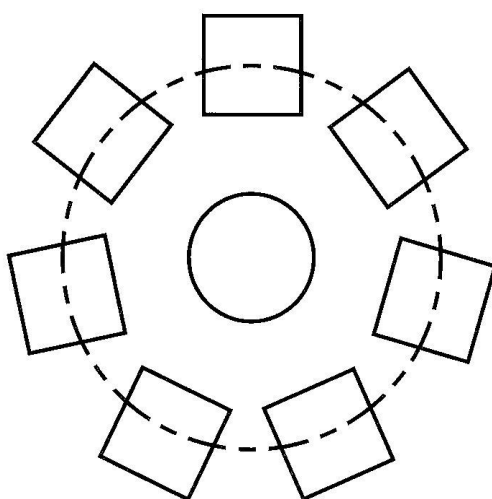


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International

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL.....	
PRESIDENT’S PAGE.....	
Notes on Space–Time: Memory Through the Dream by <i>Malcolm Pines</i>	
News From Rome by <i>Isaura Manso Neto</i>	
<u>Papers from the GAS International Symposium 2011:</u>	
1. From Cronus to the father and from the mother to Crohn by <i>Graziano De Giorgio</i>	
2. The Social Unconscious and the Foundation Matrix by <i>Regine Scholz</i>	
3. My Child, an Alien at Home by <i>Maha Sakallah-Tali et al.</i>	
Michael Foulkes: A Reminiscence by Vivienne Cohen.....	
Articles From Selected Journals and Media.....	<i>Terry Birchmore</i>
GAS Website by <i>Terry Birchmore</i>	
Events.....	

Editorial

“The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul, opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was any ego consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego-consciousness extends. For all ego-consciousness is isolated; because it separates and discriminates, it knows only particulars, and it sees only those that can be related to the ego. Its essence is limitation, even though it reach to the farthest nebulae among the stars. All consciousness separates; but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night. There he is still the whole, and the whole is in him, indistinguishable from nature and bare of all egohood. It is from these all-uniting depths that the dream arises, be it never so childish, grotesque, and immoral”. Jung. *"The Meaning of Psychology for Modern Man"* (1933). In *CW 10: Civilization in Transition*. pg. 304.

“Dreams told in the group are conjoint individual and group creations. They are both influenced by the group atmosphere and may in turn influence it and the individual, promoting change and development. Dreams have a deepening effect on therapeutic work and, due to their unconscious content, they may represent the most authentic exchange between individual and group”. *Dreams in Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Technique*. Claudio Neri, Malcolm Pines and Robi Friedman.

The idea of the dream features large in this issue. How may we interpret them? Are dreams a key to self knowledge, to the personal or even group unconscious? Psychoanalytic thought generally postulates that dreams can be evaluated as if they were events observed consciously in overt, empirical reality and that dreams offer descriptions of dreamers' intra-psychic conflicts bearing on the roles dreamers play in interpersonal and social relationships. Three of the articles in this issue explore the clinical use of dreams as a method of connecting the previously disconnected in group psychotherapeutic practice.

Clinical practice, in a number of areas, is also highlighted in this issue. Isaura Netto discusses her work and thinking about multi-family groups, an area of work previously neglected in Group Analytic literature. Experience of this work has shown that bringing together several families in a group is a powerful therapeutic technique that is based on the benefits of families interacting and learning from each other. Isaura presents us with some of the history and literature of this method and an account of her work in this field.

Malcolm Pines begins the discussion about dreams with an article that defines various types of dream themes and making reference to clinical material to illustrate these typologies. Graziano De Giorgio then contributes a rich account of a group in which a dream and ongoing group relationships are used to illustrate transference and projective processes in the group and the connection with the mythic dimension of

groups. Silvia Anfilocchi continues to develop this theme in a very rich clinical paper that also focuses on a dream.

Maha Sakallah-Tali, et. al. finally provide a rich clinical account of working with a group of traumatised refugees in which participation in a group helped the group members to reclaim a sense of identity and humanity.

Vivienne Cohen provides a moving reminiscence of Michael Foulkes.

Regine Scholz, in a more theoretical article, challenges the idea of the social unconscious.

Terry Birchmore

President's Page

The past months were intensive in planning and rethinking our tasks and aims, and we have still much work ahead. There are possibilities to move in rich and creative directions – but we need the personal involvement of our Society members and the means to achieve these aims. We are trying to get used to the "International" in our name, trying to understand what this may mean, and of course it seems to be more natural to deal with it the more one is involved in working with it. International slowly emerges from the parenthesis and starts to fit into a new concept, something that requires changing attitudes towards Europe, the IGA London and the world.

Those of us who took on themselves the challenge of making our society more inclusive will continue to struggle to strengthen us. I urge you all not only to pay your yearly fees, but to strengthen our organization by encouraging your friends and colleagues to join the Group Analytic Society International. In addition, every contribution you feel you can make to our Society, wherever the suggestion is, will strengthen us – you are welcome to write to me or to the GAS office. The difficulties in the European Union makes our task even more important; many of our GAS International members live in countries like Greece, and experience a rather difficult time. The GA Society is their professional home too and we wish to help if we can.

The next Symposium, which is already being discussed and planned, will take place in Portugal and will provide the opportunity to both show off this beautiful country which also encounters economic hardships and will introduce us to a very vibrant IGA. We are already working to create a constructive response in our professional community to encourage a sense of joining and curiosity that will promote a strong gathering and strengthen GAS. The preparations for the next Foulkes' Lecture and Study Day are also finalized. This event will continue our best traditions and yet present new analyses and perspectives for the participating members. Tackling our

belief systems and our morality seems to be the task Farhad Dalal and the other respondents have taken on themselves. This event will further the discussion about our identity as Group Analysts and ask important questions about our attitudes and activities.

I wish to share another aspect of my current work within the Group Analytic Society International. I participated in a whole day meeting which discussed the question: who should be conducting psychoanalytic group therapy? At the latest congress in New York I was invited by the AGPA (American Group Psychotherapy Association) along with other Group Analytic and global non-group analytic associations (such as Psychodrama) to discuss the possibility of the Americans issuing an "international certificate" to approve standards for group analytic specialists. Although we don't regard ourselves to be a certifying organization, we still adhere to and use group analytic certification and have a say on it. All Group Analytic partners in this meeting were concerned about the AGPA's minimal requirements for such an international certificate. We united to demand that such an international certificate should also represent our points of view. In this meeting in New York it seemed very important for us to describe our positions to other world organizations: we absolutely stand on our principles to require our tripartite education before someone is considered to be a group analyst: one's own analysis together with a substantial amount of theory and supervision.

As sometimes happens discussing these issues with differing organizations enhances the elaboration of our own identity and makes it easier to understand who we really are and who we don't want to be. Many of us found it encouraging to hear that we have high education standards for our students and that adhering to EGATIN standards seems to guarantee good starting positions for group analytic therapists. We want to remain a high quality organization. We may have to struggle for these principles, but they not only seem essential for qualitative therapeutic interventions but also to maintain a respectful position in the therapeutic community. These processes will also influence future developments as Group Therapy will expand "overseas", to the Asia, South America, and Africa.

