

## **A Process Oriented Psychology (POP) Approach to Processing Collective Trauma in an Irish Context.**

### **Abstract**

The Island of Ireland and Irish people have experienced a vast array of social, political and military and paramilitary events and occurrences throughout history. Many have given rise to different forms of collective trauma. This has influenced the development of a national psychology and the many sub-psychologies of different groups of Irish people. Unprocessed, this trauma is transferred to subsequent generations at an individual, group and collective level. This paper considers an integrative approach to working with collective trauma within groups of people who have a relationship with Irishness. This is heavily based on Process Oriented Psychology (POP) or its larger scale application, Worldwork. We combine this approach with the spirit or essence of ancient, Irish storytelling in hosting community-based dialogue interventions. These groups explore ‘the experience of being Irish in 2022 or different relationships with, or to, Irishness in today’s world’. The different themes and topics that emerged across the initial groups are discussed with further reflections from participants and more in-depth commentary from the perspectives of the group facilitators. The next stages of this group-based psychotherapeutic work are considered within an Irish framework; as well as the potential benefit of this kind of work at an international level, given the many collective psychosocial challenges we face across a very interconnected globe.

**Keywords:** Process Oriented Psychology (POP), The Seanchaí Project, Collective Trauma, Worldwork, Group Psychotherapy, Inner Work.

## **Introduction**

The Island of Ireland, the Irish people and the culture of these peoples has been heavily influenced by a wide range of very significant collective and societal events for hundreds of years. The impact of these is transferred to subsequent generations in both conscious and unconscious ways. This informs the development of a national psychology, different ‘sub-psychologies’ across the many groups of people on the island (and those who leave), as well as impacting the development of each person’s psychology at an individual level. All are interconnected, the individual, their groups, sub-groups and the larger collective that gives rise to a notion of ‘Irishness’ or rather many different conceptions of what it means to be Irish.

In the last thousand years, there has been several major traumatic events on the Island of Ireland. Many are connected to our relationship with our near neighbours in Britain - there have been many social, political and economic effects of such events. The first Anglo-Norman invasion occurred in 1169. Since then, the people of Ireland have lived through the Plantations (1500 – 1800); Rebellions in 1641 and 1798; The Great Hunger or ‘An t-Ocras Mór’ between 1845 and 1852; the War of Independence between 1919 and 1922; the partition of the island that followed; the civil war this partition created; the civil rights movement in the ‘North of Ireland’ in 1964; and the 30 years of war or ‘Troubles’ that began in ‘Northern Ireland’ in the late 1960’s. This is to name but a few. Religion and Religious institutions have also had a far-reaching impact. This is true in terms of both Catholicism and Protestantism and in a whole myriad of very external and obvious contexts (e.g. Troubles in the North of Ireland; the childhood sexual abuse cases connected to the Catholic Church; the writing of the constitution in the Republic of Ireland) as well as many internal or unseen domains (e.g. internalised attitudes towards women, sex and sexuality).

Unprocessed, untold and unconsidered trauma that such experiences can lead to is often unconsciously transferred to subsequent generations to be re-enacted in different ways at an individual, group or collective level. For example, the ‘victim-oppressor’ dynamic plays out regularly in dynamics of internalised oppression within people’s own psychology, within parent-child relationships, within romantic relationships, in the classroom, on the sports field, and at a broader level within political arenas. That said, we realise that there is much more than hardship to the many stories of Ireland and Irish people – both past and present – and we do not wish to overlook this. In recent times, benefits of joining the EU have been many; many parts of the island now experience as much immigration as emigration; and there has been significant progress on social issues such as same-sex marriage and legislation pertaining to abortion.

Several years ago, along with other Irish people, we began processing some of the abovementioned issues at an International Group Process Seminar, hosted by CFOR (Force for Change) in conjunction with Research Society of Process Oriented Psychology United Kingdom (RSPOPUK). It was entitled ‘The World Inside Out’ and focused on the application of Process Oriented Psychology (POP) within a group setting (Mindell, 1995, 2014). This was the beginning of a further project undertaken with another colleague at a subsequent CFOR/RSPOPUK programme, ‘Facilitating Our Future’. This work, on the relationship between Ireland, Northern Ireland and England, was part of a series of workshops facilitated by people from around the world, working in the areas of conflict negotiation, post-conflict rebuilding, peacebuilding, and community development. This work led to the development of *The Seanchaí Project* (Cotter et al., 2022a). This is one of ten projects seeded by the ‘Far in Far Out’ (FIFO) Jean-Claude Audergon Memorial Project. The purpose of the FIFO project is

to support facilitating personal and collective awareness within community-based projects at a range of different levels, including design and practical implementation, as well as within individual facilitators, facilitation teams and the interplay between these and the groups they work with.

