**Interiors and Exteriors**

In name of the British Psychoanalytical Society it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the *Ninth European Psychoanalytic Film Festival* (*epff9*)under the direction of Andrea Sabbadini

This year’s theme, *Interiors/Exteriors* is one that addresses central issues to both psychoanalysis and film. It is the dynamic link between the two, the relationship between internal and external and often enough the conflict between them, that psychoanalysts often struggle with. By this I mean the conflict between the internal – the drives, our phantasies and anxieties – and the external, the world that surrounds us, the relationship to others, the particular way in which each of us experience external reality – always through our perceptions and influenced by our emotions.

But it might also be relevant to think about how we convey our ‘internality?’ ‘How we communicate it?’ We know of patients who we see as ‘as if’ personalities who cannot be themselves, who live to show something that does not feel genuine or that does not belong to them. In the film *Room at the Top* Alice says to Joe: ‘You don’t have to pretend. You just have to be yourself’. But Joe is trapped by his own ambition, by his constraints, his anxieties related to class and to his history and he just cannot be himself, follow his passion, his own knowledge of whom he truly loved. Was his choice motivated by the external world, or was he mainly taken over by his internal conflicts and anxieties? These conflicts are clearly highlighted, brought to life by the film. At another moment Alice asks him why during the war, when he became a POW, he did not escape. He said that to be a prisoner was better than to be dead. If the fear of freedom is so great, if freedom is actually dangerous, perhaps then it is preferable to remain dead to our passions. But what is the real danger about? We are permanently confronted by internal sources of anxiety stemming from our superego, from narcissistic loss, from fear of losing the love of our objects as well as fear of damaging others and having to confront guilt. But we cannot underestimate anxiety and fears related to trauma. Was Joe affected by the impact of what happened to his parents? We have to acknowledge that our own demons do affect others. Like the daughter feeling the impact of her mother’s hallucinations in *The Girl, The Mother and the Demons* (the Swedish film in the *epff9* programme).

Our way of relating to films has to do with our unique and specific way in which we perceive the world. We live always hovering on the bridge between the internal and the external, between the individual and society.

We should not equate interior/exterior just with internal or psychic reality/external reality. Interiors and exteriors also alludes to location shooting, to the concept of space and geographical situations, ambience, aesthetics and the impact that these factors have on a specific scene. For example, the particular way by which interior and exterior lighting has an influence on the emotional impact created by certain scenes in the German epff9 movie *Fritz Lang*. The impact of the transition between a scene set outside to one indoors can sometimes tell us much more than speech. This could somehow mirror the impact of the transition between being on our own, in our dream-thought world to having to relate to others, to reach out, to adjust to the difference brought by the other with the emotional and physical aspects involved in this interaction.

Amongst one of the factors that play a vital role in psychoanalysis that is on the border of the exchange between interior/exterior is the psychoanalytic setting with its own particular way of lighting, the arrangements of the objects in the consulting room, the atmosphere, the space between the analyst’s chair and the patient’s couch, the attentiveness of the analyst, his warmth, formality, neutrality. Each setting, with its objective as well as subjective aspects, offers a particular frame that can in greater or lesser way propitiate the sense of containment, the possibility of enabling contact with the patient’s inner feelings, his experience of the analyst and of himself. A setting that enables distance and intimacy, freedom and boundaries, a space for projection and introjection and, like a film, one that can elicit the timelessness of the unconscious only to be both reassured and shocked by its ending.

So there is a constant exchange between the internal and the external, an exchange that is also involved in the relationship between the patient’s internal world and the analyst’s internal world. But there is also an exchange of different type, but still a very important one, between the artistic work and the experience of the recipient, between the artist – his work which is already occupying a social space – and the spectator. Here we are not just within the realm of the creator’s work as we need to be aware of the complexities involved in the filmmaker’s relationship to his/her own creation and this is influenced by a number of internal and external factors, many of which are not just psychological: such as the social environment in which a film is created, the technical aspects that are used as well as the collaborative impact of a number of people taking part in it, including the actors.

Art itself – and this includes film - is a type of communication between all these different aspects. Mark Rothko wrote: ‘Art is not only a form of action, it is a form of social action. For art is a type of communication and when it enters the environment it produces its effects just as any other form of action does… How far a single impulse can extend in its effect is unpredictable (Rothko, page 10. The Artist’s Reality. In Philosophies of Art by Mark Rothko (1998).

Ekkhard Gattig proposed that the particular effect of a work of art on the spectator depends on the ‘*art-work unsaturated aesthetic potential’*. Perhaps it is this opening, the questions that a certain film leaves us with, the potential for changes in our ‘internal’ experience, thoughts and feelings, the need for an unsaturated experience where meaning can be created and expanded.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all our speakers, filmmakers the organizers, and everybody involved in creating this wonderful program. A special thanks to Andrea Sabbadini.

I am sure we will have a very stimulating weekend.  
  
Dr Catalina Bronstein 2017