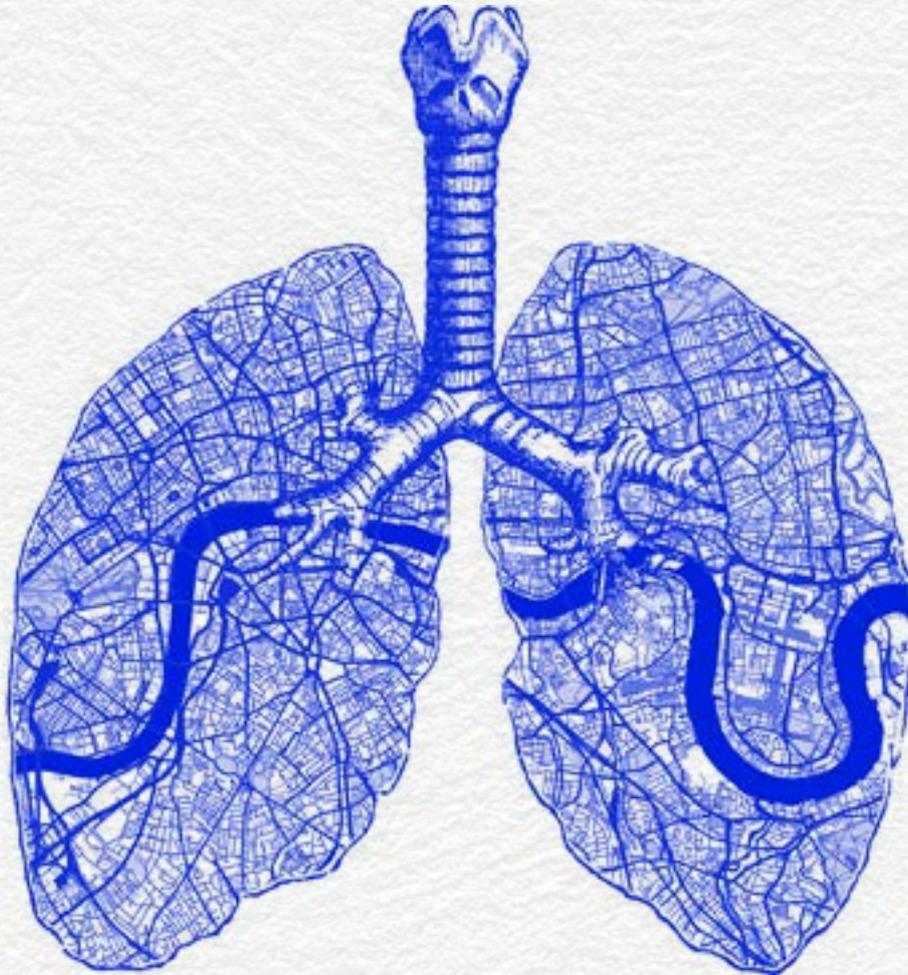
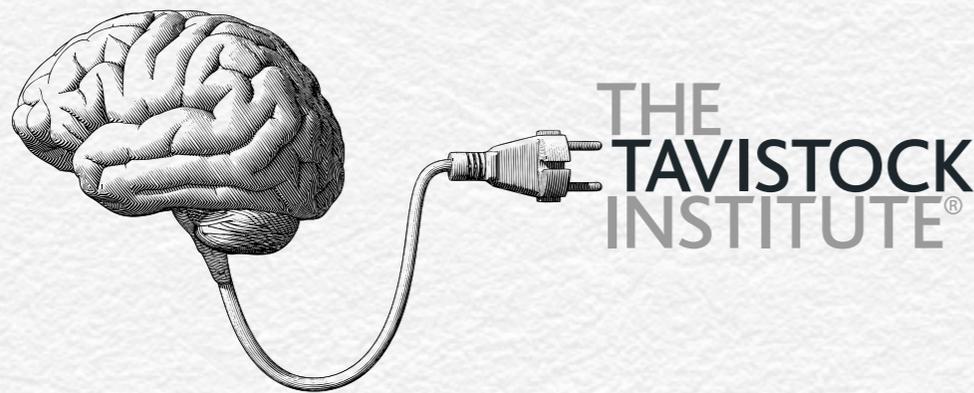


# Studying the Socio-ecological and reticular in organisations



Saturday 29 July – Friday 11 August 2023 | CIM Moor Hall

THE **LEICESTER** CONFERENCE 2023



## Welcome to this iteration of the Leicester Conference of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, celebrating 77 years in 2023.