### **Approach to Facilitation**

The underlying perspective from which we operate is integrative, interdisciplinary, and pluralistic (Norcross & Goldfried, 2005; Boix Mansilla, 2010; Teo, 2010). We are informed by a range of models and schools of thought, including Person-Centred Therapy (Rogers, 1957), Group Psychotherapy (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), Compassion Focused Therapy (Gilbert, 2005) and Existential Psychotherapy (Yalom, 1980). However, our biggest source of learning and training has been in Arnold Mindell's Process Oriented Psychology (POP; Mindell, 1988, 2017).

POP is a very integrative approach itself, incorporating learnings from Jung's analytical psychotherapy, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), client-centred psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy and Systemic and Family Therapy (Cotter, 2021a). Beyond the domain of psychology and psychotherapy, it also introduces concepts and ideas from physics, Shamanism, Buddhism, alchemy, and mythology (Mindell, 1989). An essential underlying viewpoint that pulls all of this together is grounded in the Chinese Philosophy, Daoism (Addiss & Lombardo, 1993). The aim of this work is to follow nature, the 'Dao', the 'way' or the 'process' as it arises in each moment (Mindell, 1989).

In recent years, there has been more and more recognition of the impact of social, political and collective traumas on individuals' mental health (Johnstone & Boyle, 2018; Sweeney et al., 2018). Early in the development of POP, Mindell (1989) came to see how there were many advantages to processing collective events and societal issues in larger forums beyond the traditional psychotherapy dyad. This larger scale group-processing has become known as Worldwork. We have had the benefit from learning quite closely from some of Mindell's early students in Ireland (Hollwey & Brierly, 2014), England (Audergon & Audergon, 2017) and Spain (Instituto Trabajo de Procesos). Two of our most influential mentors, Arlene and Jean-Claude Audergon, along with their colleagues, have used this approach in other parts of the world that have been heavily affected by war and conflict. These have included Rwanda and the Balkans (Audegon, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008; Audergon & Ayre, 2005).

In an effort to incorporate aspects of human psychology and consciousness that have become less prominent in modern western thinking, Mindell and colleagues have reached to more indigenous cultures and long-standing schools of meditation in the East (Mindell, 2000). These perspectives often inform the use of what are called 'Metaskills' (Mindell, 1994). These are the feeling attitudes, values and beliefs that inform the facilitator's overarching engagement and guide how they do what they do (e.g., following nature, beginner's mind, eldership; Diamond & Jones, 2004). Over time, the development of our own Metaskills has been informed by an ancient Irish tradition, the *Seanchaí*. This way of being has a range of resemblances and some more direct overlap to other indigenous cultures that Mindell has learned from and studied with in other parts of the world.

A *Seanchaí* (shan-a-key) was a traditional Irish *storyteller* (O' Suilleabháin, 1969). In a literal sense, the word means 'bearer of old lore'. The *Seanchaithe* (*plural*) were custodians of history and culture on the Island of Ireland for many centuries (Mercier, 1969). Historically,

they were highly valued by their local Chieftain and had a wide range of roles that involved dealing with legal issues, literature and genealogy. Following the English Conquests of Ireland - from the 1500's onwards - the work of the Seanchaithe became more and more centred on storytelling and passing on Irish folklore, myth and legend (Kiberd, 1979). This rich and ancient way of being, that has its roots in pre-anglicised Ireland, has become an important background spirit or metaskill and starting point for this work.

