

## Globalization – a possibility of finding oneself?

The elucidation of the human being's basic structures is one of the preconditions preceding the immediate taking-in of that which shows itself to us. This clarification requires a phenomenological vision of the essence, which perfuses empiricism. Phenomenology, the method of Daseinsanalysis, is a Being-open for the miracle of our world, which stretches out in the vastness between heaven and earth..

The buzzword "Globalization" has mutated into an anxiety-triggering factor. The worldwide intertwining of economic processes, cross-financing, and the global orientation of corporations has become a multiple challenge.

In view of the necessity of meeting the health problems and needs of many foreigners – migrants, foreign workers, asylum-seekers – the health sector is encountering more and more so-called "multicultural challenges." If the insight is gaining ground with regard to purely somatic illnesses that a merely objectifying and generalizing attitude to the diseased person is insufficient and we learn to include the cultural background, the living environment and the uniqueness of each patient, all this applies, of course, to an even higher degree to psychiatry and psychotherapy.

How can we approach and assist a person hailing from a completely foreign culture? What does foreign mean, and what is it, this *foreignness*? Etymologically, "foreign" initially meant "far away," later also "unknown, unfamiliar."

The unknown and unfamiliar usually causes fear as a first reaction and triggers a deprecatory attitude. But if we manage to stand up to this recognition and to bear the *foreign* – by relying on our fundamental Being-one – a fascinating phase of research and searching for meaning begins; we look for the "similar" in the "other" and vice-versa for the "other" in the "similar." In so doing, the incredible variety of potentialities-for-being opens time and again before our wondering eyes. Thus not only does the similar, familiar reveal itself in the initially foreign, but the still foreign, undeveloped also reveals itself in our own sphere. Inherent in the encountered *foreign* there is always the call to one's *own*. Our *own* shows itself in the dialogue with the *foreign*.

Consequently, the encounter with the »foreign« is of immediate significance for the theory and practice of psychotherapy since it is all about the development and unfolding of one's own, yet un-lived possibilities that go way beyond ourselves.

The *foreign* will probably never be completely fathomed, or rather: be made our own. It asks to be respected precisely as something *foreign* and to be preserved in its essential nature. One's *own* will barely show itself in the assimilation or misuse of the *foreign*, but rather in the active letting-be of the *foreign other* in his/her otherness.

When meeting persons from foreign lands, it is actually fairly easy to see our way rather quickly, to a certain degree anyway, based on the immediate understanding of Being and the equally primordial Being-with the other person. Although a lot of things may initially seem strange to us, we soon realize that the basic human needs and strivings, and even certain decisive situations in life, are the same everywhere, although not at all identical.

In his book »Indienfahrt eines Psychiaters« (A psychiatrist's travels in India) Medard Boss pointed out, with regard to his encounter with human beings in *foreign lands*:

»... to anticipate the most essential, completely unexpected finding: In not a single one of all those people could I discover a single human problem, a single emotion and behavioral mode, any fantasy, dream phenomenon, or a neurotic fixation, a psychotic syndrome which would have been fundamentally foreign and unknown to me based on my psychiatric-psychoanalytical experience with Westerners, however assiduously I was searching for and investigating them...«

We may encounter the *foreign* in foreign countries, in our own country, within ourselves, and it may break into our own existence at any time. It always challenges us to a discourse, even though the first response often consists in closing ourselves off.

The *foreign* may show itself in different ways. In the following examples from practice the *foreign* appears once in the shape of something threatening and once as a saving grace.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> case study

A 26-year old woman tells of a repeated dream. She is in her own apartment. A foreign, unknown power tries to invade her apartment from the outside through the door. The door is locked. She is afraid of the foreign and dares not check what is outside the door.

In subsequent dreams, the *foreign* comes closer and shows itself in more concrete terms. The noise is getting louder. There are scratches on the door, loud and howling noises. She is afraid. Again, the woman dreams that she is in her apartment. There is loud knocking on her door, bells are ringing, and then the doorbell sounds. In her dream she hopes she is experiencing merely a dream. When awake, she tells of a terrible force raging before her door and trying to break into her apartment.

One night she dreams that the apartment door is open and she is facing a huge bull. Its wild eyes tell her that it is after her. In the nick of time she is able to close and lock the door.

