

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	2
PRESIDENT’S PAGE	3
Understanding the Experience of Working in Contemporary Organisations by Margaret Smith et al.	7
Arrival of a Sibling by Regine Scholz	10
Papers from the GAS International Symposium 2011:	
1. Conference Report from the London Symposium by Haim Weinberg	15
2. Framework: Report from the London Symposium by Silvia Anfilocchi	17
3. The Egyptian Revolution of 2011 as a Group Process by Mohamed Taha	28
4. Loss Definite, Mourning Uncertain by Tija Despotović and Jelica Satarić	42
Report of the GAS Librarian by Elizabeth Nokes	47
GAS Website by Terry Birchmore	48
Events	53

Editorial

This edition of Contexts has been put together at the turn of the New Year, even though it will not appear until the Spring. We look forward to another year of interesting and stimulating pieces from you, our membership.

What for us connects the different papers in this issue is the topic of change (painful and/or welcomed) - in mental health services, in organisational life, in societies at large, and the reflections of these issues in the therapeutic groups we conduct.

Regine Scholz and Terry Birchmore

President's Page

In the last few months those of us in the Management Committee of the Group Analytic Society started our joint journey together by trying to tackle the different challenges we are facing. In our October weekend meeting we made an effort towards coherence – trying to define where to invest our energies in the course of the coming years. In working together, the range of our communication improves and the direction for our efforts become clearer: we are trying to deepen our understanding of the process at the London Symposium, to plan forthcoming events and think about their content: from ethics to marginalization and questions of authority and Internationalization. Wanting to learn from past events, especially the Symposia, means wanting to improve as a functioning group. I found MC members fascinated about the vast possibilities of Internationalization which we are only starting to realize. There are many ideas and I am sure, with your help, many more ideas may enrich our thinking and planning. Please write to us if you have any contribution to make or you can present them in the Forum: robif@netvision.net.il

I am discovering a range of new perspectives from the President's "position": for example it became clear how much Group Analysis seems to have an "inclusive" philosophy which makes International co-operation so important. Our work teaches us to listen to all the voices in the Matrix and be curious about their context and the right figurations. Suddenly it strikes me again that Foulkes founded, together with Moreno, a psychodramatist, the IAGP - the International Association for Group Psychotherapy. Whatever this alliance really meant, S.H. understood that it was important to engage, converse, participate and bear witness to the work of other (international) groups and the directions they were pursuing.

Europe is going through some very significant times and for some of us, especially around the Mediterranean, it delivers personal difficulties. Very important for the Here-and-now of European Group Analysis seems the foundation of a huge and potentially powerful new Association which unites German-speaking Group Analysts with Psychoanalytic and Dynamic Oriented Group therapists. Personally I considered this event so important that I joined them in Berlin to congratulate them personally.

Many prominent German colleagues were present at the foundation of the organization. The name of the organization is: “German... Association for Group Analysis and Group Therapy” -Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Gruppenanalyse und Gruppentherapie. Does this title make German speakers more or less able to join? In my address to them I mentioned the wounded walls that surrounded us in the beautiful Hall in which we gathered...hurt from thousands of shots in the WWII which can be overheard up to the present time. The name of the Association shows that our German colleagues are struggling with both their professional as well as their national identities. Can they achieve the same degree of clarity in an intra-group struggle or would an inter-group with non-Germans be optimal? I believe an international space is a better container to elaborate these issues than a local national discussion. I invite our German colleagues and us to benefit from an exchange of our professional know-how as well as from what encounters around identity-building and conflict resolution can provide for all sides.

Finally...is it true that the larger the group, the louder the symptom that's mumbling to be overheard? Besides those we treat in small group settings, some of the symptoms seem to be shouting now, at least for a while. Probably in Cairo's Tahrir Square, in Syria, Tunis, Madrid, Tel Aviv and New York, few can be deaf enough not to hear the loud voice of the people's suffering and the cry for more social justice. The small and large group processes around us are intriguing and our Group Analytic thinking seems able to offer much understanding for democratic and social movements. It may enable us to apply more of this in our lives and everyday practice, in order to participate and help in these difficult times.

Robi Friedman

Be a Contexts Writer!

Contexts welcomes contributions from members on a variety of topics:

- Have you run or attended a group-analytic workshop?
- Are you involved in a group-analytic project that others might want to learn about?
- Would you like to share your ideas or professional concerns with a wide range of colleagues?

If so, send us an article for publication by post, e-mail, or fax. Articles submitted for publication should be between 500 and 2,500 words long, or between one and five pages.

Writing for Contexts is an ideal opportunity to begin your professional writing career with something that is informal, even witty or funny, a short piece that is a report of an event, a report about practice, a review of a book or film, or stray thoughts that you have managed to capture on paper. Give it a go!

The deadline for each issue of Contexts is about three months before the publication of a specific issue. The deadline for publication in the June issue, for example, will therefore be early March.

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Understanding the Experience of Working in Contemporary Organisations

This article is a response to Terry Birchmore's papers 'The Context of Public Service "Reforms" in Westernised Democracies: Part 1' and 'The Context of Public Service "Reforms" in Westernised Democracies: Part 2. Images of Organisation: Compliance or Collaboration'. This response comes from a group of us who have all worked offered organisational consultancy within public sector organisations. We meet monthly in Liverpool to discuss a paper and to reflect on our consultative work. The picture painted in both of these articles was bleak and depressing. However, this tone struck a chord with the group and stimulated an interesting, if gloomy discussion.

Terry's first article described the way that professional practice has been influenced by Fordist, Taylorist and neo-liberal ideas, leading to the work of clinical staff needing to meet performance targets and predefined clinical procedures that become increasingly pre-determined by the theology of evidence based practice and key performance indicators. Within mental health services, where research suggests that the effectiveness of the therapy is largely linked with the quality of the therapeutic relationship, this has the potential both to undermine the role of professional judgement and the professional's relationship with their service users.

The group liked the way the second paper linked some of the organisational issues stirred up by the current climate to attachment theory and concurred that their experience of being with Health and Social Care Staff was that many are currently highly anxious and feeling uncontained. Birchmore wrote that

There is no secure base and the organisation does not function as a base of safety from which the workforce can make creative explorations (Bowlby, 1988). We are then homeless, stateless, unsettled without a sense of assured belonging. (Birchmore 2011 p. 4)

He suggests that this can lead employees to

... reject any nurturance or feeding from an unreliable, depriving and demanding parental organisation. Another solution may be to conform in an aggressively passive and covertly resistant manner. (Birchmore 2011 p. 6)

Recent criticism in the media about staff in care settings being seen as uncaring, fails to ask why this should be. Our hypothesis would be

that without containment staff are unable to bear the distress implicit in their work and so withdraw emotionally because it is not possible for them to give the quality of care that requires tuning in to the painful feelings associated with the needs of their elderly and often disabled and confused client group. Managers too may themselves feel uncontained and preoccupied with the survival of the business in the face of budget cuts and mounting paper work and turn a blind eye to this (Long 2008).

Terry's articles also helped to make sense of dynamics that some of the group members had experienced in the workplace, where anti-group forces seem to dominate. Stapley (1996, p. 156) suggests that the culture of the organisation is hugely influenced by the level of containment available within the organisation. There is a climate of denial, where successive governments have promoted the myth of creating choice for all in the public sector, diverting attention from the reality of rationing while raising expectations and putting even more pressure on staff to give what in reality is often not fundable.

Where there is sufficient containment, members will be able to co-operate, working together creatively. Where containment is lacking, anti-task phenomena predominate. A comment was made within the discussion group that 21st century organisations can be seen as feral, where each person makes their own way. The position of a lot of anxious people trying to demonstrate their importance within the organisation as a way of trying to secure their survival at a time of cuts, is a part of what the group thought lies behind the phenomena suggested by Bourdieu (1998) and highlighted by Birchmore, that at its core neo-liberalism involves the dominance of individualism and the destruction of collectivism.

The first of Terry's papers draws our attention to the lack of research evidence supporting the new managerialist approach with its blind faith in markets. It is not appropriate to assume that the model of management within Private organisations within industry makes them suitable as providers of Health Care. The proceduralism does not take account of the relational aspects of the work, where people are responded to rather than tasks performed. A recent paper by Ekman et al (2011) contrasting the effectiveness of person-centred care of chronic heart failure patients with the standard care model found that those who received the person-centred care were well enough to leave hospital significantly faster.

In his second paper, Terry movingly describes the change in feelings engendered by the organisation in the learning events he was

delivering. Bramley (1990) suggests that when consultants are invited into an organisation, they are drawn in to take on the functions that are missing in the system. The CPD group felt that when staff were released from their day-to-day work, and were in a room together, it was perhaps a rare opportunity to talk about how they were feeling and also to think about what was happening to them. The way in which work is organised now often means that thinking space itself is under attack. The group felt the trainers were containing something, often painful, for the organisation.

Conclusion

Over all, the group felt that the papers contribute a helpful if depressing perspective on the way in which recent political and managerial ideologies have affected changes to the way in which the modern Health Service is run and the way these changes have affected staff over time.

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Margaret Smith, Mike Hogan, Sheila Ramsey, Clare Flinn, Sandy Bryson

**Arrival of a Sibling:
Report on the foundation assembly
of the “German Society of Group Analysis
and Group Psychotherapy”**

The 15th October 2011 was a remarkable date in the history of group analysis in Germany. About 150 group analysts came together in Berlin, founding a German group analytic society.

Until that day group analysts in Germany were represented in different training institutes and were members in different sections of the German Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Dynamics (DAGG). Historic changes in German legislation led in the end to a situation, where the umbrella “group” was not enough anymore and the different sections of the association drifted increasingly apart. It was time to dismiss these old structures and to seize the chance to build something new. The three sections of the DAGG, where group analysts from former West-and East-Germany had found their homes – Analytic Group Psychotherapy, Clinic and Practice and Intended Dynamic Group Psychotherapy – took the initiative and decided to try to find a way of associating together.

