Group-Analytic Contexts

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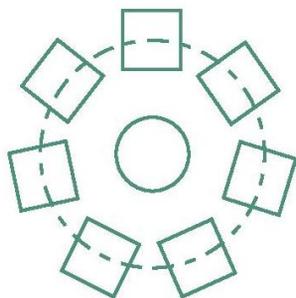
Newsletter of
THE GROUP-ANALYTIC SOCIETY
International

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Editorial

Group Analysis inclines to the horizontal in most matters and, although the vertical is far from excluded (actually it is always located in the horizontal plane), within the preferential conceptual hierarchy of our theory and practice, inter presides over intra, dialogue lords it over monologue, "on the level" democratic participation comes before leadership and hierarchy. We tend (or aspire) towards what Martin Weegmann (2014 – see Jale Cilasun's review of this book in the June 2015 issue of Contexts) calls "horizontal understanding" and "horizontal seeing", which he clarifies beautifully as "not a God's eye view". And yet we know, despite our best efforts and ideals, that our small group analytic world, just like the world in which it is embedded, is vertically ordered, hierarchical, deeply divided, stratified, and so on. This issue of Contexts more or less exclusively focuses on a number of core concerns for group analysts all linked in some form or other to the tensions between the vertical and horizontal.

Zoe Voyatzaki reports on an important but "controversial" development around the outlining and possible subsequent certification of different levels of training within the broad international group psychotherapeutic field. This could result in the global stratification of group psychotherapy. It is clear to me that this is a subject which requires our active horizontal attention.

This year, excitingly, the Foulkes Lecture brought with it a technological innovation (live-streaming) potentiating a widening group analytic horizon. Members are now able to attend virtually, from wherever they happen to be in the world. I'm delighted to say we have a number of reports (from Serbia, Israel and London) by this new category of participant in the event, the virtual attendee.

The Foulkes Lecture also sparked debate on the forum and elsewhere about the nature of the event itself, principally the format of singling out a colleague to lecture us, after all, what form of learning is more hierarchical? I invited a number of colleagues who expressed views on this issue to join me in an e-mail based discussion.

A discussion on the forum (a fragment of which appears) arose around the presence (or not) of the voice of members in training within GASI, as well as the trainer/trainee relationship and the perceived infantilization of trainees within training programmes. Sasa

Bogdanovic, makes an impassioned plea for enhanced transgenerational linking and a greater authenticity from the giants he orbits within GASI's multiple common spaces. In addition, Rob White allows us a candid and stimulating view of his first encounters in, and experiences of, the group analytic world. He gives us a vivid and fresh account of how he discovered group analysis and why he's "both glad and sorry" he did!

Finally, I sometimes wonder about the nature of my relationship as editor with you, the reader. Is it a hierarchical one? After all, becoming editor has required me to enter into the management of the organisation. My role feels akin to that of a public servant, a notion I can feel comfortable with, somewhat similar to Foulkes' servant of the group, although at times this carries a painful servile upstairs/downstairs ring to it for me. In his piece comparing the similarities and differences between conducting a group and an orchestra, Anastassios Koukis gives us a fascinating variation on this as he talks about the "servant leadership" function of both the group and orchestral conductor, perhaps a truly authentic group analytic concept ambiguously combining both the vertical and horizontal planes.

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Peter Zelaskowski

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President's Foreword

Meeting in Berlin – re.: belonging as the cure?

Some of us are already in the midst of the preparations for the Group Analytic International Symposium in Berlin 2017. We, as the GASi Management Committee, talk with representatives of many countries in and beyond Europe; we discuss, sign contracts with organizations, etc. And we, coming from many countries, meet together with Germans. Last week we used the fact that the EFPP (European Federation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy) had their tri-annual congress, to meet with German group analytic partners in the organization of our Symposium face to face. And while we are continuing to do this I want to share some of my reflections on these meetings. I think that the meetings with Germans are now completely different than even 10 years ago….meetings seem so full of a smooth emotional movement, as if it was the most natural thing in the world to meet in Germany. When I asked individuals who were present in the congress, how they feel being in Germany and how they returned to their homeland, many answered that it's not so easy. English people remember their parents' and grand parents' relationships with Germans, while also Polish, Norwegians, Belgian, French, Russian, Danish, Israelis and others seem to be deeply moved by feelings which can be hardly named and are sometimes even of nameless dread. They return home confused between the joy they felt in Germany and other feelings and memories which they were carrying with them, partly unconsciously.

In the Large Group and in the Social Dreaming Matrices some of these issues pop up into consciousness – a Polish woman is so happy her city's name was written correctly in Germany, an Israeli woman says she would never have come to Germany as long as her parents lived. Many other associations make it clearer that Berlin symbolizes something different than 'the old Germany' and that coming to Germany has a purpose. Not that I completely understand the function of meeting with the new Germany in Berlin, but it strikes my mind that it has to do with healing purposes on the one hand and with a very strong group process in the European Matrix: something should be overcome. By meetings now between Germans and Europeans, we are healing relations which were disordered for almost a century.

On the other hand, there are the relations for the Germans and Berlin: it's clear that they want to welcome people from abroad, they seem in a reflective position, having let shame and guilt into their matrix. The meeting between Germans and other Europeans (and Israelis) seems to be a strong reciprocal movement – which changes a relation which was 'sick' for many generations now. It is as if these difficult relations are now undergoing a transformation. Germans, many of them having been quite ambivalent for decades about their own identity and identifications, are the former bad perpetrators who have now for the last 30-40 years worked hard to earn our admiration: they have succeeded to process significant intergenerational difficulties – they have at least partly elaborated on their parents un-spoken guilt. They now welcome many of those who were mistreated and kicked out of Germany – they have reversed into the opposite – and those who were formerly rejected feel good back into the group of those who for the last decades rejected the Germans. We are almost unknowingly doing history by working through the Berlin Symposium.

As Foulkes thought: rejection from a group makes you sick, inclusion in the group makes you healthy.

Is this healing premature? Is it at the expense of repressing many of our feelings? In the Social Dreaming, the day after the last (second) Large Group, there was quite strong ambivalence towards aggression, through dreams and associations with quite aggressive dogs – I thought the emotional movement which started the day before with the questions of curing meetings between Germans and Europeans continued into the confusion of aggression and fears from the perpetrator's anxiety together with strong wishes to be cured by belonging all together in one coherent society.

We certainly will go through this process in the next 2 years and we'll try to keep our eyes and hearts open to difficult moments – but actually it gives us a sense of hope right now.

Dr Robi Friedman

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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 5,000 words long, or between one and ten 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!

Articles are welcome from all those who work with groups in any discipline: whether practitioners, trainers, researchers, users, or consultants. Accounts of innovations, research findings on existing practice, policy issues affecting group therapy, and discussions of conceptual developments are all relevant. Group therapy with clients, users, professional teams, or community groups fall within our range.

Length: Full length articles; of up to 5, 000 words, should show the context of practice and relate this to existing knowledge. We also accept brief contributions which need focus only on the issue at hand: brief descriptions, reviews, personal takes of workshops or events attended, humorous asides, letters and correspondence.

Presentation: articles, letters, etc. should ideally be in Word format and forwarded as an email attachment to the Editors.

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!

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Ms Frederica Brooks
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Frederica Brooks is a Group Analyst and a qualified Health and Care Professions Council Registered Art Psychotherapist. Frederica currently works in the voluntary sector offering individual and group art therapy and group analytic therapy to adults and young people recovering from torture and organised violence. In addition, Frederica is an experiential group conductor for psychodynamic counselling trainees. She began working in the National Health Service over twenty years ago, with groups and individuals. Her work included setting up and running an art therapy service in an adolescent inpatient psychiatric facility in East London. She was concurrently employed at a voluntary sector organisation, offering group and individual therapy to young people recovering from trauma. Frederica is an associate member of the Group Analytic Network, London.

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Kathryn Cave is a children's author, a member of the Society of Authors, PEN, and the National Association of Writers in Education. For the past decade she has run creative writing workshops with groups of children in schools in the UK and abroad. She completed the Foundation Year at the IGA and now rejoins GASi as an associate member. She has an enduring interest in how groups of all kinds function.

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Prof. Jose Pedro Pontes
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José Pedro Pontes is born in 1957, in Lisbon. He holds both a PhD (in 1987) and a Habilitation title (in 1995) in Economics. He has been teaching Economics at the University of Lisbon since 1981, with a specialization in Microeconomics and Game Theory. He is a Full Professor at the University of Lisbon since 2011. Besides his work as an economist, José Pedro Pontes has engaged in long time psychoanalysis (11 years) and group analysis (15 years). He has coached two learning groups at the economics school of the University of Lisbon, which gave birth to two articles: "Coaching a regular economics research seminar at a Lisbon University in 2010-2011", Economics Educator: Courses, Cases &Teaching EJournal, 08/2011; "Using the medical group as a research facilitating tool in an economics college", whose draft is available as a working paper of the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). He was accepted as a Full Member of GASi in 2015.

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Wendy Delyse Schaffer, BA (Hons), U.E.D, Rem.Edu, PhD, MAPS, MCEDP. Wendy studied social anthropology and remedial teaching and worked with children in hospital with emotional and learning difficulties before qualifying as a registered psychologist. She worked at La Trobe University in Melbourne as an experimental psychologist and in the public health system as a medical and coun-selling psychologist before training as a psychotherapist. She comes with a strong psychoanalytically-oriented tradition, working clini-cally with both individuals and groups. She is in full-time private practice in Melbourne.

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Rob White is the author of two books about cinema and one about psychoanalysis: Freud's Memory (2008). He worked in publishing for twenty years before becoming disillusioned. The 2014-15 IGA foundation course in London was part of a new beginning.

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International Standards Network

By Zoe Voyatzaki

In the last few years, a number of group analytic organizations have been involved in an effort towards more organized cooperation with other related organizations around the world, with the aim of discussing issues pertaining to training standards in group psychotherapy and possible prospects of certification and issues arising in our mutual relations. Writing this in my capacity as a GASI member, and especially one who has served on the then GAS Constitution Revision Committee which prepared the necessary changes for our 'internationalization', I consider the above an important development albeit one that has controversial aspects.

