

Sailing Against the Winds:
A Professional Autobiography
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Written July, 21, 1998; revised March 8, 2001

The Odyssey of a Psychologist

Let's start with a spotlight on the family background.

My personal development and the background of my family will be illustrated by factors of the Szondi test. Right from the beginning one can state that everything points out that the Paroxysmal Vector was the most loaded vector in this context. This vector is characterised by the dynamic factor (e-) and the showmanship factor (hy) which were the main dynamic factors in my family.

The male family members in both lines were Adventurers, Legionnaires, Soldiers of Fortune and Seamen. My mother's father worked as a soldier for the Americans during the American-Mexican war. I remember still the red saber scar on his face. He was a real Daredevil in his younger years.

My father was 36 when I was born in 1919. He is an example of a typical factor (e) person, explosive and extremely active and dynamic. He was more or less sold out as a 12-year-old boy to work on a Dutch navy sailing ship, on board of which he met my mother's brother; they were of the same age.

When they got fed up with the hardships of life onboard and wanted to get out of the navy, they raised a red flag on the mast of their ship early in 1900. All the other warships were then put in alarm. Of course they were disqualified and thrown out of the navy, but that was what they wanted.

Later my father got a job to work for German millionaires on a country estate. He was foreman and private policeman to control poachers. When the First World War was finished, he lost his job and had to take a job as an office clerk in a bank. Such a static job was a catastrophe for him. His energies got no outlet, but he kept to the job in order to support his family. However this had as a consequence that, although he basically was a kind person (his e+ aspect), he was most of the time in a very explosive mood, like a

powder keg. Always potentially ready to explode. He could then look quite frightening. Szondi was absolutely right when he described that such e- people look like “brazing bulls” when they are angry.

That was the reason why at home there was always the feeling that a thunderstorm was looming up at the horizon. We lived more or less in an atmosphere of a continuous thunderstorm, always with a lot of electricity in the air. (By the way, this somewhat made me feel “at home” when I later worked with primal therapy groups. Working with such primal therapy groups certainly gives the therapist the feeling to be in a thunderstorm with all the patients screaming like crazy.)

About my father’s brother: I remember having heard the most incredible stories; he was also a real daredevil and risk taker.

My father was a born showman/story teller (hy + aspect, “need to be seen, to assert himself, to keep up with the competition). In those days without TV entertainment he was very popular. We often had many visitors every week during the evening who listened to his endless adventure stories. He was a great actor and presented his stories with dramatic temperament. One of his cousins, Charlotte Köhler, became a famous actress; she did theatrical solo performances and could quite alone spellbound big audiences (sublimation of hy+ factor).

My mother with Spanish ancestors was a very good-looking woman. The daughter of one of her cousins became a Dutch beauty queen. My mother was intelligent but did not get much education. However she had a great respect for knowledge. She had an extreme verbal capacity (fluidity). She was known to be able to slap people verbally in the face in such a clever way that at the first moment the victims thought she was caressing them, until they discovered what was really behind it. She played somewhat the piano and had great ambitions for her children. She lost several children by illness or accident.

At the end of 1919 my twin brother (e factor) and I were born. She had lost another child only a short time before, and only a few days after we were born my twin brother died too. During the first years of my life she must have had a depression that I suppose must have influenced me strongly. This is probably the reason why behind my surface of being an easy-going person a certain morose and serious character quality can be found. In Jungian terms it seems that Saturn is always present in my background.

My uncles (mother side) were all extreme e- types (adventurers)! One became an American submarine second mate, another a Hotel owner in Canada, and the third arrived during the Second World War in Nigeria. There he successfully built up a school (on

Electrical techniques) with several hundreds of students. Another uncle emigrated to the States but we lost contact with him.

My oldest brother was also a real adventurer. He was about 19 when he went to the Dutch colonies in the East (Indonesia). There he lived a very hectic life, partly due to rather shady business. During one of these affairs he was shot but survived.

However his son, my cousin who was born in Holland, became not withstanding the very chaotic conditions of his early youth, and in contrast to his father, a very respectable high-ranking officer in the Dutch army. I have great respect for him.

Nevertheless, without his knowing, he demonstrated for me the truth of Szondi's ideas about the influence of our ancestors. During one of my visits to his villa, I noticed, shown on the sidewall of the staircase, quite a large series of portraits of notorious pirates. His latent ancestors could not be quite so easily suppressed!

