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Now I See a Person

The Poetics of Learning Therapy – A Supervision Story

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INTRODUCTION

CHRISTOPHER

We present a moment, an event of family therapy supervision provided to graduate-level university students. We believe that this particular moment/event might unfold creative, responsive and renewing possibilities in the realm of supervision for students and supervisors alike.

We suggest supervision is an experience that does not have to be:

- about the *negation* of actions and attitudes determined to be undesirable by the supervisor, by his regime of training, or by the institutions the supervisor is connected to;
- nor about the appropriate, professional *reaction* to the Other in supervision, particular to the Other of the student/worker upon whose body the supervision is to be implemented. We are referring to *reaction* as: 1) the forming of response in connection with that which is distinguished as undesirable; and 2) the diminishment and undoing of creative action.

Negation and reaction – two aspects of the ‘will-to-power’ Nietzsche¹ talked of, and two actions that seem all-too pervasive and bent on destructive impulses. Much of the therapeutic world, including the work of supervision seems to have been built upon these two modes of action.

Negation

The therapeutic domain assumes that there are problematic items circulating within bodies, families and other human arrangements that, with appropriate remedial action, can be removed, can be negated – gotten-rid-of. Many books and other forms of documentation have been dedicated to elucidating these problematic items -- from Freud, to the DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual), to innumerable intake and assessment processes adopted by human service organizations. And, large industries have developed which give language and lines of authority to these forms of negation.

¹ Nietzsche’s thinking on negation and affirmation is discussed in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1969), but is perhaps most clearly described by Deleuze (2001) in a chapter titled “Nietzsche”.

The politics of human services necessitates processes of negation before any monies are permitted to flow – money moves toward *problems*, and only those problems which have been clearly identified, fit within previously designated categories and sub-categories of negation, and are plainly visible to political and economic authorities.

Reaction

The second action described by Nietzsche is that of *reaction*.

Reaction takes on at least two types of movement. The first is movement *against* something.

What characterizes reactive forces, on the other hand, is their opposition to what they are not, their tendency to limit the other...

Deleuze (2001), p. 74

Reaction also moves in opposition to creative action.

Creation is about assembling, arranging pieces of life into something that bears newness within and around it. It is something that breaks through the normal, the expected, fashioning an *original* upon which life can continue to take form. Creation is never, can never be pure and perfect. It is the assembling of imperfect fragments, broken chunks and little bits into something of a renewed and renewing beauty.

The philosopher supposes that the value of his philosophy lies in the whole, in the structure; but posterity finds its value in the stone which he uses for building, and which is used many more times after that for building – better. Thus it finds the value in the fact that the structure can be destroyed and nevertheless retains value as building material.

Nietzsche (1967), p. 176.

Reaction is about undoing the creative. It is about dis-assembling the creations of other hands, dis-easing the actions of creative hands. It is about taking the goods which have been formed and discovering flaws, holes, missing pieces, misplaced pieces, thereby seemingly undoing the creation. A re-languaging of the creative event occurs through these negations. Reaction can be an academic process, though it certainly is not limited to that. Reaction can appear in a righteous garb, a religiosity, even in the zealotry of political correctness, professional correctness. Reaction is not just a simple act or question, it is a spirit that floods, that overwhelms, that flows toward the undoing of the creative invention.

The Path of Negation and Reaction

Nietzsche suggested that these progressions of negation and reaction lead inevitably toward nihilism; that is, to ever

expanding circles of negation that descend into crushing and destructive violences – to aggressive and extreme negation.² This intensifying path of negation and reaction forms machine-like things, increasing numbers of them, things that resemble concentration camps and nuclear warheads; machine-like things that doesn't act like most machines, but, instead, produce worlds where homosexuals are murdered, lovers imprisoned and compassion and joy are trivialized.

Negation and reaction -- turning, expanding, overturning; at the same time, organizing and sanitizing all they touch. Reactive forces which culminate in a terminus of negation that attempts to engulf all.

A Renewed Supervision

However, we wish to talk of a supervisory experience which feels to be outside of negation and reaction, even outside of the therapeutic. We are suggesting a supervisory experience:

- where affirmation encircles/embraces,

² Some have attempted to connect Nietzsche to Nazi thought which came many years after his death, however, Nietzsche warned of the end results of such systems of thought. He created a world which eschewed the typical perspectives on power, control and institutional life. Nietzsche had no room for manners of life built upon the actions of negation and reaction -- two central activities of Nazism.

