

## Harold Blum – In (my personal) Memoriam

Driving from the Memorial Service, involuntary series of images parade as if in front of my eyes – it is a stream somewhere indelibly imprinted and playing out like a reel.

It does not interfere with the outside reality, in which I am watching the road full of moving cars in front of me.

The images are sharp, there is a music to them and after they appear, they slowly fade.

Corner of 85<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Park West, New York City, apartment of Hanna and Milton Kapit. Among the guests are Marianne Kris, Phyllis Greenacre, Helene Deutsch, Leo Bellak, Andrew Peto, Margaret Mahler, Leo Stone, and Harold and Elsa Blum ...sometimes in late 1970's. I just started my psychoanalytic training. Awed by these big names, many of them from Freud's Vienna, who I know from their publications only, I am quiet and trying not to stare. Well aware I am here only because of my father's cousin, who Hanna and Leo Bellak knew from pre-war days of academic life in Vienna, I feel I do not quite belong and am quietly scanning the room, looking for a place to hide. Then I hear Hanna say my name. I politely join the small circle with Elsa and Harold. The discussion is about psychoanalytic 'orthodoxy' versus 'classical' analysis. Leo Stone is giving an example of an orthodox analyst colleague, who, upon meeting his patient unexpectedly in the elevator, responded to his patient's greeting by, "Why such a friendly Hello?" After exchange of opinions among the present stars of the analytic universe, Harold turned to me and asked: "What do you think, Eva?" Gasping for air, struggling to keep my composure, I blurted out: "I am just a trainee", thinking: "Not fair to call on me to reveal my ignorance in front of all these illustrious people!" "You are not in Communist Czechoslovakia, Eva, you can speak your mind!", chimes Hanna (a training analyst of my institute, whose father was Freud's colleague at the Vienna University, and who would not let anyone forget it). "Ok", I exhale, "It actually happened", I hear myself saying, "I met one of my patients at the elevator of the training clinic. Patient said 'Hi', and I said 'Hello', .... but I am just a trainee.", I repeat apologetically. Harold cheerfully retorts: "Well, you are just an analyst in training and I am just a training analyst and I would do the same". Everyone laughs.

Somewhere from the middle of the memory reel, May of 2011: I am in Brno, visiting my parents, on the phone with Harold, while shopping for groceries, reviewing my clinical work with a severely traumatized patient, who I am to present later in Prague Psychoanalytic Institute and write for Ferenczi's issue of Psychoanalytic Inquiry. Talking about enactments, analytic flexibility, transference-countertransference. This was my longest shopping trip to the supermarket ever. Harold called back from New York, so I of course took a call. And for good measure, Harold adds tons of historical vignettes about the complexities of Ferenczi's relationship with Freud, and if that is not enough, Freud's relationship with Flies. From there we go to Freud's childhood in Pribor. Harold's mind works overtime: "Eva, how far are you from Freiberg? How do you say it in Czech?", "Pribor. It's around the corner from here. I am going there tomorrow. I told you; they have the Freud's Days there on May 6, and the 'Dream Drawing' competition. I'll tell you and Elsa all about it when back in New York." Harold

cheerfully retorts that “Elsa says Hi, Otto and Kay (the Kernbergs) are with us for dinner, and let’s think more on Pribor, shall we? Maybe we can do something there and get Otto involved too.” And so we did. In 2013. Never before we told anyone that the idea of Prague Post-Congress Freud Symposium in Pribor was born on the phone, while Harold and Otto were having dinner in Long Island, New York and I was shopping for groceries in Brno, Czech Republic.

Paris November 13-14, 2015: With Harold, Sophie de Mijolla, Heidi Faimberg, Christine Anzieu-Premmereur, Jerome Blackman, and other presenters and panelists of the International Symposium ‘Parent-Infant Disturbance: Theory and Therapy’. Just as once before in Pribor, so now in Paris, Stefano Bolognini, the IPA President, gave the opening address on the video. At the end of the first day of the conference, a ‘disturbance’ of epic proportions shocked Paris and all the world: a terrorist attacks which claimed more than 140 victims, erupted on the evening of November 13 in the backyard of the conference venue, and in proximity to the restaurant, where Harold, Sophie, I and others were continuing into the night with discussion inspired by the first day’s presentations. While some of us promptly got up and ‘uberated’ ourselves to our hotels, Harold stayed, claiming his desert. When I checked on him later that evening, he confirmed that he and Elsa got safely back, “only after the desert” ...We left when we heard that the brutes are coming to the ‘restaurants row’. No worry, Eva”, he added, “I may not be too quick to leave in face of the brutal force, but I am not stupid.” It was in the spirit of not ceding to the terrorists’ ‘brutal force’, that we decided to continue the conference as planned the next day, in spite of the state of emergency, which turned the public transportation upside down. At the farewell dinner of November 14, Harold spoke for all of us when he remarked: “All that we had come to Paris to accomplish had been completed”. And he added that “During the terror, it immeasurably helped to ‘huddle together’ and not be alone”.

The last time I saw Harold was during American Psychoanalytic National Meeting, during the working conference of the contributors of the IPA Inter-Regional Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (IREN). ‘The circle of life’ would have it that at this time, I chaired the conference (and IREN), and Harold, the elder statesman of world psychoanalysis and prolific consultant-contributor to IREN, stated: “It is very important that anti-dogmatic attitude and creativity, which IREN brings to the table, prevails in psychoanalysis going forward...”

So here I end. Immeasurably sad at Harold’s passing, but at the same time immensely privileged of having known his wisdom, his humor, his creative thought and human bravery first hand.

**Eva Papiasvili**