From then on, the bull appears almost every night in her dreams. She tries to flee, to hide, to lock herself up. Powerless, she is always at the mercy of the bull. In one of her dreams she feels safe from the bull in a locked room. But then she discovers a hole in the roof and she sees how the bull pushes its belly through the hole. Again she panics and runs away to make it to safety. Conspicuously, she is always alone in her dreams, nobody is helping her or tries to subdue the bull. In most cases she dreams herself in her parents' home where the bull appears.

With the regular return of the bull-dream, the dreamer's fear of the bull begins to fade and her curiosity is awakened. In the following dreams she begins to look for the bull, its whereabouts. In one of her dreams, the neighbor manages to appease the bull. There are also dreams in which the bull's threatening nature has decreased and its head takes on human traits. Slowly, the dreamer dares to move closer to the bull. In one of her dreams, she softly strokes the bull's neck. The bull lets her do it and even seems to like it, the same as the dreamer.

In the waking state, this woman had realized for some time that the bull-dream refers to her relationship to "masculinity," to her relationship to men, and to her approach to sexuality. She discovers what she already sensed, namely to what high degree in her waking state men were similarly foreign beings for her, as the bull initially in her dream.

In her waking state, the dreamer is living with a man in some sort of brother-sister relationship. He does not make great demands on their relationship. It is enough for him that she exists, takes care of his household, does his laundry and nurses him

when he is ill. For a long time, she had appreciated his contentedness and cuddly behavior. But for some time now, she has felt unsatisfied with this situation and she begins to reject his sluggishness.

Just as she had been able to gradually become friendly with the bull in her dream, she was able to allow more and more men to get closer to her when she is awake.

At a dance party she meets a man who is the opposite of her friend - vital, full of life, a go-getter. His impetuous nature reminds her of the bull in her dream. Initially, the man's disposition scares her, but at the same time his ways attract her more and more. In the end they get close and she feels at ease when they embrace.

In her original family, tenderness and eroticism were taboo.

She hails from a family with an attitude that repudiates anything "corporeal" and she had not been able so far to detach from this attitude. In childish dependence from her parents she scarcely dared to follow her own path. Thus a lot of things outside of her parents' home had remained foreign to her, or she had closed herself off from it.

"Masculinity" was foreign to her, and now it urgently demanded entry. This *foreign* thing could no longer be locked out. In the same measure in which she had initially kept the "masculine" at arm's length, to the same degree it impressed itself on her, to begin with in her dream, in the shape of the bull. The vitality of the bull in her dream also speaks of the vitality of this woman. But it scares her and does not match her self-image at all.

Urged by the therapist to take a closer look at the foreign power that requests to be admitted in her dreams, she began to relinquish her defensive attitude, or in other words, she could no longer keep out this foreign power. By allowing the *Foreign*, which took concrete shape as the bull, she was referred to her own potential of behaving and relating.

More and more she discovered how withdrawn and restricted to the world of her parents' home she was still living.

Just as she was able to gradually become friends with the bull in her dream, she was able in her waking state to permit the overtures and closeness of men.

Thus, the foreign, the initially threatening, fear-inspiring aspect became the rescuer that referred her to the possibilities of behavior not yet lived by her.

In the psychotherapy of neurotic persons, the *Foreign* often announces some as yet not appropriated new aspect. In emotionally numbed persons, dreams of animals are not at all rare. They are proof of an emerging vitality showing itself in animal shapes. Just as in our example a bull referred the dreamer to "masculinity," a man once dreamed of a cow that pointed to its genitals and thus called his attention to the "feminine." The powerful effect on the dreamer caused by such dreams of animals not only depends on the size of the animals that show themselves, but also on the degree of rejection these persons feel towards everything that is alive. Sometimes in a dream, for instance, small worms or maggots that bore themselves through the skin of the dreamer as a sign of returning vitality may lead to the most intense panic reactions.

2<sup>nd</sup> case study (The *Foreign* shows itself as threatening and redeeming)

A therapist in supervision reports on an analysand he calls Max:

He wakes in a sweat during the night, feeling tortured. In his dreams, he is persecuted by *foreign* powers, anonymous primordial forces and demons, which threaten to annihilate him. He is unable to counter this power or to face it. Impotent, he is at the mercy of these powers.

