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Processes of Political and Terrorist Radicalization in Late Adolescence – Some Case Examples

Part I

1. Introduction

In the first lecture we sought to show the way in which the inherent connection between narcissistic ideas of purity, unity and equality impacts the imagination of a pre-ambivalent, narcissistic ideal state with massive violence. In the process, the other and the foreign then become the faithless, the intruder and the troublemaker – an ascribed characterization required for projection and persecution in order to phantasmatically uphold the ideal state. When called into play by leading charismatic religious or political figures, such ideological ideas and fantasies are capable of activating an aggressive disposition harbouring substantial destructive potency. However, though such radical ideology may not, in itself, be sufficient to become an actual terrorist, the adoption and adherence to it constitutes the first phase of a transformation of the personality – a transformation which occurred in many Islamic terrorists in their late adolescent development.

In order to undertake an adequately differentiated description of this transformational process, we must first provide an overview of adolescent development so as to outline at what points such transformations take place.

2. Adolescent Development, Aggression and Destructivity

During adolescence, psychic organisation is subject to a comprehensive transformation. Sexuality must be integrated into the body image, into self-representation and into future object relations, and the young person must attempt to find new objects of love. The preconditions for this are the dissolution of the infantile relationships to the primary objects, to which also belong the dissolution of parental authority and thus the reorganisation of the superego and the ego ideal. The new instinctual drives assist in relaxing repressive barriers and to once again bring to consciousness former, unconsciously generated pre-oedipal and oedipal desires and fantasies.

However, it is not only the sexual body which challenges and threatens adolescents, but also a body which now becomes capable of exercising aggression and violence in a new way. Not only the genitals but also the growth of the musculature, have transformed the body into a vehicle capable of pursuing aggressive-destructive desires. It has become an active force with which sexual and aggressive fantasies can be realised and corresponding actions carried out. In this way, re-actualisation of derivative infantile unconscious fantasies may threaten the adolescent ego, especially if incestuous and aggressive-homicidal impulses irrupt into consciousness. At the same time, it is through this that there also emerges the possibility to search and discover better and other possible solutions to infantile conflicts and traumas. A successful adolescent developmental process is a complex balancing act. Along the road to successful psychic integration the adolescent is susceptible to many risks, which can lead to impasses or to breakdowns in the development with self- and foreign destructive acts. Here, it is especially constellations of adolescent narcissism which play a central role.

During adolescence, narcissistic behaviour, and especially omnipotent fantasies perform a bridging function. Should the youth detach himself from his primary objects, his ego dispenses with the parental support which hitherto functioned as an assisting ego. Parental support is now replaced by the support of peer groups, by grandiose fantasies and by daydreams. During this period, these last assume important transitional functions, until such time as the sense of self-esteem begins to be increasingly stabilised by real gratifications and relationships. Hence, the search for objects and integration in the reality of social structures, have an anti-narcissistic function. However, if the conflicts of development and detachment are unable to be solved, and if infantile narcissism has not been mitigated by an adequate solution of the oedipal conflict, then this frequently results in a compensatory fixation on daydreaming and omnipotent thinking. Especially in cases in which the pre-adolescent self has become fragile by being hurt through neglect and other traumatic experiences, the bridging function of narcissism can become overburdened. The base and vanishing point of narcissism, which in itself signifies a developmental scope, then leads to an impasse which - if it can no longer be left - develops into a psychopathological condition. What one then observes is

the multiple formation of a pathological, grandiose self which can no longer expose itself to any real acknowledgement, but which is increasingly guided by archaic-destructive affects.

Like narcissism, the formation of groups among adolescents also achieves a supportive, developmental function. The young person needs the affiliation with a peer group in order to manage the psychic transformations and the detachment from parents, as well as to develop new faculties of the ego which advance his cultural integration. Sub-cultural milieus thus become experimental fields, which can lead to rapidly shifting affiliations and identifications with the most diverse of groups. These groups evolve their own specific behavioural norms to which often belong aggressive challenges to the adult world. As is well known, during adolescence, the thresholds to anti-sociality and delinquency are fluid.

Depending on the group, several things can go awry here. The high appraisal of violent acts and brutal masculinity then becomes a group norm serving to generate power and respect. By transgressing limits and by means of radical provocation, youth sound out how far they can go, and thereby challenge a boundary which they are unable to elude in the long run, but rather need to orient themselves and to internalize subsequently. For the development of youth, one may in this sense refer to society's container-function.

