

Sarron Goldman



I got to know Sarron in the context of his clinical psychoanalytical work, but through that window, he gave me a very privileged glimpse of so much else about him.

When he joined our training programme, he wondered about the wisdom of it, saying many suggested that he should instead be providing for his superannuation. In other words, he should be preparing for closing down his life, rather than opening it up. But intuitively I think he knew he was moving in the right direction. He came to us with an extensive and distinguished academic background in clinical psychology, yet strangely, here he was starting a new training in a field of study he was already familiar with. In this new situation, I fully expected him to resort to well established ways of thinking. But I was very pleasantly surprised to see the openness, receptivity, and freshness with which he entered the work. He had an unabashed curiosity about what we examined together, along with an unfettered capacity to observe with great sensitivity, and then describe, in enormous detail, the non-verbal, as well as the verbal communications of the session. Alongside these observations, he entrusted me with extremely personal, but highly relevant, observations of what the clinical situation was producing in him, memories, feelings, imaginings. The considerable wealth of his observations, both externally and internally, stimulated my imagination to explore areas that I could never have ventured into, without his careful descriptions. We thus worked as a team, going into areas that neither of us could have anticipated. We started each session with a sense of uneasy expectation, not knowing what it held or where it would lead us, and almost invariably we ended the session amazed at the vistas that had opened up, that neither of us could have foreseen. I think it would be very true to say that we both learned enormously from our joint experience.

And now he has gone. Our journey together has been interrupted. Never again will we stand together on timeless shores of endless oceans, waiting for the sun to rise. This is such tragic and abrupt end to such a momentous journey. I stand on these shores, grieving along with his family that he always spoke so warmly and fondly of, wondering about a world bereft of his enlightened presence. What are we to make of a day that yawns dismally with his absence? There is a time before the sun rises and there is a time after it has arisen. These times do exist, but there is also something timeless about the moment of the sun emerging from the great ocean of time. It is always, in a sense, arising. That is how I picture Sarron, with his openness, his curiosity, his gentle understanding, and his patient acceptance. Do these things ever arise from somewhere, and do they ever set at another place? Do they not just exist, in their fullness with neither a before, nor an after? Can we not stand in that moment of inspiration eternally? Whenever I think of Sarron, I always stand with him on these endless shores, looking out over the great ocean, waiting for the sun to rise, waiting to watch the joy with which his eyes, and then his whole face, would light up with profound understanding.

Yeats, in his poem about “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”, takes us from the description of that beautiful island to his depths of his beating heart, where we learn the isle actually exists, regardless of wherever the poet happens to be. For me that poem is the discovery of a profound truth in one’s heart, which produces a peace that exceeds all understanding. The tides of this world will indeed come, and the tides will indeed go, as they must, but I will forever stand on these shores with Sarron experiencing peace, the peace that, I quote -

*“ ... comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.”*

Shahid Najeed