

rejection. Crucially, neuropsychanalysis (whether by reference to work in the field or using a neuropsychanalytic lens to assess research) has the great potential to demonstrate that psychoanalysis is not stuck in the 1950s. In doing so, it will meaningfully impact academia and the next generation of students. Now is the time for psychoanalysts and neuropsychanalysts to act, to change the providence of our discipline (and others) for the better. We believe that action at the undergraduate level will be key to this process.

✉ dallagliojohn@gmail.com

### Acknowledgements

We thank Atticus Doherty and Samir Patel who, along with the authors, have been ongoing members of our reading group where much of this dialogue has taken place. John Dall'Aglio wrote and finalized the main draft; Emily Siff proofread and edited the manuscript.

### Reflections on the 20-year history of neuropsychanalysis and the International neuropsychanalysis society – the Turkish Npsa group

Fatma Gökçe Özkarak Gradwohl

All new scientific approaches are the products of the Zeitgeist, which finds a seat for itself through a scientific leader and a scientific society to express and actualize itself. Leaders become the voice of their group members, who are actually the voices of the Zeitgeist. Via these group dynamics, each society, in a way, actualizes the life story of its scientific approach. As the perspective of the leader changes, the group dynamics and/or group members may also change. As the group dynamics and/or members change, the life story of the scientific approach also changes. Thus, when we are asked to reflect on the life story of neuropsychanalysis, we cannot do this without reflecting on the society that has carried it up to date. Therefore, this report will try to present both a process analysis and a group analysis regarding our society, from our point of view. All these analyses must be combined with the analysis of the other regional groups' point of view, in order to reach a "Gestalt".

Neuropsychanalysis, born in 1999 (and its birth registered in 2000, London) is now a 20-year-old "psyche", with all the existential questions in mind about where the next destination must be, in order to have a good future in adulthood. The Npsa family (all Npsa society

members, the regional groups, and the admin team) became the "body" that carried this "psyche". By doing so, all these people contributed to the growth and development of neuropsychanalysis. In other words, the Npsa family became the seat of the Npsa spirit. Therefore, when I received the email that invited all the regional groups to share their reflections on 20 years of neuropsychanalysis, I could not differentiate the history of Npsa and the history of the Npsa family. As we are believers in dual aspect monism, we all know that psyche and matter are not separable. Therefore, I dived into my memories and went back to 2001 when my curiosity made me SEEK to find out if there were other experts like me, who believed that neuroscience and psychoanalysis can be translated to each other. Googling "neuroscience and psychoanalysis" was enough to discover that an International Neuropsychanalysis Society was recently founded in London. It was a great feeling to know that people who believed in bridging different disciplines existed. After following the works of the society from a distance for a while, I flew to Rome to attend my first psa congress. The aura of the society was created by so many brilliant peace-making people, whose greatest will was to build bridges among different disciplines. It felt like an international gathering of scientific peace keeping missionaries, who wanted to bring peace to the mental health experts (from different disciplines) who have been fighting with each other more than a century. All "missionaries" were repeating "The brain is the seat of the mind", all were believing that "we define the same phenomena with different terminologies (languages), so if we translate our findings to each other's discipline's terminology, then we can resolve the mindbrain dualism better", and all were motivated for "interdisciplinary bridging". For all the members from different countries, these were the starting principles of the Society: "Not reducing mind to brain in a mechanistic way" and "bridging and building dialogues for the unity of disciplines". Dual aspect monism and affective neuroscience were the main guidelines of this spirit.

Mesmerized by this peace-maker aura and with the hope that we can altogether get rid of the curse of Babylon (using different scientific languages and not understanding each other), the Npsa members were flying back to their countries to spread the news about the birth of the unifying scientific spirit. Regional groups were being initiated one by one, and Mark Solms and Oliver Turnbull's The Brain and the Inner World and Jaak Panksepp's Affective Neuroscience were being translated into several different languages by these regional groups. Messengers were carrying the

105

110

115

120

125

130

135

140

145

150

155

160

165

170

175

180

185

190

195

200

message to all around the world that the scientific peace was on the way.