Background

The beginnings of this can be traced, I think, to two events. The first is the initiation, by GAS president Gerda Winther, of international discussion meetings within the Triennial Group Analytic Symposia, where representatives from the main group psychotherapy organizations were invited – the first one (Dublin, 2008) with IAGP, EFPP, GAS and EGATIN and the second (London, 2011) with the addition of a colleague from across the ocean, representing AGPA (American Group Psychotherapy Association). The other event, which served as the kick start, was that European and other colleagues had a strong reaction when AGPA renamed their national (American) Board of Certification and called it 'The International Board of Certification'. This reaction prompted the American colleagues to set up a meeting to discuss issues of certification and standards and the ball started rolling…

These meetings have up to now taken place twice a year within the venue of various international conferences. The organizations which have participated in the meetings to a larger or lesser extent, include the following:

AGPA: American Group Psychotherapy Association;
AMPAG: Mexican Association of Analytic Group Psychotherapy;
CGPA: Canadian Group Psychotherapy Association;
Chinese Association of Group Counseling and Group Psychotherapy;
D3G: Deutschen Gesellschaft für Gruppenanalyse und Gruppenpsychotherapie;

DPSedes: Sedes Sapientiae Institute Psychodrama Department;
EFPP: European Federation for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy;
EGATIN: European Group Analytic Training Institutions Network;
FEBRAP: Federacao Brasileria de Psicodrama;
FLAPAG: Federacion Latinoamericana de Psicoterapia Analitica de Grupos;
Georgian Group Psychotherapy Association;
JAGP: Japan Association for Group Psychotherapy;
IGA: Institute of Group Analysis;
IOGAP: International Organization of Group Analytic Psychotherapy –Australia;
Moreno Psychodrama Society;
Singapore Association for Group and Individual Psychotherapy.

   Not all the organizations have been present in all the meetings; some have formed a core group with a more steady presence while some joined late, like the D3G who participated once and then decided to withdraw.

Considerations

One thing that we, as group analysts, may notice is that this list involves a wider circle of colleagues, namely the world of group psychotherapy (including psychodrama). So one might ask why are we involved with what group psychotherapists do across the world? Is this needed? And if so, why? These are important questions and I can only offer my own views on them.

   In Europe we have the experience and privilege of being "… the prevailing form of group psychotherapy" (Schlapobersky, 2015), or as John more informally explained to an American colleague, "group analysis is what we call group psychotherapy in Europe!" However, we cannot expect to find this elsewhere. So if we want to be in contact with others outside Europe and to have the chance to participate or influence developments more widely, we need to "mingle" with other psychotherapists even if they are not "orthodox Foulkesian!" This is what happens or what has already happened in certain countries such as the U.S. and may unfortunately come our way as well. Some European countries are in a sort of Golden Age for group analysis, while others seem to be going 'over the hill' and are trying to make changes in order to survive. In the U.S. the trend may have been much more in favour of long term psychodynamic psychotherapy and for

the rigorous training of therapists in the past, but now short term treatments as well as short term trainings are in demand. The changes that seem to become necessary in European group analytic institutes are also usually in the direction of shorter and more versatile programs. There we are called to ask 'who is really a group analyst?' 'Is a Diploma course enough?' 'What can a Group Practitioner (term coined by IGA London for their new very short program) do?'

On the other hand, countries that are only now 'developing' in terms of psychotherapeutic services, not only need support, guidance and clear ideas about what constitutes an adequate training, but will most probably surprise us by how fast they progress and take the lead.

Last but not least, as I am a firm believer in what our own approach, group analysis, has to offer, I am very eager for it to be made more widely known.

So, in my opinion, Group Analysis needs to be in contact with the wider matrix which envelops it, the sort of foundation matrix, which is the network of group psychotherapists around the world. We all have common problems regarding training standards and certification, and we are all influenced by globalization forces and social and economic change.

Aims and key issues

A formal statement of aims was agreed upon during the Iseo meeting in August 2013:

To promote qualifying group psychotherapy standards in our respective regions with mental health organizations, mental health professionals, governmental bodies, insurers and clients for maintaining the highest standards of group psychotherapy practice and quality care.

1. *To compile and publish regional standards that meet licensing and group psychotherapy agreed criteria. (Specific criteria for regions – Georgia, Australia, USA);*
2. *To promote quality group psychotherapy standards in countries who are in the process of developing group psychotherapy practices and training;*
3. *To encourage networking and cooperative relationships among participating organizations in the International Standards Network.*

Key issues that have been the object of discussion include the following:

Definition of high quality training and high standards; Delineation of the basic tenets of training: Personal Therapy, Theory and Supervision accepted as the cornerstones of an adequate course? How can we deal with the fact that some organizations do not require the sine qua non of training, i.e., personal therapy? The concern that awarding the current 'International' Certification from AGPA to persons in developing countries without the requirement of personal therapy could be misleading;

Compiling information about certification requirements across participating organizations and their members;

The necessity or not of formal certification in various parts of the world: Certification seems to be in demand or is mandatory in certain countries and not in others;

The request of most ISN member organizations that AGPA's certifying board, the IBCGP, removes the word "international" from its title;

Planning a multi leveled scheme of training criteria and thus possible certification in order to accommodate differences.

The controversy over whether a possible certification procedure should be undertaken by one of the participating organizations (i.e., IAGP or AGPA), which may have the practical means and infrastructure to carry it out, or to a new independent body;

Last but again not least: efforts in the direction of establishing a common language and a minimum level of trust.

Recent Developments

A decision has been reached after some controversy, that whatever work is done will be carried out not by any of the existing organizations, but by a new independent body according to the following statement which was approved by the majority of participating organizations:

> *"that each organization commit themselves to send one or two representatives to join an independent Work Group in order to create a network which will examine possibilities for common international standards (multi-leveled) and a further prospect of examining an international certification"* .

This is an important step, which ensures horizontal relations and a representational structure.

The issue concerning the use of the term 'International' by AGPA's Certification Board has proved to be the most difficult one and is still unresolved. It has caused much tension and disappointment. IAGP has been led to take the stand that they will not be present in the meetings until it has changed. More recently the German organization D3G has also withdrawn and even more recently (April, 2015) EGATIN has decided to withdraw mainly for the same reason. Although the AGPA-IBCGP Board sent an apology, they clarified that they are not willing to change the title. The present prospect is that the organizations which no longer find they can share 'the table' with AGPA will continue with dialogue, exchange and cooperation between them.

Repercussions

Group analytic theory and practice has become more tangible and familiar to other organizations and colleagues outside Europe. Group analytic organizations have achieved greater visibility. (For example, although GASI was relatively known to North American colleagues, the existence even of EGATIN was unknown to them, let alone other parts of the world. Since then, it has become not only a familiar, but a highly appreciated organization.)

A level of communication, an understanding of each organization's practices and mutual respect has been achieved between several organizations hitherto practically unknown to each other. A prospect of future cooperation has opened up, despite the differences and the areas of conflict.

Conclusions and proposals

My own conclusion is that despite conflicts and stalemates, there is a lot to gain from cooperation and exchange on an international level for group analysis and that we cannot and should not isolate ourselves in our part of the world.

The road to closer relations and increased cooperation with other group psychotherapy organizations, may be paved with tension and antagonism. But the long term outcome may be worth it. We only need to go back just a few years to remember how tense relations between GAS and EGATIN were. And how now, we can definitely say that "the difficult relationship of the past has been transformed into one of mutual cooperation and respect." (Voyatzaki, 2015)

I consider that a new organization which can function as a connecting and containing network regarding training and standards issues internationally would be very beneficial and that common international advisory guidelines on training standards will prove valuable – much in the way that the EGATIN guidelines, which specify levels of membership for institutes (Introductory, Intermediate or Qualifying) and the EGATIN Essential Training Standards (ETS), have performed an important function. Such guidelines may in the future form the basis for systems of certification valid across countries and continents and may be useful for defining, safeguarding and promoting our profession.

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Reports from the 2015 Foulkes Lecture

Going to the Annual Foulkes Lecture via the Internet

By Bojana Mitrovic

Making a home amongst strangers may be not just a paradox of group psychotherapy but of other groups as well. That evening, our common house was cables and screens through which we were directly connected to the Foulkes Lecture, making me feel less like a stranger in the Group Analytic Society International, which I joined half a year ago.

Group Analytic Society Belgrade organizes twice a year a one-day workshop on topics of group analysis, which always consists of a lecture, discussion groups, supervision groups and the large group. Our idea was to incorporate Foulkes Lecture in our workshop so we could watch the lecture together, after which we would have a discussion group about the topic of the lecture, and then continue with our planned program.

John Schlapobersky's lecture and Gwen Adshead's response were very interesting. In spite of small difficulties with the sound, we really enjoyed our fruitful discussion group the next morning and we all agreed that we are very interested in this kind of 'participation' in the Foulkes Lecture. After that we continued with our previously planned Study Day in which the contents from the previous night's lecture also appeared. This is not unusual given that these are our everyday topics. Since I am writing for the "Group-Analytic Contexts", it is inevitable that I look back at the context in which the lecture took place and in which I live and work. Serbia has been a country with the largest number of refugees in Europe. The disintegration of Yugoslavia made topics from Schlapobersky's lecture, such as leaving home for political reasons and the home that becomes a place of danger, the issues that we encounter daily in a very complex way.

The Group Analytic Society Belgrade was established 20 years ago, in June 1995, at a time when the wars in the former Yugoslavia were still happening. An important part of my professional development took place at a time of isolation of the country and then in 1997 I encountered group analysis. Just like that house from Schlapobersky's lecture, which was protected from the horrors that were happening, thanks to the birth of a baby, I can also feel my personal small

analytic group as a place that, by creating something new, became a refuge that helped me to cope with everything that was happening outside, during the war and the serious political and social crisis in my country, of which we still suffer consequences.