This process took nearly two years and included intense discussions. First the members of three sections had to agree on the project, then a commission was installed to prepare a constitution. A first draft was discussed with the membership on the occasion of two so called “sounding boards”, critics, comments and additional ideas were included and a final version developed to be presented and voted on in Berlin.

After this long process eventually “the great day” arrived. The Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities offered a worthy environment. For me it was very touching that this historic building at Gendarmenmarkt, that nowadays hosts a very modern conference centre, still shows the wounds of the war, the bullet holes are still to be seen at the walls of the columns that structure the big hall. So history was integrated in a very “natural” way into this project aiming at the future.

The hall filled gradually and to begin a short film was shown about some people making music together. Everybody wanted to play his or her own piece, and in time they attuned to each other – and everybody still playing the own piece together they developed something new

– the whole being more than the sum of the parts. This way of starting created a very good atmosphere.

To begin the conference, the three chairs of the three sections of DAGG that carried the process of meeting together welcomed the participants and added from their perspectives some remarks about the history of this day. It became clear, that this new society was welcomed wholeheartedly and at the same time there were sad feelings about the place that had to be left.

The welcomes were followed by greetings from different societies and institutions. Many good wishes were put in the cradle of the baby. Also some hopes and expectations were politely expressed – mirroring the discussions we had had during the preparation phase about the significance of psychoanalysis in relation to other theoretical sources, about the relevance of individual psychoanalysis in group analytic training or about the role group analysis could play in the mental health system and the society at large. Here in “context” is the place to specially mention the greeting of Robi Friedman as president of GAS International, who expressed his hopes for a close cooperation of both societies and moreover invited German group analysts to also become members of GAS International.

The preliminary highlight of the day were the three papers that tried from different angles to widen our perspectives and to bring to our attention, what group analysis is, could be and in which contexts the new society has to prove itself.

First, Dietlind Köhncke emphasized and illustrated the special potential of group analysis in non-clinical fields. In the second paper Kurt Höhfeld gave a résumé of the institutional history of group analysis and group psychotherapy in Germany and argued vividly the necessity of the new society. Finally, Karsten Münch underlined the importance of group analytic competence in the mental health field – and how vitally important it is for group analysts to understand the genuine logic of the mental health system – a logic that differs remarkably from the logic of a therapeutic process.

Between the different greeting and papers, the Japanese pianist Misa Shimomura commented on the emotional tones she had grasped by improvising on the piano – that added a wonderful further dimension and brought into the figure some of the unconscious material floating in the room. I only can recommend her and this way to organize a conference.

Meanwhile it was lunchtime – and after a quick snack and some coffee the actual founding process took place. The whole constitution

was read – each paragraph by a different person – changes of each paragraph were discussed and voted on immediately. In the end there were only minor changes and the whole constitution was accepted with no “no” vote and only one abstention. The “German Society of Group Analysis and Group Psychotherapy” was born – standing ovations!

There was a need to relax for a moment. During the following break, champagne was offered and the founding members signed the founding document.

To give you an idea, I quote from the constitution § 2 Aims and tasks (my translation):

1. Aim of the society is to promote group analytic theory and group analytic practice. It fosters group analysis in the different fields of application as psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, social work, mental health and educational system, counselling, supervision, organizational development, research, teaching as well as culture and politics.
2. The society supports group analytic research and the further development of the theoretical and praxeologic foundations of group analysis considering psychoanalysis, social psychology and other relevant theories as well as research results from other scientific areas.
3. The society represents the scientific interests of its members.
4. The society represents analytic and psychodynamic group psychotherapy and promotes their development to improve the treatment of patients.
5. The society promotes the cooperation of group analysts in German-speaking countries and cooperates with colleagues and their societies inside and outside the country.
6. The society develops and evaluates group analytic training standards as well as criteria for training analysts orientating itself to European and international standards
7. The society organizes symposia, congresses and training activities. It supports scientific publications.

To fulfil these tasks it needs hands and hearts and heads to do it. The whole membership is asked to make this society a living body. Yet some people have to take responsibility. So after the hard work of discussing and deciding the constitution, the elections for the management committee and the different commissions had to be held. And because you hopefully will meet some of these people on different occasions, I want to introduce the committee to you.

The President is *Pieter Hutz*

In his first profession he was a seaman. Later he studied sociology, qualified as a couples and family therapist and trained as group analyst in Heidelberg. Nowadays the focus of his work besides psychotherapy lies in supervision, coaching, training and teaching, and working in private practice in Berlin

Pieter is assisted by a board of 4 persons:

Marita Barthel-Rösing

Marita works in private practice in Bremen as a psychoanalyst with children and as a group analyst. Her group analytic focus is in supervising and developing organizations. She trained at the group analytic seminar in Zurich, where for years she was member of the board.

Stephan Heyne, Deputy

Stephan is a medical doctor, a specialist in internal medicine as well as in psychotherapeutic medicine, working in different hospitals for more than 20 years, in the end holding the position of a chief physician of a psychosomatic department. He was trained in the former GDR and now works in private practice in Berlin.

Joost Kókai, Deputy

Joost studied medicine and worked for years in different hospitals as psychiatrist and psychotherapist, and eventually as senior physician, before he settled in a private practice near Hamburg. He did his group training in Göttingen and was a member of the working party for the new constitution.

Ulrich Schultz-Venrath

Ulrich studied medicine and holds a doctorate in neurology and psychotherapeutic medicine. He is a psychoanalyst and training group analyst, chief physician of a psychiatric hospital in Bergisch Gladbach and a professor teaching psychosomatics and psychotherapy at the University Witten-Herdecke.

After the introduction of the candidates and the voting procedure, the well known rituals followed: the votes had to be counted, the election of all the candidates was announced – they accepted and thanked for the confidence that was given to them, promising to do their best.

The rest went very quickly.

The first affiliated members were admitted, the key points of the training guidelines were accepted as well as the membership fee

regulations. Finally the logo of the new society was presented...and then it was over.

Tired but happy the participants had no further “job” to do than to attend the festive dinner, socialize, listen to the music and dance.

So this important day came to an end. It was not so much the day of discussions, but more the day of symbols and celebrations. Now the work has to be done and – as the English say: the proof of the pudding is the eating. The future will tell us if this new society can develop an interesting organizational life and find its place in the mental health and other relevant fields, and if – most importantly – it can attract new young members. Let’s hope that all the good wishes that accompanied the founding assembly help to reach these aims.

Regine Scholz

Papers From the London GASi Symposium 2011

Conference Report from the London Symposium

Recovering from a conference and getting back to daily routine after being away, takes some time. Although I came back from the Group Analytic conference in London very energized, it took me some time to write a report for Contexts. I do hope that other colleagues who have been to the conference join me and share their experience here, so that our friends who could not be with us might have some of the taste...

Firstly, you can all listen to the wonderful plenary lectures given every day at the conference, as the organisers put them all on the Internet. Wonderful idea which I suggest that the AGPA adopts. Go to http://groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/?page_id=1102

Some of the lectures were quite touching (listen to Albie Sachs, an amputee and formerly Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, second video on the website, and you will never forget him). All of them are fascinating. Robi Friedman summarized his interesting theories of relational disorders and of dream telling as a request for containment (fourth video). Gwen Adshead talking about “Killing time” in a high security ward for psychotic patients who killed members of their families (third video). Elizabeth Rohr describing the amazing story of supervising group facilitators in traumatized Guatemala (fifth video).

You can also watch the gathering of the Large Group. It’s both funny and fascinating to watch how you seat 500 people every day for a dialogue...The large group at the GAS conference is quite an experience, scheduled every day at the end of the day, including all the conference participants. Just think about the traumatic events in the world in the months before this conference: the earthquake in Japan, the revolution in Egypt, Gaddafi’s fall in Libya, the murderous attack in Norway, riots in London. I expected all these to be processed in the Large Group and was somehow disappointed that, although some of them were mentioned, there was no deep working through of these issues. Instead, in the last day, following demonstra-

tions against Israel during a concert of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra in London at the BBC Proms (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14756736> and <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2011/sep/02/israel-philharmonic-proms-protest-video>), which some Israeli group analysts attended, the Israeli - Palestinian conflict was again in the centre and I thought to myself: How wonderful for the world that they can focus on this issue and not touch other troubles of the world...

The first volume of the book that Earl Hopper and I co-edit (*Social Unconscious in Persons, Groups and Societies: Volume 1: Mainly Theory*) was published just before the conference and sold very well at the conference. You can go to http://www.google.com/url?sa=D&q=http://www.karnacbooks.com/Product.asp%3FPID%3D28584%26MATCH%3D1&usg=AFQjCNGDRoj3C6_JB5ALyfUnToksyHR6cQ to see the content. We organized a panel on the subject of the Social Unconscious that was very well attended and produced an intriguing discussion.

I also led a small group which took place every day (another important idea that creates a safe environment to process the impressions from the conference) and included people from Taiwan, Egypt, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Australia, Germany and the UK.

Twenty people participated in the group psychotherapy email list (hosted by Haim – editors comment) dinner that was organized by Pam Kleinhof (thanks again, Pam) in a restaurant facing the Thames river. The food was good and the atmosphere warm, but the conversation was limited because we sat in two long tables in a noisy restaurant.

Part of the attraction of such a conference is the informal meetings and acquaintances created during the breaks. I enjoyed meeting my friends from Israel (more than 30 colleagues!) and from other parts of the world, that I usually do not see at the AGPA in the USA.

I advise you all to prepare yourself for the next GAS conference in Portugal in three years time. Those who are used to the AGPA - come and see a different way of doing groups...

Anyone else want to share your impressions?

Dr Haim Weinberg
Clinical Psychologist, Group Psychotherapist
Sacramento, California

Framework: Report from the GAS International Symposium 2011

(Crossing different levels of reality: the overall contemporary situation, some themes emerged in the Symposium and in my work).

The title of the last Symposium of the Group Analytic Society “Cultures, conflicts and creativity ...” naturally touched my interests in social and political issues and my clinical work with adolescents and young adults.