Finally I also wish to share with you the optimistic feelings of those of us who interact with and visit European countries. Visits to Serbia and Croatia (Don Montgomery) two months ago revealed exciting IGAs, promoting multi-level programs of group analytic education which seem to attract many young therapists. In Belgrade I met with what seems a strong middle-sized big Institute, holding a strong motivation towards professional development, curiosity and the display of a rich and high quality professional life. I was not only impressed by my colleagues and my experiences there, but also supported and encouraged in our will to enhance our Society's life. The many young students of the Society I talked with were enthusiastic about future encounters with other young Group Analysts, which makes the future of our profession appear optimistic.

Other issues are not so rosy, but we try to tackle them, together with IGA London and I hope we are making significant progress. We are meeting to discuss our mutual concerns over the lack of evidence-based research and of effectiveness investigations in our field. An English version of a Group-Analytic manual by Steinar Lorenzen and their associated workgroup is making progress and will add to our interminable search

for professional excellence and research. We know that we need to not only believe in our experience as group analysts but also to add to our agenda the presentation of this experience in a convincing way to the professional world. The last issue of our Journal of Group Analysis shows many signs of this. GAS International would like to embrace such initiatives...similarly to a Danish group-analytic move to create a comprehensive dictionary of group analytic terms. Starting in English and then being translated into other languages it will further build up our thinking instruments. Foulkes and Anthony (1957) said: "As more complex roles have come to be assigned to the group, a new language has begun to appear, replacing the psycho-analytically-derived concepts by more group-determined ones (p. 20, Penguin edition, Pelican Psychology Series)

Robi Friedman

Be a Contexts Writer!

*"Substitute "damn" every time you're inclined to write "very"; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be". **Mark Twain***

Contexts welcomes contributions from GAS members and non-members on a variety of topics: Have you run or attended a group-analytic or group psychotherapy workshop? Are you involved in a group-analytic or group psychotherapy 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 3,000 words long, or between one and eight A4 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, a reply to an earlier article published here, or stray thoughts that you have managed to capture on paper. Give it a go!

Please don't worry about language, grammar and the organisation of your piece. We, as editors, receive many pieces from non-English speaking countries and it is our job to work with you to create a piece of writing that is grammatical and reads well in English. This help also extends to English speakers who may need help and advice about the coherence and organisation of a piece of work.

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.

The deadlines for publication in Contexts are give below:

For publication in March: December 31st

For publication in June: March 31st

For publication in September: June 30th

For publication in December: 30th September.

The principle is to submit at least 3 months before publication.

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GAS New Members

There are no new members this quarter.

Notes on Space – Time: Memory Through the Dream

Dreams represent the activity of the unconscious mind that can transform and digest unbearable emotional states of mind into a “theatre of mind”. In this theatre, dreams play to the audience of the dreamer, want to be listened to and to be understood. Ella Freeman Sharpe, the English psychoanalyst, wrote that “the only dreamless state is death”.

In group analysis, we recognise that the internal and external are always in flux, so in dreams we need to pay attention both to the social context in which the dream has occurred, and recognise the state of the internal society that is reproduced.

In the examples that follow, I will try to show how the dreams present themselves to the dreamer and to the group context, as the activity of mind in dealing with deeper issues that are being called to the attention of the dreamer.

We view the past through the present and thereby reconnect that which has been disconnected. Early on in her group analysis the patient, who is a woman in her 50s, who has led a successful business career, who is now turning her attention to the life of feelings, has a long and complex dream, which includes the bodies of children which are neatly divided in half, top and bottom separate, and without any feeling of revulsion or anxiety, she carefully lays two halves side by side. She begins the work of reconnecting, the upper and lower, adult and child, thought and feeling. Soon after, she has a dream in which a different form of connection is represented. Her husband shows her a “cat’s cradle”, string stretched between the two hands of a person or between one person and another to form a communicating net. She and her husband often connect sexually. I have often had the image of group matrix as a cat’s cradle, the network of interconnections taking place in group time and space.

Reconnecting with Self through Connecting with Others

Early dreams in the group demonstrate the fears of exposure and shame, the dangers met on the journey to inner space, the private space made public through the dream. The dream is a personal and private experience, therefore sharing it in a group moves it across the highly charged threshold between what belongs to oneself and what can be shared with others. A woman in a group with a male co-therapist dreams of lying in bed covered with a sheet spotted with blood. Another dreams of entering into a tent where two camp leaders (co-therapists to the group), are talking to each other and she feels embarrassed, an intruder. She has entered into a private space, but in recounting her dream her own private space becomes public.

Shame and its Defences

Such dreams represent the fear of rejection for being dirty and defective. A man dreams that the skin is torn off his finger, but what is revealed is not flesh and muscle, but a machine. A machine cannot fear exposure or experience pain.

Meeting the Rejected Self

The same man whose body is represented by a machine later dreams that he is carrying an ill little boy in his arms. A woman responds with a dream of adopting a child and holding it by its hand. A woman dreams that she has a frightening monster inside her. Over the course of the next year, this image of the monstrous inner self elaborates into recognition of envy and jealousy, fears of rape, Oedipal rivalry, Oedipal sexuality.

This inner journey is characterised by an increasing capacity to recognise in dreams those disconnected parts of the self that contain aggression. Sibling rivalry and death wishes can be symbolised, translated and recognised. A woman dreams of travelling with her father, and able to oppose his wishes. She throws a banana skin at him and sees this herself as saying “keep your penis, I have my own”. A man dreams that he is part of a computer game which represents madness to him, but he is no longer afraid, is excited by and enjoys the madness of the dream. In another dream, he has a painful image of his mother starving and naked. What is important to him is that he does not have to help her.

The relationship to his mother has been worked out with a woman in his group, whose own mother was repeatedly psychotic and died in a psychotic illness.

Dreams of Transformation

A deeply disturbed man who has reached his 60s without having had any fulfilling sexual relationships and who repeatedly withdraws into glacial regressions, dreams of a sea full of dirt and mess that becomes clean and clear. He dreams of discovering a small bird hanging upside down, just alive within a container in a room that seems to contain only dead objects. The group recognises that there is internal life where before there had only been death.

A deeply disturbed borderline woman, who lives in a state of constant pain and torment, dreams of travelling in a ship out of whose funnel emerges a deathly cloud of filthy smoke. She realises that the ship will sink under the weight of this discharge. She values the dream, as representing her inner state. Her jealousy is so painful, that it feels as if it will kill her, but she does not want to lose it, because it represents her pathway into life. What will kill her is the constant rage and anger which threatens to overwhelm her. She has had many years of psychoanalysis, has been some years in the group, this dream represents a powerful and clear symbolisation to her and to the group of her inner state, which can now be shared and integrated with the underlying group process.

A young woman who acts out by always coming late to the group and is very bitter in her attacks upon the therapist, awakes from a dream in which she is strangling her

father and injuring his throat. She feels relieved to have had this dream, because it connects her with her rage towards her father, which she has not fully recognised or accepted and releases her from having to feel that her husband or the group conductor are provoking her rage. She reconnects with a powerful source of inner anger that seeks targets.

Time as a Link of Present, Past and Future

Nearing the end of a closed group, two months before termination, a woman dreams that she constantly loses and re-finds her wrist watch. The last time that she finds it, it no longer has a clock face and cannot register time. Through the dream she recognises, as do the other group members, her fight against the passage of time and the wish to annihilate time. In itself the dream represents the exploration of time, time past, seen from time present, time present connected with time future.

