

## IN MEMORIAM: MARY MAIN (1943 – 2023)

### Aleksandra Mindoljević Drakulić

Dr. sc. **Aleksandra Mindoljević Drakulić**, klinička psihologinja i psihoterapeutkinja, Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, [aleksandra.mindoljevic@gmail.com](mailto:aleksandra.mindoljevic@gmail.com)

/ **Aleksandra Mindoljević Drakulić**, Ph.D., clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb, [aleksandra.mindoljevic@gmail.com](mailto:aleksandra.mindoljevic@gmail.com)

Mary Main - svjetski poznata američka psihologinja, profesorica emerita kalifornijskoga sveučilišta Berkeley, umrla je u svojem domu, dana 6. siječnja 2023. godine, u 80-oj godini života, nakon dugotrajne borbe s bolešću.

O Mary Main moglo bi se napisati stotine stranica. Bila je biološki i psihodinamski orijentirana psihologinja čiji je višedesetljetni stručni i znanstveni rad vezan uz veoma široko i značajno područje psihoanalitičke teorije privrženosti, koju je utemeljio engleski psiholog, psihijatar i psihoanalitičar John Bowlby (1907. – 1990.). O dostignućima psihologinje Mary Main najbolje svjedoči bogata citiranost njezinih radova, kojih je do 2022. godine bilo preko 16 tisuća.

Njezine kolege suradnici s fakulteta, kao i brojni studenti kojima je predavala, danas je se sjećaju kao mirne, strpljive, skromne i staložene osobe velikog iskustva, plemenitih osobina, sa silnom znanstvenom znatiželjom i posvećenošću struci. Doktorirala je 70-ih godina 20. stoljeća te je kao jedna od prvih žena na

On January 6, 2023, Mary Main, a world-renowned American psychologist and professor emeritus of the University of California, Berkeley died at home at the age of 80, after a long struggle with illness.

Hundreds of pages could be written about Mary Main. She was a biologically and psychodynamically oriented psychologist who dedicated decades of professional and scientific work to the very broad and important field of psychoanalytic attachment theory, founded by the English psychologist, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst John Bowlby (1907-1990). The achievements of Mary Main are best evidenced by the wide impact of her works: by 2022, her works were cited more than 16,000 times.

Her colleagues at the University, as well as her numerous students, remember her today as a patient, modest and calm person with vast experience, noble qualities, great scientific curiosity and dedication to the profession. She received her doctorate in the 1970s and began her scientific career as one of the first women at the University. Not much is known about her private life, except that she had

sveučilištu počela svoj znanstveni put. O njezinom privatnom životu ne zna se gotovo ništa, osim da nije imala djece te je bila udana za kolegu s fakulteta Erika Davida Hessea. Stoga je Mainin golemi doprinos znanosti nakon Johna Bowlbyja, kao i približavanje teoriji privrženosti, na stanovit način došlo bez jasnih razloga koji bi se dali iščitati iz njezine osobne biografije.

Iako su još početkom 80-ih godina 20. stoljeća mnogi Bowlbyjevi bliski kolege psiholozi, psihijatri i psihoterapeuti vjerovali da se privrženost nakon rano djetinjstva više ne može izravno proučavati i mjeriti, ili su pak smatrali da postoje metodološki jasne granice, bolje rečeno limiti u istraživanju koncepcije privrženosti, Mary Main je u svojem znanstvenom radu dokazala i demonstrirala suprotno.

U svojem je prvom važnom članku iz 1985. godine „Security in Infancy, Childhood and Adulthood: A Move to the Level of Representation“ objavljenom u časopisu *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, sa suradnicama objavila rezultate šestogodišnje studije četrdesetero majki i njihove djece. Ta su djeca prije šest godina, kao jednogodišnjaci, bili ispitanici u eksperimentu tzv. nepoznate situacije kanadske psihologinje Mary Ainsworth. Naime, M. Ainsworth (1913. – 1999.) je kao bliska Bowlbyjeva suradnica, istražujući koncepciju privrženosti, razradi-

no children and was married to her colleague Erik David Hesse. For that reason, Main's enormous contribution to science following in John Bowlby's footsteps and her interest in attachment theory, cannot be specifically explained through her personal biography.