Max applied for treatment after he had suffered such a panic attack on an excursion in Asia that he had to call off the excursion and return home. He had earlier been in psychotherapy for five years because of panic attacks.

In the following sessions he tells about his life. His mother was a paraplegic and tied to a wheelchair even before he was born. Aged 17, she had had a benign tumor of the medulla, which had to be surgically removed. The operation went well, the tumor could be completely removed, but the operation had left her a paraplegic. Not to remain alone, she had paired up with a man and had two sons with him. Max was the elder. He was a lively child with a great urge to move. His mother could not cope with this. Tied to her wheelchair, it soon became too much for her and she rejected him time and again. His sundry attempts to get closer to her failed. Based on his own, unsolved problems (a son of a previous marriage had killed himself), the father had

difficulties with alcohol and - after having managed his own business - retired as an invalid. Moreover, the father was evidently jealous of Max since he rejected him, and thus there were stormy quarrels with his father when Max was still a child; they had even come to blows. At those instances, his brother was of help. He would sneak into his bed at night, where he felt rather safe; he found security and understanding with his brother. According to him, he would not have survived without his brother. In kindergarten, he was often locked out because of his restlessness and hyperactivity, which only increased his growing aggressiveness. In school, Max learned with ease and joy. It was remarkable that as a student, he was very successful regarding academic achievements, even though he had no stable relationships, became ever lonelier and emotionally stunted. Thus Max was frequently alone and had grown up lonely.

In an early youth camp he slept in a tent accommodating 12 children. He got to lie next to a boy. It was cold, there was little space, so they cuddled up to each other, which felt good. They kissed and fell asleep in each other's arms. From then on, he kept seeking the company of boys until, in his words, he outed himself as a homosexual. He lived in the world of homosexuals, behaved promiscuously, had lots of superficial relationships, with him subordinating himself, doing everything to prevent the relationship from breaking up. He had organized his life as follows: He was professionally successful and with the "gay scene" he had a community in which he felt safe. By this, his objectives in life and therapy were met. He assumed that he had been born with homosexual inclinations, he lived with his panic attacks and in case of an emergency, he took tranquilizers. His former therapist agreed with him that nothing more could be achieved, that he had to live with his panic attacks.

This rather covering therapy had helped him at that time, but in the end it had failed since it did not lead to a genuine overcoming of anxiety.

At the beginning of his therapy, Max externally gave the impression of a modest and pleasant person, but his eyes were restless, seeking support. He was most distressed by his fear of dreams in which he was pursued by strange powers, unknown to him, and by his panic attacks. His whole thinking and striving was exclusively focused on avoiding fear. According to his own statement, lying on the couch he felt even sicker and had to control himself. The therapist said: "Maybe it is now not so much a matter of controlling yourself, but of finding the courage to let go."

During treatment, he heard his therapist encouraging him time and again (the first time for Max) to pay attention to and do what and how things came to his mind. He should also pay attention to his dreams and report on them during the sessions. That was quite foreign to him, because he felt that to pay attention to and behave according to what comes to mind was egotistical, and he wanted to be anything but an egoist. He also heard that it was very much up to him to behave in a manner that would make it possible for him to realize his wishes.

Again, in the initial phase of his now 2<sup>nd</sup> analysis, the same aspects of his biography appeared as had been brought to light by his earlier therapy. But this time, the stakes were much higher. It was not merely a matter of how his environment had behaved towards him and how he had reacted, but it was about himself, who he is in essence and what task has been entrusted to him by his Being (existence). He discovered that he had a claim to a life of his own, that he need not live what others had made of him, but that he could lead a life that made sense to him.

He also began to pay attention to the power that kept reappearing in his dream, which pursued him and threatened to annihilate him. He discovers that this anonymous power has something to do with his parents who had behaved so destructively towards him.

In his waking state, Max began to withdraw from his mother, he actually began to hate her. He realized how very much she hampered his autonomous development. In her, he had merely seen the poor soul he was obliged to help, and who also demanded that.

With his father, he had had barely any contact for many years.

When he began to defend himself vis-à-vis his father, the latter, quite drunk, tried to throw the television set at him or he feared to be poisoned by him. According to his statement he then screamed everything at him, that he hated him, that he should leave him alone, that he would do us all a favor if he drove into a tree. After that, Max said, he was shaking for hours.