The ending of Serbia's isolation took years and EGATIN Study Days and GASi Summer School in Belgrade, as well as many international conferences and workshops organized by the GAS Belgrade Psycho-Social section, certainly helped me to feel less isolated and more 'at home' at my own home. This kind of connection with GAS International is another important step in this direction but also important for all of us who are not able to attend the Foulkes Lecture.

The traumas in our society are still too fresh and it takes time to reach the point of which John Schlapobersky was speaking - to soften the burden that lay on the responsible generation, but even more important is to comprehend how hard we have to work and how group analysis helps us realize that "history isn't destiny".

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The Live Streaming of the Foulkes Lectures:

"Ego Training in Action" of "Making a Home among Strangers"

By Yael Doron

When I was on my way to start writing about the live streaming of the Foulkes lecture, I found myself humming the new pop song: "Home is wherever I'm with you". I think this sums up, for me, the whole experience.

John Schlapobersky, in a fascinating and illuminating lecture, reminded us of the huge gap in Foulkes' writing: on the one hand, Group Analysis is all about "longing to belong", to get into the group, to feel a part of it, to connect, to feel "at home", but on the other hand, Foulkes himself almost never spoke or wrote about his home, his concrete home, his family and the tragedy they went through in the WW2, as Jews who escaped (and some of them didn't) from Germany.

Foulkes re-created himself from the beginning in England, and his theory and practice are in fact all about "making a home among strangers". We, as group analysts, are used to dealing with those subjects of feeling "in" or "out" with our patients in our small groups, but we also see it when we look at the social arena and the "large group" level.

For me, the opportunity to participate in the Foulkes lecture through live streaming was a way to feel a connection to GASI and my friends, although I couldn't come and actually BE in the event. It's not the same as to be there, of course. I can only hear and see; I can't meet, talk, smile or hug anyone else in the room. I can't thank John and Gwen (Now I can – Thank you J). No one can hear me singing with the songs, clapping my hands in the end, sending David Glyn a kiss back in the end of the session, when he sent us all kisses in the air… But still, it was so good to feel a part, to hear the lectures "on line", in the actual moment of the event. To belong.

Haim Weinberg, who will give the Foulkes Lecture next year, wrote in his book about the "Paradox of Internet Groups" (Weinberg, 2014). He writes about the very special intimacy that can be created in "virtual" online connections. He calls this phenomenon E-ntimacy. I could feel it in that evening: Being alone "in the presence" of significant others – to use Winnicott's wonderful way of putting it – is not at all alone.

Foulkes wrote "In order to see something whole we have, I believe, to see it **in relation to a greater whole**, so that we can step outside of that which we want to see" (Foulkes, 1973[1990], p. 239). I think the live-streaming is a way in which we, the group analytic society, are "stepping outside ourselves": I could feel it from my point of view in Israel, but am sure that John, Gwen and all those present in London could feel it too. This is the way the world "shrinks" and we can better see "the greater whole" – The Large Group as a Whole.

I want to thank GASI, Robi Friedman and the committee for making it happen. Watching the Foulkes Lecture live makes me hope to be with you next year in London, but even if I can't join in the flesh – live streaming will help me and others feel "inside".

"Home, let me come home
Home is wherever I'm with you…"
(Edward Sharpe - "Home")

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On Being Able to Tune into the Foulkes Lecture Live

By Jennifer Mccabe

On being able to tune into the Foulkes Lecture live was a delightful experience. I was at home but busy also with other things that evening. So the screen in my bedroom connected me as everyone started to arrive.... I immediately felt a connected and warm sense of belonging and being at home in the lecture hall as though I had arrived with the early group....and at the same time in the comfort of my own home. From the comfort and ease of my own home I did not have to take my seat in the lecture hall and swivel round or turn my face towards or back from anything or anyone - I could see others chatting and greeting each other ... I was happy and comfortable from my distance but still felt a sense of belonging and being part of the event. I was there and at home at the same time. It was then I realised how I had experienced being cramped and somewhat isolated from the whole when I had attended previous lectures. From home the camera was catching much more of the whole and bringing me in with it.... I could experience being more part of the whole. The experience of being there was lighter and a different frequency to actually being there in person - different and for me interesting as desirable in some ways.

As I had other commitments that evening I had to keep leaving the screen in my bedroom so I was coming and going with the event. This made me recall early theatre where the audience came and went freely chatting and engaging with the performers and others in the audience... As I had to leave the screen I was thankful that I would not miss the experience. Through the wonders of David Glyn and modern technology I would be able to replay as many times as I wanted..... To catch up...

The virtual experience had an immediacy (which to some extent is always ephemeral) and a permanence - with the facility to catch up and replay.

Thank you all who worked hard to make this event including its extended reach possible.

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E-mail Conversation on the Format of the Foulkes Lecture

Conducted during the month after the Foulkes Lecture, May 2015
By Jennifer Mccabe, Mike Tait, Teresa von Sommaruga Howard and
Peter Zelaskowski

Peter: Jennifer, Great to hear your voice on the forum. I noticed that you watched/attended the Foulkes Lecture via the new live-streaming option. I am writing to request that you write something of your experience of the event for Contexts. I hope to include reports on the different ways (and places) in which GASI members experienced the event.

I also wanted to ask whether you could write for Contexts a more extended piece on the point you make about the lecture/didactic format of the event.

Jennifer: Yes I would be happy to provide a paragraph or even maybe two of my virtual experience with the Foulkes Lecture this year. Will let you have that.

With regard to writing something more about the lecture format ... Well that - I am not easily moved to say yes. I have never favoured monologues. What really enables me is dialogue, so perhaps a two hander...some exchange between you and I...if you had the time...we could see where it went and do some editing?

What do you think?

Peter: Thanks Jennifer for agreeing to write something about your Foulkes Lecture virtual experience.

Your proposal is an interesting one. You may have noticed I've been trying to develop dialogue/conversation based pieces, conducted through e-mail. So I'm happy to give it a go. I was also wondering about inviting somebody else, Mike Tait, who also has an interesting perspective on this. What do think about a three-hander?

Jennifer: Yes I really welcomed the newly developing format for Contexts. I suppose if it goes digital that will allow even more interactive...

Yes a three-hander would be fine. I do not know Mike Tait so that will be fresh and interesting.

Have we already begun?

Peter: Hi Mike, I'm writing to you in my Contexts editor guise wondering whether you'd consider taking part in an e-mail conversation/discussion on the theme of the Foulkes Lecture, in particular the format. It would be a three-hander including Jennifer McCabe who has expressed some interesting thoughts on the theme on the forum this week. I thought it would be a useful way to jointly write something about possible alternative approaches, in particular I was thinking about the Warhol 15 minutes of fame model you've been pushing. It would take place over a couple of weeks or more with, hopefully, space to think.

Interested?

Mike: ok.

Peter: Many thanks Jennifer and Mike for agreeing to participate in this conversation. As ought to be the case, I've no idea where this will lead but look forward to finding out. In the days during and after the Foulkes' weekend it's become apparent to me that there is a degree of disquiet and dissatisfaction with the traditional format, in particular the tradition of inviting a figure to lecture us en masse. From your postings to the forum Jennifer and from conversations with you Mike in London, as well as your role in establishing the more cooperative approach used in Aarhus earlier this year, I know that you both have a lot to say about this. Would it be a good starting point if I ask you both to maybe start by saying something about where you stand on this? Personally, I enjoy a good lecture but I am also aware (particularly now I'm involved in the choice) that the Foulkes Lecturer is asked to carry a heavy burden for us during the year in which they are invited to take on the role. Is there a hope they will be the voice of the group analytic zeitgeist and move us forward conceptually? Or are we in some way setting somebody up for a fall? Or, are we being un-group analytic in asking somebody to talk at us in this hierarchical way? Questions questions!! But it's a start.

Jennifer: Is it perhaps the desire to be accepted in the professions, be taken seriously academically, and to still cling to the psychoanalysis. The criticism that is sometimes raised in our community that we (group analysis) have not fully embraced the radical shift from psychoanalysis that our ideas and theories would produce. Perhaps the lecture format is part of that?

I raised the question after viewing the recent Lecture from the periphery where I could observe more of how the format impacted on the group experience. It seemed a very un-group analytic way of doing things.

Mike, where can I learn more about the 15 minutes of fame model you pushing?

Mike: I think that the 15 minutes of fame was Peter's description but during the Lisbon symposium - in conversations in the evening (mainly involving people based in the UK or in Denmark) we decided to meet again and continue our discussions. So we met 6 months later in Aarhus in Denmark. It was all by word of mouth, no secretarial input and no fees paid for any contributors. People were invited by word of mouth (including at quarterly meetings - although you didn't have to be a GAS member to come) and then added to the email list and removed if they didn't respond to communications.

About 18 of the 25 people (approx.) who came had been at Lisbon.

The Danish people who didn't have to pay for transport or accommodation paid for the venue. There was no fee and people paid for their own food. We liked the idea of a worker's cooperative.

There seemed to be a theme of the shadow in many of the conversations in Lisbon so that became the theme for the gathering last February. People contributed according to their enthusiasms. Three people offered to do papers and two to run workshops - as well as others to conduct the social dreaming groups in the mornings and median groups at the end of the day.

However several people, who were a bit daunted by the idea of giving a paper, felt they would like to contribute something - and so we thought of encouraging a larger group of participants to each take ownership of 15 minutes to use in whatever way they wanted. If they felt they had nothing to say, they could conduct a discussion or a meditation.

In practice 7 people volunteered and all had plenty to say. What was interesting was that most begun by thinking about work with clients in relation to the theme of the conference - the shadow - and then realized that they were talking about themselves and so gave personal reflections for 15 minutes. At the end of the conference there was a general acknowledgement that this was the part of the weekend that had most impacted on people.

We agreed to meet again in 6 months in Inverness - the last weekend in October - the weekend after the GAS quarterly meeting. The membership remains open and it seems likely that we will have quite a few more 15 minute contributions. The theme continues to be the shadow as it seems endlessly evocative. So if anyone wants to come we simply add them to the email list. If for any reason they can't come - just inform and be taken off the email list. No registration and no payment.