Through abstract cognitive thinking, an extended sense of time and the greater capacity to reflect, the adolescent also acquires the ability to develop his own worldview and to incorporate ideological elements into his thought. Through these means, hate can be transformed into ideologically endorsed resentment and to seek out a field of activity in extremist political fanaticism. Right-wing extremist movements and Islamic terrorism psychologically exploit these connections.

World views and political ideologies represent one of the extensions, the acquisition and further definition of which lead the young person beyond the family and integrate him into social life. The young person requires such an externalisation and displacement of his inner, conflict-charged confrontation with the powerful parental images in order to take leave of the family circle, and thus infantile identifications, to discover independent solutions and to integrate new identifications into his identity. Here, political ideologies lend themselves

especially to the externalisation of undissolvable inner conflicts within the young person, more particularly those based on a Manichaeistic worldview marked by a friend-enemy thinking with clear-cut attributions of good and bad. For the young person's development these views of the world are ambiguous. While decisiveness, intransigence, and either-or reasoning help the young person to cut loose and to adopt his own points of view, the danger is that he then remains too rigidly fixed to these. This threat arises especially in cases in which massive feelings of hate and disappointment are at hand, when social attachments no longer function and the young person perceives himself devalued. Here, political ideologies provide the young personality with approaches to thought and action which make an impression on him as ways out of otherwise apparently insoluble problems. Instead of dealing with these problems himself, it is now the ideology, or the group representing the ideology that defines what is right and what is good or bad. The group norms take the place of a more individualised superego. As a result, adolescent development threatens to end in stalemate. The painful path to individualisation ceases and mature, psychological solutions of compromise, as well as the ability to endure sustained ambivalence are thus eluded. And in lieu of this, both inner, as well as outer worlds are subject to a split. While ideal, loved objects to which one belongs and which one wishes to possess do exist, there are also objects of hate on to which weak, anxiety-driven and despised aspects of the self are projected, from where they can then be persecuted and eliminated. This is a first step of a radicalization process.

We would like to present instances of this by way of examples, the first one being of Islamist terroristic radicalization.

3. Terrorist Radicalization. A Case Example

Germany experienced the first terror attack by a Salafist Jihadist in 2011. Arid Uka, a twenty-one-year-old Muslim from Kosovo, killed two American soldiers and critically wounded two others at Frankfurt airport.¹ There were no other casualties only because his pistol malfunctioned. Uka had become radicalized within a very short space of time about six months earlier. Prior to this he had fallen into a

¹ I took the following example from the book by Guido Steinberg (2014): Al-Qaida's German Fighters

late-adolescent crisis, left school before completing his school leaving examinations: due to a depressive phase he was unable to get out of bed in the mornings, and consequently missed school. He kept his parents in the dark about his expulsion from school, and took on casual jobs, the last of which was at the airport mail centre. It was at that time that he turned to the Salafist religion, dressed himself according to these religious rules, and began to study Arabic. He learned about the world of Jihadism not, as others had done, from charismatic preachers or ideological fanatics, but exclusively through the Internet. He occupied himself intensely with the ideology of Jihadism, followed news from battle zones, listened to Jihadist sermons and watched videos. After a few months Arid Uka decided to join the fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan. However, this plan failed since he was unable to establish the right contacts. The evening before the attack he watched a propaganda film produced by the Islamist movement in Uzbekistan including purported documentary material featuring sexual attacks by Americans on Iraqi and Afghani women. A narrative voice on the video called for the protection of Muslim women in Iraq and in Afghanistan against rapists from the ranks of American and allied armies. Following a sleepless night, he then decided to drive to the airport in order to kill soldiers about to depart for Afghanistan. He knew his way around the airport and discovered a group of soldiers. He asked one whether they were flying to Afghanistan; when the latter answered in the affirmative, he then entered the soldier's bus and began shooting. On the way to the airport he repeatedly listened to a Jihad hymn in the German language:

Mother, stand firm, I am in Jihad.

Do not grieve, and know that He has awoken me.

The Umma is dazzled, but I have been honoured.

Mother, stand firm, your son is in Jihad.

The Umma is dazzled, but I have been honoured.

Mother, stand firm, your son is in Jihad.

The cries became louder, the wounds became more.

This unfulfilled duty leaves me no peace, leaves me no quiet.
I must go this very day, since tomorrow would be too late.
Mother, stand firm, your son is in Jihad

.....

