

# Editorial: Endings, partings and new beginnings

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## Dr Carl Goldberg

Carl Goldberg Carl Goldberg, my colleague and friend and fellow pioneer in the shaping and establishing of this journal, died at the end of 2003. Carl is survived by his wife Virginia, to whom we offer our deepest sympathy, and, fittingly, papers by each of them are published in this issue.

Carl Goldberg was a great man. From the rocky granite of a wounding childhood Carl forged a unique identity in psychotherapy. He was absolutely one of the most independent thinkers in the field. Not for him the more abstruse reaches of metapsychology, the minutiae of doctrinal difference in psychoanalysis, and yet further applications of Freudian sexuality theory. Carl consistently, and beyond anyone else I knew of in the field, explored the *ethical dimension* of psychotherapy, through testimony after testimony of engagement in some of the deepest toughest and most recalcitrant ethical dilemmas in psychotherapy, and again and again broke new ground through his refusal to avoid the hard choices, or to evade his own responsibility when he felt he had not faced a situation with full courage or compassion. Carl always took on the tough cases others would avoid; poignant and powerful narratives of his work with criminals, and other morally deeply ambiguous persons, abound in his writings, and yet Carl never succumbs to despair in the face of moral darkness. Carl had given up seeing clients on a fee-paying basis and lived by his writing, bearing witness in that way. Out of the blue, as fellow radicals each in our different ways, we established a friendship, even though I often exasperated him! His extraordinary directness of being was of significant influence on myself at a time in my life when I was struggling with a deep moral ambiguity in my life-situation. I never got to fully express my gratitude; an obituary is the amends one must make, but was not able to make.

One of Carl's heroes was the great Polish novelist who came to write in English, Joseph Conrad, who, like his other heroes, Mark Twain, Dr Johnson, and the author of the Book of Job, lived in the face of pessimistic darkness without suffering life defeat. Through Conrad, we can get a glimpse of something like how Carl's inner world may have been.

Now, Carl could be abrasive on occasion! In understanding this I turn to one of Conrad's profoundest portrayals, through which I wish to express my sense of the enormous humanity which underlay that abrasiveness of Carl's. Conrad's greatest novel, and probably the greatest English-language novel of any of the 20th Century, perhaps even of any century, is *Nostromo*, which is a (still utterly contemporary) account of a political revolution in an imaginary South American state (Conrad would *not* have been surprised by America's and Britain's current

troubles in Iraq!). In *Nostromo* a key role in making possible the rescue and defence of the provincial capital of Costaguana, Sulaco—soon to be an independent state, the Occidental Republic—is played by Dr Monygham.

Dr Monygham, ‘whose short hopeless laugh expressed somehow an immense distrust of mankind’ and who felt it ‘most unreasonable to demand that a man should think so much better of other people than he is able to think of himself’, has survived torture under a previous regime, and his self-rehabilitation is the most life-affirming and optimistic narrative in the entire book. The other major characters, even the noble but broken-hearted Mrs Gould, whose husband Charles Gould ends up as a workaholic plutocrat who has lost touch with the ‘heart’ of his marriage, all, in one way and another, fail morally, or humanly. In general the atmosphere of the book is represented well in the following powerful passage, where Hernandez, the bandit by virtue only of necessity in the face of injustice, who controls the Campo, the uplands above Sulaco, has offered the townspeople refuge from the insurrectionary forces:

‘I must leave you now,’ repeated Charles Gould to Antonia. She turned her head slowly and uncovered her face. The emissary and compadre of Hernandez spurred his horse close up.

‘Has not the master of the mine any message to send to Hernandez, the master of the Campo?’

The truth of the comparison struck Charles Gould heavily. In his determined purpose he held the mine, and the indomitable bandit held the Campo by the same precarious tenure. They were equals before the lawlessness of the land. It was impossible to disentangle one’s activity from its debasing contacts. A close-meshed net of crime and corruption lay upon the whole country. An immense and weary discouragement sealed his lips for a time.

‘You are a just man,’ urged the emissary of Hernandez. ‘Look at those people who have made my compadre a general and have turned us all into soldiers. Look at those oligarchs fleeing for life, with only the clothes on their backs. My compadre does not think of that, but our followers may be wondering greatly, and I would speak for them to you. Listen, señor! For many months now the Campo has been our own. We need ask no man for anything; but soldiers must have pay to live honestly when the wars are over. It is believed that your soul is so just that a prayer from you would cure the sickness of every beast, like the orison of the just judge. Let me have some words from your lips that would act like a charm upon the doubts of our *partida*, where all are men.’