The TAO of Tavistock has always provided a leading-edge criticality for leaders – working below the surface of apparent realities to engage in profound ways with what it means to be human and how we can meaningfully relate to each other and most critically, our environment.

As we enter 2023, our social systems are facing their legacies – and unpicking from the ruins of the rubble, a renewed sense of purpose – which for us is Task; seeking out how to function effectively – which for us is Authority; and questioning the shape, boundary and processes of the social world – which for us is Organisation.

When we speak about The Reticular, we refer to the hidden web of entangled systems and processes that support life. From cell biology to soil substructure, transport and broadband networks

– they are all reticular. Being able to navigate the reticular is a nuanced skill, and a LC offers the opportunity to develop the ability to see, listen and speak into the spaces between apparently separate objects, persons, nations and perspectives, and experience that reticular dimension whilst studying it.

So, as it has done over the last 66 years, the Leicester Conference is the living laboratory where all leaders, change agents, group and system practitioners, come to deepen their capacity to survive -and thrive - turbulent times and

contexts. A place in which to hone the craft of acting in the face of uncertainty, directly from their own experience.

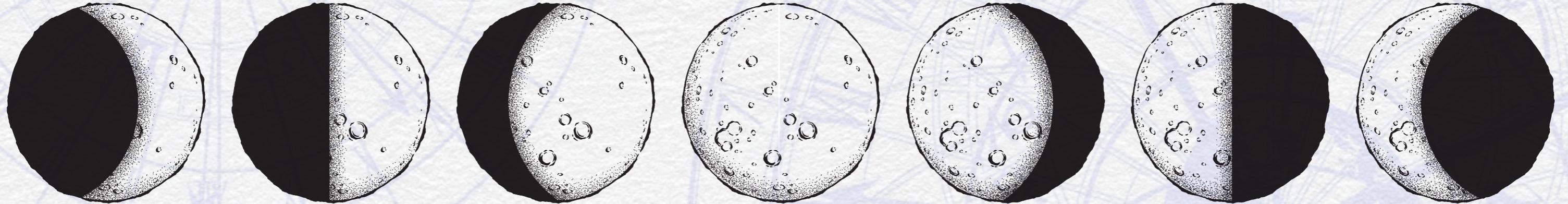
As we all face the coming decade up to 2033 the UN sustainable develop goals, the digitalisation of the global economy and surviving a climate catastrophe will draw out of us a new set of competencies, skills and abilities to shape our social order. The Reticular skill set is at the heart of the learning from a Group Relations conference in general and the Leicester Conference in particular.

### **The Primary Task of the Conference is:**

To study the exercise of authority in the taking up of roles through the interpersonal, inter-group and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organisation within its wider context.

# Previous Leicester conferences

The Leicester conference has happened every year since 1957.



2013

**Authority Role Organisation:**  
**Studying space, pace, purpose in hyper-turbulent times**  
Beaumont Hall,  
Leicester University

2014

**Authority & Role:**  
**Living, Leading & Learning in Our Organisations**  
John Foster Hall,  
Leicester University

2015

**Authority & Role:**  
**Fighting and Fighting in Our Organisations**  
Stamford Court,  
Leicester University

2016

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**The Art of Role: TAO of Tavistock**  
College Court,  
Leicester University

2017

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**Presence in Absence: In & Out @ Work**  
College Court,  
Leicester University

2018

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**[red pill / blue pill]**  
College Court,  
Leicester University

2019

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**LOVE@Work**  
College Court,  
Leicester University

2020

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**4C's C-Change**  
Am Sonnenhang,  
Pleystein, Bavaria

2021

**Task Authority Organisation:**  
**Birthing, Learning, Leading in a Time of (post) Pandemic**  
Lane End,  
High Wycombe

2022

**TAO: Studying the capillary, rhizomatic and tentacular in organisations**  
Lane End,  
High Wycombe

# What the Directors say about The Leicester Conference



**Dr Leslie B Brissett, conference director and director of the Working conference** is the Group Relations Programme Director at the Tavistock Institute, has directed 6 Leicester Conferences (2016–2022) and has contributed as Director and Associate Director and Staff member to this – as well as dozens of other Group Relations Conferences – nationally and internationally.