As for the Foulkes lecture, I'd first want to acknowledge that the lecture and the study day was packed and so perhaps meets a need in its current format. Perhaps the kind of events in which as many people as possible discover their own authority and expertise - without projecting it upwards - would take place on other occasions.

The advantage of 15 minute presentations rather than simply experiential groups, is that like a lecture, they encourage people to crystallize their thoughts and present to a group a coherent, and to some degree metabolized, line of thinking. As with a lecture, many of the presenters found it initially anxiety-provoking but seemed to discover how much they knew and had a sense of achievement when they presented and then entered into conversation with the group. Interestingly, there was no sense of offering something of less value than those who gave longer lectures. In fact, I think part of the reason they were so powerful was that there was not time for acknowledgements, introductions or diversions. They had to be concise. The themes were based on individual's preoccupations and thoughts that were central to their being. Theory could be acknowledged but there was no time to disassociate into theory. Presenters were all in their words in a way that is more difficult when the presentations are much longer.

It would be interesting to have a gathering in which everyone presented in that way.

I could imagine a conference with a theme e.g., the matrix, gender, destructiveness - whatever - in which 15 minute presentations were done by individuals who worked with different groups or in different contexts. It would be interesting to say have two 90 minute slots - the first consisting of 6 fifteen minute professional reflections on the theme - followed (perhaps after a reflective group and coffee) by - the second 90 minute slot involving six 15 minute personal reflections on the theme - possibly by the same speakers to discourage professional disassociation - although I also like the idea of as many people being involved as possible. Could this operate as a Foulkes lecture?

I imagine that many people would suggest it was serving a purpose rather different than a Foulkes lecture, which as I understand it, includes acknowledging individuals for their contributions to Group Analysis.

I guess as a personal learning style as I get older I feel drawn to and connected with - something which feels more cooperative. I like the idea of a median group in which all participants presented something and then had experiential time together to reflect on it. I hope that the shadow workshops continue every six months, continuing to experiment with learning styles, at least until the symposium in Berlin.

Yours in cooperative thinking.

Jennifer: This is a very interesting initiative...an experiment with form and collective contributions. Thank you for setting this out.... it is good to know that this will now be on record in Contexts.

Is it generally understood that the purpose of The Foulkes Lecture is to honour one of our number annually for their outstanding contribution to Group Analysis?

My mind is rather like a group at the moment full of so many strands of thought and connections that it feels impossible to narrow and focus. Following from this theme of the Foulkes Lecture - its format - and its purpose...

If the purpose of the Lecture is to award one of our number...this quote from Martin Amis in his autobiography, *Experience*:

> "My Father's deepest fears, a man who refused to drive, refused to fly, could not easily be alone in a bus, train or lift, did not want to go to Portugal, the trip was forced on him by the terms and conditions of the Somerset Maugham Award - a deportation order he called it in a letter to Philip Larkin ('forced to go abroad, bloody forced mun')".

May make us think again of how to do that. It made me think of how those who had been asked to give the lecture may have considered it. Perhaps some quotes from them in this edition of Contexts as well? A way of further investigating this theme.

Mike: Peter you spoke about a 3 way dialogue. Are you happy if I copy more people into this conversation?

Why do I think that the Foulkes lecture involves a particular form of recognition? I feel a bit uneasy making statements that might benefit from a wider variety of mirrors?

Teresa: While I agree with Jennifer that the Foulkes Lecture is not very group analytic, many people who are not group analysts join us for the evening. Perhaps the lecture format is an easily accessible way of reaching out to these people and letting them know a little about how group analysts think. "I'm an ordinary person!" as an economist said to us in our 'turn to your neighbour' conversation.

Perhaps prospective Foulkes Lecturers could be encouraged to think creatively about their presentations just as I am when 'teaching' on various courses. Is there another approach or format that 'Foulkes lecturers' could use or develop to let others know their thinking?

One big problem that is not generally taken into account enough is the problem of language. People who do not have English as their first language need English speakers to remember to speak slowly. Unless they do, many people feel hugely disadvantaged. Having overheads helps but the text needs to be big enough and dense enough to be easily read.

In Aarhus, we were a group of about 25, all group analytical thinkers. Expanding that approach to a Foulkes Lecture where there may be 400 people present coming from many different backgrounds, languages and methods makes it more difficult but not impossible to think beyond the straightjacket of the lecture format.

And lastly, I don't think we should underestimate the role of anxiety in making this event a success, for the lecturers themselves, the organisers and the listeners.

Peter: I, like you Teresa, in my own teaching tend to use quite a range of approaches. Although at the time I wasn't sure about whether I wanted John's break with the rigid lecture format, now looking back it seems progressive, with the inclusion of music providing a feeling of something much closer to performance. I've often felt, particularly while working with dance movement therapists and art therapists over the past decade or so, that group analysis sometimes feels like a bit of a one trick pony...but then it's a trick of which I rarely tire.

Jennifer, I really like the Martin Amis quote. It's a tremendous burden of anxiety we hand over to the person handed the honour…hardly feels like an honour at all, to have to carry, as Haim is now, the hopes and expectations of this Society for a whole year!!

Jennifer: I thought it was worth considering this quote that John referred to in his lecture this year:

"ONCE a year those of us who have been touched by S. H. Foulkes' liberating influence gather, on the occasion of this Annual Lecture, to honour his memory. In his technique of group analysis we acknowledge an immensely creative way of learning that has enhanced our professional work and continues to illuminate and enrich our lives. To remember Foulkes and thank him for this fine gift, one of us is privileged each year to share with others what we have made out of what we received from him, and **I** am happy that the honour has this year fallen upon me."

It was of course Robin Skynner in the 1984 - 8th Foulkes Lecture. "Institutes and how to survive them".

At least as John pointed out things changed after that year adding a response to lecture and questions followed by study day.   This year John brought even more changes to the lecture format - as many as the actual structure of the hall would allow.

However is it now time to think about whether a different structure is possible without losing what is valuable about the event. Or do we need it as a homeopathic remedy each year!

Mike: I continue to be in 2 minds. I can see that the Foulkes lecture in its current format may perform a valuable role for the society.

I also resonate strongly with Jennifer's early challenge as to whether we are willing to embrace the potentially radical challenge of group analysis in the ways that we choose to interact each other - whether we have the courage of our convictions. But then perhaps the definition that often gets quoted involving 'therapy of the group by the group including the conductor' echoes that ambiguity. In what way is the conductor part of the group - including the vulnerable, confused, infantile parts of the conductor - resonating with group members and unable to be neatly

separated by notions of counter-transference? Do most conductors see themselves as primarily 'a trained professional' rather than 'a fellow human being' in the way they understand their roles? Does the structure of the Foulkes lecture reassure us of that separation?

What is the nature of the democratization that we practice? Perhaps the Foulkes lecture format remains in tune with the continuing thrust towards regulation and professionalization rather than pointing towards a more radical and open-ended form of exploration which may be seen as out of tune with current social developments - hence outdated. And yet whilst 'regulation' and 'professionalization' may address 'boundary violations' and prioritize 'technique' and 'practice', I'm not sure how well they address empathetic difficulties. These seem to be more chronic and more difficult to think about together - but sometimes get acknowledged when group analysts speak about which of their colleagues they would refer a particular patient to - or when they speak about the limitations of their own analysis. I wonder whether the development of this standardizing focus is linked to the social side-lining of group analysis. Is it just the absence of funding or is there a real question about how radical, exploratory and leading-edge group analysis really is?

Peter: Any concluding thoughts?

Jennifer: This looks fine... Another conversation without conclusion which seeks to question how we do things and why.... All very group analytic I think!

Mike: I'm not a natural conversationalist in this mode and feel that I've made speeches rather than conversing. I hope that's not what I do in 'real' life!

Peter: Many thanks Jennifer, Mike and Teresa for entering into the spirit of this. I agree Jennifer, I think this multiperson discussion piece (and all its gaps, silences, surprising turns…) has a certain GA'ness about it, although the editing does kind of go against the grain.

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Group Analysis and Music: Similarities and Differences between Conducting a Group-Analytic Group and Conducting an Orchestra[1]

By Anastassios E. Koukis

ABSTRACT

Based on the author's dual identity as group analyst and musician, this study extrapolates on Foulkes's (1964, 1990) metaphor of the two fields and shows how the art of conducting a group-analytic group resembles that of conducting an orchestra. These arts are similar in that they constitute a means of strengthening the power of the group on the one hand, and the orchestra on the other, as the basic vehicles of therapeutic efficiency and musical performance respectively, through the functioning of their conductors as symbolic 'dead' fathers, favouring 'servant' leadership. A group-analytic group and an orchestra, although differing significantly, both serve the melody as extracted by either the score or the improvised prosody of human vocalisations in free-floating group discussion. The group evolves as an orchestra playing baroque rather than classical music, as its development follows the pattern of a baroque overture or symphony, or that of a classical forma-sonata. It is the conductor's duty to facilitate the melodic evolution of the group/orchestra primarily by monitoring its tempo (Wagner, 1869), thereby fostering its therapeutic effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Does the act of conducting a group-analytic group, which is a scientific activity in a clinical setting, present substantial similarities with the act of conducting an orchestra, a highly artistic procedure in a performance context? Foulkes (1964, 1990) frequently refers to the group-orchestra analogy and to the group analyst as conductor, indicating that he conceived the similarity between conducting a group and conducting an orchestra as a matter of fact rather than just a metaphor The issue has not yet been explored systematically,

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[1]Part of this paper was presented at the 16th Symposium in Group Analysis, "Art meets Science: Exploring Challenges and Changes", Lisbon, 28 July-1 August 2014.

although there are a few studies that draw a general analogy between listening to music and listening to a group, since both are based on an evolution of themes and processes (Strich, 1983; Powell, 1983); or further conceive the group matrix metaphorically as the true music of the group by considering the conductor as a significant note (the tonic or dominant one) among other notes (group members) and the group as a concerto which, due to its rhythmic temporal patterns of tension, is attuned to the release caused by the resonating inter-subjective time of group interrelationships and the construction of joint meaning founded on innate human musicality (Wotton, 2013a, 2013b; Thygesen, 2008). Others emphasise their similarities by tracing some strong analogies between conducting an orchestra and a group-analytic group (Pisani, 2014). In this paper an attempt will be made to corroborate Foulkes' view of the substantial similarity between these two activities through a systematic study of the rationale and technique of each one. Theory will be related to clinical material, and ways will be shown in which group analysis can be conceived as both a scientific and an artistic activity, further strengthening its therapeutic effect.

