actions/20060504-06konfKryciVzpom/Texts/>) included Mancia's *Memory and Unconscious: From Freud to Us (How the Neurosciences Can Contribute to Psychoanalysis)*; Feve and Hart's *Dreams in the Fields of Neurology and Psychoanalysis*; Falk's *Psychoanalysis and Neuroscience: Cooperation or Integration?* and Galatzer-Levy's *Screen Memories and Non-linear Dynamics (Chaos Theory)*.

In July 2007, Dr. Erika Mlejnkova and Joseph Dodds attended the International Neuropsychanalysis Congress in Vienna and on 5th January 2008, the ČPS held an all-day seminar on Freud's (1950) *Project for a Scientific Psychology* led by Dr. Miroslav Borecký, a senior training analyst. Mr. Dodds briefly reported back from the Vienna Congress, raising the idea of a neuropsychanalysis work group. On 19th April 2008 Dr. Borecký led a further seminar on Freud's *Project* including presentations by Mr. Dodds on *What Is Neuropsychanalysis?* and Dr. David Holub on critiques of neuropsychanalysis (see Blass and Carmeli, 2007). The seminar concluded by discussing potential benefits and pitfalls of neuropsychanalysis, and its relevance, or not, to psychoanalytic clinical practice. Three participants followed up this final question by attending the British Psychoanalytical Society's 'English Speaking Conference', featuring a debate on this topic between Mark Solms and Rachel Blass. While Solms formally won the debate, this important issue is far from being settled and remains controversial.

The University of New York in Prague (UNYP) has approved a new course 'Neuropsychanalysis', created by Joseph Dodds, who led a group of UNYP psychology students to the 'Neuropsychanalysis London Workshop' in December 2007 and in April 2008, where he gave a 'datablitz' presentation on *Social Neuropsychanalysis and the Ecology of Group Dynamics*, on the importance of group-level phenomena for neuropsychanalysis, and the relevance of non-linear dynamics and complexity theory. This is further developed in Mr. Dodds' contribution to the book *Simulating the Mind: A Technical Neuropsychanalytical Approach* (eds. Dietrich et al. 2008), entitled 'Artificial Group Psychodynamics: Emergence of the Collective', integrating neuropsychanalysis, group analysis, complexity theory, and swarm- and agent-based computer modeling. The December 2008 issue of *Revue Psychoanalytická Psychoterapie*, journal of the Czech Society for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (ČSPAP), includes a neuropsychanalysis article in Czech, 'Od psychosomatiky k neuropsychanalýze: Přínos pařížské školy' (From Psychosomatics to Neuropsychanalysis:

Contributions of the Paris School) by Joseph Dodds, kindly translated by Dr. Eva Klimentova, with help from Dr. David Holub and Dr. Michel Šebek. The PNG has also made contact with the British Association of Art Therapists' 'Art Therapy in Neurology' group, in terms of possible collaboration in the area of art, art therapy, and neuropsychanalysis. For further educational/outreach purposes, a new website has been created for the group (www.npsa.cz), which also aims to collect together all neuropsychanalysis online videos, with help from the International Neuropsychanalysis Society. Finally Martin Babik, founding member of the new Slovak Psychoanalytical Society and candidate in the ČPS, is studying the relationship between neuropsychanalysis and the mathematical-psychoanalytical ideas of Ignacio Matte Blanco's 'bi-logic' (Matte Blanco 1998), an author he is currently translating into Slovak.

The PNG aims to try to clarify the mutual relevance of neuroscience and psychoanalysis, to encourage dialogue between neuroscientists, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychoanalysts and others concerned with the mind/brain, to initiate a Prague-based research programme, to promote educational projects, and to become an active part of the International Neuropsychanalysis Society. We welcome any contributions or contacts from other groups.

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