

PEARLS ON A STRING THE PSYCHOSYNTHESIS NETWORK IN THE WORLD

Translation by Donatella Randazzo

At the end of the last international congress in Taormina, in the summer of 2016, when Luce Ramorino and Mike Malagreca presented the initiative of World Psychosynthesis Day, I strongly felt the importance of Asagioli's words from 1937, on the urgency to create spiritual airways between men, between nations, between continents, in order to build a support network for the development of goodwill, able to support new models of cooperation for humanity.

In the wake of that vibration, I wrote a letter to the Magazine Director:

“Dear Director,
I have recently been asking myself: “What happens in the world of Psychosynthesis, after we get mutually updated on the occasion of international congresses”?
I would very much like to find out, by browsing through the websites of the various institutions and centers, finding out if there are magazines like ours abroad, or newsletters, or by asking directly to people met at Rocca di Papa (2012) or Taormina (2016), or by contacting the secretariats of the centers or perhaps through channels that at this time I cannot even imagine. But beyond the “how”, I am interested in the “what”, and in its extension: is there a Psychosynthesis network in the world, are we interconnected, or do we need to work a little on weaving threads - spiritual airways - to strengthen our awareness of being part an enlarged living organism that wants to participate in the renewal of humanity?

The Italian Psychosynthesis community would like to renew itself, one proof of this being the numerous activities and discussions that each year which are brought

to our national congresses, open to all, but also to our trainers' meetings in Vallombrosa. I wonder if the inspiration for renewal could be nourished also by knowledge of the initiatives that our psychosynthetic brothers of other nations carry out and perhaps, vice versa, if what we organize could represent a source of inspiration for them.

In short, I would like to open a window on the world of Psychosynthesis out of Italy, to learn about other realities, to start a dialogue and exchange of ideas through this magazine.

And to give a shape to all this, I imagine a special column, reporting on interesting initiatives taking place elsewhere, centers, people, news, ideas, or ...?

What do you think? Shall we give it a try?
Donatella”

Having received a positive response from the editor, as I set out on my task, a multitude of thoughts and questions crowded my mind, some aimed at finding an effective modality for expressing my findings, others dictated - alas - by the fear of “exploring new territories”. Since, however, what prevailed was my wish to make investigations, after accepting what was stirring inside me, I took a few deep breaths to center myself and then started my search for a “thread” with a twofold purpose: follow the traces leading to Psychosynthesis entities, and knot them together on a silk lace to make a... string of pearls.

The initial point were the words spoken in Taormina, so I decided to reconnect to Luce and Mike by reading their beautiful article (see Rivista n. 26 - October 2016), of which I quote here an excerpt as it well expresses the inspiration background for this column.

“If [...]all of us have embraced Psychosynthesis as a model, the synthesis among the diverse units and groups [...] is still far from completed.

It is thus essential that we make an effort to recognize the need for a greater connection and a true reciprocal recognition among all those who generate initiatives and work with them in its diverse lines and levels, regardless of the specific belonging to this or that center,

institute, and group, or its focusing on therapy, education, the transpersonal, etc.

It is as if the moment is right to acquire more awareness of being part of a greater energetic movement initiated by Roberto Assagioli, to feel that as Psychosynthesis practitioners or friends we belong to only one individuality which expresses the intuition of Roberto Assagioli in many different ways, but the Oneness lies in its essence. In Psychosynthesis vernacular this could be the time to recognize each other and identify with Psychosynthesis Itself, wherefrom we can strengthen its multiple personality expressions through each of us making our own contribution to a movement of convergence and unification, getting ready for a further convergence and unification in Humanity Itself, which will lead to the creation of a new world."

I imagine this planetary organism, already in existence, as being engaged in the evolutionary phase search for self-awareness. I believe that together, from the pages of the magazine, we can help it "know itself", by making an inventory of its parts on the physical level, of its cells or organs, represented by centers and aggregations scattered around the planet, in the hope of creating/strengthening relationships among them.