- where joy is always close by,
- where surprise and a not-knowing generate a spirit of experimentation,
- where the gifts people bring flow outward, freely, to expanding worlds, rather than where the logic of negation pushes potential gifts inward, into protective hiding places.

This experience is reminiscent of the desires of Deleuze (1977). He talks of...

A secret link that resides in the critique of negation, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the exteriority of forces and relations, the denunciation of power, etc.

SUSAN

This document has a distinct history. It followed an event in May, 2007 where Lynn Hoffman and Christopher Kinman came to Loma Linda University for a one-day workshop. They both talked of things such as rhizomes and gift exchanges. They talked of authors such as Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida, of Gregory Bateson and Michael Bakhtin. They talked of a work beyond the therapeutic, a work which is communal and enlivening. They talked of things that I knew I was most familiar with, that I connected intimately with, that gave language to a felt experience.

In preparing this document I reviewed the tapes of conversations I was involved in with my students. In watching and listening I could not keep from smiling and feeling joyful.

I can remember when I began my therapy work – it was with Harry Goolishian in Galveston, Texas. I was shy and unsure of myself. However, Harry loved these qualities in me. He thought highly of me, to the extent that he told the executive director of that small agency that I was brilliant. What a thought for me. What words! Words which made me fly. I remember the last thing Harry spoke to me about before he died. We were in an Armenian restaurant. He said that it was his wish for me to teach and do research. This I have attempted to do -- to honor his wish, to take up his torch, to add myself to his legacy. I was young when I met him. There was an attraction in heart and soul. He was my mentor. Sometimes he was even my eyes and ears at times -- he spoke my words. I never felt a disagreeing thought with him.

Today, Harry lives in everything I do. I am certainly not a mini "Harry", more akin to a daughter who dearly loves the ideas of her friend and mentor. He died at a time when we most needed his controversial voice. But I can be like Harry, a bit too controversial at times. Kind of the Columbo type -- not necessarily saying what is appropriate, rather finding that my passion rises to my mouth. Or perhaps to my nose -- sneezing ideas. In this spirit, I find that, even after 24 years, I am as passionate about making a difference in the field, as I first was when I was the intern.

With respect for Harry's legacy, I engage in supervisory work. I feel alive with students. I find that they continue to teach me, to improve me, to give innumerable gifts, seen and unseen. And, in my desire to acknowledge these gifts, in my desire to see them flying in their own way, on their own journey, I realize that I wish to lose the therapeutic hate words, I wish to lose hierarchy and labels, I wish to lose the sadness which we as therapists and supervisors so frequently (though often inadvertently) create for others. So Chris, we both challenge. And now I do not have the fear to do so.

In regards to this document, I carefully transcribed these reflecting conversations which my students engaged in. Chris took these words and reassembled them into a poem. The words of this poem are all the students' words. Now, however, they are permitted to speak with their own poetic rhythms and powers. Beside the poem, in a separate column, is an ongoing correspondence between Chris and me in response to the students' words. In a third column we provide quotes from some of the authors whom we find ourselves moved by. We discover new thoughts emerge as the thoughts from these writers interact both with the poem and the correspondence between Chris and me.

NOW I SEE A PERSON

The Poetics of Learning Therapy – A Supervision Story

POEM

CORRESPONDENCE -- Susan & Chris

THOUGHTS FROM OUTSIDE

Before I read her chart
I thought I read her thoughts

I thought
She was just repeating to me
What she had told the prior therapist
All these other things
All these notes from the past
And the diagnoses
And my understanding that
She would not progress
But stay anxious
And depressed

But now I saw

All the tremendous hurt and rejection
She had over the years
This is what she was dealing with

Hello Chris...

I want to share with you a moment of supervision; one supervision event.

We had nothing pressing to do that day in my supervision class. The students were not quite prepared to present their final cases. So, we just started talking. I stopped early on, however, and asked them if we could tape our conversations for the words and thoughts they were giving were so rich, powerful and full of heart. We went into another room, it was hot and stuffy, but no one seemed to care about that for we were all so excited to participate in this journey.