Mother, while you shed your tears, blood flows in Shishan².
The Jews and Christians are in in Khorassan³.
The prophet has been offended and one treads on the Koran.
Mother stand firm, your son is in Jihad

.....

Mother, should I fall in battle then,
Do not believe, I am dead.
For I am far more alive, in a better place.
Flying in a green bird, I will be provided for by my Lord.
Mother, stand firm, your son is in Jihad

....

Ari Uka probably repeated this hymn as a means to eradicate any possible doubt about the significance of his acts. He thus insured his calling for the Jihad. Furthermore, through this he was also able to imagine the relationship to his own mother, and attempted to acquire inner support from a good object and thereby ensure justification for the act.

5. The Terrorist Transformation of the Personality. Some General Remarks

The radicalization of Arid Uka for the Jihad casts light on the significance of the Internet for this path. In many cases, however, the path runs via contacts with Salafist preachers and ideologists.⁴ These latter look for ways of gaining access to youth who have experienced deprivation or who are without orientation, and most

² Arabic for Chechenya

³ Arabic term of the Jihadists for Afghanistan

⁴ For the description of radicalization of youth in Salafist groups in Germany I have drawn from Lamya Kaddor's book (2015)

of whom have serious social and personal problems; youth for whom finding an identity under existing social conditions seems almost impossible. What youth find attractive in Salafism may be seen by the fact that it is not merely a movement of religious awakening, but has the dynamics of a youth protest movement. After initial contact, the youth in question is then invited to the mosque or to group meetings. Specific attempts are made to disengage him from his previous environment, to talk with him about the meaning of justice and injustice, to show him how Muslims in the West are discriminated against and victimized. Simple religious messages with a black-and-white character claiming to be the one true Islam are conveyed to them. Once the youth becomes involved the leaders and the charismatic central figures convey to him a perspective on world events opposed to that which has hitherto been mediated to him through the media or at home. Any independence of mind and thought the youth may have possessed is neutralized, and resistance to the voices of doubt – inwardly as well as outwardly – is inculcated in him. The youth is thus fully immersed in the Salafist scene, and is no longer reachable from the outside. This isolation and total alienation from his previous world represents a second step towards the transformation of his personality.

Should he then be further radicalized and join a Jihadist group, then a world view is conveyed to him such that he himself, as “true Muslim”, is justified in carrying out violence against the “enemies of Islam”. Violence is purposely encouraged and supported. Videos depict the “justified” punishment, abasement, abuse or decapitation of so-called faithless, “evil” human beings who one now confronts with justice. The faithless are unambiguously defined; they are shown no compassion, and a merciless attitude towards them is religiously legitimated by the Koran. Furthermore, by means of propaganda and other techniques of manipulation the faithless are dehumanized such that any empathy with them is smothered. What the Salafist novice undergoes is a form of brainwashing. . This type of violent indoctrination is continued in training camps in which the future terrorist undergoes military training. The connections to one’s previous relationships are thereby totally ruptured. This results in a submersion in a ‘parallel world’ that is prepared, in part, by a series of initiation rites. One is

familiar with such techniques from other terrorist groups. And yet, as a whole these parallel worlds and the processes of violent mental conditioning are only indirectly open to investigation. It was, above all, Robert Lifton (1999) who managed to discover more about this by way of examining particularly the practices of the AUM sect that launched a Sarin attack on the Tokyo subway. Such groups are dominated by an absolute sense of control, in which all forms of communication are monitored and the psyche of group members is governed by an ethos of self-disclosure and self-flagellation. These personal confessions represent the path to purity and fusion with the group. Reality, and the perception thereof, become the property of the group and is manipulated and legitimized by the group's ideals. Among them, absolute purity is the highest and is contrasted with the outside world of pure evil. In order to create this separation between purity and impurity, these groups employ massive violence, which is then justified as a process of purification. Such a change requires the catharsis brought about by the destruction of the person one had previously been. In the course of this transformation, the distinction between education and punishment is often blurred, especially in procedures such as submerging group members in extremely cold or hot water, hanging them up by their feet, or locking them up alone in a cell for several days.

How can we explain such practices and their effects psychoanalytically? Through such treatment, the function of internal good objects to give one a sense of safety collapses and is replaced by what becomes the only available object: the leader, the guru, or the group as a whole, and the identification with group ideals. In order not to break down, and not to be killed immediately, the incipient terrorist must identify with the religious leader's intentions even more as the only accessible object and the only one capable of granting safety from the fear of a life-threatening situation. He is also served by the professed vision of an eternal life in paradise.