The work to date has involved facilitating group-based, community dialogue interventions. These have had a broad initial starting point of 'the experience of being Irish in 2022 or different relationships with, or to, Irishness in today's world'. From here, we follow the group's process and facilitate the exchanges and interactions that emerge. This involves using a range of POP-oriented facilitation skills and perspectives (for a more complete overview see Audergon, 2004). An overarching metaperspective is Mindell's (1995) concept of 'Deep Democracy', whereby all views, voices and forms of emotion are welcomed, valued and listened to. Mapping and following the different roles that may emerge within the process is key. A role can be described as a particular cultural rank, position or viewpoint (e.g. boss, underling, helper, victim, perpetrator) that often operates 'in the background', shaping how content is discussed 'in the foreground'. Where we identify roles, they can be brought into awareness, taken on and filled out by different people over the course of a group process. We often conceptualise roles as emerging in pairs, even if sometimes only one of the roles is apparent. This helps to look for what might be the missing role or the 'ghostrole'. Working with 'hotspots' is also central (Mindell, 2017). These are particular types of interactions within a dynamic where conflicts can cycle and escalate. Slowing down and bringing awareness to what is occurring at hotspots can lead to change. Similarly, bringing awareness to momentary resolutions or 'cool spots' is essential. Bringing awareness to issues of rank (contextual, social, psychological and spiritual), power and privilege is also important within this work (Mindell, 2014). Working on these issues within oneself – known as innerwork - is a further key part of facilitating groups in this way.

The remainder of the paper gives an overview of the initial events, reflections from the perspective of participants, reflections from our own perspective as facilitators, and finally some thoughts for the future of the project. Participants have consented to their direct feedback being used and where our own reflections have concerned particular participants more directly, we have sought further consent to reproduce such reflections.

### **Themes and Reflections**

A broad range of topics emerged across the initial three sessions, two of which were online and one of which was in person, in London. Participants also regularly indicated that what was discussed was 'only the tip of the iceberg'. An overview of these themes is presented in Table 1. In keeping with the spirit of Deep Democracy, all were welcomed into the group, as were the differing perspectives on each.

#### ***The Questioning***

- *What does it actually mean to be Irish?*
- *Do I 'qualify' or am I 'legitimately' Irish?*
- *At what point can I call myself 'Irish'?*

#### ***Northern Ireland, The North of Ireland and The Troubles***

- *The history of pain and suffering that the Troubles have left behind in the 'North of Ireland'.*
- *Differences and similarities between Catholics and Protestants in 'Northern Ireland'.*

- Having parents who came from each side of the Catholic-Protestant divide.
- Progress made in Northern Ireland - and how this is neglected in the English Narrative.

#### **Ireland – England**

- Challenges of being Irish in London since Brexit.
- Having an Irish identity when born in England and having an English accent.
- Women who fled Ireland for England to give birth; and how they were treated by State and Church.
- Being valued for being a joker and joke-maker, one of the stereotypes often bestowed upon Irish people in England.
- Second families, who fled Ireland.
- The ignorance of Irish-English history amongst people in England.
- Pre-anglicised Ireland – Irish Mythology, Fairies, Fairy Forts and Leprechauns.

#### **Ireland and the World**

- Being Irish and our relationship with Racism.
- How welcoming and open is Ireland to people from other countries and backgrounds?
- The overlap between what has happened in Ireland and what has happened in other colonised countries.

#### **The Past made Present**

- The 'Famine' and the lasting impact of this.
- 'Deconstructing' versus 'embracing' colonialism.
- Loss of and reconnecting with the Irish language.
- The role of alcohol and how it has been both tragic and needed.
- Class within Irish society and particularly its impact on education.

Table 1. A selection of themes.

### **Participant Reflections**

The people who participated in the initial sessions varied significantly in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic status and geographical location (Ireland and UK). They provided feedback regarding their experiences in different ways, including a follow-up questionnaire. Table 2 provides an overview of the types of things that people said in response to questions such as: What was your experience of the session? What, within the session, was most important to you? And was there anything that emerged that you would want to share with someone else in your life?

#### **Making space for the Past in the Present**

*'It was a very profound experience for me. It reached into a deep sense of shame, the shame of poverty, displacement and internalised oppression that I carry inside.'*

*'...this enabled me to speak from a deeper place of my experience of Irishness both here in Derry where I have lived through the Troubles but also of times when I have lived in England, both in London ( 73 -78) and Sheffield ( 1986-91) also during the Troubles, when being Irish, sounding Irish, having an Irish name could draw negative as well I may add positive attention.'*

*'The complex pain people shared with regard to their relationship with the colonizer who both took and provided.'*

*'I've spoken to my mum about it and had a new conversation with my dad about intergenerational impacts that for once was curious rather than confrontational.'*