I still had in my own mind and heart the conversations from the event just a

Stories are a form of poetic activism...

Lynn Hoffman (2002), p. 168.

Only if words are felt, bodily presences, like echoes or waterfalls, can we understand the power of spoken language to influence, alter, and transform the perceptual world.

David Abram (1996), p. 89.

I had given her a homework assignment last week
And now I know that the reason she did not do it
Was because it was impossible for her to do

So I apologized
For giving her the assignment

I told her that
This session was a good session

And the first one
That really meant something to me

It was the first time
I had seen her as a person
And, the first time
I could understand all that rejection and pain

I found I really liked working with her now

It was clear that for her
That meant something
Really meant something

This is the first client I have been able to
Pray with in session
At the end of the session we prayed

Something in my head kept saying

*couple of weeks prior with you and Lynn
Hoffman at Loma Linda University.
These two events were combining for
me. In the class, our conversations
resonated with such a sense of
numerous gifts circulating through
rhizome lines.*

*The week before one particular student
therapist had talked about her client.
We all reflected upon her experience but
did not seem able to quite understand
the anguish that was felt – by both the
client and the therapist. It was unusual
for this student to talk of her clients in
this manner. She tried to shrug it off as
being tired. It seemed that she did not
know what the anguish was about at
that time.*

*But today things were most different,
the student was most excited to tell her
story.*

Hi Susan...

And especially about
responsibility, when it engages a
poetic signature....

Hypothesis to be verified: all
responsibility witnessing
engages a poetic experience of
language.

Derrida (2005), p. 66.

The good interrupts the
domination of identity, the hold
of categories.

Ross (1996), p. v.

Pray with her

She said thank you so much for praying with me
She cried

She could allow herself to come out
Probably because I was there
For the first time

Before
What had annoyed me

Was that
She would not follow the treatment plan
But it was MY
Treatment plan
NOT HERS

I never could understand
Why she came back to see me
If she did not want to do the treatment plan

Yesterday I was planning on asking her about this

But I was coming in with my
Treatment plan and
My attitude
My belief
That she did not want to work in therapy

*Your students' words, and your words,
they remind of something that I need to
hold dear. That is -- there still is a
certain magic that moves within our
world. Something happens, an event
appears that is beyond our expectation,
that wasn't predicted, not foreseen,
that imposes upon us, ensuring us that
the world is both good and miraculous.
And, we better believe it, for it stares us
in the eyes, ensuring that we find ways
of taking it seriously rather than finding
ways of denying it.*

*Your student found herself in the midst
of such an event. Yesterday she was in
one place, today in another. A 'sea
change' it is sometimes called, like
sailing around the Horn -- one ocean to
another.*

*And, we find ourselves in the midst of
this event also, as we experience your
student's story. She bears witness to an
occurrence that we also must turn our
faces toward, we must encounter. Your
student was transformed, and in
response, so are we.*

I sometimes wonder how our work, our

Life activates thought, and thought
in turn affirms life.

Deleuze (2001), p. 66.

Instead of linking an active life and
an affirmative thinking, thought
gives itself the task of judging life,
measuring it ... restricting and
condemning it... (The philosopher)
ceases to be a poet and becomes a
"public professor."

Deleuze (2001), p. 68-69.

But then
After I heard her
Really heard her
I did not want to do that
Because I knew she was searching
For something that
She was wanting

I thought so much about
My treatment plan
That it was easy for her
To slip through the cracks

Now I actually saw her
Not the treatment plan

I saw who was sitting in front of me
It changes all the sessions we will have
From now on

When she was starting to leave
She wanted a hug and
I did not know what to do because
We are not supposed to touch anyone

But I decided to hug her
I thought
I have to hug you
I do not care if it is professional or not

*lives, even our worlds might shift and
move if we created more room for such
transformative possibilities, such
unexpected events? If we made added
space within our lives and work for such
encounters which simply surprise us?*

Thanks Chris...

A sea change indeed.