Part II

"A Palestinian Suicide Bomber...."

As Werner Bohleber has already pointed out, owing to its wide-ranging clinical and conceptual research, psychoanalysis might be capable of making its specific contribution to insights concerning the unconscious dimensions of adolescent radicalization processes although the complex interplay of social, institutional, specific developmental and biographical factors always have to be considered and discussed in interdisciplinary dialogues.

In my contribution I would like to supplement Werner's conceptual reflections by further clinical observations, above all, those I have been able to make in the psychoanalysis of a Muslim adolescent patient. At the same time – and most likely for us all – the vexing and shocking truth remains that it is almost impossible to predict the combined, complex effects of the above-mentioned factors. Moreover, the specific biographical-developmental paths which flow into Islamic radicalization differ considerably.

Thus, the Frankfurt assassin Werner presented was in his late adolescence (a twenty-one-year-old school dropout). The radicalization process in this case took place over the period of a mere few weeks, culminating directly in the assassination of the American soldiers.

The three Paris assassins who executed the team of journalist from “Charlie Hebdo” in January this year were also in their late adolescence. Their process of radicalization began in adolescence and continued for several years. The brothers Said and Chérif Kouachi were both brought up under the precarious social conditions of the Paris banlieus, had lost their father at an early stage in their development and were sent to a home, since their mother was unable to cope with their upbringing. The brothers kept in contact with their mother and developed unobtrusively in the well-run home. The mother's suicide and the disappointments suffered during adolescence (one of the brothers was unable to fulfil his greatest ambition of becoming a professional footballer) led to a rupture in their adolescent development, thus making them susceptible to Islamic preachers in the banlieus and, above all, during their prison term. Furthermore, this rupture was probably abetted by way of a disorganized attachment type, which, as is known, traumatized children develop and which, as many studies have meanwhile shown, represents a risk-factor for adolescent development. The brothers moved back the banlieus,

slipped into a drug career, became violent and, after being thrown out onto the streets by their uncle, supported themselves by way of petty crime. It was under these conditions that they met a religious fanatic and preacher Farid Benyettou at the Adda'wa Moschee and "Emir" of the Butter-Chaumont cell, who had been recruiting young men for the Jihad in Iraq since 2003. His appearance and his hate-filled speeches fascinated the two brothers, most likely also due to their search for a fatherly leadership figure. And yet it was only once in prison that fundamentalist Islam was to become the predominant aspect of their inner world, above all due to the efficient and intelligent draw of Djamel Beghai, an Al-Qaida recruiter, who had been cultivating contacts to radical Islamists in Europe since the 1990s. He had been in custody due to planning an attack on the US embassy in Paris. The radicalization of the two brothers was intensified by Beghai around 2010. They became part of the international terror network, were given a military training and most likely developed a terroristic inner world whereby empathy with others was prevented and the inhibition to kill systematically overridden. Belonging to the Umma offered them a sense of being part of a worldwide community of the faithful and a clear orientation. To kill and to die in Jihad now became the goal and the fulfilment of one's own life.

The twenty-six-year-old returnee X. from Syria, who had been extensively interviewed by Bruno Schirra (2014), had an entirely contrasting biographic background. After X. went underground with ISIS in Iraq and Syria, he then quite unexpectedly contacted his mother, one of the leading legal experts in economics: "whether she could and would help him... he would not come with empty hands..." X. is the eldest of three children from an "immaculate, picture book family"; the father is a respected doctor, the children were brought up in a well-protected atmosphere; the eldest son X. was highly gifted, had undergone an otherwise inconspicuous development until the age of fourteen, and was socially integrated and successful at school.

"His story began on September 11, 2001 at 3:15 p.m. That afternoon, the fourteen-year-old happened to be lounging around in his room, struggling to overcome boredom with his homework. The television was running in the

background. Once having realized what was happening he became transfixed by the events unfolding on the screen. It was inconceivable that this was to be the moment at which the young lad from a well-to-do family was to become a craftsman of death in the service of Allah. He had been an excellent student who would have gained a first in his pre-university qualifications at “the drop of a hat”. “All arbitrary? Shit happens – how differently might things have turned out! I don’t think twice about it, so just spare me with your pop-psychology” he said (X), referring in an indifferent tone of voice to the state of these teenage years. “Considered from a pop-psychological standpoint, we have tediousness, boredom, a lack of interest, weariness – just take your pick. You can write: “it was a sense of inner emptiness...” (Schirra, p. 280).... The 9/11 incident continued to fascinate the young man thirteen years later. “He remained as indifferent to the dead at that time as he is now. He admires the “incredible achievement, the absolute single-minded determination, the total devotion, and the infinite fulfilment that lies behind the event.