THE ORCHESTRA AS GROUP AND THE GROUP AS ORCHESTRA

At first sight an orchestra and a group-analytic group have nothing in common. The group-analytic group is an artificial entity functioning in a clinical setting as a strictly closed system (Foulkes, 1948, 1964). As such, it has no specific task to perform (Foulkes, 1975); it meets solely to help its members negotiate their unconscious inner conflicts that first arose in their families, as expressed in the here and now situation, through the dynamics and the free-floating discussion of the group on a personal level and to alleviate the symptoms engendered by them. The unconscious meaning of the dynamics developed in the group, which are mainly based on phenomena such as mirroring and resonance, is carefully interpreted and the patient is actively engaged in the interpretative work, as is the group as a whole. The group and the therapist represent a mother and father figure respectively on the transference level. The members sit in a circle with a table in the middle, together with the conductor, who facilitates the communication process and the development of group dynamics through his/her

non-intrusive and non-censuring stance (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957; Foulkes, 1964).

In contrast, a symphonic orchestra, which evolved from the baroque orchestra of the late seventeenth century, is a real-life task group that meets frequently to prepare and present music to an audience. The baroque orchestra, which used mainly string instruments, consisted of a small number of musicians and thus did not need a conductor (usually the first violin performed some kind of conducting). But it was decisively modified in the mid-eighteenth century by the Mannheim school. During this period, the various instrumental groups were, for the first time, placed on a stage in front of a conductor. The Mannheim school also invented and imposed the colours of musical dynamics (*crescendo-diminuendo*) and rhythm (*accelerando-rallentando*). At the end of the eighteenth century the use of orchestral instruments was extended and led to the classical orchestra, which, unlike that of the baroque period, required a conductor. The number of musicians in the orchestra, from baroque to classical and from there to the romantic period in the nineteenth century and to the modern post-romantic or post-classical period in the twentieth century, increased progressively (Bekker, 1963).

However, despite the above differences, the musicians in an orchestra, like the members of a group-analytic group, cannot exhibit all the communicational patterns involved in a performance unless the conductor is present to function as the third factor between each member separately and the group as a whole, thereby initiating the beginning of the group and facilitating its evolution. Furthermore, many group phenomena or dynamics as developed between the musicians in the group and between the group and the conductor, function as vehicles and necessary prerequisites for the music to be executed as successfully as possible through interpersonal and transpersonal relationships (Wittry, 2007). On the other hand, the group-analytic group, more than a symphonic orchestra, resembles a chamber group, such as an octet or, in its optimal form, a trio-sonata of the baroque period, the difference being, unlike both these musical groups that use an informal conductor, the group-analytic group, like a classical or romantic orchestra, uses a professional conductor (Wagner, 1869; Berlioz, 1902). But even in the form of a chamber orchestra, the evolution of the group presents a number of similarities with the evolution of many musical pieces and their execution in symphonic

(homophonic) music. These similarities will be considered as the musical features of the group-analytic process, and will refer not only to elements such as form, rhythm (mainly tempo), dynamics, melody, harmony, timbre and texture, which are common to both music and human speech, but also to the total architecture on the basis of which the group-analytic process usually evolves, which resembles the polyphonic structure of a baroque fugue or the structure of a sonata form. In this sense, any group session is a performance in itself, the main difference being that there have been no rehearsals. The study of all these elements is the object of the last part of the present paper.

THE NEED FOR A CONDUCTOR

The symphonic orchestra is known to deal with a series of complicated factors such as the right tone, the balance between instruments with a different sound and dynamic, intonation, tonality, rhythm and the correct interpretation of the score (articulation, styling, phrasing and dynamics). The latter is usually indicated by the composer but in a manner open to subjective approaches. To keep it all together in a coordinated way, a conductor is needed. It is he who assumes the role of persuading the members of the orchestra to trust him and follow his interpretation of the particular piece of music. The conductor has the technical ability to conduct and communicate the music without speaking, while standing on the podium playing a pantomime with his whole body, his eyes and especially his hands, that address rhythm as well as indicating melodic flow, colours and dynamics (Wittry, 2007). "The conductor is a kind of sculptor whose element is time instead of marble" (Bernstein, 1955).

In addition, the conductor represents for the members of the orchestra a father (or mother) figure for latent transference on the unconscious level (Wittry, 2007). If the musicians in the orchestra do not trust him as a father figure for his pre-eminent musical knowledge (Berlioz, 1902) and leadership, based on respect and trust rather than on his position (Wittry, 2007) and above all, for his love of real human fraternity rather than himself (Wagner, 1869), why should they follow him and play for him? Any morbidity engendered by the experience of the interactions and dynamics between the conductor as omnipotent primordial leader/father and the members of the orchestra as immature children is either suppressed or sublimated by being channelled into the only divine entity unanimously recognised by the musicians,

which is the music. According to Freud (1912-13) and Foulkes (1964), the conductor remains in essence a "dead"/symbolic father because the higher symbolic meaning of the music with which he identifies has replaced all speech on his part. The conductor is openly "alive" solely by giving instructions behind the scene during rehearsals. During the performance he is only phenomenally active and in the position of a "live" father (by cueing entrances, holding fermata etc.); in fact he is conducting the orchestra from the position of a "dead' father" It is through this position that the archaic leadership (sometimes tyranny) exhibited during rehearsals is transformed into leadership in the sense of servant leadership, meaning that the conductor is used by the orchestra as an instrument, while he too uses the orchestra as an instrument (Wis, 2007). This is done by trying to keep the orchestra in a state of constant tension to produce refined sound, by avoiding the extravagant gestures that represent omnipotent archaic leadership. The conductor likewise helps musicians to become autonomous players and decision-makers. The ultimate goal, however, unlike group analysis, is for the ensemble to develop beautiful sound and to perform successfully. The paradigms of ideal conductors, in the sense that they represent a "dead" rather than a "live" father, are abundant. Leaving aside the first great conductors, such as Hans von Bülow and Gustav Mahler who, according to the sources, were more authoritarian/"live" fathers than "dead" fathers in the sense of servant leadership, suffice it here to refer to modern conductors such as Arturo Toscanini, Karl Böhm, Georg Solti, Herbert von Karajan, Dimitri Mitropoulos and Leonard Bernstein or nowadays Riccardo Muti, Simon Rattle, Valery Gergiev and Gustavo Dudamel (although they all make extensive use of hand or body movements and facial expressions indicating strong leadership) or to Claudio Abbado, Daniel Barenboim and Zubin Mehta, who conduct an orchestra with the greater subtlety and serenity generated by their smooth, minimalist hand/body gestures and facial expressions in a manner achieved solely by Richard Strauss among the earlier maestros.

The role of conductor of the group as Foulkes (1964, 1990) described it, is reminiscent of the maestro's position in reverse. Unlike the maestro, the group analyst, despite being silent for long periods, is presented from the beginning of the group as an active "live" father and continues to be "alive", as an authority figure who possesses the legislative power of speech as well as the power of

expression through body language and gestures, as long as the group lasts, and especially when the group, whatever its level of maturity, requires it. This automatically ascribes to the group analyst the position of primal omnipotent father, and of transference figure on the unconscious latent level. This happens so that the group analyst can progressively lead the members to understand "by default" that their need for dependence on a leader is precisely the source of their symptoms (Foulkes, 1964: 54). This is the reason why, on the manifest level of current intercommunications and dynamics at every session, the group analyst simultaneously participates from the position of "dead" father by trying to conduct the group in the way a maestro conducts an orchestra. By avoiding identification with the role of the "leader *of* the group" that the group projects on him, the conductor essentially registers himself as "dead" father or "leader *in* the group" (Foulkes, 1964: 61) (my italics). By trying to keep silent in most cases, he conducts the group through his non-verbal communication with its members, by following in full mindfulness the deeper unconscious inner voice of each member separately and of the group as a whole. He mainly communicates his agreement or disagreement with attitudes and aspects, or marks the possible desire of a patient to speak or to pause through his discreet, smooth facial expressions or body language. Furthermore, the conductor facilitates group intercommunication by analysing or interpreting the group process, in servant leadership terms, by using the group as an instrument and at the same time allowing himself to be led and used as "an instrument of the group" (Foulkes, 1964: 57). He thus "digs his own grave as a leader" (Foulkes, 1964: 62), hoping that the idea of the group analyst as a leader who maintains the infantile neurosis of the patients will progressively decline, while the group itself will be identified as a figure with real strength that helps patients to become better adjusted to reality. Unlike the orchestra, the ultimate target here is the therapy of the individual, the group being only a means to achieve this end.

To describe the simultaneous empowerment of the group and the fading idea of the group therapist as a leader/'live' father, Foulkes (1964: 59) makes metaphorical use of the simultaneous and continuous execution of the dynamics of a "crescendo" and "decrescendo" (or diminuendo) move in an asymmetrical way, which in real music is rare or exceptional (Todd, 1992; Huron, 1990). As long as the group progresses towards maturity, the power of the therapist as

leader diminishes (*diminuendo)* and the power of the group is rein-
forced (*crescendo*) in a constant interplay. This resembles the way in
which, in an orchestra, some instruments cease progressively to play
(not necessarily in a *diminuendo* but as fading of the sound) while
others enter playing in either a real (expressive) *crescendo* (empow-
erment of the sound) or an inner (intensive) *crescendo* engendered by
the phrasing as a tendency of the notes of an ascending scale to reach
their target (Scherchen, 1953). At the end, the orchestra, usually as a
whole, will conclude with a real *crescend*o, combined with an *allegro*
or *presto* tempo indicating the ultimate triumph of the music itself as
expressed by the orchestra and the fading out of the maestro through
his assimilation into it. In the same way, the patients' therapy will
conclude, session by session, with a *crescendo* by which the inter-
nalisation of the group as mother figure has achieved its highest level
as real inner strength (in contrast with the power of the leader being
in *diminuendo*) together with which the internalisation of the conduc-
tor's strength as 'dead'/symbolic father is signalled.