It was, in fact, powerfully stimulating to me. So, the paper I submitted to the congress discusses a few sessions of a therapy group and a short vignette that took place during the winter 2010/2011, which are given an interpretation echoing the peculiar background of those days, when the whole of Italy seemed to be looking through the keyhole into the private life of some politicians and other people in the spotlight. Our public opinion then appeared to be split between those filled with indignation and (apparently) ready to get rid of both the government and parliament by any means and those who were blindly standing for the parliamentary majority.

A discouraging general atmosphere of uselessness was apparent everywhere at that time, and during therapy sessions as well, of course, and it could have offered an appealing return to my patients; though, in the clinical material I am going to present, the only concern I had in the consultant's room was to try and understand the emotional position expressed by the group and their psychic functioning regardless of the external circumstances.

Almost a year has passed since then, and during this time I wrote my presentation and we finally met at Goldsmith's College at the end of August, in an exceptionally warm and delightfully sunny end-of-summer London.

In the meantime, the economic crisis continues to strike severely the entire West (from South to North, from East to West) generating increasing anxiety, above all among the younger generations who now find themselves faced with the no longer concealable evidence that everybody's future had been compromised, stolen, damaged by the myopic choices of the current establishment.

The Greek workers, the Spanish indignados, the Israeli youngsters, the London adolescents have been the first uprisings of a global

movement on a scenario flooded by media depictions of a world waiting for the catastrophe to come, consequent on the collapse of the markets and economic destruction. Distressing pictures of a society and its institutions unable to stop, contain or direct the results of human actions are being disseminated where the stock exchange now seems to have an autonomous life and impends over humanity like a natural threat.

I suppose that an emotional resonance of these events might have unconsciously influenced our gathering in the small and, above all, in the large groups during the Symposium, where we somehow might have reverberated some kind of fear for our future and for the future of group analysis and our profession.

As I shared in the small group, I was astonished that the title “Cultures, conflicts and creativity ...” had not inspired other submissions about the generational conflicts or the condition of the younger generations. I was also surprised when a woman colleague in the large group mentioned the absence of young people and students among us, which she attributed to the general lack of money, and no one picked her suggestion up. Was there anything we were disavowing?

Janine Pujet and L. Wender created the definition “Mundos Superpuestos” (overlapping worlds) to point to the situation in which both therapists and patients share the same preoccupations and uncertainties related to the social context, when they are exposed to the same fears and difficulties in watching and analysing their contemporary events. In case of social troubles or traumatic events, we must therefore be advised and maintain a distinction between personal and shared elements, in order not to make the socio-cultural and the analytic field coincident (that happens when the psychotherapist participates and shares the patient’s sufferings and takes his words literally, thus giving his/her analytic function up) and not to deny the subjective perception of the external reality thus missing the necessary inquiry about the patient’s environment.

The real world significantly pierces our meetings and our work, openly or on the sly, and I often – avoiding the use of huge concepts as social unconscious – question myself about how to use it. That is why, I’d like to propose to your attention the considerations I made about some of my young patients and the psychic work involved in the formulation of a personal project for their future.

Reinventing the Past to Dream the Future

*‘The future is handed down as well as the past’
(2000, Il futuro in eredità [The Future Bequeathed]
Quad. di Psicot. Infant.)*

*‘The group precedes the subject of the group’
(1993, The Group and the Subject of the Group)
Renè Kaïs*

Prologue:

Our psychic life develops through its inscription into our primal ties and into our social ties. If one of these two levels deteriorate, the repercussions on individual growth may be severe. As the child’s psychic functioning is altered by the influence of ambiguous, confused parents, proposing false messages, the adult Ego can be disturbed and interfered by social information systematically false or tendentious, whose damage varies according to the mortifying quality of the message and to how it echoes with primitive psychic functioning.

To introduce my paper, let me first give you a picture of a situation I regard as emblematic of the cultural situation typically contributing to the structuring of our psyches, that maybe has some Italian peculiarities, thus influencing relationships and personal choices.

One day, while discussing with the parents of a bright fifteen-year-old boy academically late due to his hyperactivity, which has been causing him several physical ailments and the exclusion from organized groups, I suggested the need of psychotherapy for their son, who needed an experience of a safe and secure identifiable containment. But they were totally bemused, imagining their offspring sufficiently autonomous to fend for himself and picturing his professional future as a lawyer. Failing that, a politician or, ultimately, as a contestant in a TV reality show.

At that time, the boy was having many problems: at school due to his tendency to be physically destructive, and his parents appeared to be split between their sincere concern about his behaviour and their fantasies about the boy. They could in fact understand that being a lawyer requires studying, memorizing, concentration, and other qualities that the boy actually lacks; and also realized that he is too clever to put up with people competing to win a TV reality show. But they

could not imagine that even to be a politician requires certain qualities: at the very least cynical submission and the foresight to be part of a system for conveniences sake. In their view, politicians do not need any personal quality or knowledge nor do they need to follow any rule, since they make the rules they please.

Besides being amusing and sad at the very same time, this example seems significant to me because it really testifies the absence of any ethical dimension and any true faith in the boy's capabilities.

These parents, as many others, appear to be damaged by a social environment in which the ethical dimension collapses into a narcissistic dimension, where there is no idea of the common good and of the value of creative work, but only individual success counts.

We all know that such a lack of values in adults with whom adolescents have their significant relationships is the equivalent of a lack of care in raising children: it is a threat to their future.

Such a scene also tells us how difficult it is for certain adults to accept the replacement of the pleasure principle with that of reality, and show their incapacity to wait for the deferred gratification of a real pleasure "though postponed and diminished". Of course, that makes it even more difficult for their children, who sometimes happen to become our patients, since: when everything is possible, nothing can be done and, if everything is the same, nothing really counts.

And this is the matrix of the shared narcissistic depression and the absence of satisfaction, so common in our society.

Scene one:

I will now follow a chain of arguments in the free associations developed in a few sessions of a weekly therapeutic group comprised of six young men and women aged 19 to 22.

This group was started 6/7 years ago (none of the actual participants were there from its beginning) and its members, who entered the group in different times, are now experiencing the difficult passage to adulthood.

I can now refer to the sessions I am going to relate in this paper as the starting point of a development that is still going on and has led all the patients to reconsider and to give a new sense – in an *après-coup* movement (*nachtraeglich* - in retrospect) – to some fundamental, even traumatic, episodes of their past. Traumas related to their sexual fantasies or experiences, or to the fall of faith, whose effects had produced psychic constraints in different areas.

At a certain moment, during the last winter, Alvise informs us that he wants to leave university. Despite liking the subjects, the people and the general environment he came to the conclusion that his level of academic investment would not really justify his presence at university.

This decision triggers guarded questions by the rest of the group who want to understand the real motives of this renouncement. After some vague explanations of his choice, characterized by a resigned lack of hope, no trace of personal ambition and no idea of which career he could choose, another member concludes that Alvise's only possible chance for the future could be to become a politician. All the others smile and approve.

Alvise is then the spokesperson of hopelessness: in himself, the environment and the therapy. Hopelessness shared by everyone concerned: expressed by Alvise while the other members try to oppose.

The following week, after some boring exchanges in a depressed atmosphere, Ester updates us on the court hearing in which the defence lawyer of the 60 year old defendant – an Olympic trainer of young female sporting groups, accused of sexually molesting underage girls – misrepresented the character of the injured parties. She says she had therefore realized that, far from factually researching the true events, the court case is in fact a competition based on vilifying the opposing party.

The group members agree that none of them is suited to the legal profession, as it would conflict with their ethical principles. The mood in the room is characterized by a sense of juvenile disgust for the behaviour of some adults, which the patients would gladly try to avoid in their future life.

Thus they find their cohesion, in a fight-flight assumption: young against adults. And I wonder where do they place me: in the group with the ethical idealists or among the spoiled professionals?

Then Aldo asks Alvise, the ex-university student, if he has made up his mind about his future. Alvise's answer is negative and resigned, the atmosphere heavy and even more depressed.

While following the group interactions, what comes to my mind are the media headlines of these days, all about the degradation of some politicians, their scandals, corruption, about young girls suspected of having exchanged sexual favours for prominent highly paid institutional positions and other frustrating news. And back to the day when one of them answered a young unemployed girl that his best advice for her future was to find a millionaire to married to. These

thoughts move me to the specific difficulties of becoming an adult today when, at a concrete social level, youth unemployment is an ever more serious problem and the older generation sometimes seems to be the enemy who squats in all the available spaces, and where, at the intra-psychic level, the structuring guarantors are failing. The immutable principles (law, paternal function, differences in roles, etc.) and institutions no longer have a regulating effect on interpersonal and intergenerational exchanges and relationships among and within groups are critical and uncertain.

Until last winter, at the imagery level, one of the main symbolic figures of our political system, idealized by many – who had been frequently named by the patients, maybe only to make fun of him or as a negative example – recalled a parody of the primitive father of the horde: the immortal, unassailable father who requires total submission of his sons and the exclusive ownership of all the females. A figure of perversion and of the corrupted Superego: shameless, guiltless, with no sense of limits. And at the time when these sessions took place, we were daily hearing an insistent request from a part of society asking our President of the Republic to act as the Oedipal father and make the rules respected in order to stop the perverse and omnipotent primal father.

And I happen to think that the stories related by the media, either true or false, accidentally seem to be so relevant and are nothing but an attack against authority, another denigration of institutions by their same representatives and editors, the last de-legitimizing of norms and principles. These thoughts are certainly related to Alvisè's history, marked from its beginning by the absence of a loving father able to perform his parental role, who later left his wife and children to elope with a girl only a few years older than his adolescent son but younger than his elder daughter. They are also connected to the trainer's actions who had already been signified, in previous sessions, as the unbearable price paid to be successful at any cost: another negative parental model from which they'd better like to take a distance from.

Were they related to me, too? And, if so, was it transference or fact?

In the meantime, Anna tells us of a dream in which she dreamt of losing a precious ring in the bathroom, but a strange one with a big colourful stone, like those in Walt Disney's comics.