He researched into the background and found the answer in Islam: “community, solidarity, clear contents, and an unambiguous set of rules. For the fourteen-year-old boy it was “as if scales fell from my eyes. No gibberish, nothing vague and fuzzy. You are needed, and you have to honour this. Without any ifs and buts...” (a.a.O,280). He buried himself in Islamic texts and encountered a wondering preacher in a mosque.

Teachers and classmates noticed a transformation: he became oddball, overly preoccupied with Islam, grew a beard – albeit that everyone trivialized the development, since he was neither violent nor did he attract attention by bizarre clothing etc. Only his muslim friend warned the family members. They did not believe him. Their son visited the Qortoba Institute for Arabic Studies in Alexandria in 2007, returning for a short period – during which the family failed in their efforts to reach out to him emotionally – before disappearing again in 2008.

The fascination of 9/11 also played a somewhat vexing role both for my Muslim analysand and I; and yet it was possible in the mature analytic relationship, now in the fifth year of psychoanalysis, to retrace the unconscious roots of this fascination in subsequent sessions, rather than enact them, in a sort of retrospective look at

the analytic work and the insights thus acquired. I would like to focus on this in greater detail here, in the main section of my contribution:

It is extremely rare for violent youth to seek psychoanalytic treatment. Mr A. was himself able to find a way out of the xenophobic, radical right-wing scene and the openly violent “Clan”. However, for this outward struggle against open violence he was to pay a major personal price, namely, the loss of a supportive sense of identity, as well as access to his own emotionality, the world of his drives and desires – and, associated with this – the loss of the experience of closeness and bonds to other human beings. He was also utterly isolated socially: for the adolescent, affiliation to a social group had collapsed. This was one reason why he finally opted for psychoanalytic treatment as a young adult. In that long-term psychoanalysis provided us with the opportunity to analytically investigate the psychodynamics of radicalized youth with a propensity for violence, I fall back here on a summary of the psychoanalysis with Mr A., in spite of the fact that it goes back several years.

What I also found impressive in this connection was the fact that when initially meeting with him I unconsciously perceived this psychodynamics in my strikingly vehement countertransference, something I was only able to decode much later, due to his vexing reaction to September 11, 2001.

*An Unusual Explanation and a Journey around the Globe*⁵

“A Palestinian suicide bomber...” – the thought first triggered in me when walking over to the door to greet Mr A. – shocked me both in terms of its content and by its extraordinary intensity. In an effort to rationalize this response, I sought to dismiss association: the twenty-eight-year-old, broad-shouldered, strongly built young man clearly stemmed from the Arab cultural area, and appeared to scrutinize me

⁵ For reasons of discretion, the information connected with the case example has been actively encoded. I have endeavoured to reconstruct several fragments of the psychoanalytic process descriptively, and less by way of theoretic reflections in the hope to thus prompt later discussion. An extended version of the case study was published: Leuzinger-Bohleber, M. (2000): Wandering between the worlds - from an analysis of a late adolescent. In: Klitzing, K. v.; Tyson, P.; Bürgin, D. (eds.): Psychoanalysis in childhood and adolescence. New York: Karger, 104-125