INTERPRETING THE SCORE AND INTERPRETING THE GROUP-ANALYTIC PROCESSES

Human speech articulation expresses an unwritten score that is pro-
duced instantaneously in an improvised way, and is based on the
inherent musicality of the language, the voice being the first primor-
dial instrument (Ross, Choi, & Purves, 2007; Malloch & Trevarthen,
2009). A group-analytic group and an orchestra share melody and, as
Wagner (1869) persists in saying, it is impossible for a conductor and
an orchestra to find the right tempo and the right phrasing and
dynamics of a musical piece unless both continuously sing the music
to be played. Foulkes (1948, 1964), on the other hand, maintained
that group-analytic sessions develop in specific musical keys under
the influence of the conductor's culture. This alone implies that the
group analyst/conductor cannot simply be a significant note (the
tonic) between other notes by not imposing the tempo of the group,
as Wotton (2013a) argues. The group situation, as we shall see, tends
to evolve in ways that resemble atonal music. Wagner (1869) cor-
rectly insisted that a successful musical performance depends totally
on the degree to which the conductor has conceived and imposed the

right tempo and modulations on the music to be performed according to his personality and culture. Similarly, constant regulation of the tempo is of extreme importance in the group. Unconscious mental processes are in themselves *"timeless"* (Freud, 1915: 187) (Freud's italics), so their smooth and effective expression through speech and dynamics in the group's real time is crucially dependent on the ways in which the tempo of the group is manipulated.

By combining the views of Foulkes and Wagner, we support the notion that instrumentation and tempo, together with the fine tuning of every member or instrument of the group or orchestra, and then of the group as a whole, thereby leading to fine intonation, constitute the cornerstone of every group-analytic session or performance and of the establishment of the group-analytic culture (Foulkes, 1948, 1964). Correct instrumentation depends on the selection of appropriate patients, generally conceived as an ideal mixture of personalities with both active/higher and passive/lower voices. Fine tuning of the group/orchestra is also linked with the voice's pitch. In a group-analytic group, which resembles a chorus more than an orchestra, not only are the high-pitched voices of women and the low-pitched voices of men intermingled, but very high notes and very low notes rapidly interchange with each other and pitches either change gradually in small steps (conjunct) as usually happens in classical music or jump up and down in large intervals (disjunct) as in baroque music, thus forming the contour of a wide-range octave (Caplin, 1998; Maunder, 2004).

However, unlike the orchestra, which must be fine-tuned at least an hour before the performance begins (Scherchen, 1953), the group and the conductor should tune themselves in an instantaneous and highly improvised way (Foulkes, 1990; Wotton, 2013a). Our experience indicates that the tuning of the members of the group/orchestra with their personal inner world, with each other, with the group as a whole and with the group analyst/conductor takes place just a few minutes before the latter enters the group. The group, once gathered, resembles an orchestra whose members are either tuned in or not tuned in to an intermingled consonant and mainly dissonant murmuring. It is up to the conductor, before entering the group, to find a way to listen to every member's voice, tone, pitch and dynamic as expressing the general mood, mentality and dynamics of the group at the moment of the group-analytic situation, and to fine-tune himself to it. It sounds

paradoxical for the conductor to be fine-tuned to a group in which dissonance rather than consonance prevails. However, unlike an orchestra, the group is not present to perform in full harmony. Its purpose is to develop in a smoothly dissonant rather than consonant manner, since dissonance is conceived as better expressing unconscious conflicts and a sign of the group's maturity (Davies & Richards, 2010); the conductor's aim is to achieve a harmonic result and therapeutic effect at the end of every session.

But the conductor, despite his/her fine-tuning with the group, unlike the conductor of an orchestra, cannot preconceive the issues that will arise in any group session or the group tempo and dynamics that will develop, because of the improvised nature of the situation. This is why he/she is advised always to enter the group by following a tempo that is initially rather *lento* to *adagio*, through his/her thoughtful and deeply reflective attitude, as expressed by slow body movement and receptive silence. Before the conductor enters, the group's tempo is sometimes *andante* to *allegro* or *allegretto* or, on the contrary *adagio*, *lento* or *largo* depending on whether the mood of the group reflects cheer or sadness. In order for the group to transform conventional conversations into free-floating discussion, the group-analyst/conductor is advised to set a *lento* pace. This can either be fine-tuned with the group's sadness as expressed through its *lento*, or function as a meaningful container of the group's joy as expressed in *allegro* forms. Progressively the *lento* can be transformed into *largo, adagio* or *andante* in an *accelerando,* or it may return to the initial *lento* in a *rallentando* or *ritardando* depending on the evolution of the group-analytic situation. It is in this sense that the conductor follows the tempo of the group without imposing his own tempo on it.

Regarding the conductor's interpretative and analytic stance, it is of extreme importance for him/her to lead the group in the way an ideal conductor would lead an orchestra. The more subtle his verbal and non-verbal expressions are, the less intrusive he becomes, with the result that the group is left alone to perform freely. The mean dynamic of a group's speech, like the mean dynamic of an orchestra's playing, is *mezzoforte* which is embroidered by instances of *piano/pianissimo* and *forte/fortissimo* on different levels, *crescendo* and *decrescendo*. As all these are improvised, the group conductor, unlike the conductor of an orchestra, does not prescribe or cue them, although he can direct them unconsciously (through his/her counter-transference feelings) or

consciously (depending on the needs of the members and group). The same is true of the "entrance" of the members' voices/instruments. Unlike the orchestra, each member is called upon to contribute to group communication when and if they want; and as in an orchestra, the conductor can selectively cue some entrances verbally or non-verbally, or stop and prevent others.

Another important issue on which the conductor must concentrate is the rhythm and timbre of the members' speech. The main difficulty here is that group members, unlike the members of the orchestra or soloists in a concert, because of resonance phenomena (Thygesen, 2008), enter the discussion/performance not as partial groups of instruments/voices or as solo voices in harmony with the group, but in a narcissistic way, as soloists in the context of a vocal melody which has no specific rhythm or is interwoven with different rhythms superimposed on each other. The texture of the group-analytic melody is a complex issue since, unlike polyphonic simultaneity as expressed by improvising music in music therapy groups (Davies & Richards, 2010), it more closely resembles early polyphonic melodies in the sense of separate monophonic melodies that succeed one other, rather than mature polyphonic melodies (the voices of the group enter successively and contrapuntally, as in polyphony, but are not developed in parallel) (Butterfield, 1997; van der Werf, 1997; Fallows, 1997) or homophonic melodies (it is doubtful whether voices that are sometimes heard in parallel form specific chords) (Shenker, 1906). Despite this, the conductor must always try and answer questions such as whether the sounds occur at regular and constant intervals, or regarding the measures of which each rhythm consists (Wotton, 2013a). Unlike the conductor of an orchestra, he must not beat a rhythm; yet, he must notice whether pauses occur suddenly after a frantic flourish of speech or the words end slowly in a natural break, and whether pauses with a long duration, from one to ten or more minutes (which, unlike a musical score, are customary in the group-analytic situation) have any significant value. Similarly, on the level of timbre, the conductor must notice whether the members' speech sounds rough and hard, cold or warm, intrusive or reflective, sonorous or not, and find the ideal balance by interpreting the unconscious conflict underlying each member's articulation.

Regarding melody and scale, the group is not like an orchestra, but more like a chorus with an antiphonal effect. Some members use

longer, usually unpaired, phrases with regular rhythmic and metric patterns, although rhythmically complex and with few pauses or breaks as in baroque music (Buelow, 2004; Maunder, 2004); others use short phrases usually in contrasting or successive pairing with an entirely different rhythm as in classical music. Others use longer phrases with excessive melodic chromaticism, leading to expressive melodic peaks with freer rhythmic layers*,* as in romantic music (Collaer, 1955; Dahlhaus, 1974); yet others are more disjointed with wide leaps and changes of direction that seem to expand to modal or whole-tone scales or have no rhythm or beat at all, or with a strong rhythm but asymmetric metre (modern music). Harmonic motion, which is assumed to be expressed by the conductor's interventions, mainly in a calm voice, is slow with few chord changes, in the guise of a basso supporting the melody produced by the group, as in classical music (Caplin, 1998), especially when the group is in the depressive position (Klein, 1946). Usually, though, when the group is in either the oral-sadistic stage or the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein, 1946), the conductor's bass line is forced by group interactions to move around a lot, leading to the more rapid harmonic changes and movement of baroque music (Maunder, 2004). In either case, the harmony seems to be ambiguous and sometimes more complex chords (seventh or even ninth) are used, by either the conductor or some members, that are more dissonant than in baroque or classical music (romantic feature). During the period in which a member is preparing to bid farewell to the group, a minor key is often used by the group or the conductor, to express the group's depressive position (Klein, 1946). The conductor can also use a minor key to reduce the anxiety of the group and some members, as expressed in the paranoid-schizoid position by favouring their entrance into the depressive position. In most other cases, the group seems to be in major keys. However, the sense of being in a key is often weakened, with the clear distinction between major and minor being blurred, as in romantic music. In most cases, as in modern music, bitonality or even atonality is employed with dissonance (frequent use of altered chords) that undermines any feeling of a leading tonic or a tonic centre (Dahlhaus, 1974).