*“We live in a world of myth masquerading as fact, a world of theory pretending to be truth and a fabric of hypotheses offering certainty. How does one lead and follow in this reticular matrix of density and confusion, how does one find one’s core?”*

*Understanding our interconnectedness is difficult work, we can at best contribute, enhance, shape and mould our experiences, but we are not and never have been in control. Perhaps there is, however, an implicate order, a fabric that is holding all of this together, and our task is to find harmony with it.*

*Engaging with that woven fabric that runs below and between all matter is a creative process and as such evokes anxiety. Anxiety can paralyse individuals and crash economies as we lurch from one moral panic to another – extinction of institutions, races, species and planet are the nexus of nightmares that shape our behaviour, and paradoxically opens the door to play and creativity.”*



**Dr Eliat V Aram, conference director and director of the Deepening Praxis Training Group (DPTG)** is the CEO of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and has directed 11 Leicester conferences (2007–2022) and many conferences all over the world.

*“The LC is a true international gathering. People meet at the conference who would not have met in any other context in the world; neighbouring enemy countries, huge geographical spread, different ages and professions. It spans over two weeks in a secluded location where you can really immerse yourself in an exploration of self and others and everything that runs between. There is nothing like this conference in the world. It is an opportunity to go into the depth of one’s psyche with an intensity that, because of the luxury of time and space, is not overwhelming but is life-changing and profound. The Leicester conference is a conference for the person who immerses themselves and is willing to grapple with being and living in the learning position”.*

# Conference Administrators narratives



**Leah Ashton-Hurst** is the Operations Manager & People Co-ordinator at the Tavistock Institute.

*"I am delighted to be joining the Leicester Directorate, as a conference administrator, for a second time. I am excited to experience once again the unique learning opportunities that Leicester provides and to apply this learning in my personal and professional life".*



**Emily Kyte** has been an Administrator at the Tavistock Institute since 2019 and,

alongside this work, is training on the MSc in Person-Centred Psychotherapy and Practice at the Metanoia Institute. Emily is joining the Leicester Directorate as Administrative Assistant for her first experience on staff at a Group Relations conference.

## Staff



**Pietro Catania, MBA, MSM/MSX** is a gestalt OD practitioner and professor of

management at Milano Bicocca university. Pietro feels a sense of anticipation and curiosity in joining as a staff member in the 2023 production of the Leicester Conference and in bringing his presence and awareness in supporting the unfolding of collective and individual learning as it will emerge.



**Winnie Fei, PhD** is the CEO Tavistock Institute China and has experience as

Associate Director and Director at the first three iterations of GR conferences in China. Winne is honoured to be in the staff team of Leicester 2023, to co-create with my colleagues and contribute the different perspective of understanding the world as a Chinese person.



**Dr. Markus G. Feil** is a psychoanalyst and organisational consultant and member of German

Psychoanalytic Society and Lithuanian Group Relations Society. Markus finds the Leicester Conference model of meeting and discovering oneself and each other in a variety of roles more important than ever in times when the social systems that we rely upon appear to be coming apart at the seams.



**Jinette de Gooijer, PhD** is a founding member and Past President of Group Relations Australia

and has directed and worked on staff of group relations conferences in Australia and internationally. Jinette has an abiding interest in the individual's lived experience in contemporary society. The invitation to join the staff of the conference spoke of creativity and courage and a world facing momentous realities. Learning from direct experience to develop the skills for these times is vital.



**Rachel Kelly** is a Group Relations and Organisational Development Consultant at the

Tavistock Institute and has extensive experience of Leicester conferences and international Group Relations conferences. She practices and teaches the Alexander Technique, since 2006. She is very much looking forward to exploring the net-like intricacies and the socio-ecological in the temporary organisation that is the conference.



**Dr. Debra A. Noumair** is a group relations scholar and practitioner and a Fellow of the A. K.

Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems. The focus of her work is on applying systems psychodynamics to organization change with individuals, teams, and organizations. She is intrigued by opportunities to study systems psychodynamics in post-pandemic environments and there is no better venue to do so than the Leicester Conference.



**Irina Ponomarchuk** is an Executive and Leadership coach for Business schools and corporate

clients in Russia and Europe, and the Director and co-founder of Group Relations Russia. It is a big pleasure for her to be invited be a part of such a meaningful conference in these complex times, to explore and maybe find the ways out of reticular group relations to create more trustworthy and ecological systems.