with a mistrusting sinister gaze. I found his engaging, soft-spoken manner and perfect High German with which he opened the discussion to be in stark contrast to this initial outward impression. A younger colleague had sent him to me after four initial discussions, since she felt that I could work well with him therapeutically. However, he was not fully decided about beginning a therapy: though sensing that without therapeutic help he would be unable to progress any further in his life, he experienced difficulty in committing himself over a period of years. He was very fond of travelling, and often. Perhaps, his problems could be solved if he immigrated to Australia. I was surprised at how quickly Mr A. succeeded in gaining my sympathy, and was astonished by his deliberate and discerning introspection. He gave an impressive description of how proximity to others presented problems. "Whenever someone comes too close, for example, at work, or a woman, I begin panicking. I then feel a compulsive urge to rush off to the next airport, book the next "last-minute-flight" to wherever and fly off to a distant continent...I feel the safest as world-vagabond...". Though Mr. A. is somewhat frugal with his explanations and images in discussion, speaking in soft tones and with long pauses, I am able to follow him well inwardly. We swiftly come to the agreement that the object of therapy would be to understand why emotional proximity to another causes such anxiety in him. "I think I understand an aspect of your conflict: while conveying to me your interest in serious therapy in order to discover the background to these problems with close interpersonal exchange, this means proximity to another human being, namely, to me as your possible therapist and thus to a danger – also with respect to the therapy which triggers anxiety and even panic. And yes, naturally, I can try a number of things to ameliorate these anxieties, but I cannot grab my couch and follow you to the next airplane..." – We both smiled at this fantasy without it coming across as offensive or creating a distance between us; this I took to be an indicator that a form of unconscious communication could develop between us – something which could be used in common psychoanalytic work. Furthermore, I found the indication for psychoanalysis to be relatively clear, since Mr A. was at high risk (suicide and the danger of drugs, acute psychosomatic stomach complaints), and his psychic development appeared to have come to a standstill; furthermore, thanks to his high

motivation and introspective faculty he was most likely in a position to profit from a psychoanalysis. His social and affective retreat reminded me of the beginning of a development towards a severe narcissistic personality disorder.

In the initial two interviews I discovered almost nothing biographical other than that he is the son of an intercultural marriage between an Arabian refugee, an engineer, and a German secretary – a relationship which he described as chronically unhappy. Both parents had an alcohol problem. The father is now also acutely physically ill, and occasionally works in a snack bar. The mother manages a carpet cleaning service, which is on the brink of bankruptcy. He is one of four siblings – two elder brothers, and a younger sister. Both brothers suffer from drug-related problems, are repeatedly involved in violent incidents and have been unemployed for years. The sisters still attend school and are obese. He also suffers from “eating frenzies”, followed by acute stomach complaints and sleeplessness. After training to become a car mechanic Mr A. studied for his high school leaving qualifications at evening school before spending two years in the USA to study a rare subject in economics which interested him, but which provided him with as good as no professional perspectives. He returned to Germany to save his mother’s failing business, but was unsuccessful. “I have now also been unemployed for the best part of a year, and only occasionally earn some money as a travel guide...”

After the first interview Mr A. disappeared for almost a year. He then called me and requested a discussion as soon as possible. He began the interview thus: “I have decided to begin a course of psychoanalysis with you. This last year I travelled across the world and was forced to concede that I still drag my problems with me wherever I go... if I want get any further, then I will not be able to do so without psychoanalysis.” Over the course of the discussion he referred to three suicide attempts: he once stood on top of a high bridge and was about to throw himself off the edge, but then remembered me and thought that he could still do away with himself at any time...

We agreed on beginning a psychoanalysis (4 sessions a week).

Some Fragments of a Psychoanalytic Processes

In the first year of psychoanalysis Mr A. virtually entirely withdrew from the real world, spent his days alone at home, would often spend hours in bed, and either masturbated compulsively or else “greedily stuffed himself” to help assuage the inner sense of emptiness a little. Only with extreme effort did he manage to come to the analysis sessions. Throughout this period he seemed in extreme danger of suicide, remarking, for example, that when driving past a high-rise building he could barely resist the temptation to walk up to the top floor and throw himself off the edge.

After several months he dreamt that he was paralyzed, and was only able to move his eyes. His associations lead to his frequent (depressive) states in which he withdrew to bed for hours at a time, where he would then lay motionless, as if lamed. It then occurred to him that his mother would often be lying in bed when he returned home from school – she was incapable of preparing a warm meal for the children. Here, we both suspected that the mother suffered from severe depression at this time, a suspicion which was increasingly borne out by emerging memories, but also by way of asking his parents themselves.

Several sessions later, he unexpectedly began recalling his experience in a foreign environment as a young boy, and being visited by his mother and siblings. He wished to return home with them, but didn’t dare ask his mother. A later discussion with his mother revealed that there were actually two lengthy separations in the first years of his life: one ten-week hospital stay without visits as a two-year-old, and a six-month stay at a children’s home as a four-year-old, apparently as a way of relieving his mother. The mother mentioned that she visited him after four months – he had made such a “good and sweet impression” on her that she decided to leave him there for a further two months. Through the many observations in the analytic situation, we suspect that he had already at that time attempted to be “a little hero” and to suppress his homesickness and feelings of

neglect so as not to put pressure on his (depressive) mother. It was during this episode that the mother's empathy disorder also became evident, as indicated by other recollections of episodes. Thus, for example, the mother would often humorously relate the way in which, as a young boy, Mr A. would "drop his trousers and stand naked in front of me" when he no longer knew what to do, and begin to cry in a fit of anger or desperation. ...