*And, her words, this event, this
transformative possibility, as you called
it, connected with all of us in that room.
Similar stories came to all our own
minds.*

*Something particularly special for me –
this event brought me back to many
conversations with old and dear friends
Harry Goolishian and Tom Anderson.
Their ghosts seemed to be appear,
specters rising amidst our own
conversations and reflections.*

I also thought of others, individuals such

The gift of the good interrupts
the rule of identity,
undermines the domination of
being and law, challenges the
authority of every rule, brings
us face to face with
heterogeneity, with other
beings and other kinds,
touches everywhere with
strangeness.

Ross (1996), p. 4.

And she thanked me
And it was good
It was beautiful

Before
I would leave my heart at the door
Before entering

Before
I would enter with
The notes and the treatment plan

This would break my heart
For I do not truly see myself
As somebody who
Sees charts
Rather than people

Now I want to check with all my clients
To make sure I see them
And not the charts

I think that is what makes the difference

To see our clients

Then things start to make sense

I now understand the man she liked
Whom I did not approve of before

as Bettye, Sallie, and Shari, and how they led me toward the creation of something I called 'Process Ethics' (Swim, 2003, 2006; Swim, George, Wulff, 2001).

To me, Process Ethics is about what is the right and good between therapist and the client, or the supervisor and the supervisee. A right and good that circulates not in books, encoded procedures and archived policy statements, but within relationships. And, I also see Process Ethics as about the sacred, the fluid, and the non-replicated. All of this appeared in abundance within our conversation.

Yes Susan... Yes! A good that circulates within relations, within the events of relationship. A kind of ethic, a Process Ethic (I find this to be an evocative term, and, in perhaps a hidden way, a most provocative term) that transforms in the event, in the movements of relationship, and only in these places.

To say that the heart of proximity belongs to speech comes down to having removed it from its carnal touching.

Irigary (1996), p. 33.

Time never begins or ends; life always does.

Northrup Frye (1991), p. 42.

I could now see the role of this guy in her life
He gave her moments of happiness
Even if he always does not treat her so well

He helps to take away the pain and rejection
She gets from her family

Now he is the one who gives her love
And takes away the loneliness

And I can see that

I can see that this man is the only place she gets
Peace and happiness

The other therapists were always trying to
Get her to dump him

I now see why she cannot
She is happy with him
He gives her comfort
Moments of non-loneliness

It is so easy to skip out of that place of
Hearing a person
Because you think you
Know what is best for her

*And, a plethora of events and relations
emerge for you. Even as your student is
talking about a certain imperative she
felt to give a hug, at the same time I
find you walking into the embrace of
life-affirming friends, valued friends. I
never knew Harry, but I knew Tom. Tom
hugged, and he did so in a most tender
manner. I can imagine both Tom and
Harry resonating with your students'
words, coming alive, heart rates
increasing, responding with a joy, an
embrace.*

Chris

*Embracements, specters, relations,
events, an ethics in process. I like it!*

*As we continued to listen to Jill's story
the room became luminous –
enlightened with thoughts and passions.*

*The student spoke of things like
'treatment plans' and 'diagnoses' –
things that had previously blinded her.
But now, in a wonderful irony, she found*

The appearance (or
reappearance) of what the
ethical legislation declares off-
limits in the world of morality:
namely of the emotional
relationship to the Other.

Bauman (1995), p. 62.

Not judging somebody

You do not find out who that person is if
You start making assessments
Putting labels upon them
You just focus on how they fit that label

Also...
It is so funny
Remember the client that was cutting

And my supervisor wanted
Me to perhaps commit her

Well she came in
She was so happy
She had stopped cutting herself

And she brought in her partner
Whom I had not liked
Because he had been abusive to her
And he held no job

But I was able to give up that
Preconceived notion
That he was worthless
And I worked with both of them—

herself joyous, for now she understood something about how to enter into the Other's heart. We were all moved. Her story awoke our own, many of our own.

Again Susan...

I find myself resonating with these words.

All of that which you and your students are describing transpired within a supervision class, a supposedly formal setting. As you know, these contexts are all too often embedded in blatant and unapologetic judgment. The out-of-the-ordinary aspects of this event continue. I often think that much of life unfolds like this – out of unusual contexts an unforeseen beauty emerges.

The out-of-the-ordinary perhaps is most ordinary.

Chris...