My younger brother joined the German army, when he was only 17 years of age. When I heard this I tried to influence him to desert from the army and cross the Swiss border with my assistance. Unfortunately he was then already too much indoctrinated and he refused to listen to me. He fought in Russia and died on the battlefield at only 18 years. It was a great loss for me.

After you have read this family report, you will understand that I do strongly believe in Szondi's theories about Fateanalysis and the existing of an active "family unconsciousness" (although I also do wholly accept the possibilities of the new way of interpreting Szondi, the contributions of Pathoanalysis to Szondi's original ideas).

In the years I described above the working population in West Europe had not much education or culture and my family was no exception. Holland was mainly a Protestant country and had no tradition at all of the great nobility as one found in England, Austria or Germany. The Dutch folk character is very individualistic, sceptical, always in opposition, with no respect for authority, and has a total lack of pathos. Even the wealthier classes show a typical Anglo-Saxon "grocer" mentality.

This depended much on the Protestant Calvinistic atmosphere, which was reflected by its extreme restricting norms: Anti-dancing, Anti-movies, Anti-theatre, Anti-jazz. All pleasure of the senses was considered the work of the devil. The only positive way to get away from sin was to work hard. (When I think about it, it is hard to believe that with such an attitude children were actually born in this Protestant country!)

Due to the loss of her children and her depressions, my mother absorbed easily these negative Protestant ideas and was also influenced by the sectarian Hallelujah preachers. They got a strong grip on her mind. However she had a “personal God” who made it possible for her to do whatever she wanted, without any pangs of conscience. She could have spread fake money and still be convinced she was doing an act of charity with the blessing of the Lord. (Remember Anglo-Saxon politics!)

In families with such intensive affects and such narrow Protestant moral restrictions one finds a fertile ground for neuroses and much hypocrisy. As a young sensitive and rather feminine boy, who liked to play with dolls, I did not suit very well in a family with the background I just described. My father certainly did not appreciate such sissy qualities. However, in contrast, I easily became my mother’s little sweetheart. I was an understanding listener and counsellor when she told me about her complaints about my father. A nice start for a five years old to become a psychotherapist!

Furthermore, it is easy to understand that this combination of 1) an attractive seducing mother, who more or less has fallen in love with her gentle, understanding little son and 2) a terrible frightening father figure coupled with 3) the extremely narrow Protestant anti-sex morals created a first class and full blown Oedipus complex. The consequences were that it produced a young boy with a typical (hy-) type in Szondi terms: chameleon qualities, overloaded fantasy life, very empathic, being able to play many roles, voyeuristic, etc.

However in my early adolescence the (p-) factor, which stands for expansion, more and more showed its presence! I wanted to become a detective (p-)! Together with some other boys we organised a secret society and did exercises in stalking and tracking, a kind of manhunt. In this period I got in trouble at school, as I often bought weapons, hunting knives, box-irons, beating sticks, etc. (e-) This rather paranoid pleasure in the “discovery” of subtle traces became a great asset later in my life. During the war it helped me to survive during the Nazi period and much later on a higher level when I worked with psychodiagnostics.

I must also refer to the very strong influence of the powerful control of my restrictive factor (k-!!) and its shadow opponent (in Th.K.P.) of the need for extreme introjection k+!!, a factor which in my Szondi registrations later always showed up as the most loaded factor. By the way, Szondi wrote that personalities with this shadow reaction in order to stay healthy ought to take up a profession with never ending tasks of learning, like medical studies or learning different languages, etc. My Ego profile was continuously k-!! p±. For how can one understand otherwise the continuous drive and thirst for knowledge and the forever-repeated question I put forward: “Why do we behave as we do? What makes Sammy tick?”

At the age of 14 or 15 I tried to find answers to this question by reading cheap booklets about psychology. Other answers I got by listening to the radio doctor, a psychiatrist who solved human problems. He was the ideal of all the working class women living with husbands who did not understand them and often lived in sordid poor conditions. This doctor became somewhat of an ideal identification object for me. I wanted to become a psychologist and be admired by women.

My intellectual horizon started at last to lighten up by the discovery of Freud's *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* when I was about 15 or 16. There I found solid answers on how to understand human problems. Somewhat later I started ploughing through the 700 pages of Jung's *Psychologische Typen*, written in German.

The main knowledge in the thirties about characterology or personality makeup was presented by GRAPHOLOGISTS. In their books one could find a highly differentiated description of personality. However already then (around 1935), I read a reference to Wilhelm Reich's book *Character Analysis*, which I tried then in vain to get. (It took more than thirty years when I started to study Bio-energetics before I could get hold of his book.)