*'...I feel living in the South of Ireland, the experiences in the North were very separate to me. It was a real eye-opener hearing these personal accounts.'*

*'The personal sharing on colonisation in Ireland and the world.'*

#### **Welcoming Irishness**

*'The sessions reminded me of my love for the Irish language and further empowered my resolve to keep learning an teanga.. I have go leor Gaeilge ach nil me liofa...'*

*'The space to be Irish without reservation.'*

*'My insight into intergenerational trauma and the inability to express this when you don't speak your native language.'*

#### **Power of the Group**

*'...But I didn't feel alone in it, because the group created a safe container for my inner experience. I felt closer to the emotional level and the invisible trauma of what the Great Hunger has left behind in our psyche.'*

*'Really appreciated the sense of belonging to a community that emerged.'*

*'The opportunity to share whatever felt relevant, in a non-judgemental space.'*

*'Listening to different stories/individuals experiences and connecting it to my experiences as an African woman. I appreciated the openness, honesty, relaxed atmosphere and the respect by the organisers and the participants throughout the session.'*

*'Diversity of experience Connection Open hearted kind and bold facilitation. Sense of inclusion.'*

*'One of the most moving sessions for me was my reaching out to my Northern friend..., hands across that deep enough (cultural??) divide that exists here in NI...'*

*'...I was struck by the openness of those who participated.'*

*'Hearing from everyone. Learning about different people's experience. A safe space where people felt comfortable expressing themselves candidly.'*

#### **Facilitation Role**

*'The facilitation guided the process beautifully...the human-ness of those present touched me and the humour.....'*

*'The excellent facilitation made honest and open sharing very safe for me.'*

*'It was a very welcoming forum where a feeling of safety was cultivated by the facilitators and space was offered for those who wished to share their experiences.'*

*'...these sensitive enriching conversations were very well facilitated...'*

*Table 2. Reflections from participants.*

### **Facilitator Reflections**

What follows is an overview of some of the many reflections we have had about the initial stages of this work. Our perspective is influenced by our own relationships with being Irish and the lives we have lived more broadly. We were both born in the Republic of Ireland and have had traditional, rural Catholic upbringings. We are male and currently live in London. We have a strong interest in Irishness and being Irish as well as the world beyond that. Our reflections are an effort to make sense of the experiences we have, as opposed to representing 'fact' or 'absolute truths' in some way. Other people in our position may have very different experiences and perspectives. It is also of note that the following descriptions are made more state-like and concrete by virtue of putting them into words but these experiences are much more transient and non-linear in 'reality'.

#### **Innerwork**

An essential part of this work is the preparatory work we engage in and how it supports us to facilitate, and model alternative ways of being for the group. We are always looking at how different roles emerge within ourselves; as well as our relationship with the different themes and topics that emerge within the group. One pair of roles that we have regularly found ourselves processing might be best represented as 'The Confident Role' and 'The Shy, Unable or Incapable Role'. At different times we have both experienced each of these in different ways. We have processed these within our own psychology, within our relationship

with each other, how they emerge within the groups and how they are connected to Irishness, both past and present. It's not difficult to see how such a dynamic can be very prominent at a collective level, given the power imbalance that Irishness has had relative to Englishness for many centuries. This innerwork has supported our facilitation and work on the project more broadly. It has allowed us to step more fully into being confident about the work we are doing well; and 'not be against' moments we feel shy or in need of support. The awareness we have generated through processing these roles has supported us in noticing them when they emerge within the group as well as having more space to respond to each from a more compassionate place rather than being psychologically 'knocked out' at one end of this polarity.

### *Roles*

Over the past number of years, we have identified and worked with a whole range of what we conceptualise as roles related to the Irish experience. We have prepared a further paper outlining these in more detail that will be submitted for publication soon. In this instance we focus on two related pairs of roles that have been influential on several occasions.

The first pairing is what we have called '*The Jester/Jesting*' – '*Being Serious/Taking it seriously*' and the second is '*Going deep into the hurt/past*' – '*Bypassing the hurt/past or Moving forward*'. Separating these roles or even pairs of roles is an artificial distinction that is an artefact of putting names or attributing words to complex psychological phenomena. As we will see below, these 'individual' roles are much more interlinked and not really distinct constructs at all.