Dream as a Release from Time

“Last week’s session must have freed me up because I have had three dreams”. The dream I focus on was where his son was sitting in the toilet and producing lots of faeces, but he was enjoying this, smiling at his father, what was coming out of him was not at all “odious” (meaning odorous), was chocolate-coloured. The patient is puzzled as to why he had had these dreams and we reconstructed that what was important in his last session (he comes once a week), was to do with time. He had been complaining about how he always hurries, that when he goes for a walk, he is pacing himself and exercising, that he drives his car too fast. I had said that I had thought that he was always marching to his mother’s time. This had made a big impression on him and since then, he has been for walks with his wife on Hampstead Heath, strolling along, both of them enjoying being together, which is unusual for them. Thus, in his dream, he is not anally performing for his mother, he is enjoying what he is doing and what he is producing is good enough to eat, like chocolate. He is mistrustful of his inner world and does not believe that he can produce anything good. Neither of his parents have represented good internal objects and his father had said when his son had made a big deal in business “He is not a big shot, he is a big shit”. Significantly, the dream occurred on the first anniversary of his father’s death and he had not consciously remembered about that. The next day, his sister had rung up to give him the Jewish message “May you live a long life”, that is magically disengaging him from his father’s death. But in his dream, which produced this very long and lively shit, he had in fact given himself a long life. In this session, he also associated to the American film “An Officer and a Gentleman”, where the hero is a black soldier, who has all the good qualities that anyone could want in a father, courageous, kind, physically powerful. The patient was brought up in South Africa, where black people could be experienced as warm and friendly by personal contact with them, though there was also a community fear of them. Thus, this dream illustrates freedom from the pressures of performance, from fear of the super ego and a capacity to reconnect with the pleasures of the body and of exhibitionism. He produced freely in his own time and what he produced was good enough to eat. The other thing that this patient is concerned about, is how his moods take him over, either his elation or depression. He recalls that his mother, instead of modulating his moods, would join in them, making

him feel more excited than he was excited, or more sad when he was sad. Thus, there was not an attunement that was appropriate between child and parent. Instead, there was a reinforcement of the intensity of the affect.

Space and Dream

An agoraphobic woman tells her group that suddenly when sitting in a bus, she realises that she is no longer anxious. A few sessions before she had reported two dreams:

1. I walk along the sea and want to get across to an island. There I can see two friends, a couple. Suddenly a porpoise, or was it a dolphin, came up to me. I sit astride on its back and it swims towards the island. In approaching the island, I see two yapping dogs, which prevent me from going ashore.

2. I am doing cross-country skiing. A man is accompanying me. We are passing through an icy landscape, nothing but snow and ice, then arriving at a lake which to my surprise is frozen. I catch a big salmon, just using my arms. I flay the fish and take out the entrails. The man has also come to the lake and at his request, I hand him the blood of the fish. It is light red in colour and he drinks it.

In the second dream, a landscape was offered to the group and in the session people talked about lakes and landscapes, getting lost and through being lost, finding openings into outer or inner space. The men were preoccupied with the drinking of the blood and spoke about the behaviour of primitive tribes.

The women spoke openly about sexual pleasure, the pleasure of riding on the porpoise and talked openly of their own sexual experiences.

It can be thought that this woman had reached to an exploration of her inner world and of her sexuality and was no longer frozen by fears of her inner world projected on to outer space. What is particularly interesting, is that her dreams seem to intermingle with those of another woman in the group who dreams that she is on a boat with a friend, they have a valuable cargo on board, but the crew instead of being friendly, takes control over them, tries to rape the friend and pursue not to rape her, but to kill her. In terms of the group matrix, it can be thought that when the agoraphobic woman gave up her fears of being attacked, that they then passed over to the second woman for whom space, the journey on the boat becomes dangerous.

The conductor of this group writes “Her phobic anxiety had been replaced by dream activity. The change had not come about by insight into the unknown fears of phobic symptoms. It was rather that her unknown fears by dreaming, had been transformed into unknown desires. Dreams are not objects of knowledge, like natural objects, dreams might be rather vehicles of thinking about unknown objects”.

Inner Space Explored in a Dream

The woman who had dreamt of strangling her father soon afterwards has a dream in which she gives birth. What she gives birth to is not a baby, but a shapeless lump like dough. In giving birth, she is surrounded by her family and she is terrified not knowing what to do about this shapeless form. She dreams of waking up and finding that her mother has taken this thing away to have it adopted. She recognises her dependency on her mother who can take charge and remove this frightful object. She also recognises that she is giving birth to a part of herself in the dream that can be brought to the group where it can be moulded and shaped into a part of herself that she can recognise and own. She is able to tell this dream at the end of a long and painful session in which other group members had been confronted by horrifying images. Thus, a man who sees himself as being fair, honest and peaceful, is seen by a woman as a member of Hitler's Youth Movement, capable of cold cruelty. He is furious with her having seen him in this way, but it begins to take him on a journey into his own inner space, which mobilises both his anger at being misread, but which leads him to look within himself in a different way.

Dreams as Unconscious Connections in the Group Space

The dreamer of the ship that belched out dangerous smoke, erupts in the next session with rage against two women, whom she declared did not want her to speak about her dream. She is calmed only by the older man sitting next to her, who shows a sympathetic understanding of her and then tells of a dream that he had had two days after the last session. He had woken in the morning, feeling rather depressed and had gone to sleep again in a chair. In his dream, the therapist was in his house doing the washing up at the sink, later on washing the kitchen floor. The therapist's three children came into the dream, all of them had some speech defect and the therapist had to explain this to the patient and then interpret for him what they were saying. In the dream, the patient thought that the therapist really must be a human being after all. He woke up feeling better. In this session, he was warm and gentle and two women in the group were moved to tears at the thought of losing him and his capacity for emotional honesty and understanding. I thought to find a connection between the dream of the smoke, which threatens to submerge the ship and the dream in which the therapist is humbly cleaning the floor of the kitchen to get rid of the dirt. She had erupted in the group space, where her rage can be contained and responded to with firmness and understanding and does not elicit a counter-response of rage. The man has often brought a terrifying cold rage to the group with associated paranoid feelings, but in this dream, there is no damage, but a move towards listening and understanding what has not previously been expressed and communicated. The three children with defects seem to represent the defective parts of ourselves, the recognition that to be human is to be defective.

Website

Funzione Gamma, scientific online magazine University "Sapienza" of Rome, registered with the Court Rome Civil (n. 426 of 28/10/2004)–
www.funzionegamma.edu

Further Reading

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Malcolm Pines

News From Rome

Giornate Romane di Psicoanalisi Multifamiliar

24th- 26th November 2011

The third International Meeting of the Psicoanalisi Multifamiliar /Psicoterapia de Grupo Multifamiliar (PGMF) Multifamily Group Psychotherapy was held in Rome from the 24th to the 26th November 2011. The first International Congress on Psicoanalisi Multifamiliar was held in Buenos Aires from the 1st to the 8th November 2008. The second was held in Bilbao – from the 18th to the 20th June 2009.

This therapeutic setting was introduced by Jorge Garcia Badaracco in the Psychiatric Hospital Bordas in Buenos Aires, in 1958. Later on, Badaracco began to organize these kinds of groups in his private practice.

Badaracco was a psychiatrist and a training psychoanalyst of the Argentinian Society of Psychoanalysis. He had important responsibilities as a psychiatrist as well as a psychoanalyst. He was the President of the Argentinian Association of Psychoanalysis for two periods. He died at the age of 85 on the 11th September 2010.