Feeling that my psyche fits to the psyche of this society, I followed the advice of dear Irene Matthis and I initiated the Turkish Npsa Group and Istanbul Npsa Seminars. I built up a website, a mailing list, and a Facebook page immediately, in order to reach to the Turkish experts who may be carrying the same Npsa spirit. Not surprisingly, parallel to the Zeitgeist, a huge interest in Npsa was already present in my “bridging” country. So, within a short time, a very interdisciplinary team (composed of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and neurologists) came together in Türkiye and our mailing list and facebook grew up rapidly. Like some other groups, we helped with the translation of Brain and Inner World and Affective Neuroscience into Turkish and published their messages also in Turkish. Like several other groups, we translated Panksepp’s Affective Neuroscience Personality Scale into our language. Thanks to the support of Panksepp, we started the “Cross-cultural Affective Neuroscience” studies and compared the Turkish, American, Japanese and German ANPS norms. The influence of culture on basic affective systems became the new interest of the Turkish group. To date, we have spoken at national and international congresses, given local Npsa educational programs, conducted national and international studies, and produced numerous publications. In order to follow the innovations in the field of Npsa very closely, we invited Npsa speakers to our country and hosted Mark Solms (3 times), Oliver Turnbull (3 times), Jaak Panksepp, Brian Johnson, Lisa Ouss, Giles Yeates and David Pincus.

In a short time (until Npsa reached its puberty), we enjoyed witnessing the realization of a dream that more and more experts from different disciplines were coming together and building up dialogues, all around the world, including our country. Npsa family was composed of the ones who were not afraid of breaking the homeostasis of the “scientific taboo era”, during which the interdisciplinary dialogue was forbidden. They were not afraid of the uncertainties that the new era would bring, therefore they “SEEKed” to change the homeostasis of the taboo era. These people did not resist mind-changing dialogues, they were curious to learn new things, they were open to hear surprising things from each other. Npsa family members did not want to minimize free energy, they were the free energy themselves. They were brave enough to change the things which were considered as “certain” into “uncertain”. This was the general profile of the group psychology of our society. In 2013, Solms’ “Conscious ID” was groundbreaking for all mental health experts all around the world. In particular, the Istanbul

audience, listening to his talk in 2012, loved the idea of reconceptualizing the id as the most conscious part of the mind. Dreams became real, in all senses. The reality principle was supposed to be reconsidered. It was all so intriguing that all members were more excited and more motivated by this free energy in the air. Since the beginning of our society, Panksepp had nurtured the society with his affective theory, and his “Affective consciousness” had been the core of our clinical and experimental practices. Therefore, the “conscious id” was welcome without any hesitation or resistance.

Also in our private practices, Panksepp’s basic affective systems were always in our minds when we did the first intake sessions with our clients and when we monitored the psychotherapeutic process. As clinicians, we were (so to speak) scanning the subcortical affective systems in the intake sessions, and this was facilitating our diagnostic formulations and therapeutic goal settings. As clinicians, we were acting as the ego of the clients whose ego could not regulate their affective systems in a healthy way, and we were reinforcing the expression of certain suppressed affects and facilitating the suppression of certain overactivated affects. Applying supportive techniques were, bit by bit, feeling like being the DJ of the limbic system. The balance of top-down and/or bottom-up regulation of subcortical-cortical networks was becoming the goal of our psychotherapies. With the help of this awareness, as psychotherapists, we were deciding whether to apply cognitive or emotive techniques according to the current need of our clients. Npsa and affective neuroscience were definitely helping us in our therapy rooms. Empirically and clinically, all was working out so perfectly that the spirit of Npsa (around its midpuberty) was finally accepted by the American Psychoanalytic Association, who chose Mark Solms as the director of the Science Department in 2016. As the scientific peace-maker missioners, we were proud of this victory.