While participants may have their own relationship with these roles at an individual level, from a group level perspective, it's not difficult to relate many narratives from the past to these roles and why they still influence discussions on being Irish in the present. The reader will likely have many thoughts of their own – we offer some reflections from our own experiences and our experiences of being with others in relation to these roles. Use of humour and 'the craic' (the 'fun') have been very important ways of being and coping for Irish people for hundreds of years both in good times and in bad. There have been many times in the histories of the island where it was too difficult to 'take things seriously'. In addition, the stereotype of the 'Jester' has been bestowed upon Irishness and caricatured by the 'serious, civilised Englishman' from very early in the shared relationship between the two nations. This is one example of how Irishness has developed relative to Englishness and often been defined from this relative or othering perspective, which does not value humour. Irishness has been heavily influenced by how it has been consumed by the 'serious, civilised Englishman'. This is still often held up in many conscious and unconscious ways today – in Ireland, England and on an international stage. We continue to receive a lot of positive reinforcement for 'being great craic' and being the 'life and soul of the party' while other qualities may be overlooked.

The second pair of roles are not uncommon amongst groups of people where there is significant collective trauma (Audergon, 2005). They can occur at an intrapersonal, interpersonal and collective level. They can emerge within a group where some people wish to focus more on the hurt of the past whereas others do not. Even framing this, as a facilitator, and bringing awareness to it can help the group appreciate both rather than becoming entrenched on one side or the other. One of the ways that we have observed this emerging is where the more dominant jesting can lead to skipping over points where there is also much feeling. This can create confusing communication signals or what we often refer to as 'mixed feedback'. Continuously skipping over these feelings can lead to an escalation, eventually

creating a hotspot. From a facilitation perspective, we have really worked with welcoming, embracing and appreciating the jesting, humour and ‘the craic’. However, we are also looking for moments to slow down and welcome in the less apparent feeling-experiences and to ultimately ‘take ourselves and our experiences seriously – take being Irish seriously’ while not forgetting the value of humour. This is often a missing role or what in POP we call a ‘ghostrole’ – it is part of the group’s process but one that is much farther from awareness. Through doing this we create an environment in which something different can happen or new patterns and ways of being can emerge.

One final point regarding roles, concerns the degree to which we step into a ‘participant-facilitator role’ within each group (Mindell, 2014). We view the facilitator role as part of each group we step into – as opposed to being some kind of external agents with external expertise. We are also always there as participants, on our own version of the same journey as all the other group members.

### *Hotspots and Rank*

Facilitating hotspots and issues of rank and power are important parts of this work. We take our experience of one such instance as an exemplar of this but again wish to stress that its depiction here is a gross oversimplification of the many complexities within it.

One of the groups was made up predominantly of people who had an Irish Catholic upbringing whereas there was only one person who identified themselves as having grown up within a protestant tradition in Northern Ireland. At one point in the group a hotspot emerged around the use of violence within the Troubles and at other points during the past, such as the War of Independence.

There was a strong Irish Republican perspective presented early in the session by one member of the group and this was added to in different ways by other group members. This person had high ‘contextual’ rank in that their perspective could be conceptualised as likely representing a more dominant viewpoint within the group. This was furthered by the fact that it was known within the group that we as facilitators also had a Catholic upbringing. The contextual rank that facilitators hold within a group is always an influential factor in terms of what may get centralised versus marginalised.

As facilitators, we were aware of how this may have been marginalising the viewpoint of the individual who grew up within a Protestant tradition. Eventually, we offered an intervention, highlighting how the foregoing perspective was one viewpoint and that there were also likely lots of other perspectives that we wished to hear. When this group member eventually spoke, they mentioned how they had been having lots of feelings within their body in response to many of the other viewpoints and that it had been difficult to hear. At this point, we really appreciated them bringing their perspective and we outlined how grateful we were for them bringing it within the group; how we were learning from it; and how the group was much richer for having it. Other group members echoed this appreciation and a ‘cool spot’ of sorts followed. We reflected after on how bringing this framing and awareness sooner may have been preferable however it was challenging to find a moment to ‘interrupt’.

It is also worth noting that as facilitators, we had an awareness of how the person in question had a lot of ‘psychological’ rank and facilitation experience themselves and also had a number of allies in the group. This influenced some of our decisions in terms of how and when we intervened.



