



ISPSO 34th Annual Meeting, Copenhagen 3rd - 9th July 2017: Dreams always take place: Spaces, Places, Rooms, and Furniture, inside and around us

**PARALLEL PAPERS IV**  
**SATURDAY 8<sup>th</sup> JULY 1345-1500**  
**ROOM II - 7.0.08**

**Amnon Bar-Or & Gabi Bonwitt**

*The Deserted Dining Hall in the Kibbutz:  
An Empty Heart of a Prolonged Trauma.  
A Dialogue between an Architect and a  
Psychoanalyst*

There is a new understanding in architecture that any work of conservation involves some reconstruction of the past. The act of reconstruction involves not only the knowledge of the history of the building itself but also the history of the people that are connected to a specific architectural construct. - The Built Heritage. Many times the history of the built heritage involves traumatic events that have an overt as well as subtle nature. The phenomenon of the Kibbutzim in Israel is unique, not only in Israel itself, but also in the world. Although Kibbutzim made up a mere 8%-2% (1948–nowadays) of the total population in Israel, their importance and significance was far greater than these percentages. They played a prominent part in almost every social sphere, including politics, the military and the local culture. The beating heart of the Kibbutz community was its dining hall. It was always the most impressive and lavish of the

buildings and its function was not only to supply meals to the members of the collective but to provide a social space; it was the place where they held their meetings, their parties and their ceremonies. Almost every gathering took place in the dining hall, which was called, among different names, *The Temple*. The rupture of the Kibbutz idea in the 1980's – a result of a long process of denial and political changes in Israel, together with the disappearance of the idea of a collective – emptied the dining halls, and they became an open wound of the trauma. Most of the young generation left, leaving the old generation behind. The heart became empty. We decided to try to study the nature of these phenomena. For more than a year we visited over thirty Kibbutzim, interviewing members and scholars in different areas of social research, trying to understand the meaning of the empty dining halls and the links to wider currents in Israeli society; to history, culture and politics. This joint venture had two tasks:

1) To gain insight into the overt and subtle processes that contributed to the above as well as to explore the processes that brought about and were the result of the end of an important era in the history of the Israeli society. The relatedness between this process and national processes will be discussed in terms of *Basic Assumptions: Oneness* and *Me-ness* and the inability of these mental states to hold complexity and paradoxes, as seen in architecture.

2) To find a common ground between two languages: the language of architecture and the

language of psychoanalysis. This meeting point will be discussed in terms of the differences between *thick and thin boundaries*.

This paper will try to elaborate on these issues using psychoanalytic concepts and ideas, among others, post trauma, repetition compulsion and denial. We will also try to integrate it with open systems theory. The paper is part of an ongoing research study being conducted by a working group entitled "Trauma and Architecture," at Tel Aviv University. The paper will be presented as a dialogue between the architect and the psychoanalyst, a trial of a model of discussion between two fields of research.

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**Gabi Bonwitt**, M.A., Training Psychoanalyst, Past Chairman, Scientific Committee, board of directors, the Israeli Psychoanalytic Society; Past Board Member and Director of Group Relations conferences, OFEK; "Testimonies", a documentary film, post trauma and soldiers (1994), Main Interviewer.