‘Do you hear what he says?’ Charles Gould said in English to Antonia.

‘Forgive us our misery!’ She exclaimed hurriedly. ‘It is your character that is the inexhaustible character which may save us all yet; your character, Charles, and not your wealth. I entreat you to give this man your word that you will accept any arrangement my uncle may make with their chief. One word. He will want no more.’

On the site of the roadside hut there remained nothing but an enormous heap of embers, throwing afar a darkening red glow, in which Antonia’s face appeared deeply flushed with excitement. Charles Gould, with only a short hesitation, pronounced the required pledge. He was like a man who had ventured on a precipitous path with no room to turn,

where the only chance of safety is to press forward. At that moment he understood it thoroughly as he looked down at Don Jose stretched out, hardly breathing, by the side of the erect Antonia [*Don Jose's daughter*], vanquished in a lifelong struggle with the powers of moral darkness, whose stagnant depths breed monstrous crimes and monstrous illusions. In a few words the emissary from Hernandez expressed his complete satisfaction.

Following his release from torture, Dr Monygham, badly injured by the cruelties of his interrogations, to which he eventually succumbs, hobbles into a sort of freedom:

A ceaseless trembling agitated his bent body, all his wasted limbs, his bony head, the conical ragged crown of the sombrero, whose ample flat rim rested on his shoulders.

In such conditions of manner and attire did Dr Monygham go forth to take possession of his liberty. And these conditions seemed to bind him indissolubly to the land of Costaguana like an awful procedure of naturalisation, involving him deep in the national life, far deeper than any amount of success and honour could have done. They did away with his Europeanism; for Dr Monygham had made himself an ideal conception of his disgrace. It was a conception eminently fit and proper for an officer and a gentleman.

As someone with an ill reputation, but inwardly profoundly, hopelessly, and self-sacrificingly devoted to Emilia, Mrs Gould, Dr Monygham is able to appear convincingly to betray Sulaco to the turncoat commander of a nearby garrison, whom he seduces into an incessant hopeless search in the harbour for the lost silver of the mine, which prevents him uniting his troops with those of the invading guerrillas. Meantime Dr Monygham, in a macabre and haunting incognito encounter, (comparable with those in the greatest literature, such as Gloucester and the mad Lear on the heath in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and Joseph with his brothers in the book of *Genesis*), with the eponymous hero, Nostromo, has persuaded him to ride over the mountains to Cayta to bring rescue from troops previously sent out from Sulaco and otherwise unreachable. It is an intricate, fascinating, and gripping drama and melodrama; Carl learnt his trade as an always compelling writer and narrator from such models.

However, in the process, in his devotion to a loved self-object (Conrad would have had little to learn from modern theorists about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder!), Dr Monygham rehabilitates himself. Later in the book Conrad writes:

The doctor's self-respect, marked inwardly by the almost complete disappearance from his dreams of Father Beron [*his inquisitorial torturer*], appeared visibly in what, by contrast with former carelessness, seemed an immoderate cult of personal appearance.

As he talks with Emilia on her return from Europe after Sulaco's achievement of independence, and as he takes in her personal misery and loneliness, (for, in her alienation, desolately contemplating what was lacking:

It had come into her mind that for life to be large and full it must contain the care of the past and the future in every passing moment of the present. Our daily work must be done to the glory of the dead, and for the good of those who come after).

he 'pours mental imprecations on Charles Gould's head'. And here is the passage I want to relate to Carl. Conrad here shows the profoundest understanding of the kind of

man who, because of suffering and profound moral self-reflection, sees further, with compassion, but without sentimentality, than his fellows—Carl Goldberg was such a man:

The doctor, with his back to Mrs Gould, contemplated a flower-bed away in the sunshine. People believed him scornful and soured. The truth of his nature consisted in his capacity for passion and in the sensitiveness of his temperament. What he lacked was the polished callousness of men of the world, the callousness from which springs an easy tolerance for oneself and others; the tolerance wide as poles asunder from true sympathy and human compassion. This want of callousness accounted for his sardonic turn of mind and his biting speeches.

It was from such a non-sentimental but compassionate stance that Carl was able to write so much that was wise and poignant here in this journal. We are proud to have published so much of his work, including the wise words in his paper in this issue, which will have been his final words here.