Probably based on the reading of some of the articles on psychoanalysis (or my p-?), I decided that a study of early childhood might be important. When I was about 16, I got quite by hazard an English book in my hands about "Child Psychology". There I read for the first time about the Rorschach test. By saving my pocket money, I could buy Rorschach's original *Psychodiagnostik* in German and ordered also the test itself. I was then 16 years of age. The owner of the library informed me later that it was the third Rorschach Test that was imported into the Netherlands.

I feel at present really proud that I discovered the Rorschach test earlier than many of the prominent psychiatrists in Holland. Anyhow I studied in detail Rorschach's instruction book and have still a little Cahier with my notes from these days.

At the University in Utrecht there existed in 1936 already a department for the study of para-psychological (occult) problems. The docent Dr. Wilhelm Heinrich Carl Tenhaeff, who was in charge, became an international well-known specialist in this field. His book about this subject I read with great interest and became still more interested in psychology.

I think his book was the reason that I started to experiment with hypnosis. In those days Dr. Berthold Stokvis wrote the best known professional introduction to hypnosis He studied at the Leiden University under Prof. Carp, who was a specialist in psychiatry. It

might interest you to learn that Prof. Carp already in 1936 was one of the few university teachers in Europe who dared to accept the basics of psychoanalysis, which was very unusual in those days. One of his textbooks on psychiatry was about Freud's theory of neuroses.

Stokvis discovered a suggestion method based on the physiological visual reaction when one looks at the midpoint between two colour strips (one blue, the other yellow). A normal reaction in such case is that the subject gradually starts to see a green colour in the midpoint. Stokvis used this to focus the subject's concentration on one spot and to prove to the subject that his hypnosis was having effect. I successfully made several experiments with this method.

However I created my own technique (!) -- also based on a normal sensory reaction -- by putting behind the subjects of my experiment a hidden electrical stove that I gradually could turn the heat up. By suggesting to the subject that he would feel more and more warm, I got the same results!

I wrote to Stokvis about my "discovery". He worked at a psychiatric hospital and I was invited to explain my method to him. He received me together with his staff. They were probably very curious to see what an uneducated teenager had to tell them. My main memory of this meeting is that I asked them for advice on how I could realise my dream to become a psychologist. As I had not even finished the most elementary secondary school (!) they could not tell me much more than to go to a gymnasium or to try to become psychiatric nurse instead. I never got their psychiatric diagnosis of me.

My experiments with hypnosis ended abruptly when I got a borderline artist as a subject, who quite unexpectedly came into a kind of psychotic twilight state. I became deadly scared and stopped with my experiments.

However having the famous Dutch entrepreneur mentality, I made a shield on the door of our home with my name and the title Psychologist on it. To be honest it did not help me much. I never got any paying clients (I suppose they were lucky). The only exception was that, thanks to this shield, I impressed the girl who initiated me in what sex meant. So it had still some effect!

I left secondary school without any formal certificate and was right away dumped into the mass of unemployed people. However typical for me was that I used this time in a very disciplined way for reading and studies that interested me.

When the war started in 1939 between Germany and England, I tried to smuggle out a German anarchist to the West Indies. At the last moment he did not dare to take the

risk, so I had to go without him and work some months on a tanker. I deserted on one of the West Indiana islands but was caught and sent back to Holland in 1940 just before the war started.

The war meant no more time for studies or for the luxury of having a personal neurosis. Instead I lived a very dangerous life, with many adventures, illegally crossing frontiers, and I was sometime in the Gestapo *Untersuchungshaft* (prison) in Potsdam Germany etc. All these adventures would take days to describe.

At the End of the War

In autumn 1944 I succeeded, after an illegal border crossing, to return back to Holland, where my parents lived in a small castle, outside Amsterdam as housekeepers. There they had built secret rooms where eight persons were hidden away from the German military police. One of them was a German deserter, which meant that we all would have received a death penalty if they had found out about us.

Anyhow, when at last peace came, I suppose my Szondi Sch vector would have shown a very inflated Ego (k+! and p+!). During the war I had successfully come out of so many sensational adventures that I felt I could do anything. However when peace conditions and a normal life claimed its rights, I had suddenly no ground at all to stand on. I had no certificates, no professional training and no references. This meant that I was worth less than nothing on the occupational market. This was a terrible shock. Moreover I got several "post traumatic" symptoms: restlessness, depression, combined with an abrupt sexual blocking, which -- I think -- partly was caused by my unexpected collapsed and low self-esteem.