No comments are made on that.

After a long silence, Anna again recalls an incident which took place early that afternoon while she was teaching Italian to three

African adolescents who had settled in Italy some months earlier and were immediately enrolled into the school system. Anna had already talked to us about her students and told how impressed she was by their educational eagerness and speed of learning. That day, in particular, they wanted to learn the Italian conditional and hypothetical verb form that, in the boys' examples, was represented through the idea that their future will certainly be brilliant if they study and work hard.

This last scene suddenly makes us understand the reason for the sad mood we had shared during the session. As a matter of fact, when one cannot maintain a lively hope and confidence in oneself and a better future – due to one's personal history and fantasy (as it is with Alvisè), but also to the real economic and social situation (as it is for young people today) – it's impossible to invest in one's action and personal capabilities. Actually, we can engage in our expectations only when we do not experience latency as passivity and impotence and we have a sense that our accomplishments will be successful. This aptitude requires that in our early experiences our needs haven't been too frustrated nor anticipated: that an adult has taken good care of us and showed us a possible way. But this need is not confined to the first years of our life, since the following experiences can confirm or weaken this nucleus and a good leading function (both external and internal) is necessary to accomplish each step of the construction of our personal identity.

If Alvisè's experience had a persecutory effect, Anna's example represents a positive incident, though a perverse reversal of values where the boys embody adult features and represent the only possible hope.

So I question myself about the group's communications. What are they really saying? That they'd better do it alone? That they need someone to teach them the grammar and the syntax of the language which enables to do better? Or that a primitive neglected part of them is longing to be transferred from a (psychic) place to another?

My role in the group, as the representative of the adult who can dream feasible dreams and can wait for their accomplishment, without falling into depression or into a manic excitement, has often sustained the tension towards a further, accessible and positive progress. The therapist, with his/her faith in the method, in his/her theories and the rules of setting, and also in the developmental possibilities of the group and every single member, is, actually, the witness of the positive evolution resulting from a serious work accomplished during a

length of time. Claudio Neri notably calls the F factor, the necessary attitude to sustain the wait for something that isn't shaped yet.

The possibility of losing those precious jewels (the colourful ring of the dream that represents one's personal resources and the dreams of childhood) is, in fact, high. The young immigrants, on the contrary, represent the other culture, a way of living which does not spare the future and can build projects, since everybody's destiny is also considered as the result of one's initiative and engagement.

My only interventions to the group aimed to show them the solutions they pre-consciously suggested, and I simply put in evidence the different positions towards the future evoked: a resigned and hopeless pose opposed to a constructive and helpful attitude; this last might have "emigrated abroad" but is not lost: it's still available to them and can be explored, valorised and integrated.

Scene two: a Basic Assumption Pairing group

The following week, Anna tells us about her elderly grandfather after his surgery and of the difficulties that await the family, due to the indifferent relationship between her father and her aunt, the two offspring of the ill old man. Which makes the whole issue rather difficult to manage.

Anna explains that in the course of her therapy, she has realized the true nature of this brother and sister relationship, characterized by the silent rage of the aunt, who had always been considered by her parents (Anna's grand-parents) as the brother's underling.

Then Ester recounts a recent episode: while at the local railway station, she saw a 6-year-old unkempt child trying to attract the attention of the adults who persistently ignored him. The girl was the only person to take any notice of the child and, having taken him to the first-aid post, she discovered that he was the son of a drug-addicted mother who had tragically died earlier that day.

The group feels disturbed by this incident, and condemns the adults' unbelievable behaviour, declaring that none of them could ever think about being so cruelly indifferent. But then someone recalls Annah Arendt's 'The Banality of Evil' – even though they are not so sure about the content of that book and confuse it with another text.

And here again, the patient's evoke the presence of an unconscious split part – their dehumanized aspects – in them and everybody.

Aldo then illustrates this awareness by commenting “When you read the news in the papers, you always think it’s somewhere else. But this is our local railway station! Don’t you realize it? It’s us!”.

In the here and now of the session, there is an excluded child, of course: Francesca, the last entry to the group, sitting right in the middle between Anna and Ester, who have been talking all this time and only acknowledging each other.

The indifference of the adults to their needs – that they are accounting and criticizing – is also, at least in part, the experience of today’s youth who not only do not feel protected but even feel seduced and abused when the establishment lets them think that everything is possible and easy to reach, as in the case of the female athletes double crossed by the dirty old trainer.

At a transference level, am I myself letting them feel abandoned or excluded? I wonder if I’m missing something, if I maybe haven’t given them the necessary interpretations to let them play alone in my presence – which I usually do when the exchanges among them are fluid and smooth.

But my interpretation about Francesca’s position in the group – as the excluded child and recent orphan of the individual therapy – provokes a change in the group’s interactions towards the group.

The first comment in this direction is Aldo’s, who suddenly exclaims: “There is someone I do hate lately: it’s one of my colleagues. She has never really bothered me, but she is such a crass girl-in-the-street that I cannot stand her”. Aldo is a smart boy with a long-enough therapeutic experience to realize, with a little help from the group, that this girl represents all his rejected and projected characteristics, mainly related to his propensity for mental and physical inactivity.

His recognition is the first movement towards a number of considerations from them all about one’s personal responsibilities in the settlement of one’s present and future life.

I am not going to account here and analyse all the following interventions since I consider the previous clinical passages satisfactorily illustrative to sustain my commentary.

Suffice to say that the group went on discussing their families and relationships and could finally differentiate – even though that is never done once and for all – the “real” parental figures and others from the fantastical ones, and to re-integrate the grandiose and/or destructive Self, previously split and projected onto the closest similar fellow.

The last partially reported session, was a pairing group in Bion's language. As the theory tells us, Basic Assumption Pairing is the group mental state unconsciously established and maintained by the feeling of hope, dominated by the fantasy that a pair will produce a saviour (the Messiah), or an idea that must never be realized, who would lead the group out of its difficulties and desperation, and will guarantee an emotional security. It is characterized by the rising of unconscious sexual fantasies, hiding the possibility that pairing (and the consequent reproduction) will preserve the group. This outcome is obtained with the fantastical exclusion of the therapist, upheld by the illusory representation that the members don't need him/her, thus negating dependence. The BA pairing is a way of coping with the anxieties of exclusion (primal scene), maintained by splitting off, and denying impulses and experiences, above all those related to rivalry, competition and sexual jealousy.

But, when interpreted and revealed, this configuration allows for the possibility of mobilizing productive and creative forces in the service of the work group: hope can consciously develop and the pair is recognized 'as a source of change and renewal and continuity' towards a "realistic future orientation". If we take into consideration Gould's attempts to articulate "binocular linkages and correspondences" between Bion's theory on groups and the Kleinian developmental position, we can see that the Basic Assumption P is connected to early Oedipal dynamics. That is the infant's evolution, integral to the depressive position, towards the acknowledgment of the mother as a whole object and the consequent recognition of the others, firstly the father (as the non-mother). Notably, the father is the symbolic representative of law, rules and order; the (fantastical before than real) figure that allows individual evolution from the chaotic primal relationship. When the Oedipal dynamics develop felicitously, the subject achieves his capacity for love, mutuality and robust sexuality, which are the major requisites for a mature and reproductive desire and generativity, in any field of life.

In the group sessions previously described, we can in fact find all the Oedipal elements: mother, father, child, exclusion, sexual differences, generational differences which are the fundamental elements that need to be elaborated in order to reach an individual identity that can be recognized by oneself, and consequently, by familiar and social environments. The real catastrophic change leading my patients to conquer the necessary consciousness that building realistic and

accessible projects for the future, and choosing which kind of adults they can and want be, therefore hinges on the recognition of one's personal origins and position within the parental couple, on the capacity to enlighten their own and their family's story. That is: the achievement of the Oedipal position and the knowledge of who they are.

This is the individual basis on which personal and social new solutions can be searched for and found.

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Papers From the London GASi Symposium 2011

The Egyptian Revolution of 2011 as a Group Process Mohamed Taha

Abstract

The 2011 Egyptian revolution (Revolution of 25 January) took place following a popular uprising that began on 25 January 2011. Millions of protesters from a variety of socio-economic and religious backgrounds demanded the overthrow of the regime of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. On 11 February, following weeks of determined popular protest and pressure, Mubarak resigned from office.

As an Egyptian person who works in the field of group therapy, the author thought that the best scope to view and analyse the Egyptian revolution is the scope of groups.

The article will examine the idea of the revolution and how it came to light, and what the motivation(s) for it were. Then it will analyse the revolutionary processes and dynamics from different perspectives; starting from Gustave Le Bon to Foulkes and Bion. This will be followed by exploring some factors behind the success of the revolution, and a trial to correlate some of the revolutionary phenomena with recent data from neurobiological knowledge. Lastly, it will look at some unique aspects of this revolution.

Introduction

The Egyptian Revolution of 2011 is one of the largest and most comprehensive peaceful revolutions in history. Twenty million people took to the streets in a period of 18 days to oust a 30 year autocratic president and a 60 year entrenched regime. The Egypt revolution was non-ideological, non-partisan, and non-sectarian, and as thus represents a case study in the psychology, process, and dynamics of groups.

It is difficult to comprehend the whole picture of such a revolution, how did it start? Why did silent people decide to speak loudly at this specific time? How could this large a number of people gather? As someone who works in the field of group therapy, I thought that the

best scope to view and analyse the Egyptian revolution is the scope of groups.

To me, any group starts with an idea (let's make a new group) supported by a motivation (both from therapist and patients). Recruitment of group members follows, and then the group process begins. Ongoing group dynamics can then be seen from different perspectives, and the role of therapeutic/success factors is in action all the way through. Additionally, recent neurobiological knowledge has added new dimensions to our understanding of groups.

That is exactly how this article will go. First, it will look at the idea of the revolution and how it came to light, and the motivation(s) for it. Then it will analyse the revolutionary processes and dynamics from different perspectives; starting from Gustave Le Bon to Foulkes and Bion. This will be followed by exploring some factors behind the success of the revolution, and a trial to correlate some of the revolutionary phenomena with recent data from neurobiological knowledge. Lastly, we will look at some unique aspects of this revolution.