In mid-puberty, the administration moved out from its birth place, leaving London and settling in New York. Unfortunately, the unifying mother figure for all the Npsa family, Paula Barkay, was not there anymore to maintain the “unity” of the family. Paula Barkay, with Michael Kerman, were the modest wisdom of this society, embracing all the members with dialogue and CARE. Unfortunately, in the April of 2017, the affective and nurturing grandfather figure Jaak Panksepp passed to eternity. The affective touch of the Npsa society was not also there anymore. During the transitional period from London to NY, the loss of “unifying dialogue” and “affective touch” interrupted the continuity of the Npsa spirit. Right after the loss of Panksepp, the amount of


305 affective neuroscience references also decreased in the congresses. A new role model, Friston, was introduced to the Npsa family, who argued for seeing the brain as a hierarchical Helmholtzian machine where largescale intrinsic networks occupy supraordinate levels of hierarchical brain systems that try to minimize the amount of free energy. In our perspective, this mechanistic view was reducing the mind to the Markov Blanket, that tries to minimize the free energy that can be caused by changes. This Bayesian perspective was not in touch with any basic affects and did not have any affective touch to mental phenomena. In the 2017 London congress, one speaker suggested that “ANGST” (meaning “FEAR” in German) caused by surprises extends consciousness.

310 Several Npsa members could not attune to the new Bayesian Npsa perspective. Years ago these members had SEEKed each other in order to break the homeostasis of the scientific taboo era where interdisciplinary dialogue was forbidden. For years, they had built bridges to change the environment of old taboos and worked hard to maximize a free energy. For years, they improved dialogues with experts from different disciplines, with CARE, PLAY and SEEKing, but not with FEAR. After all these reforms, this new Bayesian Npsa perspective sounded as if it was suggesting that all minds want to minimize the free energy caused by changes which will bring uncertainty and that ANGST can increase consciousness. Scientific peace-maker missionaries, that were the defenders of free energy, were disappointed. This mechanistic perspective and its philosophy did not fit to the personality of the Npsa family, which was a reformist family, after all, that worked for bringing changes. Not surprisingly, in April 2019, regional groups got an e-mail from NY, indicating that in the last two years the size of the Npsa society was reduced sharply and asking for the support of regional groups in increasing memberships. For us, the loss of spirit was more important than the loss of size. Thanks to the still ongoing dialogue among very old members (about how the initial spirit was lost), Andrea Clarici had already vocalized our distresses. It was great to hear that he was chosen as the International Liason officer. He invited us all to webinars in order to reconnect the Npsa family and to repair the affective bonding. Not all surprises bring ANGST; the reconnection call was a positive surprise for all of us and brought us hope for the return of CARE, PLAY & SEEK in the Npsa society. In line with this re-unification energy, by the end of 2019, the administration was delighted to report that the current membership reached to its highest levels.

345 For this special issue dedicated to the 20th anniversary, we were also asked to share our reflections on

whether any wrong turns have been made, and what can be done to improve the future of Npsa. It seems crucial (a) to work on increasing the dialogue and affective bonding among regional groups and all members, (b) to have a healthier mourning process for the loss of Jaak Panksepp, by organizing special symposiums dedicated only to him and by discussing the clinical implications of affective neuroscience, (c) to reduce the Bayesian perspective as it does not represent the profile of the Npsa family who have been the “free energy defenders” for years, (d) if the Bayesian perspective is not avoidable, than revising Friston’s approach and making it more “affective” by discussing the “emotional valences” of surprises (surprises that bring negative affects and surprises that bring positive affects need to be urgently differentiated), (e) to focus on “neuropsychanalysis of psychopathologies” and “neuroscience of psychotherapies”, (f) to focus on “the influence of culture on mind” and working on “the neuropsychanalysis of groups”, (g) to discuss and define the “Ethics Code of Npsa” (which the Turkish Npsa Group has been discussing in local conferences for a long time). For instance, the possible utilization of the “new Bayesian Npsa” in the service of “artificial brain” studies may accelerate the mechanistic materialism. Hence, we believe that returning to the starting principles of the “essential Npsa” are highly recommended for the future life of Npsa. Hearing the feedbacks from all regional groups and processing the overlapping suggestions seem to be the greatest idea, in order to rebuild the coherence and integration within the society. Therefore, we convey our special thanks for this special issue, which enables all regional groups to share their point of view, which will later help to build up a Gestalt.

All being said, we are happy to witness the first 20 years of neuropsychanalysis and we are looking forward for the coming decades ...

385  [npsa.istanbul@yahoo.com.tr](mailto:npsa.istanbul@yahoo.com.tr)  
[www.npsa-istanbul.com](http://www.npsa-istanbul.com)