Badaracco published 4 books:

- «Demonios da Mente. Biografia de uma esquizofrenia», 1982; re-edited in 2005, by Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires, without any translations.

- «Comunidade Terapéutica Psicoanalítica de Estructura Multifamiliar», edited by Tecnicopublicacione, SA. em 1990. Translated into Portuguese and published by the Casa do Psicólogo e Clínica de Psicanalise Roberto Azevedo, in 1994; it has also a French translation in PUF, 1999, without an English version.
- «Psicoanálisis Multifamiliar, Los Otros en Nosotros y el Descubrimiento del Sí Mismo» published by Paidós, Buenos Aires in 2000, translated into French, PUF, 2003, without other translations.
- «La psicoanalisi multifamiliare in Itália», 2011, together with Andrea Narracci, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst from Roma.; written in Italian; without translations yet.

He also published several papers:

The most popular is: «La identificación y sus vicissitudes en la psicosis. La importancia del concepto objeto enloquecedor» in Rev. de Psicoanalysis, XLII, 3, 1985. Published in English: «Identification and its vicissitudes in the psychosis. The importance of the concept «Maddening Object». Int J. Psyc., 1986, 67: 133-146. Translated into French by the Revue Française de Psychanalyse (1986). It has had a great impact within the international psychoanalytic community.

The most recent one, «La Mente Cerrada» was presented in the 46 th. Congress of the international Association of Psychoanalysis in Chicago, in 2009.

The PGMF has spread throughout several countries:

- South America –mainly in Argentina and Uruguay. The most important figures are: Maria Elisa Mitre and Gabriel Dobner.
- It has had a progressive spread in Spain with several cores; the oldest and stronger is in Bilbao. The most important figures are: José Luis Atienza, psychiatrist and group analyst and Norberto Mascaró, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. There are other cores in other regions of Spain: Madrid, Malaga, Valencia.

- Italy, mainly in Rome, being introduced by Andrea Narracci, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, in 1997.
- In Portugal, Isaura Manso Neto – psychiatrist with a psychoanalytic training and a group analyst, training member of the Portuguese Society of Groupanalysis and GAS Full member - introduced them in the Day Hospital of the Psychiatry Department of the Hospital de Santa Maria, a General and University Hospital in Lisbon in 2001; currently this responsibility is taken by Paula Godinho – psychiatrist with a psychoanalytic training, Maria João Centeno – psychologist and member of the Portuguese Society of Groupanalysis and Teresa Fialho - senior clinical psychologist with a training in brief dynamic psychotherapies.

In these groups observers were allowed from other institutions from the beginning, which transplanted other PGMGs within other institutions such as in the Day Hospital of the Hospital Amadora Sintra, another general hospital in Lisbon in 2004 with Paula Godinho and her team: Maria João Dias – psychologist and Margarida Matos – occupational therapist. Nowadays, these groups are under the responsibility of João Carlos Melo – psychiatrist and training groupanalyst.

In 2006, these groups were formed in an Addiction Therapeutic Centre – IDT in Lisbon, under the responsibility of Clara Farinha, psychologist and Celeste Silva – occupational therapist and under the supervision of Isaura Manso Neto, on a monthly basis.

Multi Family Groups have been developed throughout other countries and Institutions with frameworks other than psychoanalytic and group-analytic.

These Jornate had approximately 150 attendants and were very intense.

The programme was mainly theoretical. The presentations were in Spanish or Italian. After every 3 presentations, there was a 30 minutes discussion, which allowed a relatively deepening of the issues brought by the panellists.

On one of the days the attendants were invited, as observers, to a Multifamily Group.

The themes were mainly about conceptual aspects. There were also some presentations about training and investigation.

The Portuguese presentation was made by Paula Godinho and Isaura Manso Neto, entitled: «The indoors opened syndrome: From Diagnosis to Therapy – the Portuguese contribution».

There was a deep interest in group analytic concepts that might contribute to the development of this diagnostic, therapeutic and prophylactic technique.

The most recent book on the GPMF by Badaraco and Andrea Narraci was launched during this event. The title is: «Psicoanalysis Multifamiliar in Italia».

The next International Meeting will be held in Buenos Aires, in 2012. In 2013, it will be held in Madrid.

Isaura Manso Neto

Lisbon, the 12 th. December 2011

Training Member Portuguese Society of Groupanalysis

GAS Full member.

GAS MC member

Papers From the London GASi Symposium 2011

**From Cronus to the father and from the mother to Crohn:
dreaming, proto-mental and mythopoesis
in a small therapy group**

As the session draws to a close an unusual spat arises between Stefano and Maurizio, almost like "Bar Sport" teasing: Maurizio, an Inter supporter, accuses Stefano of rejoicing in the triumphs of Milan, "Berlusconi's team", he retorts. The group listens on but no one intervenes, until Natasha snaps "...to hear you talking about Berlusconi right ... right at a time when you don't hear of anything other than his whores... with this name. My father was obsessed with communism, and he didn't hesitate to give me a Russian name to show his faith ... but now that there are so many girls from the East here working in dubious jobs... people used to make fun of me... and I have never liked my name. I would have preferred to be named after one of my grandmothers." Stefano: "He may well be a womaniser, but as president of a football club ..." and so he starts up again with Maurizio until Tiziana, who over the last few months has intervened only to talk about her intestinal problems, says: "This is just man talk!"

Before bringing the session to a close I make the comment, "It seems to me that in these last few minutes, the group has made reference to, explicitly or implicitly, a father figure who either exalts us or who makes us angry."

The week after Natasha opens the session: "The night after our last session I had a dream... maybe because of some of the discussions we had... I dreamt that zia Tina had a strange pain in her stomach (the Italian for "aunt" is "zia"). My mother told her she would have to go to the doctor for the swelling and she answered: I have already been to so many! And she said it with a strange smile, as if she was alluding to something sexual. Well, I've already told you about my aunt: she was the one who was a prostitute, the poor thing, after being abused by her father; well he was hardly a father, he was a Cronus! An embarrassment my family has always had to carry around "

The session continues with a certain liveliness and the Cronus-father theme comes up several times. In the following session it is Tiziana who starts talking: "It seemed strange to me that last time when we were talking about "zia Tina", nobody remembered that I had once pointed out how zia (aunt) Tina is an anagram of my name, Tiziana. Yet we made so many connections with my fears. We even laughed when I talked about how I have trouble with sexual relationships [vaginismus].

I'll admit that I felt left out ... not even you Doctor ... anyway, that same night, after a long time, I had a dream. I was at the doctor's, to talk about my intestinal problems as usual, because he refuses to do any more analysis on me.

He was examining lots of people all at the same time, and the atmosphere was strange, he was wearing strange clothes ... I would say like a character from ancient times, a kind of fortune-teller or a god, but maybe this comes to mind just now ... and I just couldn't make him understand how sick I really am. Between him and my mother, it seems like a competition to see who understands me the least ... Well, the two people who have known me the longest, as he was already my mother's doctor for her health problems during her last pregnancy period. But the next day I went to see him, very determined, and I convinced him: he referred me to the hospital to do a colonoscopy. I had never been so firm with anyone: I'm tired of being treated like I'm "obsessed". Maybe that dream helped me, then all the discussions which have come out here, Cronus, the sickle, Natasha's father's hammer and sickle, controlling fathers."