It is important to note that this article only refers to the period between 25th January and 11th February 2011 (the 18 days of the core revolution).

I – Idea of the revolution

It may be surprising to realize that the Egyptian revolution of 2011 was not planned to be a revolution in the sense it went on to be. During the few weeks prior to 25th January, some invitations on Facebook were talking about a big protest on the National Police Day. The major demands of the supposed protest were a series of reforms concerning justice, political freedom, economic status, employment plans, etc. One of the wall-writings on Facebook on 24th January was "We need termination of the emergency law, putting in upper and lower salary limits, the resignation of the minister of internal affairs, and a new law for presidential elections". Another wall-writing said: "We need dignity, freedom and bread."

However, the idea of a revolution was developed as a consequence of the government's aggressive reaction to the protest in its early phases. The protesters were brutally attacked by the police with tear gas, rubber and even live bullets. The police used indiscriminate force to try to disperse the crowds, whatever it took (thousands killed and injured), but the masses – who mostly have very little to lose, put up an enormous fight, that rapidly stirred up into a revolution.

II – Motivation(s)

One of the big questions of the Egyptian 2011 revolution is: what has motivated Egyptian people to rise up in this specific point in time?

Egyptian people are known to be extremely tolerant. In the past few decades, they could tolerate the worst living conditions ever, without even thinking of making a revolution.

As an Egyptian person, I can tell you that the immediate motivation for the revolution was not poverty, unemployment or usual police brutality, although these were chronic motivating factors which at their utmost have led to some small protests in the past few years.

In my view, the immediate motivation for the revolution was the severe injury to Egyptian people's dignity in the early days of the protest (police aggressive reaction) which has deeply reactivated all the latent wounds in the Egyptian body to reach its threshold. A sub-conscious message was being conducted from people to police: "We have been patient all these years, but if you are going to play like this, then it will be your end".

The role of the Tunisian revolution few weeks earlier could not be denied. It acted like a trigger which has fuelled the hope: "Yes we can".

III – Recruitment (and readiness of Egyptian people to recruit)

How could this extremely large number of people gather so spontaneously and strikingly? Another logical question looking for a logical answer!

In the past few years, Egyptian people have trained themselves to collect, gather and recruit if they find a good-enough motivating factor. The following are some instances of such factors which could make Egyptian people ready to recruit in the past few years, and to reach a maximum (of readiness and recruitment) by the time of the revolution:

- **Large social campaigns organized by popular figures:** These could gather millions of Egyptians and made them ready to be recruited and motivated towards the same goal. One of those figures was Amr Khaled (a modern Islamic activist and television preacher who has recently been chosen as number 13 of the world's most influential people by Time Magazine (2007) and sixth most influential intellectual in the world by Prospect magazine (2008)). Amr has held numerous campaigns in the fields of personal development, addiction

management, accepting others, etc. He had a very wide public base that could be motivated in times of activism.

- **Big national events:** Some recent national events have very much shared in stirring people's readiness for gathering in large numbers around similar goals. Celebrating Egypt's winning of the African Football League (2010) for the third consecutive time was such a major event. On this day, Egyptian people roamed streets in all cities in a wonderful, amazing and yet striking view. People who have never shared in any public event (like myself) found themselves motivated to go out and run like crazy with much happiness and with the highest level of self esteem! In this event, Egyptian flags, posters and face-drawings appeared as a public phenomenon. Flags were being sold in huge numbers for the first time in decades.
- **Social networks:** The growing role of social networks especially Facebook and twitter in Egypt and the world cannot be denied. Several online groups and communities could recruit thousands and millions of Egyptians in the past few years. The largest and most motivating group-in regard to the revolution-was called "We are all Khaled Saeed" after the name of an Egyptian young man who was recently tortured to death by the police. This group had more than one million and a half members just before the revolution.
- **Anti-government movements:** During the last few years, many anti-government movements were formed and could recruit thousands of Egyptian people around their goals. "Enough", "6 April Youth Movement" and "The National Association for Change" were some of the latest movements (the latter was led by Nobel Prize winner for peace: Dr. Mohamed El-Baradei). These movements have played a major role in collecting and motivating people before and during the revolution.

IV – Stages

It seems to me that the stages of the Egyptian 2011 revolution might be correlated successfully with Bruce Tuckman's (1965) model of group development, as follows:

1. Forming: Tuckman assumed that this stage is characterized by getting on or getting along with others. This is a stage of organization; who does what, when to meet, etc. Individuals gather

information and impressions about each other and about the scope of their task and how to approach it. In Egypt, this stage started some weeks before the revolution, where many anti-government movements announced their intention for a big protest on the police national day. They specified the date, the places of gathering, the directions of marching and the list of reforms they ask for (justice, political freedom, economic reforms, employment plans....etc). The government has made every effort to abort this stage (cutting off mobile phones and internet, police aggressive treatment...etc). This stage ended by occupying Tahrir (liberation) square by the protesters on the night of 25th January.

2. Storming: One major feature of this stage, according to Tuckman (1965), is that the group decides what leadership model it will accept. The protesters were formed of many movements, groups, syndicates, professions and social levels. The leadership model that evolved from their subconscious and conscious interactions was to be leaderless, with the minimal help of some voluntary conductors. Protesters were only led by their intuition. In fact, this was a point of power rather than weakness. If there was a specific leader, he might be killed, kidnapped or even jeopardized by the government in the early stages of the revolution, a matter that could abort it so easily. In this stage, the government's reaction was violent. Hence all the storming potential of the protesters was directed outwards (towards government and police) rather than inwards (to compete and develop a leader). This stage ended by marshal intervention after the police had collapsed (the police forces decided to withdraw and evacuate all police stations and prisons around the country in order to spread fear and terror between people, which it was hoped would oblige protesters to stop and get back to protect their families and homes from criminals who were freed and ordered to threaten and even kill people randomly). The army forces when they ruled the streets were very much welcome and completely natural. They promised not to direct a single bullet to any Egyptian person whatever happened.
3. Norming. This is a stage of lying down of the group norms, according to Tuckman (1965). In this stage, Tahrir square turned to be a special community of its own, which had its own norms, rules and values. During the eighteen days of the

revolution, Tahrir community had all essential living requirements. People could eat, drink, pray, sleep, joke, create, read, medicate, entertain, mourn, and even have their hair cut. They could also love and marry (two weddings were held in the square between two couples of protesters). Tuckman (1965) assumes that in this stage, the group manages to have one goal and come to a mutual plan. The ultimate goal in the Egyptian case was the stepping down of the president and the regime. In this stage, Tuckman (1965) also assumes that some members may have to give up their own ideas in order to make the group function and all members take responsibility and have the ambition to work for the success of the goal. This has exactly happened in the Egyptian case, where all religious, ideological, partisan divisions have given up their own agendas and only worked for the success of the revolution's ultimate goal.

4. Performing: Here, the group has a shared vision and is able to stand on its own feet. Group identity, loyalty and morale are all high in this stage, as Tuckman (1965) suggests. Here, identity was Tahrir, loyalty was Egyptian, and morale was Utopian (see below). In this stage-as Tuckman assumes- all energy of the group was directed towards the task in hand and Members worked on a highly efficient and cooperative basis. The most influential tool in this stage was increased Public Pressure.
5. Adjourning: This is the stage of completion of the task of the group. The ex-president has resigned and the army took the responsibility for protecting the transition to a new civilian regime. The first thing done by the army representative was to salute the thousands killed and injured offering their souls for the welfare of their country. This stage, according to Tuckman (1965), is characterized by termination of roles, disengagement and dissolution of group members after they have achieved their goals. It was surprising that revolutionists had cleaned Tahrir square before disengagement. As Tuckman (1965) has noticed, mourning the loss is sometimes felt by former participants in this stage. What has typically happened is that some protesters have refused to leave Tahrir square and had to be forced to move. Individuals were proud of having achieved much, and glad to have been part of such an enjoyable group. And they have recognized what they had done. They had gathered again on the next Friday for celebration.

V- Dynamics:

A – Mainly unconscious dynamics:

1. From the perspective of Gustave Le Bon's (Psychology of revolution, 1913): It seems that the Egyptian revolution didn't follow most of Le Bon's views about the psychology of revolution! First, in his famous book, Le Bon divided revolutions into two types, either scientific or political. It was clear that the Egyptian revolution was neither scientific nor political (although it had transcended both). The millions of Egyptians that turned out in the streets were not political activists and they didn't demand the replacement of a political party by a specific other. They only demanded justice and free choice. Secondly, Gustave Le Bon has also said in his book: "*Revolution is easy when the leaders are very influential...The people will create a revolution because they are persuaded to do so, but they do not understand very much of the ideas of their leaders*" (p. 35). Surprisingly, the Egyptian revolution had no leader at all. Thirdly, in his book too, Le Bon wrote: "*man in the crowd descends to a very low degree in the scale of civilization*" (p. 58). The opposite was entirely true in the case of the Egyptian revolution. Values of politeness, altruism, etiquette, respect, acceptance, containment, and many others were predominant in the crowd's behaviour at the time of the Egyptian revolution. Fourthly, he wrote also: "*The new laws and institutions will depend on the interests of the triumphant party and of the classes which have assisted it...the soldiers, the radicals, or the conservatives...*" (p. 16). This was not true in the Egyptian revolution which has resulted only in activation of the law; the already present inactive law. Persons of the old regime were subjected to ordinary civil courts (not military ones) and justified according to the current Egyptian law. The role of the army was only to protect the transition of the regime through people's own free choice and the activation of justice according to the present laws.
2. From the perspective of Freud's (Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego, 1922): In the Egyptian society, family roles tend to be highly structured and obligations to parents are respected throughout one's life. *Parents* are afforded a great deal of respect that might reach some grade of holiness,

and this respect governs all interpersonal relationships of the individuals. The ex-president was once seen (even unconsciously) as a father who shall be respected, idealized and never devalued. But it seems that it was time for the Egyptians to give up that patriarchal structure *in dealing with their presidents* and move on to a new structure, with them having equal rights. An approximate actualization of Freud's words: "*the scientific myth of the father of the primal horde...he was the ideal of each one of them, at once feared and honoured... These many individuals eventually banded together, killed him and cut him to pieces...They then formed the totemic community of brothers, all with equal rights...*" (p. 135).