Semester by semester, the magazine would mark the time of learning and contact and help keep this purpose alive because, as Luce and Mike remind us

[...] an idea in order to manifest itself needs to be loved and desired and nurtured throughout time, Consequently, its realization will depend on each of us [...]

I wish to give it a try, and animated with the energy of desire, I start this adventure trying to find on the Internet some written trace of the interest aroused by the World Psychosynthesis Day. The language needed for my international search is English, which I am fortunate to know fairly well.

I immediately found two references from people close to us: the first is in the blog of Catherine Anne Lombard, an overseas Psychosynthesis researcher, who explains the purpose of World Day in this way:

"The day is meant to establish a spiritual connection between everyone who is generating and working with Psychosynthesis concepts and techniques. Each of us is encouraged to take time during the day to reflect on how Psychosynthesis is a living, evolving idea that can be successfully applied through many formats and in various contexts."

Attracted by the emphasis placed by Catherine on the vitality of Psychosynthesis, and by the reference to its evolution, I entered her blog and, in the bibliography section, I found, among others, some of her publications appeared in the journal *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*, which is the serial magazine of the Association for the Advancement of Psychosynthesis (AAP).

It is known to many of us in Italy this great overseas association, consisting of numerous centers located in the North American territory, some members of which we know for having met them at international congresses. Their magazine seems to me an excellent starting point for our journey of knowledge. Access to it, however, is reserved to members of the AAP, so Catherine's articles available on her blog are simple extracts that do not lead to the entire issue.

Then I went back to my original research: on the "Psychology today" website, I found a presentation of the world day on a page signed by another Psychosynthesis practitioner known to many of us, Dorothy (Didi) Firman. I was struck by the initial two paragraphs:

The first is an adorable postulate that skillfully shifts the focus from the World Day to Psychosynthesis itself!

"If you know Psychosynthesis, then you understand why it is celebrated. If you don't, I invite you to taste a bit of it".

The second part is her declaration of adherence to the spirit of Psychosynthesis in each of the main roles of her life:

"As a psychotherapist, life coach, author and professor of psychology, as well as a mother, grandmother, friend and seeker in life, Psychosynthesis has been a key piece



of my life's work and path. I love it as a life's practice and as a way of teaching "conscious evolution" to those I work with".

Dorothy also publishes on *Psychosynthesis Quarterly*, and finally a glimmer of memory opened up: the magazine, on a quarterly basis and in an entirely electronic format, is sent by email to the Palermo Center and, I assume, to many other centers in the world.

From the mailbox of the Center I found the link to each issue and, browsing through the last two ones, I discovered that both Catherine and Didi have covered the role of guest editor in the numbers of March and June 2019 respectively. *Guest editor?* To better understand the meaning of this role, I had to look a little further back in time, to find everything explained in the editorial of the December 2018 issue: with the end of the year 2018, the publisher and founder (in 2012) of the magazine, Jan Kuniholm, left his position after a seven-years cycle. To cover the role, starting in 2019, the AAP Steering Board (Steering Board) has thought of assigning it, in turn, to some of their psychosyntheticians, each being in charge of a given issue as "guest editor", specialized on the "leit motif" topic of that number and also responsible for collecting the contributions sent to the magazine. On an e-mail arrived to the Palermo Center I also noticed that guest editors solicit these contributions, by sending questions or inspiring thoughts to the Psychosynthesis community of members and sympathizers. The issue of Catherine, for example, was dedicated to the theme "Awareness and Will", Didi's to "Personal and Transpersonal Knowledge" and these topics were treated from various points of view.

Another interesting point I have learnt is that starting from 2019, all the activities of the AAP are based on a theme, which is developed for the entire quarter not only in the magazine, but in every event organized by the association: webinars, online discussion groups, posts on social networks and wherever the AAP brings its contents. The themes are chosen taking into account requests and suggestions from their members.