My reactions to these problems were very typical paroxysmal: I got "on the road" (Szondi reaction Sch (\pm -): *Ausreisser Ich* = Run away Ego, Flight, Fugue). For several years I lived as Jack Kerouac, the American writer who described such an existence as a hitch-hiker. One of my jobs I worked on was as a press-and-street photographer in the south of France. I took as a firmaname: "The flying Dutchman".

But being aware that I had to do something against my depression and neurosis, I went back to Holland. There I worked as a free lance photographer about a year to follow a short psychoanalysis. A humoristic note in this connection is the fact that when I had no money to pay my psychoanalyst, I sometimes left my camera in a pawnshop in order to get the money to pay my fee.

However at the end of the forties I worked, due to my knowledge of languages, at last some time as a Hotel porter but soon took a job as a tourist guide and tour conductor

for a big Dutch Travel agency (1950-1956). In those days I spoke Dutch already fluently, German, English, French and Spanish and could understand some basic Russian. In Szondi terms I was “still on the roads” (a typical quality of the e factor) but this time in better social conditions.

In 1956, when I was 36, I met a Swedish woman, who invited me to come to Sweden, where I arrived in autumn 1956. Sweden was in those days for Dutchmen like America; it was very easy to get a well-paid job. In the evening I worked in a restaurant and made in a few hours a lot of money. During the day I for fun studied books about psychoanalysis. It was during this time at the end of the fifties that I got hold for the first time some of Szondi's books. This was quite a discovery for me.

Szondi made psychoanalysis become concrete, visible and alive for me, and I started experimenting with his test.

During this time I met a young man who told me he would start studying psychology at the University in Gothenburg. That sounded like a dream to me. He informed me that, although I had no high school certificates, I could get permission to follow the courses in psychology as a none-official attendant. I registered as such at the psychology department in Göteborg, studying in the day time and working at a restaurant in the evening. I concentrated my studies on personality analysis, projective techniques and especially Szondi's books. In this period I met Docent Dr. Gösta Fröbärj, who promised me a great future if I would seriously continue my studies in psychology. We became friends, and he introduced me into a circle of psychologists (Inga Allwood, Gerty Freriksson, Ann-Marie Ebenfelt) who all were interested in depth psychology. At last I had come into stimulating company and could exchange ideas with them, I was then already 38 years of age.

During this time I read about an abbreviated Rorschach test, the Zulliger test, which consists of only three plates. I got interested in this Z-test because I had observed that many professionals found projective testing much too time consuming.

Experimenting with the Z-test I found out that -- notwithstanding the shortened time for registration -- it could give the same basic information as from the complete Rorschach. This was made possible by applying psychoanalytical concepts to the Rorschach responses. (These I learned from Roy Schafer and Dr Fritz Salomon in their books about Psychoanalysis and Rorschach). I became convinced that the Z-test showed an optimum relation between the registration time and the information one could get out of it. A great advantage was that in contrast to the Rorschach test that takes about 40 minutes to register out, the Z-test takes only about 15 minutes. Moreover the interpretation of the Z-test takes less time.

At the end of the fifties one of the university teachers introduced me to the managing director of a big company for applied psychology. This firm had 60 psychologists who worked mainly as vocational selection counsellors. I told the director that the Z-test could save his company a lot of time and money, but although I got a friendly reception, he did not believe me. However fortunately for me, only a few months later a Swiss psychologist Heinz R. Schmidt published a dissertation for a Doctor's degree titled *Der Zulliger-Test in der Berufsberatung* (The Z-test in Vocational Selection), which proved that my reasoning was right. That book became my passport to this company. After I showed it to the director, he gave me a contract, notwithstanding that I had no official certificate at all as a psychologist.

In my work I specialised in projective technique interpretation. My successes depended partly on the fact that

a. the other qualified psychologists could not read German or French psychiatric literature, and

b) never had studied psychoanalysis, and for another part

c) I depended on my (p-) function, i.e. intuition. Referring to this period I often say that I lived on my intuition, for I had not yet any official degree yet. But already, after some months, I got the same salary as the certified psychologists. When my colleagues had problematic cases, they sent me their projective test registrations. Based on these results I worked out, often very successfully, blind-diagnostic reports.