**Antonio Sama** is a university lecturer and organisational consultant in both British and Italian

universities (undergraduate and postgraduate programmes), and a Professional Partner of The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Being part of the staff team provides a unique opportunity in a temporary learning organisation to explore socially what each of us brings to the co-creation of the environments we then inhabit.



**Haritha Sarma** is an Associate Member of Group Relations India and has extensively worked with diverse

groups, organisations and networks, and addressed themes related to structural poverty, marginalisation, and deepening democracy. Haritha is looking forward to being part of LC2023, which offers a unique opportunity to explore, study and learn about conscious and unconscious processes that deeply influence intra- and inter-organisational dynamics.



**Dr Christopher Scanlon** (DPhil) is psycho-socialist Researcher/Consultant, Consultant Adult & Forensic Psychotherapist,

Training Group Analyst (*Institute of Group Analysis (London) & Irish Group Analytic Society*), professional associate Tavistock Institute, and lecturer in Psychosocial Studies at the *Tavistock Clinic/University of Essex*. Christopher hopes and trusts that through participation in this conference, at this time, that different ways of being hospitable may be revealed and look forward to being an active part of this process.

# What happens at the Leicester Conference?

A temporary organisation is created, in which all members and staff co-create the culture and practices of the organisation as it unfolds.

We hold a close scrutiny to everything that happens within the organisation and surface what meanings are embedded within the behaviours as they happen.

The Groups are formed, and events are consulted to by the staff. Designed to surface our

assumptions and myths about organisational and social life. As the conference is fully residential, we have the experience of immersing totally into the life of the organisation, eating sleeping and working together consistently for 14 days. There is nothing quite like it.