I like their new editorial program, I find it inspiring, and it seems to me a beautiful opening to "new ventures",

founded on the experience of the previous seven-year period. In this respect, as stated by the AAP:

"We realize that change is sometimes challenging, but we hope that this can include both the best of what came before, and the invitation and openness to what can be."

I admire the magazine as a whole. It is very colorful and pleasant to read, with beautiful images. On the second cover, is clearly stated the purpose it aims to achieve:

"The Psychosynthesis Quarterly is published by the Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (AAP) four times a year in March, June, September and December. The AAP provides resources for people to cultivate peace and purpose. Our mission is to advance the theory and practice of Psychosynthesis to benefit individuals and society. "

The types of contributions that the magazine accepts for publication are also specified.

"The Psychosynthesis Quarterly accepts announcements, ideas, reviews of books and events, articles, poetry, art, exercises, photos and letters. Tell us what has helped your life and work, what can help others and examples of Psychosynthesis theory in action. "

The brilliant contents reflect the spirit of great openness that distinguishes the AAP! I let myself be distracted by some of the articles, promising myself to read them all, whenever possible. Authors are psychosyntheticians from other European countries and all over the world: some could be useful references for future discoveries.

The pages include advertisements of initiatives and activities offered by the various centers that are part of the AAP: for example, the online course for coaching training (160 h) offered by the Synthesis Center in San Francisco, or a course of 130 h aimed at professional development and personal growth. Among the ads, there is also the announcement of summer activities taking place at Casa Assagioli, in Florence.

I suggest to everyone, even those who just speak a little English, to browse through this magazine to appreciate

the “ambient” of Psychosynthesis and breathe a gust of oxygen for their psyche, comparable only to the atmosphere of deep connection that has permeated our last international congresses.

From the magazine I move on to the AAP website, which I visit by letting myself be captivated by the enthusiasm that emerges from each section.

I take the occasion of my “leap” from the magazine pdf file back to the web, to underline that this column cannot be the place to talk extensively about Psychosynthesis entities (centers, people, ideas) that I encounter in my path. Here, in giving news of the various existing and operating realities, I would like to point out those elements that I consider to be innovative and / or important, which can act as a stimulus for new ideas! And I am very open, however, to accept suggestions and discuss different methods of presentation by other psychosynthesists, both Italian and foreign.

But back to the points of the AAP that struck me:

- First of all, the availability of investment in “*scholarships and grants to support training in Psychosynthesis or new initiatives that promote knowledge of Psychosynthesis in the world.*”
- Second, their presenting themselves as a cohesive group (unity in diversity): “*we are therapists, coaches, teachers and artists who use Psychosynthesis in professional contexts*”
- Third, the wealth of online bibliographic resources available to everyone.

Among these, as librarian and archivist, I want to emphasize the oldest documents, in pdf format, which date back to the 60s of the last century, with the invitation to go and consult them because they are very interesting.

I found the Newsletter of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, in which from 1958 to 1974 they wrote Frank Hilton, co-founder of the PRF, and perhaps Assagioli himself, and I perceived and appreciated the spirit infused in these communications with the public, aimed

at accrediting the newborn Psychosynthesis in a medical and educational environment, to create an international network.

I want to close this first piece by reporting an excerpt that seems particularly relevant to me, present in newsletter n. 4 of April 1959:

GLOBAL SYNTHESIS

The PRF conference last May pointed up the larger, ultimate synthesis of the diverse peoples of the world: the “Psychosynthesis of humanity”. One of the great steps towards this distant goal is the UNESCO’s EAST-WEST MAJOR PROJECT, coordinated by Jacques Havet, the French philosopher. Writing in that most constructive journal, the Unesco Courier (December 1958), he outlines the Project as “Firstly an effort ... to eliminate prejudices and replace them with knowledge of established historical and sociological facts. Secondly an understanding of the spirit of each culture, the way of life and of the manner of thought and feeling of each people... favored by presenting facts in the perspective of history, geography, and social and economic conditions. Finally, more ways... to inform the general public, in each country, about the most remote cultures