Due to my knowledge of foreign languages I was later sent to other European countries for market research in order to assist the local researchers (sociologists and psychologists) there. When the big Swedish companies afterwards, based on these reports, decided to open up offices abroad and therefore needed new employees, I got the commission to select potential employees (*selection des cadres*). My international background was then a great asset for me.

During many years I travelled regularly by plane to France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. I assisted the local managers to select the best candidate out of about five to eight persons. As the applicants often came from different parts of these countries and could only be present one day at the main office, I did not get much time to work with them. I got an average time of one and a half-hour per person. Because the manager interviewed them, I worked only with a projective test battery and did not make any interviews myself.

My test battery was composed of 1) the Z-test, which I exposed two times during the same registration, 2) some drawing tests: e.g. drawing a fruit tree or drawing a person 3) some colour tests, e.g. the Lüscher colour test or the more extended Frieling colour test and 4) an abbreviated type of the TAT test: “the Four pictures test”, and 5) if possible three Szondi test registrations. Sometimes when I did not get enough time I had a double check made by sending a handwriting example to a Swiss graphologist.

Since the beginning of my work I tried to introduce the ideas of Szondi to my colleagues. We began to discuss if we could not make a questionnaire based on the eight Szondi factors and their affinity to specific occupations. (Rolf Kenmo, an industrial consultant in Stockholm, succeeded in creating such a questionnaire nearly 35 years later. (See the Szondi Forum.) However only shortly after we started experimenting with such a questionnaire, around 1964, I read in a “Szondiana”, published regularly by the Szondi Institute, that a certain Dr. MARTIN ACHTNICH experimented with a PICTURE SELECTION TEST, also based on the Szondi factors. I was so happy to read this that I right away sent him a long telegram asking for an appointment.

Soon I met Achtnich personally in Zurich. At the same time a Szondi Congress was held. There I met Szondi himself and also Prof. Schotte, who later would develop “Pathoanalyse” that gave a new perspective on Szondi’s theories. For me it was inspiring to be present at this congress. Although to be honest I felt sometimes like a cat among ermines, as I had not any certificate or official qualification to be present. However, Szondi and Schotte allowed me even to be present in some closed meetings. You will understand that I am very happy that, by means of my Szondi Forum, I afterwards can show my gratitude and appreciation for their encouragement and goodwill.

My meeting with Martin Achtnich was the beginning of a long friendship, which lasted for more than thirty years. Since then we regularly exchanged letters about our experiences and development. For me his death in 1996 was a great loss. He was an inspiring person and a great psychologist and has contributed much to my development as a psychologist.

During the first years of 1970 Achtnich stayed in America, where he studied the New Age therapies. He informed me about Gestalt therapy, Psychodrama, the “Guided Daydream” (*rêve éveillé*) and bio-energetics, sensitivity training, etc.

The 1970’s became a very important new phase in my development. When the socialist government nationalised our company, in the beginning of the 70s, I started working as a private therapist. I then also married Gunnel, my present wife. When I met her she had worked for more then 10 years as a clinical psychologist in Göteborg at the psychiatric hospital. After our marriage we started together with great success training

courses in group therapy for professionals. Later on we bought a Psychotherapy Center, located about 10 miles away from Göteborg deep in the woods.

My Studies in Psychotherapy

The first year of the 70s, I went regularly to Oslo to study Wilhelm Reich's Character Analysis. His therapy technique is based on releasing the body tension (armour) and, by this, loosening up the patients' defence mechanisms.

In the beginning of 1970s I also joined the first psychodrama group in Göteborg, directed by Mrs. Inga Allwood, who had become a good friend of mine. This experience was to have a decisive influence in my selection of the therapy method that suited me best. I felt this was the instrument I wanted to use. Soon I discovered that psychodrama could be used as well as 1) an instrument for psychodiagnostics and as 2) a psychotherapy method. Group psychotherapy has moreover the advantage that a private person pays only about 1/10th of the price his individual therapy would cost.

However it would take some time before I could follow an official psychodrama training. Instead I registered at the University to follow a course in "Creative Dramatics". Soon afterwards I got a chance to register at the second psychodrama training group in Sweden, directed by Dan and Dorothy Lefterie. They had worked for more than twenty years with the great Moreno as his assistants.