There seems to be a clear reference to the figure of the doctor-analyst and the group; it occurs to me that at times I myself have thought of Tiziana as being perceived by her mother as an excrement and not as a narcissistic product. Then I think of the possibility of giving birth to a "different" being through my head and it occurs to me that the birth of Minerva was the result of a severe headache: I make a connection between this and the analyst's mind which, going beyond the limits of anatomy, becomes the mother of a new baby.

Then I think that all Tiziana's interventions in recent times were in fact messages regarding her physical ailments, but that might convey a series of meanings that cannot express themselves in any other way but by using the body as a mediator of knowledge. I then decide to abandon the idea of transference interpretation and I simply say: "It is interesting to observe how Natasha speaks of her Aunt Tina, of her stomach pains and of her let's call it "busy" sexual activity, Tiziana remembers her past sexual difficulties, and in the end goes to the hospital for a colonoscopy: it always has something to do with somewhere "down there", " Tiziana reacts with

one of her coarse laughs [at my attempt to make a connection between the sexual and the anal].

Tiziana arrives for the next session looking exhausted, tense and worried. She begins: "It's incredible, I got the results from the colonoscopy and it turns out I have a form of enteritis. It's a terrible illness, NOT an obsession ... luckily I found out now, otherwise I could have ended up under the surgeon's knife... but the strangest thing is that this disease is called Crohn's disease as well. After all this talk about Cronus... I was really shocked! You knew, didn't you Doctor? "

"That that's the name of the disease, of course. But if you mean that I could have known you have Crohn's disease, ... I would have to be a fortune teller or a god". "It's just that it reminds me of my father. Since his death in that terrible accident in his workshop I've always had this feeling that nobody is taking care of me, ... that men can only hurt me ... "

[[These issues regarding male figures had always been veiled for Tiziana in an aura of persecution, and then extended to other aspects of reality: a tendency that had never become a real interpretative disorder. Tiziana recalls her entry into the group four years ago, the first few months of which almost all the sessions revolved around her inconsolable crying.

When, after a while, one of the girls left our group to go and live in London, Tiziana started to think, despite all evidence to the contrary, that she had left because she couldn't stand all her crying and that the same thing would happen to all the other six members of the group, one after the other. She thought that even I would have eventually been convinced that there was nothing to be done for her and that I would have left her to her own destiny.

Stefano then joins Tiziana's discussion about her father saying "My father was never really close to me either, or at least I've never felt he has been able to help me with things... and he's the same towards the whole family ... and then his company going under . He has many faults: he's always been weak ... it's just that when he found out

he has lung cancer... I felt so guilty... as if his weakness could... (turning his gaze towards Maurizio) he's an Inter supporter as well!"

Maurizio: "But judging by the last few years he's definitely chosen the right team... and he's not a fascist or a Berlusconi supporter." I think with some annoyance "We're still on this "Bar Sport" teasing tangent, just when the discussion seems to be approaching some more engaging issues," and I am reminded of the verses of a song from my teenage years, and while I sit wondering about what everything means the title comes to mind: "At the bar you die" (1).

Then I think of Tiziana's dead father and her fear that I will abandon her too, of Stefano's father's cancer, of Natasha's anger towards her father, of Crohn's disease, of my distaste for the sterility of all this "bar" talk.

I think of my distancing myself from the session by taking refuge in the verses of an old song and of the possibility of my resonance with the group: this "bar sport" behaviour which prevents me from assessing how much suffering is being concealed behind the sports banter and isn't able to be mentalized. I say: "It seems to me that a lot of hate towards fathers accused without a trial, is generating a great fear within the group."

Maurizio immediately breaks the pause by bringing up his father who also died of lung cancer, and who kept smoking even after having been diagnosed, but he adds that maybe this was because of his alcoholism, a disease that "stole his life." Stefano intervenes saying that his father, when it came down to it, had always worked in order to pay back the price of his weaknesses to the "bastards down at the bank".

Maurizio joins in on the attack towards banks, sympathizing with Stefano and his workers. Pierpaolo then intervenes to speak of his troubles dealing with two teenage children. Tiziana informs us on the continuation of her findings and the possibility that the cortisone therapy will keep the pain at bay, her "Cronus". Giorgio is happy with how his insurance agencies are running and says that his father was right after all for encouraging him to pursue his business ventures and not enlist in the police force. The impression is that the intervention of the analyst helped in creating a certain

resonance between the most evolved part of the group's mentality and the more primitive part, who can then be freed from their isolation and contribute to the development of the group, offering both the possibility of the emergence of a different father figure and, through the recognition of their own hatred, a new vertex for the organization of their own subjective identities.

But let us now try to reflect on the whole sequence of sessions, just as they took place ... "crono-logically." It seems obvious how the bickering which arose in the first session has to do with the proto-mental dimension of the group being in basic assumption, where the masculine and feminine collide, like Inter and Milan or Berlusconi and communism.

This proto-mental dimension represents an attempt at avoiding mental conflict and with it the elaboration of the obscure and distressing dimensions of life. The intervention of the analyst, with its un-saturating characteristics, indeed acts within the emotional trans-personal field of the group, opening up the possibility for each member to associatively bring their dreams and fantasies to the session.

In the following sessions it can be seen how the ability to dialogue between the unconscious of different people allows Tiziana and Natasha to recognize repressed parts of themselves involving the oedipal issues from which they both suffer, while at the same time the enigmatic representation of Tiziana's traumatic side reveals itself.

The telling of the dream in the next session to me seems emblematic of how one's own dream activity allows us to capture the primitive modality of relating to one another: Natasha claims as her own the emotional situations that Tiziana is unable to handle and then represents them in dreamlike images which she tells in the session. Natasha performs the transformation that Tiziana is unable to accomplish and, dreaming for her, introduces the theme of a certain "confusion" between the sexual-oedipal and the evacuative- anal.

I would now like to make some comments on the interplay of the projective identifications which in varying degrees involved both the members of the group and

the analyst during the third session I described earlier, which in some way produced the associations of the analyst himself.

The necessary prerequisite is that during group analysis the negative capability of the analyst replaces the traditional position of neutrality and abstinence, and it is this mindset which, allowing one to tolerate the persecution of emotions still deprived of the ability to think, promotes the expression of field function and thus the development of group elaboration, comparable to what is for the individual, the alpha function (gamma function).

The space-time situation which sets itself up as an emotional field in an encounter between two or more people is crossed by emotions which equally affect the subjectivity of the different members of the group and facilitates the dialectical relationship between the oneiric and the mythopoeic sides of the mind.

The myths and their derivatives, even in small group therapy, have an important evolutionary meaning and are articulated together with dreams which, when told by a member of the group, have something to do with the psychic reality of the group as a whole. In this case, I think I can say that the transferential interpretation taking shape in the analyst would not have led to a shift towards a realization in thought of Tiziana's preconceptions attributable to an undifferentiated prenatal state which cannot be defined, as the symbolic elements have not been established yet, to verbal communication and understanding.

I also believe that a major transference investment could have encouraged a certain collusion between the idealization of the analyst and "persecutory-ness": I am referring to proto mental dimension of the basic assumption in the first session, where I preside as a Cronus omniscient of the various couples which have developed, and Tiziana's references to the fact that I could have already known of her Crohn's disease, as she said in the next session, also making reference to a possible link between her mother and her doctor.