And finally, as in modern music, the overall form of group session performances seems like the expansion of a central idea or conflict as presented by a member or members of the group in a circle whose radius expands as each member contributes to the free-floating

discussion with a high degree of unpredictability (Collaer, 1955). The absence of any clear-cut distinction of long movements, clear phrases and form-defining pauses or key relationships is reminiscent of romantic music (Dahlhaus, 1974). By contrast, sometimes one or two themes are presented by some members as the main entrance of voices, and when these voices arrive at a cadence and make a pause, other voices are successively added, sometimes separately and sometimes simultaneously, contributing to the discussion of the themes in a way that resembles the *stretti* of a fugue in baroque music. Then other issues of secondary importance are discussed by the group, similar to the episodes of a fugue, and towards the end of the session, the main theme tends to be repeated as in a fugue (Mann, 1965; Walker, 2000). Discussion is continuous within movements, with long phrases and few breaks at cadence points. Interestingly, when such a situation develops, the themes discussed are treated superficially rather than profoundly, on the border between the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position, so there is a weak change of key usually ranging between the major and minor state of the same scale, as in baroque music. Ordinarily, the group evolves on the basis of the deep elaboration of one or two interrelated themes in a constant negotiation between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position (Bion, 1992). The theme or themes are clearly stated from the beginning, in distinct phrase breaks, and phrases are balanced in a specific key and somewhat discussed during the first movement of the group session. A second movement follows, clearly differentiated from the first, during which themes tend to be repeated in a non-tonic key with the members contributing to the discussion of the themes through their own related experiences. The third movement then comes along to end the session by restating the theme or themes in the tonic. In such cases we could perhaps draw some similarities between the development of a group-analytic session and the development of a three-form sonata in either pre-classic or classical music.

A CLINICAL VIGNETTE

The group-analytic group, a session of which will be presented here, has been running continuously twice a week from 1998 to the present. Over these years many members have completed their therapy and new members have joined the group. Last year, at the session described

here, the group consisted of four men (Andreas, Leonidas, Panagiotis and Petros), and five women (Joanna, Stavroula, Penelope, Alexia and Helen), all of whose psychopathology is mainly neurotic, with a few members showing signs of regression to borderline personality disorder states, plus the conductor. Five members, three men and two women, entered this group after having completed two years of therapy in two different closed groups. The session described here was the second-last before the group stopped for a month's summer vacation in July 2014. All members are present and one of them, Joanna, is preparing to announce her farewell to the group after the holidays. Interestingly, in this session the members have taken their places in the group by sitting in twos or threes according to their previous membership in this group or to their first closed group. The whole situation is reminiscent of an orchestra with three sections of different instruments; the conductor is sitting between Joanna and Stavroula, who are its oldest members (in a sense the leaders of the first violins) and have been in this group since the beginning.

The whole tone of the group as it was "heard" by the conductor before entering the room is on a low-to-medium pitch with the members discussing various themes while different voices successively enter the discussion in a baroque musical way in a key ranging between major and minor scales and in a tempo ranging from *adagio* to *andante*. The mood of the group is rather one of anxiety and sadness in the depressive position, perhaps because the members will be separated from the group during the vacation and because of Joanna's pre-announcement of her departure.

The conductor enters and sits down with slow body movements, after which there is a one-minute pause indicating a general mood of reflection and melancholy. After that the tempo begins in *lento* with Stavroula stating the first theme of the group. Stavroula, a forty-nine-year-old unmarried businesswoman, after the previous group session, paid the two months' fees she owed, and on this occasion raised the issue that, after paying for her therapy, she usually feels emotionally closer to her dead father, as represented by the conductor, and that the distance from her mother, as represented by the group, has grown. Unlike other times, she speaks for about five minutes at a low-pitch and in a rather minor key following the imposed tempo. There is a thirty-second pause and Joanna enters the discussion by presenting the group's second theme strictly related to the first, which had resonated

with her. Joanna, a thirty-five-year-old mathematician, also unmarried, has not yet managed to accept and fully come to terms with the death of her father which occurred suddenly ten years earlier. It is this largely unprocessed mourning for her father's death, together with a very conflictual relationship with her mother, which creates difficulties for Joanna in her relationship with men. Joanna talks for fifteen minutes in a louder pitch (about one fifth above the voice pitch of Stavroula), in a rather *andante* tempo and an atonal scale or sometimes a major scale which imperceptibly only touches the intervals of a minor scale (thus indicating how difficult mourning is for her). She says that her mother, unlike her father, has never supported her and that her mother's identification with her husband was less than that of Joanna with her father. She differentiates her mother from the group, which has supported her, but finds that the conductor is not so good for her because, unlike her father, he does not satisfy her every capricious whim. Stavroula said that she understands Joanna. A two-minute pause followed, signifying a deeper anxiety and anger in the group like an impending storm. The other members listened, and the conductor nodded his head with comprehension and acceptance, in accordance with the evident oral-sadistic stage needs of the members and the group, thus closing the first movement of the session.

The second movement was marked by the elaboration of both themes and began at a somewhat *andant*e to *allegretto* tempo and on the paranoid-schizoid position level, mainly in major scales, by Penelope, a thirty-nine-year-old married teacher, who raised the question about the meaning of the conversation between the two older members. Penelope had lost her father just ten days earlier, and tried to keep cool by avoiding mourning. The themes that were raised resonated heavily with her and, in this sense, she implied that Joanna in particular ought to have resolved these problems or should be able to refer to them in an uncomplaining tone. After that Penelope, and the other women in the group, remained silent throughout the second movement. Andreas, an unmarried twenty-nine-year-old who is completing his engineering degree, stated that he also fails to understand Joanna's complaints about her mother. The pitch of his voice is higher, sometimes leading from *forte* to *fortissimo* and *crescendo*, which is evidently linked with his pain at his own mother's death some months earlier. Joanna continues to speak by defending her views and was frequently interrupted by Andreas, who, by being in a

strong resonance position, also defended his positions. Stavroula often intervened by saying that she had no intention of provoking a confrontation with Andreas. Sometimes the three voices were inter-mingled, each in its melodic evolution and each upon the other as in a fugue. Leonidas, Petros and Panagiotis, in a *decrescendo* voice, stated that Joanna's complaints represent one of her last attempts to re-negotiate her central conflicts through a regression that is legiti-mate. The conductor intervened in a somewhat *andante* tempo. He said that this was a very important moment, especially because the group had an opportunity to hear two older members re-stating their conflicts to the group and for them to present these conflicts from another more thoughtful perspective, like the two leading violins in an orchestra.

The intervention of Helen marked the transition of the group to its third movement which lasted for the remaining twenty minutes in an *adagio* to *lento* tempo, marking the group's return to the depressive position and to its initially prevailing minor tonality. Helen, a twenty-nine-year-old married psychologist, asked in a *pianissimo* way what was the reason why the women in the group, including herself, remained silent throughout the above conversation. Stavroula intervened *forte* by saying that the silence of the other women, as mother figures in the group, indicated their disapproval of Joanna's stance which re-enacted the stance of Joanna's own mother. The women left the conductor/father to assume the role of mother in the group by showing acceptance of Joanna's attitude. This intervention led to a release of the underlying tension in the group on a paranoid-schizoid position level which would have prevented the group from terminating the session in a meaningful way in the depressive position, and a thirty-second pause followed, indicating temporary relaxation. Then, Penelope, in a *fortissimo* way, defended herself by saying that she just wanted Joanna to speak in a more mature way. Joanna replied, now more emotionally and very *piano,* that she understood Penelope's feelings towards her, and she does not equate her with her mother. Alexia, in a *pianissimo*, said that she had remained silent because she felt the way she had frequently felt as a child listening to her parents' adult conversations. The men in the group in one voice stated that they understood Joanna's position. The conductor, following the group's *lento*, said that the group itself had interpreted the situation. He added, very *piano*, that the women in the group do not necessarily represent mother figures since the major

mother figure remains the group in which the real strength lies. Stavroula, acting now in the role of the conductor, recapitulated the situation by drawing a link between her initial statement about her feeling of being closer to the conductor/father when she pays her therapy fees and Joanna's ambivalence (to which Joanna had referred earlier in the session as a secondary issue). Joanna had initially decided to pay the therapy fees she owed for two months but later thought it would better to pay one month first (as had happened after the previous group session) but finally decided to pay the other in the days to come. This implied on an unconscious level that, had Joanna thought of paying for two months at the same time, she would be closer to the conductor and to a more unified representation of the conductor and the group as a whole. The group agreed that there was a hidden competition between the two women as to which of them was closer to the conductor/father, however it stressed that the main problem was that some members cannot decide whether the conductor is a "dead" or "live" father with the result that they cannot mourn the death of their own father.

The cyclical evolution of the tempo of this group in three movements was strongly reminiscent of the evolution more of a French overture (slow-quick-slow movement) rather than of an Italian symphony (quick-slow-quick movement) of pre-classical music (Blom, 1954; Maunder, 2004) or of a classical symphony (which is not always the case since a reverse group evolution can often happen), while its three-part content (exposition of two themes, elaboration and recapitulation of them) resembled the structure of a form-sonata which usually constitutes the first movement of a classical symphony (Rosen, 1980; Newman, 1963; Caplin, 1998). In any event, the group concluded by augmenting its strength in a *crescendo* way parallel to the conductor's *diminuendo*.

CONCLUSIONS

By extending the views of Foulkes (1964, 1990) the above analysis has verified that the art of conducting an orchestra and the art of conducting a group-analytic group are similar in that they are based on the idea of a conductor conceived as a symbolic or "dead" father who follows the principles of servant leadership. Both the conductor of the group and the maestro fade away as long as they either produce from the orchestra the highest harmony and melody as an instrumental expression of the human voice or extract the melodic

and harmonic texture of human speech as developed in the free-floating discussion of the group-analytic situation. Interpretations of group communications and dynamics that are made mainly by the group can benefit from considering group speech as an improvised score. The group evolves like a pre-classical overture or symphony in tempo and like a sonata-form in content, more like chamber music or a baroque orchestra than a symphonic orchestra, and with different tonality and intonation modifications that are closer to romantic and modern rather than classical music. Conducting it by imposing above all the right tempo, as in an orchestra (Wagner, 1869), can contribute decisively to making group psychotherapy function more smoothly and perhaps more effectively as both an art and a science by helping the members to keep finding flexible ways of negotiating between the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position following Klein's (1946) and Bion's (1992) views.