Although in the early 1980s many of Bowlby's close colleagues - psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists - believed that attachment after early childhood could no longer be directly studied and measured, or they believed that there were methodologically clear boundaries, or, better yet, limits to the research of attachment, Mary Main's work proved and demonstrated the opposite.

In her first important article, “Security in Infancy, Childhood and Adulthood: A Move to the Level of Representation”, published in *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development* in 1985, she and her colleagues published the results of a six-year study of forty mothers and their children. Six years prior, as one-year-olds, these children were subjects in the so called “strange situation” experiment conducted by the Canadian psychologist Mary Ainsworth. As a close associate of Bowlby, while researching the concept of attachment, M. Ainsworth (1913 - 1999) developed a 20-minute laboratory procedure which she named the Strange Situation Procedure. In this experiment, M. Ainsworth observed the behavior of the primary caregiver (mother) toward the infant, as well as the behavior of the infant toward



la 20-minutni laboratorijski postupak kojeg je prozvala Nepoznata situacija. U tom je eksperimentu u nekoliko sekvenci kratkih napuštanja djeteta i ponovnog ujedinjavanja s primarnim skrbnikom, M. Ainsworth promatrala ponašanje primarnog skrbnika (majke) prema dojenčetu, kao i ponašanje dojenčeta prema majci. M. Ainsworth je uz pomoć tog postupka ustanovila 3 stila privrženosti majki i dojenčadi (sigurni i dva nesigurna stila), dok je M. Main šest godina kasnije razradila polustrukturirani intervju privrženosti odraslih. Tim je polustrukturiranim jednosatnim individualnim razgovorom s primarnim skrbnicima, (čija su djeca tada već narasla te su bili sedmogodišnjaci ili osmogodišnjaci), u 75 % slučajeva, uspjela potvrditi njihove ranije stilove privrženosti. Ponovnim promatranjem snimljenog materijala iz eksperimenta nepoznate situacije, M. Main je ustanovila i četvrti stil privrženosti, kojeg je prozvala dezorganiziranim. Osobine tog stila, prilikom (ponovnog) susretanja dojenčeta s primarnim skrbnikom, očitovale su se u neobičnom djetetovom ponašanju, primjerice u bizarnim djetetovim reakcijama, silnom strahu prema skrbniku, zaleđenoj i ukočenoj posturi djetetovog tijela, što se sve odnosilo na znatno traumatiziranu djecu.

Ovim je ključnim znanstvenim otkrićima Mary Main odgovorila na mnoga važna pitanja o fenomenu privrženosti,

the mother, during several sequences of brief separation from the infant and the subsequent reunification of the infant with their primary caregiver. Using this procedure, M. Ainsworth observed 3 attachment styles between mothers and infants (one secure and two insecure styles), while six years later, M. Main developed the semi-structured Adult Attachment Interview. By conducting these semi-structured one-hour long individual interviews with the primary caregivers, (whose children were already grown, seven or eight years old at the time), she was able to confirm their earlier attachment styles in 75% of cases. After re-examining the recorded material from the Strange Situation Procedure, M. Main identified a fourth style of attachment, which she called "disorganized attachment". During the (re)encounter of the infant with the primary caregiver, the characteristics of this style were manifested in the child's unusual behavior, for example in the child's bizarre reactions, extreme fear in relation to the caregiver, and a frozen and stiff posture of the child's body, all of which signaled significantly traumatized children.

With these key scientific discoveries Mary Main provided answers to many important questions regarding the phenomenon of attachment, primarily those regarding the existence of great stability of the early attachment style in relation to the attachment style in middle childhood and adolescence, as well as the de-

ponajprije na postojanje velike stabilnosti ranog stila privrženosti sa stilom privrženosti u srednjem djetinjstvu i adolescenciji kao i na postojanje koncepcije transgeneracijskog prijenosa privrženosti, što su kasnije pokazale mnoge neovisne studije.