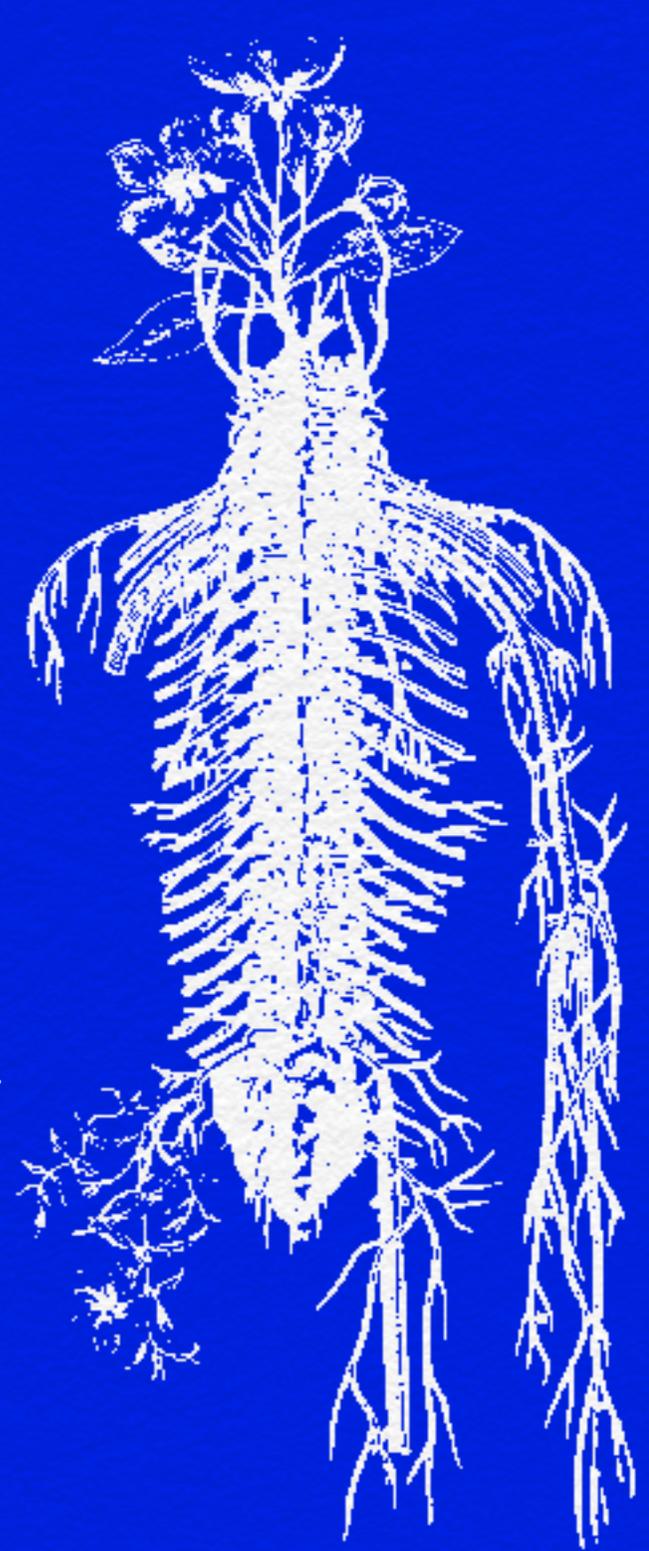


## “If”

**Rudyard Kipling (1895)**

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*



# Sub-conferences

## Working Conference:

is for people who have never attended a residential group relations conference, or those who choose to return and rediscover the member role a fresh.

## Deepening Praxis Training Group:

for those who wish to train as group relations conference consultants and those seeking to deepen their organisational consultancy skills. The Deepening Praxis Training Group (DPTG) is for people who have attended at least 2 residential group relations conferences recognised by the Tavistock Institute, at least one of which is a Leicester conference.



# Prices

Representing outstanding value, fee includes, 13 night's accommodation, all meals and refreshments and the consultancy of world leaders in the field of systems psychodynamics, organisational consultancy and coaching.

**WC: £6000**  
**(early bird: by 1st April 2023: £5500)**

**TG: £6750**  
**(early bird by 1st April 2023: £6250)**

Further Discounts for joint applications from the same organisation, or joint applications from those affiliated to the same national group relations sponsoring organisations. For severe financial hardship, bursaries and scholarships are available on application and further supporting statement.