"My mother was so weak, she had surrendered, and I was lost in the process. It was worse than a concentration camp. As a child, I had wished for my real parents to

come some day. An ideal image kept me going: To be successful, to graduate from university, to have a wife and children, and the hope of getting my parents' support."

He was worried about his sexuality. He was only able to have anonymous sex with men, and as soon as somebody got closer, his potency disappeared; he was far from any enjoyment. He was ashamed of his childishness, his need for closeness and tenderness. He had great difficulty in learning to wait, which is inherent to any maturing process. Only the noncommittal closeness to a person with whom he ultimately did not have to commit was bearable to him at that time.

At the beginning of the second therapy, as already mentioned, in his dreams appeared almost exclusively anonymous primitive powers and demons, which persecuted him and threatened to annihilate him (and that after one therapy already completed).

Dream: An almighty instance watches and observes me through a small camera; I feel unbearable anxiety. If I make a mistake, I am punished with depressions. I do not know how this instance relates to me.

Another dream shows his infant-like need and the inaccessibility of his parents.

Dream: I am in a dark room, my bedroom. My whole body is shaking, I am as if under a spell. I am lying on the floor, want to crawl to the light switch, see a light, the door is ajar, the parents are outside, I want to get out at all costs - it does not work.

This loneliness weaves through my life; it still arises in bigger intervals and shows how difficult it is for me to reach out to somebody.

Max was surprised how clearly his dream shows his situation in his childhood.

Awake, he narrates for hours how painfully he missed closeness, how it could never develop.

Furthermore he told how important the closeness to his brother has become and how he was looking to get close to men. He was popular among women, got along well with a lady friend who also called when he was unwell. When she approached him with sexual innuendoes, he stopped the relationship. How fragile his sexuality was, is also shown in a dream.

Dream: I have cut off my penis with a knife; I run to mother to put it back on.

In his waking state he says that his mother always had wished he were a girl, and that she also treated him as one.

"I had to feign all the time to survive. This make-believe is currently my illness; not to be allowed to be who I basically am. I always wanted to run away since I was aware that they would finish me off."

In his relationships with men he was able to pay more attention to what felt right for him, and he developed a more stable relationship to a friend, which also survived crises.

His own feelings were still the most threatening aspect for him, and he does not dare to live them. Another dream as an example:

Dream: I go for a walk in the park and sit down in a rock garden. Two huge serpents come towards me. I want to get up and leave. The snakes bite me; I do not feel a whole lot and ask myself whether they were poisonous or not. Two persons are attacked by serpents and eaten up by them.

He complains repeatedly that he cannot love anyone. He says: "I cannot really let anyone get close to me; I am always afraid that a person might get too close to me and flood me. This is why I am so alone."

Max had so little ground under his feet that any closeness felt like an extreme danger to him, as a complete dissolution of himself in the partner, which caused him immense, mortal dread. In his dreams, struggles with pursuers increased, which he won, and he was able to wrangle down his father.

His fear of women, who cause fright to him, also manifested in his dreams.

Dream:

"A colleague at work would like to sleep with me. When she got too close, I ran away for fear. She ran after me; I feel terrible fear and anger."

On one occasion, Max tells that he knew a girl during his high school years who was very nice to him, and he also liked her and felt at ease with her.

When the therapist asked how he had felt in front of this girl, he broke out in a rush of panic. In the following session, and prior to that by phone, he told me that he did not see any purpose in therapy. According to him, the therapist had destroyed his identity as a homosexual and merely represented a simple scheme of psychoanalysis, namely that homosexuality was merely the consequence of his problems with his mother.

This is where his identity, which had arisen from the emergency situations due to his past and was resting on shaky legs, seems to have broken down. He was overcome with great resignation and hopelessness. Until then, he had not been able to obtain his identity from the "Letting-be-present," of the "Truth of Being," but instead had to patch his identity together as it had appeared to him based on his life-long entanglements.

In several subsequent conversations it was clarified with him that it was a matter of seeing who he really is and that it might possibly not be such a loss that this fragile identity had broken down.

One of his remarks was due to this insight: "It is not a matter of whether I am a homosexual or a heterosexual; all that matters is me, what is right for me and ultimately it is all about love, about being able to love."