3. From the perspective of Kurt Lewin's Field Theory: People come together from Lewin's view if they have:
 1. a. Interdependence of fate (Brown, 1988): Before the revolution, most of the Egyptian people shared the same fate (unemployment, poverty, illiteracy,...) and all of them shared political suppression, police brutality and humiliation of their human rights. In the early stages of the revolution, people felt that they would all share a new fate, which would inevitably be the fate of the group of protesters. This might have helped (among different other factors) in increasing the number of protesters engaging with the revolution. Numbers increased, reaching twenty million in all Egyptian squares! People come together from Lewin's view if they have:
 2. b. Interdependence of task: Where there is interdependence in the goals of group members (Brown, 1988). In the Egyptian case, members had only one task/goal. So, they had all gathered.
4. From the perspective of Bion's group dynamics: The central position in group dynamics, *according to Bion* (1961), is occupied by the more primitive mechanisms which Melanie Klein has described as peculiar to the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. In the early days of the revolution, the predominant mentality within the protesters was the *paranoid-schizoid mentality*. They had to feel persecuted by the police (which was true), they had to be *aggressive* (which was necessary). They had to make *splits* (who is with us, who is against us; which was essential). They had to *fight and flight* (which was

- protective). In this stage, protesters have shown extraordinary heroism. “I will be back with freedom, or die with dignity”, a father of a young child said just before joining the revolution (he died). Alternating with this paranoid-schizoid mentality, and in the following stages of the revolution, some features of the *depressive mentality* have appeared. People have shown much *creativity*, and *integration* (mostly of inner splits). In addition, all the time, people have tried their best to keep the group a *work group*, not a *basic assumption* one (no dependency on any potential leader, no internal fight or flight and no twinship between any members/ subgroups).
5. From the perspective of Foulkes (group analysis): The protesters might be thought of as forming a very (or let’s say extremely) large group which share some principles with group analysis, e.g.,:
 1. *a. Leadership style*: The revolutionary group was directing itself by itself, with very minimal help of some conductors/organizers.
 2. *b. Group matrix*: In Tahrir square, there were many instances supporting the presence of a shared ground of this extremely large group, in which every person/subgroup was a ‘nodal point’. This ground/matrix had the functions of *receiving, containing and transforming* each individual’s contributions in a manner that was both integrating and ultimately *helping*
 3. *c. Communication*: Every event that took place within the Tahrir group’s boundary was meaningful as a communication. Sometimes the communications occurred so rapidly, anonymously and non-verbally, especially in response to government’s efforts to abort the revolution.
 6. From the perspective of Haim Weinberg’s definition of Social unconscious (2005): The social unconscious, as Weinberg (2005) defines it, is the co-constructed shared unconscious of members of a certain social system such as community, society, nation or culture. Its building bricks are made of chosen traumas and chosen glories. It includes shared anxieties, fantasies, defences, myths, and memories. Weinberg’s definition was very clear about the contents of the social unconscious and the repressed material it might contain. However, it, as well as other definitions of the social unconscious, did not provide any

clues on how to process that content and how to work through such material. In Tahrir square, I could see with my own eyes social unconscious traumas and conflicts being worked through, unconscious memories being processed and unconscious myths and glories being relived. Building on that, we can conclude that such revolution might be one way to access, process and work through social unconscious repressed material, maybe to heal them or at least to modify them. But actually, we need to find more clues for that process of accessing and working through social unconscious material, as we don't have a revolution everyday in every society!!

7. Other perspectives: The revolutionary group process and dynamics can be viewed from many other perspectives; of them gestalt group psychology, self psychology, Ego State psychology and Existential psychology. However, there might be more space and time for these correlations in the book being prepared now about the dynamics of the Egyptian revolution.

B – Mainly conscious dynamics (role of collective awareness):

1. Before the revolution: In the past few years, many factors have enriched Egyptian people's *collective awareness* with much knowledge about the crimes that were being made against them by their governing regime on the one hand and about their rights, choices and potentialities on the other hand. Of those factors: media (press, TV...), internet (social networks, blogs...), mobile technology (Twitter, SMS...). This process had cumulative intellectual, emotional and behavioural effects that were stirring up and getting closer to explosion one day after another, until the sudden strike had hit.
2. During the revolution: The collective awareness of Egyptians has taken a big leap in terms of the development of civilization opposite to Le Bon's theory on crowd dynamics. This collective awareness could think, decide and respond wisely to the ex-regimes every effort to weasel its way out of complying to the people's demands.
3. After the revolution: We are all "...concerned with the aspect of capturing the essence of the revolution & restructuring Egyptian society around this new-found collective awareness & mentality, or, in the Egyptian strategic thinker Dr. El Mostafa Higazy's words, "to institutionalize the revolution". To use this

revolutionary essence as the foundation for a strong & effective public front.” (Al Samargy, 2011).

VI – Some factors of success (applying some therapeutic group factors to the revolutionary process):

One patient in one of my colleagues’ groups said: “Tahrir was like a very large therapy group”. Actually, this saying was the trigger behind my idea of looking at the revolution from the perspective of groups. It has also inspired me that most of the factors of success of the Egyptian revolution are in fact therapeutic group factors. Tahrir square was more of an inspiring, healing, creative and integrative place than anyone could ever imagine. Examples of those factors:

- **Cohesiveness:** Feelings of trust, belonging and togetherness that are experienced by the group members (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005). These feelings were felt between protesters themselves, their various entities (e.g., Muslims and Christians) and between people and the army.
- **Contagion:** The process of emotions (and ideas), expressed by somebody, stimulate the awareness of similar emotions (and ideas) in another. In time of the revolution, emotions and ideas were floating between people, not only in Tahrir square, but all over the country. Maybe contagion had a transpersonal dimension here!
- **Universality:** Members recognized that other members share similar feelings, thoughts and problems (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005).
- **Altruism:** Members gained a boost to self concept through extending help to other group members (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005). Some people have chosen to guard the safety of the others, especially in times when police collapsed and criminals were set free.
- **Instillation of hope:** Members developed optimism for their own improvement (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005). In fact, Egyptians had nothing but hope.
- **Imitative behaviour:** Members expanded their personal knowledge and skills through the observation of other group members (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005). In time of the revolution, you could see people doing similar actions all the time, from similar face drawings to similar courage and heroism.

- **Empathy:** The capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person (Kaplan and Sadock, 1983). Protesters have shown much empathy towards injured fellows, old people, tired soldiers, young children and each other.
- **Existential factors:** Members accepted the responsibility for their life decisions (Yalom and Leszcz, 2005) even if they had to face death, which was a very common choice.

VII – Neurobiological understanding (mirror neurons as an example):

Mirror neurons are brain neurons that fire both when we perform an action and when we see someone else doing it. Mirror neurons, are the organic underpinnings of empathy, and perhaps also of familiarity and intimacy (Preston and de Waal, 2002). Mirror neurons have dissolved the dichotomy between self and other (When I observe you, I become you). In the revolution, mirror neurons and interpersonal neurobiology might have had a significant role in explaining some phenomena like contagion, spread of hope, universality, empathy and imitative behaviour. As if mirror neurons were the couriers of ideas, emotions and actions.

VIII – Some aspects of uniqueness.

Every group (therapeutic, educational, teamwork...) has its uniqueness. Having looked at the Egyptian revolution from the scope of group psychology, therapy and neurobiology, it might be suitable here to address – in brief – some aspects of uniqueness of this group/revolution:

- **Initiators:** Unlike most revolutions, the initiators of the Egyptian revolution of 2011 were the high social class citizens.
- **Tools:** For the first time in history, revolutions used the most recent and end-line communication technology as their tools. Tools were Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, laptops and mobile phones!! And believe it or not that in the meantime in Egypt, the armed forces, the Egyptian cabinet and the attorney general communicated with people through Facebook (you might wake up in the morning finding a message from the Prime Minister in your Facebook inbox!)
- **Leadership:** Unlike most revolutions, the Egyptian revolution of 2011 had no leader at all (only intuition).

- **Duration:** A relatively very short duration (eighteen days!!).
- **Goals:** Only justice. People of the ex-regime are now in front of their ordinary civil courts.
- **Nature:** Relatively peaceful (from the side of protesters of course!)
- **Places:** Only squares, all over the country. And protesters were forming a big protest every Friday only (the national weekend holiday in Egypt) not to stop any usual day work.
- **On finishing:** Protesters, and for the first time in history, have cleaned the squares, the streets and the surrounding buildings. They have even re-painted the scratched walls.
- **Effect:** Worldwide effect. Different Egypt = Different Middle East = Different World.
- **After-effect:** Similar protests around the world have followed the example of the Egyptian revolution, where protesters have exemplified most of its characters (squares, peaceful terms, face drawings, even Egyptian words). Lybia, Yemen, Syria, UK, Spain, Italy and Israel are some countries to mention.

Finally, I hope that the readers forgive me for my revolutionary narcissism that appeared in every line of this article. But there are few moments in life where you can witness history taking place. What do you think if you find yourself sharing (not only witnessing) in a history making place?! I am really proud to be Egyptian.

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Papers From the London GASi Symposium 2011

Loss Definite, Mourning Uncertain

There is paradox in group analytic experience due to loss. Mutual empathy may move the group and its members towards the reparation of a good internal object, building capacity to test the reality of loss, enabling individual and group growth. But mourning in a group may be uncertain, especially when there are many traumatic losses. Traumatic portions of feeling and aspects of identity that were not symbolized may flow through the group matrix. The group is influenced by those cut off pieces of identity, through acting out, that inhibits group mourning and the development of deep and rich relationships. The group slips into the schizo-paranoid position, and individuals experience traumatic discomfort and annihilation anxieties, using primitive defence mechanisms. Relationships of rivalry connected with guilty feelings with persecutory qualities prevent a genuine experience of loss. Vignettes are employed to illustrate the paper.