I would have begun by recalling how much we need the other and how much we will still need him, need to carry him, to be carried by him, there where he speaks, in us before us.

For no one bears this life alone.

Derrida (2005), p. 163.

No one had wanted to do this before
All the other therapists had seen him as
Worthless

But now he has a job
And is not violent
And she is not cutting

And this was not something I did
But they did

In the session
It was wonderful

Then I thought

Oh my God

I am not following the
Treatment plan

But
They are happy

And I have not brought up anything
About the treatment plan
Including the
Cutting and the
Past violence

As I transcribed this conversation, I was struck by words, by certain words. Words such as, "I looked into her eyes and saw the pain".

We were all moved at that moment. It was a particular moment, a moment with a student, with a class, and with others who were not present in body, including, of course, the client with her story, but also including you and Lynn. Both of you were undoubtedly there that day. For me it was one of those magical moments, full of gift exchanges for all involved.

We ended that moment creating new treatment plans; ones we hoped would honor the "other".

Susan...

Two things.

First of all the image of movement, of being moved, of a whole class being moved, perhaps a school being moved,

Nothing can be, can exist, nothing can belong to nature, to the earth, without a good for itself and without caring for the good for others, touching others, reaching beyond their limits... They touch each other and respond, give birth to new alliances, add to and cherish the heterogeneous things of the earth, disturb every limit, evoke the sacred.

Ross (1996), p. 7

Or anything like that

They are happy now

I said what happened

He said that therapy had helped

That therapy made her happy

He said...

This was a woman

Who never wanted to get out of bed

But she wanted to see you

And therapy

Made her different

He came to our meeting to see

Who this therapist was that was helping her

You know -- that girl from Jamaica

I was so worried at first

She is so Ok now

Not getting angry

At first I told her to

and movements going far distances, reaching to me and Lynn, somehow even invoking Harry and Tom. Taking it further, of movement as gift-exchange, exchanges, as gifts in passage, routing through lines of plenitudes, rapidly in a widening scope.

And secondly, the treatment plan. What a challenging task -- recreating the treatment plan. Recreating a specific treatment plan, specific to Jill's client.

Interesting what we have to do when we are surrounded by words such as 'treatment plan'. The word is clearly loaded with history, with expectations and obligations. It is imbedded in institutional geographies. It is loaded with assumptions, such as -- the person who requires a therapist is ill, therefore requires treatment, a treatment plan. Or, those actions which are helpful for persons seeking therapy are those which are prescribed, pre-described and inscribed, that is, written down in a predetermined and secure plan.

Yet, so often, if we consider those

Judging is a profession of many people, and it is not a good profession... Better to be a road-sweeper than a judge. The more one has been fooled in one's life, the more one gives lessons.

Deleuze and Parnet (1987), p. 8

He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer.

In Bateson (2000), p. 477.

Get a pen and paper
To see what makes her angry and
They made a game out of it

When she would get angry
He would grab the pen and paper and
Give it to her
Now she is not angry
She is different
Really transformed

And you know what he said to me

She said...

You do not write

She said...

You are the only therapist I have seen
Who does not write

And I do not write
Because I cannot listen when I write
And he said...

You do not write
Because you are listening

The other therapist we had

movements which bring benefit, life, hope, courage, joy, an overall richness, etc. – they come to us from angles we were not looking at, they come as surprise, delight, as events of unexpected wisdom, not as products of a plan. The treatment plan has no legitimate way to accommodate these moments of surprise.

Chris...

Jill's words of transformation, her struggle with things like treatment plans awoke something in all of us. Then the group of us found ourselves in conversation about how we had all been in similar situations before.

Conversations about not being in the room, of not truly being present, with the client, within her world, her joys and worries. For this kind of thing still happens to me at times. I find I am not as present as I wish I had been, as I felt called to be. At these times, I have to find a way to re-enter the room, to

There is no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at or which you ought to arrive at... The question 'What are you becoming?' is particularly stupid. For as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself.

Deleuze and Parnet (1987), p. 2

Would just write and write
We felt he was not listening
Laughter

The client that I hated is now my most beloved

I learned something from these clients
I cannot learn from a book
For those books are not alive

I think I also learned
That the main thing is
Seeing people

There is no formula
But you need

To see
The client

You do not know who they are
You have never walked in their shoes

You just have to
See

return to the 'Other' who is before me.