Homosexuality is now for him also a possibility of getting something "masculine," something he did not find in his father.

Some time later, the panic attacks decreased and he was able to bear them without tranquilizers.

His relationship to his mother has also changed, and he relates to her more freely. He claims that he is now able to tell his mother how very much she had hampered his development. She can listen to him calmly now, and she is sorry. The gradual loosening of his rigid ties to his parents was accompanied by guilt feelings on his part.

As a matter of course, the relationship of the client to his therapist was of the foremost importance, also in this analysis. Initially, the therapist was uncanny for him and he had strong feelings of rejection towards the therapist. Then, he was slowly

able to accept the situation and simultaneously felt an intense fear of not being able to get away from him any more. But it happened almost by itself that the therapist appeared more and more often in his dreams, and that he dared to go further into the unexplored territory. "I need you; I cannot do it on my own yet." The therapist is a confidant for him, something of a father, something his own father never was.

Although Max was still afraid of getting involved in a trusting child-father relationship (as he described his relationship to his therapist), he gradually ceded to his wishes. During therapy sessions he was now more relaxed, did no longer lie fearfully, rigidly on the couch, and he was now able to cry without immediately feeling ashamed of the emerging emotions. Also, he needed his therapist's protection less and less and dared to be more authentic.

In his dreams, Max had to dig through underground chambers time and again, where he came across broken, seven-armed Jewish candelabra (menorah), among other things. In these dreams, Max evidently still encounters foreign aspects that need to be salvaged. These foreign aspects are related to his growing identity, which is developing in an eventful manner and which cannot be obtained from the ontical.

These examples from practice are to show how very much a person is able to change when he/she does not only stick to the ontical, as in the first therapy, but follows his/her Being, which shows in ones dreams and how dreams are able to help, or, respectively, that this Being could not be found without the dream.

Erna Hoch, a Swiss psychiatrist who had accompanied Medard Boss on his trip to India and who later, as a professor of Psychiatry was head of a university clinic for psychiatry in India for many years, dealt in depth with the increasing importance of encountering the *Foreign* due to globalization. She feels that Daseinsanalysis is particularly well suited to approach the *Foreign*. In analogy to the other in depth psychological therapies, DA does not only aim at freeing mentally suffering persons from their anguish by way of an elimination of symptoms, but intends to enable them to lead a life in openness yet at the same time responsibly. The medium of the striven-for change is the analytical conversation, which is to facilitate deeper insight and a discourse with ones own way of existing, in particular the confrontation with previously warded off areas. At that, it is not merely a matter of intellectual self-recognition, but of a holistic self-experience, a growth into the depth and a Being-

open to that which is, which we encounter in the world. Existential threats such as anxiety and guilt are to be accepted and endured.

The completely unbiased openness postulated by Daseinsanalysis, unencumbered by any theories, calling for openness to everything as it shows itself, has proven its value as a basis, not only for long-lasting, in-depth therapies, but also as an effective understanding of foreign persons and for developing an appropriate psychotherapeutic attitude in dealing with them. Time and again, in the course of such therapy, we have to remember the daseinsanalytic tenet, namely that we should encounter each person on the level where that person is able to be without effort and without being overtaxed, and that we use a language in keeping with the patient's intellectual horizon. This means, of course, that we have to familiarize ourselves with each particular way of "Being-in-the-world" as it pervades language, not only in typical idioms, but all the way to grammatical forms and, as a matter of course, to all that is not said explicitly.

Depending on one's own disposition and according to the depth of comprehension, one tends either to recognize general human similarities, or quite the contrary, rather to tracking the fascinating aspects of what remains foreign. The *foreign* demands to be respected and protected in its essence, precisely as *foreign*. The dark, unknown always remains in a flowing interchange with the bright part we have already made our own. The encounter with the *foreign* always also contains the call to our *ownmost*.

The fundamental question of the *foreign* that arises in the context of the globalization problem proves the irreplaceable significance of "Intercultural Psychotherapy" for the discovery of our *own* which at some point in time also was *foreign*. The encounter with the *foreign* is required for our *ownmost* to shine forth from the *foreign*.

In conclusion I ask myself whether both our *ownmost* and the *foreign* may not possibly be a gift from the same source and not a static possession.