Being group analysts, we are permanently faced with losses in groups, and we learn a lot on how to deal with the feelings of group members when someone terminates his/her therapy, or when the group experiences losses for different reasons. The transient character of therapy group membership would not spoil the value and beauty of rich and meaningful relationships, when brought to the end, despite "a revolt in the minds against mourning" (Freud, 1916a). It requires time and the whole group's endeavour to initiate and maintain "mourning work" (Freud, 1917) that brings the reality of loss, and the psychic pain evoked, to the fore within the group matrix. It is a difficult and lasting task that often includes mourning through rituals, which are intrinsic to the group.

During many years of our practice, we were particularly interested to understand (at the same time were part of them) the mourning processes in individuals and groups due to the traumatic socio-political happenings in our ex-country Yugoslavia and our present country Serbia. The destructive and massive events created by the violent behaviour of human beings, who were in war against each other, led to some terrible outcomes with catastrophic consequences. Disintegration occurred on different levels, the external environment was

greatly fragmented. Human lives and homes were lost. Monuments were ruined and destroyed. Most institutions disintegrated. Normal life was lost.

One of the main tasks of all individuals, and society as a whole, was to deal with traumatic losses, which changed the environment that faded away into nothing, and acquired the reality of loss through the mourning process. In Freud's words: "What is painful may not the less be true... mourning, however painful it may be, comes to an end. It is hoped that the same will be true of the losses caused by the war... Only then (when once mourning is over), it will be found that our high opinion of the riches of civilization has not lost anything from our discovery of their fragility" (Freud, 1916).

The crucial element here is working through depressive anxieties, the source of generous feelings toward the lost object. Working through depressive anxieties diminishes the omnipotence of fantasy, and the "ego comes painfully to find a smaller place in its growing world... The experience of reparation is a tolerance of loss, and guilt and responsibility for the loss, while at the same time feeling that not all is lost. Reparation also comes out of real concern for the object" (Hinshelwood, 1991).

But, such a complex phenomena may be slowed or obliterated at any of its natural phases, and the outcome of mourning processes might be uncertain. V. Volkan (1984) described some of those forms as complicated or interminable mourning.

Our clinical practice, during and after the period of huge socio-political problems and war, taught us that the mourning process was altered in groups and individuals. We have not done any systematic research, and it took time for us to notice and to acquire evidence, for such a hypothesis. We needed time to become able to think about issues connected with loss, and their faith in internal worlds and communications, and to think about individual and group ability to mourn, and to repair internal objects (as well as externally destructed environments and broken relationships).

It was extremely difficult to mourn myriads of traumatic losses that created some kind of combination of internal, psychic space of individuals, and outer, social space. Outer and internal worlds became equated and void (of good loving objects). A confusion of boundaries between inside and outside was generated (Kaes, 1988). This confusion was forced by false, or vague information, given by official media at that time, to such an extent, that the citizens were persuaded that there was no war. It is obvious that those losses were powerful sources of schizo-paranoid and depressive anxieties, and defences

against them. It is the hypothesis of Millar, D. (2001) that traumatic loss makes it just as hard for groups as it is for individuals, to tolerate mourning, and to achieve a group identity that is tolerant of difference. He pointed out how serious and dangerous it could be when paranoid anxieties and “their extended defensive network when catastrophic loss of something good, somewhere known to have existed but which was destroyed...cannot be endured.” (Millar, 2001).

We are going to present our own experiences and thinking about group processes in small analytic groups concerning loss. We believe that there are remote and long lasting impacts of social turmoil and traumatic loss on dealing with all losses, which are inevitable parts of our human existence.

Our observations are:

1. Absence or diminished communications about grief, and mourning when a member of a group experiences an important loss, or when a group experiences an unplanned loss of a member (drop out). The group may become withdrawn or depressed after loss (drop out) of its member instead of being able to mourn.
2. The losses are more often followed by schizo-paranoid anxieties; we could say that the intensification of schizo-paranoid anxieties, and primitive defence mechanisms (denial, splitting, projection, projective identification, omnipotence). These comprise the constellation of paranoid defences, and the manic defences.
3. Beside primitive defences, there are complex defence mechanisms, consisting of a variety of forms of organizations.
4. The members more often feel fear of disintegration in the therapy group, and are more concerned about survival of the group (annihilation anxieties more often acknowledged) during periods of separation or when threatened by possible loss).
5. The need for conducting groups in those situations in a more active way was recognized.
6. Additional work by the therapist and the group members is needed to prevent (if possible) the person experiencing loss from leaving the group.
7. Strong counter-transference reactions; we realized that many interactions within our groups were so vivid in our minds that time seemed to be frozen.

To illustrate how mourning processes were inhibited, we described the fragments from more than ten years of the history of one therapy group's life, which started in 1998, during a very unstable and frightening period in the social environment and has continued to the present time. It seemed that the group developed an inflexible defensive organization that was used by the group to protect group members from experiencing painful losses that they could not endure. It took many years of struggle to get into contact with those cut off pieces of each member's identities, that they had "successfully" got rid of, and placed somewhere else: in another member, in the therapist or in the group as a whole. We could see how much the group was saturated with rage. At the same time the group did not tolerate any badness. But it was so difficult to bring some insight into the picture that rage was an essential part of the mourning process. Experiencing so many traumatic losses, the group members were not able for a very long time to give up "keeping alive" their ideal objects (the group, their broken families, broken childhood, and divided country). I believe that the unconscious fear was that the whole group would disintegrate. In such shattered (internal and external) worlds, this was to be expected. The traumatic losses needed to be worked through with the group as a whole to prevent trans-group (similar to trans-generational) transmission of losses that were not mourned. Despite all the hard work this involved, I believe that member who recently terminated her therapy (Ivana) was the first member who was able to mourn together with the group.

Another example of group analytic work concerned the universal symbol of helplessness when the group was faced with the reality that an unborn baby was dying. Considering the dynamics and the relationships in this group (honesty, interest), the group unexpectedly flew into strong denial of loss, and converted it into "non-life" manifesting their deepest anxieties, as well as the defence against them.

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Tija Despotović, Jelica Satarić

Report of the GAS Librarian

In the comparatively quiet period towards the end of last year, I was working systematically through the book shelves updating/enhancing the database records. [I should add that any new additions, any loans, requests, or items otherwise brought to my attention, have already had this process carried out]. This has already brought to light interesting pockets of the classified sequence that appear to be old / out of date / not well used: if the material has not already been ‘enhanced’ it is a clear indication that it is not well used, and some, but not all, of this material, is clearly rather elderly.

I would welcome members’ contribution to a library support process, whereby if you are interested in a particular topic or area you advise me of same, with the understanding that I can then contact you when I reach that area of the classification [which may not be for some time yet, as workload increases in the new year, with reading lists, the supervision course reading, etc., meaning the ‘luxury’ of database enhancement has to be carried on as and when a little free time becomes available.]

The process would be as follows: you alert me to your area/s of interest, and when I reach those areas, I contact you and supply a list from the database of library content in that area. You would then alert me as to which items were: old-but-classic, just old, should be updated, should be replaced, and note any glaring gaps, where we are missing core texts. I cannot guarantee that the library budget will stand immediate, overall, replacement of large sections of the library, but I don’t really envisage the process being that drastic or dramatic. But it would help to focus the library on current, good quality content on key topic areas. [NB this appeal will also be going out to IGA members via Dialogue, Newsletters, etc.]

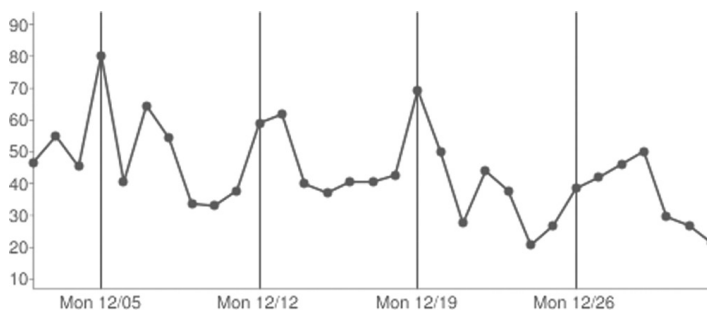
I can be contacted on: Elizabeth@igalondon.org.uk

Elizabeth Nokes

GAS/IGA Librarian

GAS Website

Website Statistics for the 30 Days before 1st January 2012



Base Statistics

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2.87	Pages Per Visit
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63.74%	% New Visits

Extended Statistics

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50 *Group Analytic Society – Contexts*

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Terry Birchmore

Request for Foulkes Letters and Documents for Society Archives

We are appealing for letters, notes, and correspondence from Foulkes that society members may possess. This will add to our already valuable society archive that contains much interesting material, papers and minutes and that is a significant source of information on our history and development.

Please contact Julia in the GAS office if you would like to donate any original or copied documents:

Group Analytic Society
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e-mail: admin@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk

Events

IGA/GAS Film Group

Screen Memories exists to engage actively with cinema; an attempt to challenge the fast food ethos of modern consumption, by giving time and thought to a series of films that potentially challenge us, offer a fresh perspective, disturb or confirm our certainties. At best they offer insight into our lives via the initially voyeuristic pleasure of spending time in the lives of others.

Peter Mark and Roberta Green invite you to another year of Screen Memories - 11 monthly film evenings in our tried and tested group analytic format of refreshments, introduction, film viewing, speaker and large group discussion.

Our film choices in recent seasons seem to have been getting increasingly dark; so this year we've made a conscious effort to 'lighten up' without sacrificing any of the quality or the potential for lively discussion on serious contemporary issues.