Zanimljivo je i to, što je u svojim zrelijim godinama, u suradnji s britanskim analitičarem Peterom Fonagyjem utvrdila prediktivnu povezanost odgovora trudnica na AAI-ju sa stilom privrženosti kojeg su manifestirale nakon rođenja svoje djece.

Njezin istaknut doprinos grani razvojne psihologije, prepoznali su sa Sveučilišta Haifa iz Izraela te Sveučilišta Uppsala i Sveučilišta Goteborg iz Švedske te su Mary Main dodijelili tri počasna doktorata. Također je bila dobitnica brojnih psiholoških nagrada i priznanja, od kojih je najistaknutija nagrada za životno djelo međunarodnog stručnog udruženja SEAS (Society for Social, Emotional and Attachment Studies).

Nakon smrti Mary Main ostalo je njezino izvorno djelo svjetskog ugleda, cijenjeno ponajprije među psiholozima i psihoanalitičarima, kao i znanstvenicima brojnih drugih područja. Kao jedna od malobrojnih velikana iznimne senzibilitnosti, kao „nježni intelektualni div pun topline“ kako ju je titulirao P. Fonagy, unaprijedila je razvojnu analitičku psihologiju i dala kreativan doprinos

development of the concept of transgenerational transfer of attachment, which was later supported by many independent studies.

An interesting fact is that in her later years and in collaboration with the British analyst Peter Fonagy, she established a predictive connection between pregnant women's responses to the AAI and the attachment style they manifested after the birth of their children.

Her significant contribution to developmental psychology was recognized by the University of Haifa in Israel, the Uppsala University and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, which awarded her honorary doctorates. She was also the recipient of numerous psychology awards and recognitions, the most prominent of which is the Lifetime Achievement Award of the international professional association SEAS (Society for Emotion and Attachment Studies).

The original work of Mary Main, appreciated worldwide primarily by psychologists and psychoanalysts, but also scientists in numerous other fields, remains as her legacy. As one of the few giants of exceptional sensitivity, a "gentle intellectual giant full of warmth" as P. Fonagy described her, she contributed greatly to the advancement of developmental analytical psychology and made a creative contribution to related disciplines such as ethology, anthropology, sociology, psychiatry and psychotherapy. Her research and intellectual preoccupations



dodirnim znanostima poput etologije, antropologije, sociologije, psihijatrije i psihoterapije. Njezina istraživanja i misaone preokupacije (poput, primjerice, ideje i koncepcije unutrašnjeg radnog modela) mogu nam biti stalni putokaz i izazov u psihoterapijskom radu. Mary Main svakako je bila jedna od pionira u uzbudljivom pothvatu istraživanja privrženosti, uz poslovičnu jasnoću, preciznost i određenost koju ponajprije imaju nadareni psiholozi empiričari.

Na kraju, ostaje neodgovoreno pitanje zbog čega je, kao *leitmotiv* svojeg opusa, Mary Main odabrala upravo privrženost. Jedino poznato, što mi sada pada na pamet, njezina je znanstvena suradnja s Erikom Hesseom, koja je pretvorena u ljubavnu vezu. U zajedništvu s njim, u odnosu koji je bio očito duboko protkan ljubavlju i razumijevanjem, Mary Main je oslobodila svoju kreativnost i u libidinoznom, privrženom skladu od sebe dala samo najzrelije i najbolje.

(such as the idea and the concept of the internal working model) can serve us as a constant guide and challenge in psychotherapy work. Mary Main was certainly one of the pioneers in the exciting endeavor of attachment research, with the proverbial clarity, precision and determination primarily seen in gifted empirical psychologists.

In the end, the unanswered question remains as to why Mary Main chose attachment as the leitmotif of her work. The only answer that comes to mind is her scientific collaboration with Erik Hesse, which turned into a love affair. In collaboration with him, in a relationship that was clearly deeply infused with love and understanding, Mary Main unleashed her creativity and in impassioned, affectionate harmony she gave only the most mature and best of herself.