A connection was already present during Tiziana's mother's pregnancy which allows us to introduce the themes of bodily codification of an emotional experience, of the

functions performed by the body in primary relational processes and vice versa, and the possible transformation of bodily manifestations from the first stage of aggregation to a stage of realization in thought.

The structuring of the apparatus for thinking requires that there be no excess of disturbing elements as a response to relational, environmental and bodily urges. An ailment in the body may represent a mute expression which is not symbolized and is therefore devoid of the possible sense of a traumatic experience relating to the last few weeks of a pregnancy, a period in which those prenatal parts of the personality, which make up the soma-psychotic part, are formed.

These primitive parts of the personality, an expression of tribal life in the depths of the mind, can express themselves with direct access to those complex processes of defense against the enemies of the body, such as micro-organisms on an external level or cell mutation on an internal level.

At this primitive level, there are no mental representations of emotional experiences that push the mind in the sensory state of beta elements, beta elements that may also be evacuated through somatic innervations.

One could hypothesize that the "swollen belly" Natasha dreamed of for Tiziana doesn't really refer to the intestinal illness of Tiziana herself, but to her mother's grievances throughout her pregnancy, a "mishap" about which we don't know much more than this, but which Tiziana somehow knows about and often makes reference to when speaking about the difficulties in her relationship with her mother. [Is this the enigma?]

Such issues may also have connections to the maternal difficulty of providing the infant alpha function of the child with the contribution needed to process proprioceptive feelings, providing elements for dreams and dream thought of "wakeness".

Let's keep in mind that some dreams may represent an attempt to symbolize very primitive traumatic experiences and that in the group-individual dialectic, through

particular phenomena including reflection or resonance, you have the opportunity to rediscover connections with unelaborated parts of oneself, the remains of traumatic or undifferentiated experiences. These parts are often split at the time of the "caesura of birth" and, remaining outside the formation of symbol and thought, they manifest themselves as bodily states.

(1) I think it's worth making reference to the contents of the verses; it is a type of duet between the singer (C) and a background voice(V): C: They're shooting! V: But not at you! C: They're dying! V: But not for you! C: But for every person who falls, a small part of me dies ...

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The Social Unconscious and the Foundation Matrix – Some Thoughts

As some of you know, I do not make so much use of the idea of a social unconscious, because it reaffirms the split that it tries to overcome between the individual and the social. In my opinion the individual is social through and through – and it is from that starting point, from where a group analytic theory of the individual can start – though I'm not the genius who can deliver it.

I prefer the notion of the foundation matrix, a communicational (including body, music, symbols etc. as media) understanding of (un)conscious processes. And if you visualize different densities of communicational acts, you get maps, clusters, patterns – horizontal in space, vertical in time. Those matrices can be seen as a pattern that generates patterns. And those materials, that are definitely excluded from becoming conscious then might be named "the social unconscious".

But this term is “dangerous” also in another way: It tends to be considered as “a thing”, at least it doesn’t emphasize the processes involved and the ever ongoing changes. It is more on the side of the fixed elements. But I assume that the so called fixed elements are often only the slowest moving ones. Even biology (on which the foundation matrix is based) is not completely fixed. People in northern Europe e.g. become taller every generation. Culture, language etc. are slow moving entities, but definitely moving. And all the different groups and their matrices are overlapping and permeating each other.

I’m hesitant about attempts to identify a, for example, German, English, Christian, Jewish or whatever social unconscious. I am very aware that communities that share deep ongoing experiences develop shared feelings, and fantasies. History and its fallout in narrations, rituals etc. can not be underestimated in the psychic life of groups – as it is part of the group boundary.

But we have to be very careful. Whilst not limiting our efforts only to the individual psyche as an individual one we are entering a territory that is not empty. And if we are not clear about the fact, that we are not dealing with eternal (inherited) but with time bound material, if we leave the communicational ground of processes with multiple actors in favour of everlasting fixed differences, we are not so far from (unwanted) proximities to new right wing thinking, in which culture meanwhile has replaced the notion of race. No one nowadays would formulate things as roughly as Jung did in his paper, *The State of Psychotherapy Today* (1934) "The 'Aryan' unconscious has a higher potential than the Jewish."

But if we want to avoid those pitfalls, we have to be aware, that an entity called the “social unconscious” - moreover defined nationally, ethnically, religiously etc. – is very close to concepts of large group identity. And these concepts (and often not only the concepts but the political practice referring to them) always have a tendency to carry a totalitarian character – as the concept of individual identity does.

I do not want to deny the value of these concepts – but just want to draw our attention to the fact, that very much is left out in making up a clear, unambiguous/not

contradictory image. Identities are consistently under construction, we leave out what is not helpful at the moment and goes against our narcissism – and that holds true on individual and on collective levels.

These processes are always going on and to a certain degree they are necessary for a healthy life. But as scientists we should be careful not to replicate these idealized entities that can soon take on the character of something sacred. And the sacred is the immobilized, if we are in the realm of the holy we can only worship – and then the next holy war might be not far away.

Regine Scholz

Papers From the London GASi Symposium 2011

My Child, an Alien at Home

Backdrop

We are going to tell you the story of a support group for fourteen South-Sudanese/Sudanese mothers which took place between May and August 2010 in Tel Aviv, Israel. Their ages ranged between 28 and 45, they all spoke Arabic and different tribal languages. Thirteen mothers were Christians and one was of Muslim faith. They had lived in Israel for three to five years. The support group met for an hour and a half, once a week, over fifteen weeks, with a Palestinian, Muslim social worker and group conductor.

For the past six to seven years refugees and asylum seekers have been fleeing to Israel via Sudan's border with Egypt. By the end of the year 2010 thirty-thousand asylum

seekers came from Eritrea and about 1500 from South Sudan - mainly Christians persecuted by an extremist Muslim government.

Asylum seekers in Israel are in an undefined state because they are deprived of access to the process of regularization as a refugee. They receive group protection, but they are deprived of basic rights such as medical care, welfare rights, social benefits, or work permits. They are allowed to stay temporarily but they have to renew their visa at the Ministry of Interior every three months. Refugee children attend Israeli schools while their parents try to survive economically by working long hours, mainly in cleaning jobs. Most of them do not know any of the international languages.

Mothers are usually the first to provide containment to their infants, and they are responsible for maintaining a sense of home in the psychological and familial domain. In the refugee population we see many single mothers who experience difficulties in securing protective limits for their children because they work long hours away from home. "My child is an alien at home" is a painful statement by a South Sudanese mother that encompasses all the complications of being a refugee mother. So, it seems mothers are most in need of support with raising their children.

When a donation was received to help mothers, Assaf, the Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel, turned to Elah, the Centre for Psycho-Social support in Israel, with the thought that Elah, with over thirty years of experience in treating Holocaust survivors, would be able to provide the most suitable kind of mental help for the refugees, who had gone through similar kinds of traumatic experiences. Together the organizations decided to establish a support group.

Every week, we (Maha, Orit and Sarah) would meet immediately after the group session. This meeting provided group conductor Maha with a safe place to express her thoughts without restraint. Together we contributed to the initial processing, through which Maha could understand processes in the group and plan the next meeting. A holding structure of three circles has been formed: the support group of Sudanese mothers sustained by a group of Israeli mothers (the supervision session) encircled by the two organizations (Assaf and Elah).