Our approach to cinema is to emphasise thinking. The film's meaning and the thoughts and the feelings generated in each viewer as well as within the collective audience, is what interests us; hence our commitment to selecting an informed speaker for each film and our central belief in the value of group analytic discourse.

So, come along and be entertained as well as intellectually refreshed on a Friday evening, after a hard working week. As well as enjoying lively and thoughtful discussion on the best of recent commercial cinema - 'Black Swan', 'Blue Valentine', 'The Social Network', 'The Kids are Alright', 'I Am Love', 'Archipelago' and 'Please Give' we have also included an important new documentary on the financial collapse, 'Inside Job', the deadpan Swedish comedy, 'Songs from the Second Floor' and two classics, 'Monsoon Wedding' and to begin the season, 'Sullivan's Travels'.

We hope you like the mix and we look forward to seeing you.

All films are shown at The Institute of Group Analysis, 1 Daleham Gardens, London, NW3 5BY (0207 431 2693)

Friday evenings, monthly 7:30pm to 10:30 pm

Everyone welcome

Fee:

£15 for individual tickets

£100 for a season ticket (only available in advance of season and not transferrable)

We advise booking in advance at the IGA: 020 7431 2693 or iga@igalondon.org.uk

Tickets are usually available at the door. Reserved tickets without payment must be collected by 7.20pm to guarantee entry.

Information from:

Peter Mark 07786 088194

Roberta Green 020 7385 3408

Or from the Gas International Office.

Listings

16th March 2012. Monsoon Wedding. Directed by Mira Nair (India 2001). Set in India, magnificent to look at with an uplifting sound track, the film explores family relationships and allegiances across the generations, when an arranged wedding is celebrated. Discussion led by Nigel Planer, writer, actor, comedian with an interest in Indian films.

20th April 2012. The Kids Are All Right. Directed by Lisa Cholodenko (US 2010). An award winning film about a lesbian couple whose family is rocked by their children bringing the children's biological father onto the scene. It has Oscar and Bafta nominated performances from Annette Bening, Julianne Moore and Mark Ruffalo. Discussion led by Lisa Gornick, film maker ("Tick Tock Lullaby") and artist.

18th May 2012. Archipelago. Directed by Joanna Hogg (UK 2010). Beautifully filmed in the Scilly Isles, a subtly painful family holiday with a powerfully absent father, underlines an arid upper middle class English social scene. Discussion led by Dr Morris Nitsun, clinical psychologist, organisational consultant, training group analyst, author and artist. We hope the director and others involved in the film will join him in discussion but this is not yet confirmed.

15th June 2012. *Inside Job*. Directed by Charles Ferguson (US 2010). Dirty dealings in the financial markets of 2008 exposed and examined. The documentary is narrated by Matt Damon. Discussion leader from the world of finance, to be confirmed.

13th July 2012. Please Give. Directed by Nicole Holofcener (US 2010). A wry comedy about society's attitude to charity, who gives most and for what reason. Centres on two families in the same building. Lovely performances from Catherine Keener, Rebecca Hall and everyone in the cast. Discussion led by Kate Stables, film critic at Sight and Sound, who has written about the murderous femme fatale in modern cinema.

Foulkes Lecture 2012:

**Specialists without Spirit, Sensualists without Heart
Psychotherapy as a moral endeavour**

Speaker: Farhad Dalal

Respondent: Sylvia Hutchinson

Friday 11th May 2012 at 8:00pm

Venue: The Brunei Gallery
University of London
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London, WC1H 0XG

Over the last few years I have come to question the centrality and value attributed to the ideas of ‘analysis’ and ‘interpretation’ in the psychotherapies in general and the analytic traditions in particular – ideas which draw on the prestige of the natural sciences.

The talk develops the reasoning behind the shifts in my thinking and practice. With the help of the moral philosopher Raimond Gaita I will build on my prior thesis that the psyche is constituted by power-relations, to argue that it is also constituted by moral-relations. Gaita’s understanding of morality has affinities with Winnicott and Bowlby, and is also deeply congenial to the group analytic sensibility. I will show how these ways of thinking contribute towards the ethical constitution of our inner lives. I will then touch on some of the consequences of this way of thinking for the practice of psychotherapy (whatever the school or modality), in ways that do not entail a collapse into emotivism nor a rejection of the rational.

I conclude that because psychotherapy is a moral endeavour, it requires the therapist to take up ‘an attitude towards a soul’ (Wittgenstein) rather than that of the detached clinician, and that therapy is better described as a very particular kind of embodied conversation rather than the scientific conceptions of ‘analysis’ or ‘treatment’. [The title is a quote from Weber].

Farhad Dalal PhD. His first degree was in Physics. He qualified as a group analyst in 1991. He works with organizations and also has a psychotherapy practice in Devon. In his first book ‘Taking the Group

Seriously', he argues against individualism and for the relational nature of human life. His second book 'Race, Colour and the Processes of Racialization' focuses on the causes of the hatred of Others in general and racism in particular. His current book 'Thought Paralysis: The Virtues of Discrimination' (Karnac) is a constructive critique of the Equality movements.

Group-Analytic Society

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EGATIN Study-Days 2012

*Lisbon – Portugal
27th – 28th of April*

“Love, Passion and Intimacy, in Group-Analysis and in Training”

Crisis, rating, economics, money, globalization, the euro, austerity, unemployment, insecurity, mistrust, rich countries, poor countries, Europe, violence, market, politics, politicians... these are words and issues that invade our lives and minds every present day. These are some of the main determinants and restraints of our present life, our way of living and our way of thinking about life.

The global village, the large European group, is apparently full of deception, with loss of social rights, loss of economic power, loss of trust and loss of hope. In this social theatre people have to adapt their lifestyles and expectations.

If rage, aggression, sadness, mistrust, scapegoating, deception, frustration, fear, insecurity, destruction, abuse, envy, etc., are common inevitable individual and group issues, present in the interrelation dynamics; so are love, intimacy, passion, happiness, hope, desire, creativity, solidarity, empathy, pleasure, sexuality... And we know that all of these, positive and negative issues could come together. Eros is always playing with Thanatos.

Many times, and probably more in specific fragile and significant personal and social moments, the language of hope, of love, of trust and pleasure, can be a manipulative one; very seductive and promoting submission, loss of power and loss of the ability to think. This is true for individuals, for groups and for organizations. But it is also true that it is usually easier to speak and underline the destructive and negative, rather than to explore the risks of creativity. We all need to be loved and recognised. We all, as social animals, are dependent on others in one way or another. We all need to communicate. We all have prejudices. We all have fears to be taken advantage of, to be abused or destroyed. We all have a need to desire and to be desired. How can we all develop and maintain the capacity for love, passion and intimacy? How can we remain desirable persons, not denying the fear and risk of deception and

betrayal? We are all different and we are all similar at the same time. How can we adapt to the changes that the present political, economical and social pressures impose on us? How can we develop and preserve our sense of identity and well-being? How can Group Analysis, as a science, a method and a practice, contribute to these processes?

Group Analysis and group analysts both need a sense of identity and at the same time need to develop the capacity to adapt to different cultures and their economical, political and social demands and realities. In most countries people feel, it seems, that group analytic practice and training are in crisis.

What kind of role can Group Analysis and group analytic psychotherapy offer and develop? What kind of importance has a European organization and forum, like EGATIN and its Study-Days? Are we solely preoccupied with our own survival, or does Group Analysis have something important to offer, to people and organizations, at the present and for future times?

EGATIN, the European Group Analytic Training Institutes Network, has its own Essential Training Standards in group analytic psychotherapy. These include:

- Essential general aims for training organisations
- Essential basic assumptions and underlying philosophy of GA training
- Essential theory and core concepts in GA
- Core skills essential to the practice of GA
- Training structures and requirements
- Essential structures and procedures for delivery of training and maintenance of standards

EGATIN essential basic assumptions in regard to training are:

- Emphasis on communication and the social nature of man and the defining features of the socio-cultural environment (Social origins)
- The assumption of the primacy of the relational matrix (the individual acquires definition in relation to the group) (Gestalt origins).
- The assumption of a personal and collective (social) unconscious (Psycho-Analytic origins).
- The assumption of open systems (persons, groups, organizations) in dynamic equilibrium, constantly adapting (Systemic origins).

We can say that EGATIN intends to contribute to the construction of a group analytic matrix, facilitating and promoting the building of a GA training culture, maintaining a sense of identity and respecting inevitable and desirable specificities from each country and from each organization. A matrix is a living, dynamic structure, more or less creative and more or less destructive.

To acquire and build a matrix - in the group analytic sense - we need people and relationships. If we want to learn, question, discuss, grow and discover, we need to be together in group. In a group we share opinions and knowledge, but also combine emotions, feelings, desires, fears, curiosity, spontaneity, doubts and errors – sharing our humanity. It is an attempt to contain instead of controlling; to be instead of pretending; to learn and to think instead of colonizing.

So we invite you all to come to Lisbon, to the EGATIN Study Days, and be in a group.

This year our theme is “Love, Passion and Intimacy. In Group Analysis and in Training”. How do we deal with these kinds of issues, in our personal group analytic process, in the groups we run, in supervision, in our training institutes and in our training programs? What kind of conscious and unconscious prejudices, defences and taboos do we hold? What can we learn with and from each others, from our differences, in culture, gender and generation?

We are looking forward to meet with you in the 27th and 28th of April, 2012, Lisbon, Portugal.

Paula Carvalho
Chair of the Local Organizing Committee

**‘Ash, a new novel by Di King
(GAS International Member) is available
on Amazon or in bookshops at £6.99**

Ash, a fifty-six year old psychotherapist, is struggling to hold his life together while supporting the patients in his group each with their own diverse problems, some of which resonate with his own. So who will he turn to? His feisty and outspoken colleague Ali? The motherly Renee? The arrival of Brenda, a new group member, further disturbs him. Then there's Jessica, who inhabits an ethereal world and seems to have an angelic connection to Brenda.

Reviews on Amazon web site

**Information About Conference Accommodation
in London and Donations to the Society**

Please see the GAS Website at:
<http://www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/>