In the meantime Martin Achtnich, who had been two years in the USA to study new therapy forms, came back to Switzerland in 1973. His picture test (BBT test = *Berufsbilder Test*) was then completed. I visited him in Zürich the same year and was present when Achtnich opened a new Psychotherapy Center in Zürich: "the PHOENIX HOUSE". Thanks to his generosity I could live there several months during the summer. I was present when Martin worked with groups in the evening. During the day I concentrated on studying Jung's Analytical Psychology.

The experience of being present in Achtnich's groups proved to be most valuable for me. At my return to Sweden I made some publicity (hy+) in my firm about my group therapy experience in Switzerland. This was successful because back to Sweden, I was offered a new job to work as a group therapist. Although I never had worked as a psychodrama director before I accepted.

This became a decisive turning point in my development. I left psychodiagnostics to become a group therapist.

The first time I worked under very hard conditions. Not only that I lacked the necessary experience to work with groups but also that I had to work alone. In classical psychodrama normally the director has a co-therapist as an assistant, who helps him in “warming up” the group. However the company I worked for did not want to pay two therapists, and I had to do the job alone.

Another difficulty was that in my first groups the members were mainly schizoid students with problems; it was next to impossible to get them into action. However this difficulty forced me to look for other and more effective techniques for “warming up”. Fortunately I had some time left for studies during the day, and I read a lot of literature about the new therapy methods (bio-energetics, Gestalt therapy, Primal therapy, etc.).

During these years I went often abroad for one week training courses, e.g. in Transactions Analysis in South Germany, directed by Bert Hellinger. He is at present world famous by his Family Constellation groups – a structured short psychodrama method”. Moreover, I followed courses in Bio-energetics, Gestalt therapy, etc. All these courses I paid for privately. At home, I again experimented with these new approaches. Gradually I got better and better results.

In the beginning of my activities as a psychodrama Director, I tried out relaxing techniques, coupled with visualisation instructions. This gave the group members a chance to share their experiences.

A very important and positive change occurred when I started to use body-therapies, such as intensive deep breathing and body stress exercises in order “to warm up” the group. This was a very successful method, and my training in Reich therapy became an asset. With Reich’s “Character Armour” techniques, these warming up methods loosened at the same time the psychological defences of the group members. It became easier and easier to start with psychodrama.

Sometime later I came in contact with the different “Dynamic Meditation” methods of Bagwhan Rasjnee (Osho). He was one of the famous gurus in those days. Especially his Dynamic “Hoo-Meditation” was effective. As far as I know I was the first in Sweden who introduced these methods in Sweden; this must have been in the midst of the seventies.

The Hoo-meditation starts with 15 minutes of intensive breathing, followed by 15 minutes jumping up with the task when falling down to screaming “Hoo”, and finished with some more quiet exercises.

Still more effective but also much more dramatic was the use of Casriel's "Scream therapy", a kind of primal therapy. I participated in Casriel's first training groups when he introduced his method in Sweden in the midst of the 70s.

It is an extremely simple method but demands a therapist who has good nerves!

Casriel's scream therapy divides the group in two halves, an A and B part. All the A-persons lay on their back on a thick mattress, while the B-persons act as their assistants. This is done by having the B-group members "laying on top" and being embraced by the A-members. This is psychologically experienced by the underlying person A-person as having a Big Teddy bear on top of him. A teddy bear who he feels he can trust and embrace and who gives him a sense of security. This facilitates the A-person's emotional release.

By giving instruction to the A-persons to repeat loudly some, for them adequate, emotional hard hitting KEY sentences like "I am worth loving" or "I do exist", and at the same time incite them to start screaming, activates an emotional chain reaction of extremely high intensity in the group. It is a real emotional "tin-can-opener" technique. However the presence of the B-person contributes that the A-person avoids a complete breakdown.

This kind of therapy is often experienced by the group members as a "total catharsis". For the therapist who has the nerves to work with such an intensive method, this is a relative easy method to make a lot of money. One can work with very large groups, 10 - 40 persons, and get very satisfied clients. For many it becomes like a drug to participate in such groups; they get a kick out of it. However, I discovered soon that this method functions like a "catheter technique". It is an excellent emotional abreaction (catharsis) but does not much to loosen, seen in long perspective, the defence mechanisms. After some months the inner tension has been built up again, and the neurotic trouble starts again. That was the reason why, under much protest of many group members (!), I stopped using this method.

One can say that during the seventies several "waves" of new therapies were introduced in Sweden by smart American therapists who made a lot of money. Different fashions followed one after the other.