In the transference I was very concerned about Mr. A. during these weeks, who continues to be extremely depressive and suicidal, unemployed and socially utterly isolated. At times, I am tortured by a sense of fear whenever Mr. A. arrives half an hour too late for a session: "something catastrophic has happened". It then became apparent that Mr. A. had, indeed, very well perceived my concern about him and responded very ambivalently. In retrospect it is more likely that through this action Mr. A., among other things, unconsciously attempted to make me feel the experience of powerlessness and helpless anxiety of "a catastrophe", to which he had been subject as a small child.

In these analytic sessions I began to feel increasingly flooded by anxiety and panic – much like in the first few minutes of the first interview. I no longer had to rationally defend myself against these extremely negative countertransference reactions, as was the case in the first interview; the trust that had meanwhile formed between Mr. A. and me now facilitated understanding the embodied memories of the early separation trauma, and to make direct reference to them. "By arriving late, you repeatedly make me feel the anxieties connected with catastrophes and the sense of abandonment, which you probably experienced as an infant in hospital and later at the children's home, and that you were unable to express to anyone". However, interestingly enough it is evidently this interpretation of the aggressive aspect of his behaviour that has an effect and which prompts Mr. A. to now return punctually for the sessions: "By arriving late you not only consciously neglect your time, but also mine and, in so doing, naturally assume that I am indifferent to how you treat our sittings. Your aggressive feelings towards me are part of this".

For the first time, the hitherto unrepresented and enormous anger along with his conviction to destroy his love object became accessible in the subsequent weeks of analytic work – the symbolization and mentalization.

At this point I would like to take a more detailed look at yet another sequence from the third year of psychoanalysis since it is by means of this that a further traumatising can be understood; it illustrates the radicalization process which my analysand went through during adolescence.

He had meanwhile re-emerged from his social withdrawal, had a girlfriend, and worked and studied in an occupational training programme. However, when his parent's business was declared bankrupt, all this seemed to collapse. Analyst: "It appears to me that for you, unconsciously, there is a formula: if I detach myself, and begin to live my own life, this would kill my parents or siblings..." This interpretation triggered a series of new memories, above all, those linked to adolescence. One day at the age of twelve, after returning home from a game of football with his girlfriend of the time, he found his father attempting to commit suicide. He called for an ambulance and thus saved his father's life. After this experience he withdrew from the youth group and attempted – clearly as an act of great inner strength – to be a good student. He admired a teacher of German and hoped in this way to gain recognition and attention. However, when the same teacher ridiculed him in front of the entire class by reading his essay, and deriding its content, it was a catastrophe for Mr A. He lost interest in school, would frequently skip classes, and then joined a violent right-wing youth group the members of which "fought real wars against gangs and would often go on Turk-bashing rampages..." He was once seriously wounded during one such fracas. His parents responded without understanding and enforced strict punishment. When expelled from school a few weeks later on account of his aggressive behaviour, his father beat him up in front of his friends – for him a humiliating and shameful experience. As the analytic sessions revealed, he struggles, also in this scene, in an effort to maintain control and not to endanger his father in an

aggressive outbreak, since he realized, also back then, that he was superior to the latter in terms of physical strength. He then recalled that shortly before a member of his gang had fatally wounded his own father when, under the influence of alcohol, the latter sought to attack his mother and his younger sister. The youth threw himself between them and in the process propelled the father against a sharp object such that the father died as a result of a fatal head wound. In this context we once again witness the flight into a “paralyzed inner state” as protection against the danger of a fatal instinctual outbreak.

After this scene contact to both parents was finally broken. The parents refused to take Mr A. back into the home. As a fifteen-year-old he lived for almost a year on the street or with dubious friends, took drugs and was in extreme danger. He kept himself above water by way of petty crime and, thanks to his intelligence, avoided further brushes with the law. He describes it as being almost a miracle how he one day, quite by chance, met his only friend from elementary school days, who had moved away in fourth grade.

This friend took him back home. He fell in love with his friend’s sister, and was lovingly taken in by the parents. Through their support and intercession, he was allowed to repeat junior high school and begin an apprenticeship.