### *Deep Democracy, Following the Process and Metaskills*

As outlined above, two of the key pillars underlying Worldwork facilitation involve following the wisdom of the group and welcoming in or making space for all of the different perspectives and emotions. We are continuously growing the ‘how’ by which we do this or the metaskills that inform our work. As outlined above, we relate this to being in keeping with the spirit of the Seanchaithe. What we mean by this is that our style of facilitating has an informal, storytelling like approach to it where we are both ‘doing’ and ‘not doing’ or ‘facilitating’ and ‘not facilitating’. It is also a somewhat different way of being to what has become the dominant way of ‘leading’ or ‘hosting’ groups in many aspects of modern life (e.g., business, healthcare, sport). This metaskill is something that continues to grow and evolve between us and each time that we engage in this work. It is an ongoing process itself as opposed to some fixed entity. While it is a part of our facilitation, it also represents a wider process within the project of finding or reclaiming an Irish voice(s) or Irish way(s) of doing things.

### **Potential Next Steps**

We have many hopes for this project and the nature of the work it represents. We hope to host a range of further events across the islands of Ireland and Britain as well as online. The latter, as well as increasing accessibility, allows us to facilitate discussions on being Irish in a way that brings people together from different parts of these islands and from different corners of the world. Already we have seen the value of this and the interconnectedness it engenders.

We wish to host ‘open’ groups where anyone with a relationship to Irishness can join, as well as ‘closed’ sessions for groups of people who share a particular connection. This can be especially relevant to people who have been minoritised or marginalised within mainstream society. This may be due to gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status or the many other ways that people are discriminated against. One group within Irish society that is deserving of special mention in this regard is the Travelling Community, which experiences the greatest degree of disadvantage “by far” among minority groups (McGinnity & Watson, 2021). Using a closed group model where appropriate may support integration in the longer term as it can support people from minoritised groups to later attend open groups. Closed groups may also be useful for groups of people with a common interest or shared goal. This might include writers, documentary makers, sportspeople, politicians, students, and what may be of particular interest to the current readership, psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors. We believe these types of group-based interventions can support such people in their own lives as well as with the work that they do.

Supporting people with different viewpoints and perspectives to come together is an important part of this work. One somewhat ubiquitous example of this is bridging ‘the generational divide’, in the context of differing experiences in a period of accelerated change. This may involve working with younger people and older people in closed groups initially and then bringing them together to share each other’s stories and perspectives. Or potentially even more important, is when these dynamics arise organically within open groups. Other examples might include Catholics-Protestants, Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland and Urban-Rural.

To realise the above propositions – and extend the project beyond the initial pilot phase - we will need to secure sufficient funding and associated resources. This is something we are currently exploring.

### **Concluding Comments**

There is a Seanfhocail (old Irish saying) ‘Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine’ or ‘under each other’s shadow is how people survive’ (Magan, 2020, p 126). We do not mean to overlook how many people have suffered and continue to suffer within individual and collective relationships. Rather we also believe that growth and healing can emerge from within this so called ‘shadow’, especially when the ‘right’ conditions are cultivated and nourished. This seanfocail can also be understood as ‘it is in the shelter of each other that the people live’ (O’Tuama, 2014, p5), recognising further how we are part of each other stories.

Much of modern Western thinking is grounded in a particular way of viewing the world. This is reflected in perspectives such as positivism, capitalism, and the scientific method (Cotter et al., 2020, 2021b, 2022b, 2022c). While there have been many benefits to these ways of being, their dominance has created many problems in today’s world. The individualistic, objectivist and reductionist stances they promote have contributed to eroding much of the interconnectedness between human beings – and between humans and other animals and the natural world more broadly. This is an underlying factor in many of today’s major issues (e.g. climate change, rise of fascism, treatment of immigrants, lack of humanity in modern healthcare).

Within Europe, former colonial ‘powers’ may find it especially difficult to ‘correct’ this imbalance because they have taken it on, and benefitted from it, most wholly. Ireland’s somewhat different history may mean that there’s a little more space for a change in direction. We believe that combing the spirit of the Seanchaí with learnings from the humanistic and integrative psychotherapies, in particular POP, can play an important role in supporting modern Ireland in becoming a more equitable place; in developing a different relationship between Irishness and Britishness; and in evolving the concept of Irishness on a more global level.

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