One period it was Janov's primal therapy, which was in the focus. Its disciples made a lot of publicity. Another time, "total liberation" was promised by the American therapists who introduced "rebirthing methods". I followed several courses and paid a lot of money to see these different methods demonstrated.

During these years I read also most of Stanislaw Grof's books about LSD therapy, which gave me quite a new perspective. Although LSD therapy officially was forbidden, I got a chance to go through such LSD therapy several times myself (with a qualified psychoanalyst). This was a very shocking experience. Moreover I was present when Grof started his first introduction course in Europe and demonstrated his LSD-replacement technique, which he called: the "HOLOTROPIC Therapy". This method was developed after LSD therapy was forbidden. This technique reminds me very much of primal therapy and became later the core of the standard technique we used during the first three days of my "one week primal therapy" groups. For opening them up, *Holotropic therapy* was done in the following way:

As in Casriel's Scream therapy the group was divided in two halves. One half worked lying on mattresses, the other as assistants sat at their side. During two and a half hours the whole group was in the beginning exposed to half an hour of extremely loud and very chaotic "hellish" music. This was followed by music with different specific emotional themes: Russian bass music could be used to activate problems with the patients' Father complex, religious music to activate relation with the Mother. And other types of music like Wagner's *Walkyrie* to tune in for aggressive tendencies, etc. For the last half hour integrative type music was used to finish.

Those lying on their back often got, especially in the beginning, a kind of primal experience with screaming, loudly crying, and a lot of emotional ventilation.

At the end of each 2 ½ hour session each member, before verbally describing his experiences, had to fill in and colour a circle on a paper (Mandala test). This had a standard format. The colours and the interior design facilitated later recall and would focus the person's experiences when he afterward directly verbally shared with the other group members. The content of the circle gave the therapist during the group's sharing the occasion to use his diagnostic qualities, by interpreting the colours and drawings inside of the circle according to Jung's Mandala principle.

For most of the group members this music and scream session was such an upsetting, shocking and knock-out experience that after three days most of their defence mechanisms were loosened up. *This created the right conditions the next five days to work through each group member's problem individually* as a protagonist in a psychodrama.

Even my psychodrama technique gradually developed. Because even after I had, in the first half of the seventies, finished my 2 years training in classic psychodrama, I still continued my training in other countries where different psychodrama techniques were demonstrated, for instance combined with other methods, e.g. bio-energetics.

However the psychodrama method “par excellence” that became the decisive one for me was AL PESSO’s “PSYCHOMOTOR THERAPY” >www.pbsp.com<. When Al Pessa, around 1972, introduced his therapy in Europe, I had the fortune to be present right from the beginning. During several years I participated regularly in his -- then -- open trainings groups in Holland and Belgium. The great advantage of his method was that it made it possible for me to reduce my working time 100% to around one hour only! In this way I could guarantee the members of my weekend groups that at least 8 persons instead of only four persons could work through their problems as a protagonist, i.c. get a personal psychodrama.

This was made possible by the fact that Al Pessa uses a “structured” psychodrama method. He speeds up the process by using the body tensions of the protagonist to activate an individual emotional “chain reaction” that soon loosens defences.

After I found out which methods suited me best and gave me the best results, my wife Gunnel and I during the next twenty years organised therapy courses using a combination of Grof’s and Pessa’s methods. We organised two standard courses, one during a weekend and the other one during seven days.

The weekend group was organised in the following way: We started with Rasjnee’s “Hoo meditation” as a “warming up” exercise, after which we used Al Pessa’s psychodrama method (psychomotor therapy).

The seven day course was based on a combination of Stanislaw Grof’s “Holotropic therapy” (two and a half days) and five days with Al Pessa’s Psychomotor therapy.

THIS COMBINATION I STILL CONSIDER THE MOST REFINED, EFFECTIVE, AND PRODUCTIVE GROUP THERAPY TECHNIQUE. Although this requires a strong personality to work with such intensive methods.

Another advantage I had in store was the fact that -- due to all the other types of training that I had followed -- I had a reserve arsenal of other therapeutic techniques at my disposition, such as “rebirthing”, “visualisation”, specific bio-energetic exercises”, “Assertiveness training”. I have only met one person who could use, in addition to his standard therapy method, the same extended arsenal of therapeutic techniques: I refer to Bert Hellinger when he works with his Family Constellations.

When we sold our former Psychotherapy Center in 1992, I was 72 years of age as it became too hard for me to continue working with primal therapy. However, I continued some more years with the easier task of training groups for professionals.