A few brief remarks on the attraction of (right-wing or Islamic), fundamentalist ideologies among traumatized youth.

In his first lecture, my husband described the *significance of archaic fantasies of merging and unity with the primary object*, e.g. how in “Phantasma of the Nation”, and, as one may assume, in the phantasm of a world religion, the Umma (Islamic world community, as promulgated by Islamic preachers such as Benyettou and Beghal) can also be reactivated. After the failure of his adolescent developmental process (triggered, among other things, by the disappointment in his teacher as an alternative figure of fatherly identification) Mr A. sought refuge in a radical right-wing group, the members of whom felt themselves to be “German”, and who committed acts of violence against foreigners, such as Turks (“Turk bashing”). Analogous processes probably occur today among youth, such as in the case of the

two Paris brothers Chérif and Said Kouachi, who, as already mentioned – frequently when in prison – began joining Islamist groups. Through this, the youth is “absolved” from overwhelming, painful processes of adolescent detachment and the search for identity: he now belongs to a fantasizing homogeneous community (the “Germans”, the Umma), with which he – as with his primary object– can now merge, and with which he feels a part, as a “unity”. It is from this fantasizing merging that he now draws “meaning in existence and in life”. Purity and the fantasy of homogeneity command over the psychic world of fantasy: the pure, homogenous (the “Islamic” community may not be sullied and destroyed by caricatures, by depictions of the prophet) for example. Thus, in this unconscious world of fantasy, the concern is with an archaic sense of belonging, with life and with death: merged with the primary object, with a narcissistic sense of omnipotence one may kill and be killed: in a martyr’s death, the merging with the Umma (the primary object) is acted out.

In the Initial Psychoanalytic Phase with Mr A. fantasies of merging were clearly noticeable, both in the transference as well as in dreams. They also showed the connection to the collapse of the adolescent identity-building processes, through to the diffusion between male and female aspects of identity. In these processes, both the above-mentioned identifications with the depressive primary object as well as the similarly severely depressive, culturally invalid father played a decisive role.

An additionally unconscious fantasy system is, as Werner explained in his lecture, the *early archaic envy* among *siblings* [Geschwisterneid]. The foreigner, the Jew, the person without faith, is unconsciously experienced as a rival, who – greedy and insatiable – attacks and “takes away” sustenance, provision and well-being.

Archaic fantasies about “Geschwisterneid” and attacks were a Leitmotif running through the psychoanalysis of Mr A. These fantasies were impressively observable in Mr A.’s reactions to September 11, 2001, which occurred in the end phase of the psychoanalysis. Mr A. provocatively observed that he had experienced a massive sense of triumph; that the terrorists were capable “of carrying out revenge attacks on the

Americans in the name of the Muslim world". Erupting in explosive emotions he placed the blame for the world's social inequality at the feet of the USA which, in its arrogance, economically exploit, humiliate and devalue Arabic countries. "These "heroes of Islam" finally questioned the purported supremacy of the West and demonstrated that they are capable of actions of which no person from the West would be capable". Mr A. had – consciously – always felt himself German. Now, all of a sudden, he emotionally empathized with the Arabic world and felt part of the humiliated Muslim Community. For Mr A., the spontaneous sympathy for violence (as well as for me, as his analyst) was unnerving, surprising and daunting.

Today, I see these intense emotional responses as a further indicator as to how rapidly and unexpectedly regressive group processes can be set in motion, and where the sense of group belonging can become a powerful motive.

Thus, my initial association "Palestinian suicide bomber" was, in fact, spot on. I perceived the unrepresented destructive rage and the traumatic anxieties connected with them, and reacted with the corresponding senso-motoric coordination ("embodiment") (see Leuzinger-Bohleber, in press), which gave rise to what was, for me, the shocking idea of a "suicide bomber". But the idea was immediately dismissed again and was forgotten, or split, for many years. Only the holding analytical relationship which had been cultivated over the years, had enabled Mr A. in the above-mentioned analysis session after September 11, to perceive his identification with the potentially violent Arabic father, who almost murdered him in front of his peers in the above-mentioned scene – and who, in his attempted suicide, had then redirected the violence and hate towards himself. Understanding this unconscious fantasy world enabled Mr A. and I to once again work through the unconscious fantasies triggered through September 11 in the subsequent sessions and, through this, prevented a similar enactment as the pater adolescent terrorists in Paris.

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