

Introductory Remarks to *Lost Voices/Found Words* by Erika Duncan *

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Before psychoanalysis became an established therapy it was simply a discovery, meaning that Freud was convinced that as individuals could allow themselves to hear what they were saying, they would know their world and themselves anew. And, he suggested, if individuals were not able to experience any formal psychoanalytic treatment, they would benefit from writing their thoughts, their dreams, their memories and their hopes. Erika Duncan has, for the past six years, formed groups of women who do just that and who have, in the process, encountered themselves and their histories: what they have hidden from themselves and, in many cases, what they cannot forget. Ms. Duncan has created groups where personal support and sympathetic ears serve a function much like an analyst's free hovering attention. She has developed a method of teaching, which she is sharing with others, enabling the participants to find words for their memories – good memories as well as painful ones. This is bringing psychoanalysis into the marketplace of life, so to speak, without disparaging the marketplace of formal therapy. This brings the psychoanalytic process to many individuals who have neither the knowledge, nor the resources, for a formal therapy. Given a clinician's training in analysis, the article will raise many questions about how the group, or the leader, addresses transference, or defenses and/or interventions. Without denying the validity of those particular metaphorical formulations, Ms. Duncan's work suggests what Bion alluded to when speaking about therapy – it is one person, with his or her pain, listening to another's pain. The creative and insightful guidelines Ms Duncan has established reaffirm the psychoanalytic belief that when human beings listen to each other, with a modicum of love, the foundations of healing are set.

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