Every meeting was recorded, and towards the end we noticed that we were holding the record of a special event which incited the wish to research and share our findings. We tried to determine whether the concepts of group analysis could be applied to understand the processes that had taken place.

From disorder to order

We will describe the milestones of the group's development, starting with the process through which a number of individual women turned into a group within four meetings. It was very hard to choose between these and so many other important events that have been left out.

During the first twenty minutes the participants come in one after the other, each shaking hands with all the others as customary in South Sudan (They all knew each other from before). When they introduce themselves their religious background becomes prominent from their names (Sandy, Theresa, etc.) and the traumatic experiences of being a refugee come up. They speak fast, can hardly stop, and swallow letters and words when they are overwhelmed. They seem to be in a hurry to say it all at once. During the last fifteen minutes of the session Maha gathers them to make a puzzle with a picture of a mother and a baby on a carpet. The purpose of this activity is to assemble them as a group and to provide the conductor and the group with an arena in which to explore their capacity to play.

The first supervision meeting starts straight after the group session. Maha is excited and speaks fast, like the women in the group, recognizing feelings of closeness as well as strangeness ("the strangeness of a foreigner") with them. Orit adds information about the participants. At the end of the meeting Maha already has a plan for the next group session.

The next three sessions evolve around building a group. During each meeting the make-up differed a little and it was necessary to continue group building while absorbing new members.

At the end of the fourth meeting it was clear that there were:

- a. A setting of alternations between guided activities and free floating speech.
- b. The motivation to connect.
- c. A higher level of listening and concentration.

There was a feeling of continuity and belonging, and central elements of a home experience were established.

The Seventh Session

The purpose of the meeting was to develop listening skills: listening to their own inner world will promote the creation of a space to hear the inner world of their children. The tool was listening to a story, an experience that is common to all human beings on the one hand, and a custom in their culture and that of the conductor on the other.

Maha reads from "Soul Bird" by Michal Snunit:

Deep down,
inside our bodies,
lives the soul.
...
...
Inside the soul,
right in the very middle of it,
there is a bird standing on one foot.
This is the soul bird.
It feels everything we feel.

Maha recalls: "Everyone was sitting in a circle; there was physical closeness between the women and a high level of concentration. The room was completely silent. Every now and then the circle would get smaller when the women bent forward to look at the illustrations in the book. I felt like a mother who sits with her children and reads them a story while all their senses are centred and focused. Their eyes shone while I

read the story, they were engrossed in every illustration while I passed the book, each woman found a page and a picture that she could relate to: "I'm like that exactly". When we finished reading the story we sat quietly for a few moments in containment of the feelings that had overflowed all of us. Then, an open discussion developed , a free floating discussion where participants resonated to their mental states.”

Some women cried softly from the excitement of the closeness they had experienced to themselves and to their friends. Some cried out of yearning for a feeling of safety and being at home in South Sudan. They started to talk about meaningful figures who guided them while they grew, such as their grandmothers, who would tell stories to the children of the family. Some spoke of rejecting their soul birds and being afraid to open up for fear of falling apart and the need to survive and use protective strategies: "My soul bird chooses to be quiet," and "I have no grief drawer, only a drawer of joy."

After the first round I brought up the question: "What conditions does the soul bird need in order to come out?" The discussion that developed moved between what they need to feel comfortable and to open up and what will help their children to open up to them. They spoke of the need for warmth and love and about the wish to find a quiet place. They shared feelings on how hard it was to listen to their children because there are so many of them and they are all different. They spoke about the hardships of disciplining their children and a little about the relationship with their spouses. It was a conversation that mainly progressed spontaneously, each one resonating to the others.

This session was a turning point for the group it had impact on the rest of the meetings and the way they progressed. The following sessions were quieter. They kept the setting, and spoke on different, deeper levels. There was a more intimate atmosphere between the women who felt that there still was something to dream about and to strive for. They spoke about the meaning of life. Through the connection to their childhood memories they felt that there is a place for them, that they are seen and have the right to be who they are.

Enjoying the acquisitions.

During session eight to eleven a more or less steady number of participants took part. They would speak freely, about their weddings, about missing their spouses who live in other countries, missing physical contact and sex, about the fun of having a partner around, about the bitterness and the stress in the family because of the different lifestyle they lead today.

Towards the end

From the eleventh session on the subject of parting came up and with it the request to continue the group. It is difficult to tackle this subject freely. The participants remind each other of the sessions that were most meaningful; the sessions that touched them as human beings and in which their positive traits as mothers were discussed. They remember that only after that they could talk about their children and relate to being a meaningful grown-up for their children. Most women say that their children love them because they are kind-hearted, worry about them and fulfil their needs.

During the last two meetings the participants relate to the subject of parting. They deliberate between the longing for their lives in South Sudan, the wish to go back there the moment they can do so; and the fear of having to change their way of living again, how their children, who grew up here and are used to life in Israel, would manage.

Most of them come early to the last meeting. The assignment Maha gives them this time is to draw the group. One of the women experienced the group as a big container that held all her intense feelings of being a bitter, frustrated refugee. Another says: "I drew the palm of a hand in the form of a flower and a heart to symbolize the conductor who reached out to all of us, touching all of us with each finger." Others say: "I drew myself in South Sudan. There we used to sit like this, with friends. This is how I felt in the group, that it was like how it used to be in Sudan."

Conclusion

We have told the story of a support group that does not pathologise the difficulties of refugee families and instead relates to them as the dilemmas of life in the kind of reality they live in. This is the reality of people for whom the continuation of life has been disrupted because they were oppressed in their native country and persecuted when they fled. As opposed to immigrants who chose to live in Israel, the refugees from South Sudan live in a state of transition. They are not expelled but are waiting to go back to their homeland and in the meantime everything is temporary. Naturally, they find it difficult to create a space where they can feel at home.

The group work consisted of building an experience of continuity in being as a first stage in regaining a sense of home. During the first few sessions expressions of social alienation and the inability to be open with others were prominent. Each participant was engrossed in her own monologue, often a disrupted monologue, which indicated her state of emotional deadlock.

In order to create an experience of holding for the group it was necessary for the group conductor to model ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT according to the special needs of the participants, who all suffered from traumatic disconnection from their foundation matrix. Orit who took care of calling the participants and reminding them before each session and Maha the conductor set a frame of repetitive alterations between a creative group assignment and free discussion which became a ritual in the group culture. The concrete activity together with free floating discussion promoted an internalization of ground rules, and interventions of the conductor were directed to connect participants to themselves and to the others.

The experience of cohesion in the group reconnected the women to a sense of continuity they had lost since they were forced to flee and turn into refugees. Through the rules and the content of the sessions the group becomes a familiar place and creates a feeling of belonging. As Pines says: "Our sense of safety and wholeness is to a large part based on being part of a socio-psychological network." (P48)

That is why by the seventh session there is a certain measure of a sense of home, a sense of coherence and safety in the group. A sense that is enhanced by the assignments. Reading a story is an activity that connects the conductor and the group

to the foundation matrix they all share : the culture of listening to the stories of the elders. In the homely environment that is created it is only natural that the participants will discuss home subjects such as parents, weddings, sex.

Because of efforts made to create a holding for the group each participant starts to be what Pines calls "a double agent". She is at the same time active in holding the group structure as well as a tool through which group processes take place, processes of communications that become more and more free and personal.