In the beginning 1999 I heard that my former Transaction Analyst and primal therapy trainer, Bert Hellinger, had developed a new form of short group therapy, which he called "Family Presentations". In this form of therapy the ancestors of the protagonist played a decisive role. Thanks to Hellinger's generosity, I could be present at several of his demonstrations in Germany and Austria. My wife and I were very impressed and introduced his method in Sweden. (You will find an article about his method on the Leopold Szondi Forum: >www.szondiforum.org>. It is written in German and entitled: New Developments/ Intergenerations Therapy).

We introduced this method in Sweden and successfully worked with two workshops, but by this time I had become seventy-six years of age; I decided definitively to "close shop" and stop all my therapeutic activities.

Getting away from the active scene gave me at last a chance to take up again my interests in Szondi's theory and test. Although after 1972, I had not worked anymore with psychodiagnostics, Szondi's drive schema has always been my main theoretical reference. The reason why I started the Leopold Szondi Forum on the Internet was that I had written, in the beginning of the sixties, a summary about Szondi's "Fate Analysis" in Swedish with nearly 200 pages. As no publishing firm ever was willing to publish this introduction, I decided therefore in the autumn 1996 to use the Internet to publish my manuscript in Swedish. This was the start of the Szondi Forum on the Internet in 1996.

Since then I have continued to expand this Forum and to promote Szondi's and Prof. Schotte's ideas in many languages. In July 2002 in Zürich at a reception, I officially received a Tribute (*Laudatio*, speech) and a distinction for my work with the Forum. (You can in telegraphic style read the content of this Tribute at the end of the original version of this autobiography on the Szondi Forum.)

Before finishing it might interest you to read what I wrote in the foreword of my Szondi summary in 1962:

The Szondi test is a first class test instrument, which certainly may be put in the same class as the Rorschach and TAT tests. Used together with these two other projective tests, one can get a real good "cross bearing" of the total personality, This combination makes it possible to define the clients' most characteristic behaviour and level of functioning. The Szondi test is especially efficient in analysing the quality of the prominent drives (needs). In this field it makes an objective and differentiated diagnosis possible and is an excellent research instrument.

Although the Szondi test may contribute to a dynamic personality analysis, within the framework of a flexible concept construction, it goes further than that.

Szondi's contribution to and significance for modern psychiatry is not limited to the Szondi test only. This depends for a great part on Szondi's role as a *Pontifex Oppositorum* [bridge over opposites] in depth psychology. He succeeded in a brilliant way to assimilate and describe the theoretical contributions of Freud, Jung and Adler in his standard works.

In *Triebpathologie* (2 volumes), *Lehrbuch der experimentellen Triebdiagnostik* and *Schicksalsanalytische Therapie*, you can find the essentials for an insight in the existing theories of depth psychology as well as a description of the accumulated experience in this field and suggestions how to apply this knowledge. Szondi's drive diagram can be considered the most original and important part of his work

Another advantage, especially for students of psychiatry, is the fact that Szondi's method and theories make it possible to reflect very complicated dynamic processes by way of relatively very simple formulas. These can be used to learn (memorise) in a rather easy way the essentials of complicated dynamic processes that result in psychopathological syndromes.

Szondi stenographic shorthand can be compared to the way chemists use formulas to illustrate and indicate physical processes. They remind us also of the transcription of musical notes in order to describe a melody. Szondi's great discovery was that he found the eight basic needs (radicals), which in dialectical interplay shape the themes in each individual's life.

Since I wrote this, nearly 45 years have gone, but I am still quite convinced that Szondi, together with Freud, Jung and Adler, belongs to the group of those great pioneers, who in the 19th century have enriched our knowledge about human personality. Or as his successor Prof. Jacques Schotte formulated:

He was "the greatest of the unknown, and the less known of the great post-Freudian psychoanalysts." (« Le plus grand des

méconnus, et le plus méconnu des grands psychanalystes post-freudiens »)

As for my present knowledge about the Szondi test and its development, I am sorry to disappoint you somewhat. Between the alternative to start studying in detail the development of Szondi's ideas or building up the Szondi Forum, I decided that the Forum was more important. This put me somewhat in the position of a Morse-telegrapher who facilitates the communication of important messages but has not enough time to digest all the interesting information going through his hands.

Well, today the 21 of June 1998, I have come to the end of this description of my professional Odyssey up till now. It was not a riding on the easy road but instead a "sailing against the winds".

March 8, 2001