Harry Goolishian used to say that if you found that you did not like someone, or if you discovered your mind wandering from the interaction with your client, at these times, have a conversation in your head and ask yourself -- What is it that keeps me from hearing?

Yes Susan...

What is it that keeps me from hearing?

I think the answer to that question perhaps comes in the form of another question, one that keeps haunting me.

What is it that keeps me hearing?

*What is it that grabs me, pulls me in?
What is it that grasps a hold of your students, connects them to these people called clients?*

What keeps me from hearing? It is a movement away from those things that

One speaks, trying to listen to the other. One should speak while leaving to the other the chance to speak, while giving the floor to the other. It is a question of rhythm, of time: not to speak too much, thereby imposing silence on the other, and not to remain too silent. All this has to be negotiated.

Derrida (2005), p. 167.

Who they are

How can we have treatment plans
Yet not see people and listen to them

This all leads to
Thoughts on
Supervision

Others' thoughts...
Reflecting

Hiding
Hurts too much
Lack of trust with supervisor
Leads to detachment

Jill's story
Made me sad

Stolen thoughts...
Violence...
Loss of passion/joy

Do not feel safe
Not wanting to be hurt

hold me in.

I think the education of therapists all too often tends to distance the learning therapist from his passions, her loves, from those things that connect him with a larger world. Those things that connect us with our clients are those same things that connect us with life.

Chris...

I had a client last night where I found myself not as present as I wished to be. So, I started "anew" halfway through the session. There was a girl and her mother. The little girl's tears kept me from hearing the mother at first. So it was not the diagnosis, nor the treatment plan -- for me it was watching the child cry that pulled me away from the mother's pain.

It is nice to know that I am also like my student, at times I also need to be called back into the midst of the conversation. This -- even my own sense of failure (the

The specter of uncertainty is thus exorcized through regimentation. Certainty is restored by forces external to the individual – from outside. In the last account, the modern cure for uncertainty boiled down to curtailing the realm of choice.

Bauman (1995), p. 108.

Had to back off

Scared to try things

Confidence level low

After being told

You do not know what you are doing

No one to talk to

As a trainee I do not feel safe

Worried about liability

The right and wrong of the supervisor

Liability

Huge punishment

No room for error

Nobody to train you

No one there to support you

Dichotomy

OK to make mistakes but...

If you mess up — high drama

Do not say anything

Do not tell what is really going on...

Not safe to do that

To try and be safe is lonely

You can hear the clients

But not let the supervisor know

*word 'failure' does not at all capture it) -
- then brings joy. It connects me with
the feelings that my students also
experience. Then for me, the struggle to
learn becomes a joyous struggle, not a
pathologizing one, not one that reverses
back to inscribe a person with lack. This
is what I also want for my students.*

*I cannot imagine not teaching and
supervising. Our students and our
clients continue to teach us, to inform
and form us -- as Tom would say, and
Harry. Harry loved his students. He said
that his students always taught him.*

*I now find myself understanding Harry's
words, like I never have before, for I also
find I love my students, I also find that I
learn so much from them.*

*I saw Harry and Tom in my students
that day.*

Susan...

You describe a world where there is a

Nomads have no history, they
only have geography... They
come like destiny, without
cause, without reason,
without consideration,
without pretext.

Deleuze & Parnet, (1987), p.
30.

Very alone

Voices not heard

If they do not hear us in these tasks

How can we trust them

To share our voices

What we do with our clients

Huge--responsibility--Feel responsible

Skip my story

Invisible

Supervision is painful

They expect you to do something else and...

If I do something that works

They do not comment on it

No recognition of what you do

Instead

They bring up more ideas of what you

SHOULD be doing

Have to talk as the supervisor talks

Skip my story

So hard

It is legalistic

certain flattening of the social geography. Let me explain what I mean. Your students learn from you. I have seen them, heard them, engaged in conversations with them, I know they learn from you. They express their love and appreciation for you. You also describe how you love them, appreciate them. You talk of learning from them. Then Harry and Tom emerge, and we find them also learning from their students, from loving their students.