Their empowerment as good enough mothers happened through drawing from the well of their own experience. In the group they learnt that they have something worth leaning on that stands by itself: their culture, their femininity, their connection to the experiences of their past.

Even though they all went through horrific traumatic experiences, they dealt little with them in the group. The main work was to rebuild something basic, a sense of home that would recreate their humanity. They could be mothers again because they reconnected to the forces of life. The duration of the group allowed them to find ways of their own to get along better with their children. These results match the findings of other researchers who have worked with refugees such as John Schlapobersky and R.K. Papadopoulos. It is likely that a group of this sort with a longer time span would allow them to go through an additional, deeper processing of their traumas

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Michael Foulkes: A Reminiscence

In 1975 Michael Foulkes suggested that he conduct a group-analytic group of senior colleagues, including founders of the IGA, who had not had the opportunity of membership of a group during their training. The late Dr Denis Brown approached me to ask if I would entertain joining this group, and although I had spent many years earlier on as a patient in a once-a-week group conducted by Foulkes, a fresh look at myself in a different group at a totally different stage in my life seemed on reflection a good idea.

The group consisted of the late Denis Brown, the late Louise Casson (widow of Ronald), Rosemary Gordon (a Jungian analyst), Ross Kalucy (professor of psychiatry from Adelaide Australia), Lionel Kreeger, Malcolm Pines, the late Pru Skynner (wife of Robin) and myself. It commenced in September 1975 and met once weekly at the Group Analytic Practice in Montagu Mansions. It was a highly unusual group, as – with the exception of Ross – most of us knew each other, but nevertheless it was a profitable experience.

On July 8 1976, we met as usual. It was a very hot day, but the ground floor flat of the Group Analytic Practice was not uncomfortable. Suddenly Michael stopped in

mid-sentence and within a few seconds collapsed. Ross, being the only ‘proper’ doctor amongst us, immediately took charge, and together the men placed him on the couch and began artificial respiration. I was instructed to check for a pulse, and someone else went to the office to call an ambulance.

When the ambulance crew arrived, ‘our’ men continued the artificial respiration as he was wheeled out to the ambulance, and I went to the office to phone Elizabeth, his wife. She must have broken all traffic rules and arrived very quickly at Montagu Mansions. We went together to the Middlesex Hospital, where we were taken to the Emergency Room and told he had died. He looked very peaceful in death. Elizabeth who seemed calmer than I felt, told me she had been expecting this for some weeks.

I remember very little of what happened after that, but I know I stayed quite a long time with Elizabeth and I must have cancelled the rest of the day. I eventually went home. I have no recollection of whether my two teenage children were already at home or not, but I do remember weeping when my husband got home some hours later.

Michael had been frail for some time. He had asked me to join him conducting a supervision group during the Christmas vacation of the previous year, where he sat the whole time with a rug on his knees. Elizabeth was very solicitous, but he was clearly quite unwell, although he functioned as skilfully as ever. However I do not think that in the conducting of our therapy group some months later he was quite as on-the-ball as he had been many years earlier – although perhaps with so many other therapists around him, there was also less need for him to intervene!

He was a very quiet therapist, intervening only occasionally, as he truly trusted the group to do the work: the group nearly always did, usually making a very good job of it. As I recall, his interventions were more likely to be questions, which would lead to interpretations by the group members, than direct interpretations.

We members of the ‘last group’ thought the timing of his death was truly remarkable. It was a week or two before the planned ending of the group, and thus gave us time together to deal, at least in part, with the impact of his death.

Today's group analysts are now the bearers of his rich legacy.

Vivienne Cohen

Articles From Selected Journals and Media

1). American Group Psychotherapy Association (2009) - Group psychotherapy emerges as a cost-effective and highly beneficial mental health treatment in challenging economic times.

An increasing number of people are turning to group therapy as an effective and cost-effective mental health treatment in challenging economic times. Recent news stories in The Wall Street Journal ("No Joke: Group Therapy Offers Savings in Numbers," March 24, 2009) and on Good Morning America ("Need a Group Hug in Tough Times?," April 20, 2009) have highlighted the benefits of this treatment modality for a wide range of needs and populations. Children, adolescents and adults can all successfully participate in groups for more acute needs such as depression, anxiety and addictions, as well as personal growth issues such as conflict management and relationship issues. The affordability of this treatment modality, the favourable effectiveness comparisons to individual treatment (equal or better outcomes), and its adaptability to real-world functioning in families, the workplace and communities due to the group setting make this a very attractive treatment option.

Retrieved from

[http://www.agpa.org/newsroom/releases/2009%20Press%20Releases/AGP A-4-09-groups-work-in-economic-downturns.pdf](http://www.agpa.org/newsroom/releases/2009%20Press%20Releases/AGP-A-4-09-groups-work-in-economic-downturns.pdf)

2). Group Therapy Offers Savings in Numbers

Conventional psychotherapy was beyond the means of Matthew Chotkowski on any long-term basis. But a willingness to share the couch with others has made therapy affordable for him.

"Group therapy is at least 50% less expensive than individual therapy," says Mr. Chotkowski, an administrator at a child-nutrition program in Newton, Mass. The 50-year-old discovered that his fear of being judged -- a huge source of anxiety -- was overblown. He calls group therapy "a more realistic environment" than individual therapy for confronting one's fears of other people.

Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123785686766020551.html>

3). Need a Group Hug in Tough Times?

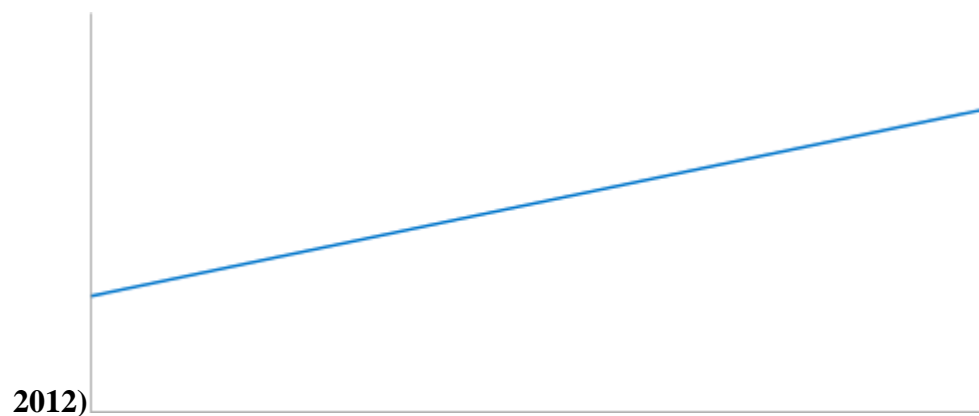
Group sessions are a cheaper option for those in need of therapy.

ABC News Video available at: <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/video?id=7382531>

Terry Birchmore

Website Report

Website Statistics (for 30 days before 7th April



613	Visits
1,656	Pageviews
2.7	Pages/Visit
46.9%	Bounce Rate
00:02:48	Avg. Time on Site
56.28%	% New Visits

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22 en.wikipedia.org

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
102 Belsize Road
London NW3 5BB

Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6611
Fax: +44 (0)20 7443 9576
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

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.

Information About Conference Accommodation in London and Donations to the Society

Please see the GAS Website at:

<http://www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/>