Feeling guilty and expecting punishment and redemption from either/or God and society is a rather selfish and, for the most part, useless process. It is in no way helpful to the victim(s) of one's wrongful acts. Nor does it instruct the perpetrator about proper and constructive social behaviour necessary to become a morally responsible person. Moral responsibility involves a curious and courageous reflection about oneself and others. It requires us to know our limitations, to accept ourselves as less than perfect, to live to the best of our abilities, and to come caringly together with others to heal the wounds of loneliness, shame, and self-hatred. In this way, a person assumes personal agency. A moral agent is a person who takes responsibility for his actions and inactions. So when he finds himself in adverse situations, he investigates the factors within himself that might have caused the untoward occurrence. This is quite different from seeking blame and accepting guilt. By using his self-inquiry as a guide, he attempts to redress and correct any attitudes on his part that are incongruous with what he regards as his intended behaviour.

Carl Goldberg lived in that way!

I now on the occasion of his own death, wish to repeat, in a more personal sense, what I wrote when I quoted from one of Carl's great heroes, Dr Samuel Johnson, on the occasion of Stephen Mitchell's death, in 2001, in a three-way review which also included Carl's own book, *The Evil We Do*; much of what I wrote of Stephen Mitchell also applies to Carl:

For many of those of us, who are psychoanalytic in an integrative sense, yet therefore not in the mainstream of orthodox psychoanalytic thinking, Stephen Mitchell was a witness that psychoanalysis is alive and open, for all its faults. In this loss of an opportunity, we are, in a smaller way, reminded by his death of Dr Samuel Johnson's memorable lament for Gilbert Walmsley and David Garrick:

At this man's table I enjoyed many cheerful and instructive hours, with companions such as are not often found; with Dr James, whose skill in physic will be long remembered; and with David Garrick, whom I hoped to have gratified with this character of our common friend: but what are the hopes of man! I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure.

But perhaps the most fitting note of farewell is struck by Bunyan, at the end of *Pilgrim's Progress*, in a passage which I also read out at my mother's funeral, 29 years ago.

After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the summons was true, 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain.' Eccl. 12:6. When he understood it, he called for his friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Father's; and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder. When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river-side, into which as he went, he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' 1 Cor. 15:55. So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

Carl Goldberg was our Mr Valiant-for-truth and we shall not readily find his like again.

### **The future of the *International Journal of Psychotherapy***

The EAP, the publishers, and myself have, for a good time, been wrestling to resolve long-standing tensions, and for a while it seemed this issue might possibly be the last issue of the *International Journal of Psychotherapy* in its present form. Taylor and Francis feel unable to continue as our publishers in the present climate of journal publication. Though we have offers from another publisher, the European Association for Psychotherapy seemed inclined to suspend the *Journal* until its concept has been thoroughly revised, and this will be considered in the EAP Executive. I offered my resignation at the Vienna meeting since, unless the *Journal* continues as an International learned journal, I would not feel able to identify myself with it with integrity.

However, it appears likely that a compromise will now be found, which will satisfy all parties. It looks as if Tom Ormay, who is Hungarian but also a fluent English speaker with long-standing London connections, and therefore represents both sides of our Europe, and is a well-known psychoanalytic psychotherapist and group analyst on the UKCP Register, who is also Associate Editor of the *Journal of Group Analysis*, and has much experience as an editor, very much his own man, and with an International vision, will take over as Senior Editor. It also looks as if to maintain continuity, and to develop the Americas connection, I will myself, in conjunction with Carl Goldberg's wife, Virginia Crespo, continue to maintain a liaison role in relation to the Americas. This is all subject to ratification by the EAP Executive, but it seems an agreeable compromise, from both the EAP perspective and the perspective of maintaining the *Journal* in its International form, as pluralistic with a strong psychoanalytic element within its thinking.

Accordingly, while this is probably my last issue as Senior Editor, I shall almost certainly continue to be a strong presence in the *Journal*, both in the Americas connection, and with articles and reviews. If anyone wishes to comment on this, or enquire about future plans, please write to the President of the EAP, Paul Boyesen, at the EAP Office address (at the front of the *Journal*) or at E-mail: paul.boyesen@ctv.es

The *Journal* has been a significant part of my life for over eight years now and I would have said a final farewell with much sadness. I believe this has been a unique journal in the field, and that it has established a pluralistic voice in psychotherapy in a way which had not previously been done. But I now hope to continue to connect with my honoured

readers in this context after all, and I look forward to a new phase of life and growth for the Journal.

‘If God will and we are alive.’ (Jas 4, v. 15)