# Venue

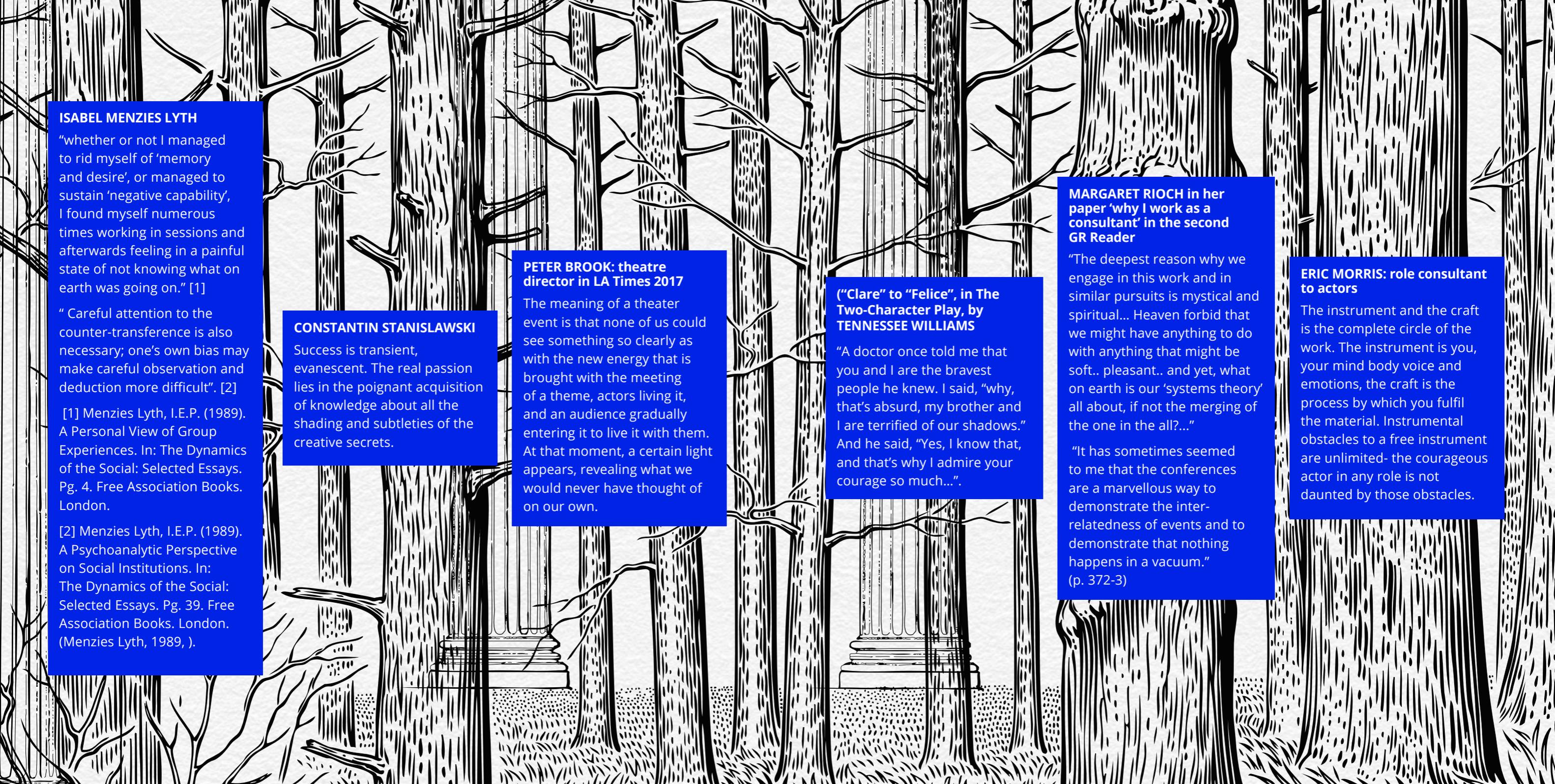


**CIM Moor Hall**  
Cookham, Maidenhead  
Royal Borough of Windsor  
and Maidenhead  
Berkshire, SL6 9QH

Located in the idyllic village of Cookham, with close proximity to Windsor, Maidenhead and Heathrow Airport, Moor Hall is an elegant 19<sup>th</sup> century Manor House. All bedrooms come with ensuite and guests at Moor Hall can take advantage of onsite lounge bar, quiet work area, gym and restaurant.

Moor Hall is one hour out of Central London, easily accessible by public transport and situated on 9 acres of peaceful Berkshire countryside.





**ISABEL MENZIES LYTH**

"whether or not I managed to rid myself of 'memory and desire', or managed to sustain 'negative capability', I found myself numerous times working in sessions and afterwards feeling in a painful state of not knowing what on earth was going on." [1]

" Careful attention to the counter-transference is also necessary; one's own bias may make careful observation and deduction more difficult". [2]

[1] Menzies Lyth, I.E.P. (1989). A Personal View of Group Experiences. In: The Dynamics of the Social: Selected Essays. Pg. 4. Free Association Books. London.

[2] Menzies Lyth, I.E.P. (1989). A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Social Institutions. In: The Dynamics of the Social: Selected Essays. Pg. 39. Free Association Books. London. (Menzies Lyth, 1989, ).

**CONSTANTIN STANISLAWSKI**

Success is transient, evanescent. The real passion lies in the poignant acquisition of knowledge about all the shading and subtleties of the creative secrets.

**PETER BROOK: theatre director in LA Times 2017**

The meaning of a theater event is that none of us could see something so clearly as with the new energy that is brought with the meeting of a theme, actors living it, and an audience gradually entering it to live it with them. At that moment, a certain light appears, revealing what we would never have thought of on our own.

**("Clare" to "Felice", in The Two-Character Play, by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS**

"A doctor once told me that you and I are the bravest people he knew. I said, "why, that's absurd, my brother and I are terrified of our shadows." And he said, "Yes, I know that, and that's why I admire your courage so much..."

**MARGARET RIOCH in her paper 'why I work as a consultant' in the second GR Reader**

"The deepest reason why we engage in this work and in similar pursuits is mystical and spiritual... Heaven forbid that we might have anything to do with anything that might be soft.. pleasant.. and yet, what on earth is our 'systems theory' all about, if not the merging of the one in the all?..."

"It has sometimes seemed to me that the conferences are a marvellous way to demonstrate the inter-relatedness of events and to demonstrate that nothing happens in a vacuum." (p. 372-3)

**ERIC MORRIS: role consultant to actors**

The instrument and the craft is the complete circle of the work. The instrument is you, your mind body voice and emotions, the craft is the process by which you fulfil the material. Instrumental obstacles to a free instrument are unlimited- the courageous actor in any role is not daunted by those obstacles.



[www.tavinstitute.org](http://www.tavinstitute.org)

The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is engaged with evaluation and action research, organisational development and change consultancy, executive coaching and professional development, all in service of supporting sustainable development and maintaining its impact as a UK Charity