This flattened social geography is a prairie-like space, a broad location where nomads move, not real-estate where kings and queens set up empires. It is also a space which enables the quick movement of goods through gift-exchange. For upon this geography all are able to experience the exchanges of uncountable gifts, including the gifts of learning.

Chris...

The geography has been flattened – for

Unlike other civilizations, modernity legislated itself into legislation – legislation as a vocation and duty and as a matter of survival.

Bauman (1995), p. 35.

Something New
Relational connectedness
Full presence
Showing -- being with

Not yet healed but stronger
Can talk now

Jill gains self agency
Her own power
Her story...
How it changed

Clients say you are
The only one that listens

The supervisor puts that down

I was told that they did not like
Our students
Cause they were client led

What you are taught in classes is
Different from what happens

So...
Try out something new, etc—
And everything will be fine
No...
Learn this on my own

sure. I just think of Jill.

Let me tell you a bit about Jill. I have known her for two years now. I find her to be a fabulous student, therapist, and person. However, she almost quit the program, at one point, because of the weight of derogatory talk put upon her, what we could call a kind of 'hate talk' (albeit, unintentional hate talk) she experienced from another faculty member. The result was that she was afraid to continue in the program.

The hate talk created a form of legalism—akin to the legalism found in Jill's client's treatment plan. I spoke with her about this experience last year, and she decided to stay.

There is a certain process I tend to follow when I begin with my students.

When the first year students arrive, I invite them to read Miller and Duncan's Escape from Babel, and I show the video The Heart and Soul of Therapy. These two pieces suggest that techniques do not do therapy, but therapist do. These two pieces suggest that it is the "full

Language is not a fixed or ideal form, but an evolving medium we collectively inhabit, a vast topological matrix in which the speaking bodies are generative sites, vortices where the matrix itself is continually being spun out of the silence of sensorial experience.

Abrams (1996), p. 84.

Learn by yourself

Class is safe but internship is not

Better now

Gets better

As you see things work out

How we learn

Our clients give us confidence

Rely on gut

If you had heard the conversation

I was being real and honest with the client

And if the supervisor

Had heard the conversation

Perhaps he could have understood

I was being honest and genuine

With the client

So...

You have to go with your gut

Get too caught up in what

The supervisor thinks

And then you have to

Go with your gut

presence,” the “relational connectedness”, and “sacred conversations” (or process ethics) that precipitate the “withness” in therapy (This is very much Lynn Hoffman’s voice, of course – John Shotter’s too). Then I show them some videos of Harry and I, with someone called Bettye.

I can sense my students’ hearts soar. And, I can also sense that they are ready to be with the “Other”.

While they certainly experience this from me, these students also receive many experiences of professional and educational legalism. I almost lost four students last year due to an emphasis upon legalism that was presented to them. The beautiful part is that we were able to talk about the experience of this dualism, of living with, one the one hand, the Alive, the sense of “withness” we all can experience in the therapy and supervision process, while, at the same time, also experiencing the rule-based emphasis that tends to throw people into realms of deficit. The students stayed.

If you are like me, you will remember the sand tunnels we used to dig as children at the beach, and that delicious final moment when the sand began to crumble and our fingers touched.

Lynn Hoffman (2002), p. xx.

Love with the seeing-eye fingers of the blind, love you feel with the tips of your fingers... perfect love.

Cixous (2004), p. 113.

You need to feel empathy
Rather than direction
Helping versus system
Supervision...
To guide you
To walk with you

The clients make me stronger
Inner strength
Rather than looking for
Strength from my supervisor

Vulnerable

Look at me
My age and gender
Does not matter
To feel heard
Most important

Wounded
You can survive

But to be heard
Is to blossom

To have a voice

And the clients

*The students come in filled with passion.
The legalism steals some. A few get
drawn to the legalism because it seems
safe for them. I find this sad to watch.
For Chris, what you call the gift
exchanges disappears. This year I had
sixteen of my students graduate using
this relational, collaborative, process
ethics, gift exchange—or whatever
words we use—as their adopted
approach upon graduation. I would feel
comfortable with anyone of them seeing
my “beloved” clients.*

Susan and friends

Thanks for the journey!

Chris

Where no one intrudes
Many can live in harmony.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first
time

T. S. Eliot

Give me a voice

Chief Dan George

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