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"I used to be a citizen": How I Found the IGA Foundation Course

By Rob White

When I was a student more than twenty years ago, I went to a conference at the Courtauld Institute of Art. One of the hosts of "Memory: The Question of Archives" was Malcolm Pines. I remember him well because he had the thankless task of reading out the paper of a distinguished professor who didn't show up. The conversation between Pines and Sue Einhorn that's posted on the new-look GASI website includes some pondering on the current standing of group analysis. Is it taken seriously by psychoanalysts, for example? Pines the founding father isn't downhearted, mentioning positive developments like growth in Europe. But I for one had never heard of group analysis until 2014. If, back in 1994, the conference-goers were told that Pines was a group analyst as well as a psychoanalyst, it made no impression on me. So let me explain how I discovered group analysis – and why I'm both glad and sorry I did.

In 2012, with more than a year left to run on my contract as a magazine editor, I gave notice of termination to the publishers, a company with newly installed top managers. It didn't go well after that. I realised that stories about the pitfalls of prisoners "going straight" applied to my seemingly respectable world of work too. I stood up for myself against the corporate shenanigans. A few months later my contract was paid out.

With time to recharge I spring-cleaned, practised yoga and went on long walks to ponder the future. A new beginning seemed possible. My peace of mind was, however, short-lived. After a while self-doubt crept in. It was difficult to chase it away. I questioned decisions I had carefully made, which began to seem like errors. I blamed myself for circumstances beyond my control. The worst of it was that on some gloomy mornings I pined for institutions I had outgrown.

Two poignant songs I love kept coming to mind at this time. In Scott Walker's "Farmer in the City" a dying artist looks back on his life: "I used to be a citizen / I never felt the pressure." I had renounced my own professional citizenship and now I was under pressure. A young man escapes home and takes refuge in the city in Sunhouse's "Hard Sun". But the future frightens him: "In the throes of thought I

wonder / Can I make it on my own." My new beginning now seemed not only possible but *necessary*. If I was going to make it on my own, though, I needed help. So I found a therapist.

To support the therapy, I read psychoanalytic texts. Fairbairn's idea of "moral defence", for example, helped me reflect on self-blame (Fairbairn, 1952). Michael Balint's reflections on new beginnings struck a chord (Balint, 1969). Still it was almost by chance that, during the summer therapy break in 2014, on the third floor of the British Library, I read Bion's *Experiences in Groups* (Bion, 1961). This wry, misanthropic book is the work of a brilliant (though not likeable) writer. The ex-editor in me admired details like the way his repeated phrase "a group in which I am a member" keeps things open and allows for the possibility that Bion's presence set the cat among the pigeons. Beyond the patrician style and the touches of mischief, I felt with a pang that this was a book that could have helped me survive institutions better. For it claims that people in groups often behave very badly, even madly. I know this to be true. Yet since I wish it not to be true, fuzzy thinking stops me from truly accepting it, and my denial brings trouble of its own. *Experiences in Groups* nails these problems down. It also rescues the idea of work from the disappointing reality of workplaces.

I wanted to know more. It didn't take long to find out that the conveniently located Institute of Group Analysis's London foundation course was starting the following month. (I knew nothing then about the differences between Bion and Foulkes.) I enrolled.

The course runs over thirty Thursday evenings, ten per term. There were forty participants this year, who were assigned to one of five small groups. Before the small groups there are lectures during the first two terms. During the third term, the lectures are replaced by a large group for all participants – or as many as wish to attend – including the small-group conductors. Lectures and groups are the main components but the whole experience is wider. There's also what happens in-between: the break between lecture and small group, the journey home, the nights when something troubling that has emerged in the small group disrupts sleep, the two vacations, all the moments of rumination and perplexity along the way.

After each of the first few lectures I found a spot outside the IGA building (which is shared with both GASI and the Society for Analytic Psychology) where I ate homemade sandwiches. Others smoked

sociably nearby. This gathering became a sort of casual small group on the fringe of the course. An ex-smoker, I gravitated to the huddle. It brought back to me the experience of being lonely at secondary school and discovering at about the age of fifteen that smoking granted access to a subculture – it was a way to belong. Obeying that same urge to connect, after a while I started walking to the over-ground station with three of the smokers. We were discreet about our small groups while we walked, but I succumbed on a couple of occa-sions to the temptation to speak about the immediate emotional fall-out from the group, taking the edge off my feelings in the process. These walks continued until the start of the third term when, abruptly, I told the others that I wouldn't be joining them any more because we were now all members of the same group. I set a new, strict boundary because I wanted to get the most from the large group, sharp edges and all. It didn't occur to me that my decision might be seen as pedan-tic and rude.

When I was first employed I made many workplace friends. Ten years later redundancy required me to learn, as I'm told divorcees do too, that such relationships depend on a shared environment, like fish swimming in a bowl. Losing professional citizenship involves losing these friendships. It was a shock to me the first time it happened, and it hurt. I was back to being the solitary adolescent on the margins of school … except that my younger self, while wanting to be less lonely, was also healthily sceptical about the merits of being an obe-dient insider, a good boy. There are some tough lines of the poet Cavafy that the teenager would have understood better than the newly unemployed thirtysomething: "Even if you cannot make your life the way you want, try this, at least, / as best you can: do not demean it / by too much contact with the crowd, / by too much movement and idle talk." (I don't think this statement contradicts group analysis, which shouldn't foster *idle* talk.) Somewhere down the line I gave up too much for the sake of institutional identity and its perks. Or else I thought I could have the best of both worlds by being an outsider *within* a workplace, a maverick insider. It's a hard act to pull off, and one which in may case ended with more than one fall. I couldn't have the best of both worlds at the IGA either. For it became obvious as the third term continued that, to satisfy my own work ethic rather than any external rule, I had hurt the feelings of the three people I'd ban-tered happily with on the way to the station. What I learnt on the

course was never exactly easy, but what happened about the journey home proved to be one of the most difficult lessons.

Boundaries are an issue that the foundation course opens up without scrutinising in detail. (I assume that the topic is explored at later stages of training.) In some ways the course is an unusual free-for-all. This year's participants included a couple as well as people who are colleagues or flatmates. Applicants aren't interviewed (unless my own case wasn't typical). There isn't dynamic administration in respect of intake, though it's ensured that people who know each other don't join the same small group. This means that participants are implicitly invited to see why dynamic administration and strong therapeutic boundaries become important beyond the foundation course. Of course, many of the participants belong to the caring professions – counsellors, clinical psychologists, doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists – and so were probably more familiar with therapeutic boundary issues than me, a nonprofessional who didn't tread as carefully when it came to socialising as a professional might have done.

Yet here I must note something that surprised me. Many of the professionals never questioned the lecturers and were noticeably reluctant to let down their guard in the group settings. I found this lack of candour annoying. It had a chilling effect. For much of the course, a collective professional reserve clamped down on emotional frankness as well as theoretical argument. I wondered if my expectations were faulty until I read an article on the reading list. In it, Ian Craib recalls an experiential group that was part of another introductory training. Its members too were reluctant to discuss their own conflicts and emotional difficulties. Participation in the group was seen by the majority as "an activity directed towards something outside of oneself rather than investigating one's own suffering" (Craib, 1997). Further light was shed when I heard one therapist explain that as a trainee he feared being perceived as unstable by his peers and tutors. It was a reminder that caution is needed to be a successful insider: in the workplace, you can't say whatever comes to mind. I was grateful that this therapist let down his guard enough for me to glimpse understandable institutional worries that were being kept below the surface. Many participants were attending for reasons of professional development. Inevitably they brought their workplaces with them, much as I brought my past work troubles with me. My

business affairs had ended whereas these professionals were part of ongoing enterprises. It's no mystery why the insiders felt less free to speak than the ex-citizen.

As more than one group analyst has observed, lectures are the antithesis of an analytical group. My sense of relative freedom wasn't worth toffee in the lecture sessions. Seventeen of the twenty followed the same pattern: an hour's talking-plus-Powerpoint followed by a question or two that never quite went anywhere. Lecturers usually started with a version of the statement, "Please stop me if there's anything anyone would like clarified." (Sometimes this statement was qualified with "—but please keep wider issues until the end".) I asked lots of questions of lecturers once they had finished but intervened during a lecture only once. I asked if the speaker would speed up in order to leave extra time for discussion. He seemed to consent … but didn't relinquish even a second of his allotted time. I was quick to make my point after he had finally stopped. A brief response was given and that was that. I had to realise that this wasn't a setting where topics could be *debated*. (I made further comments on the feedback form that was emailed out after each lecture, but I don't know if these ever reached the lecturer.) We were really there to *pay attention* to someone selected by the institute for their eminence. Probably all sorts of professional politics play a part in the selection but I for one didn't have enough knowledge of the group-analytic world to figure out that factor. If it was like being back in a classroom, it was also like the semi-academic workplaces I'm used to, with their echelons and prickly diplomacy. If I had to sum up my dissatisfied experience of these lectures, I would say that I felt *left out of the picture*. Possibly that's what they're there for.

The lecture format was varied three times. At the end of the first term there was a Social Dreaming Matrix. The free-floating format allowed a number of our group to contribute for the first time. A virtual montage was assembled that was striking for its scary imagery (car crashes, torture, dead parents) and at the same time enjoyable, warm. This mismatch of content and mood disturbed me but it was splendid to be actually *interacting*. The next exception was the session on therapeutic communities. The psychiatrist lecturer brought with her a colleague who'd once been a community resident. They opened the session up almost immediately, not to clarification but to genuine discussion. It was tentative at first but then the nettle was

grasped. The mood was sombre and even mournful, as if we were at a meeting where something was being closed down. I think we were aware in the session that the radical ideal of trends like antipsychiatry and democratic psychotherapy has been eclipsed, and that even though the NHS is still central to national life the concept of welfare which used to underpin it has been corrupted, turned upside-down. The final exception occurred at the end of the second term, when we all participated in a large group – or perhaps I should say a large-group reception, for there were pictures scattered on the floor in the middle of the circle of chairs. Picking an image and commenting on it helped reduce the anxiety that would trouble the large group throughout the following term.

The conductor of our small group came in, sat down and said flatly: "This group will meet here for the next thirty weeks." Probably she then looked down. That was all. Presumably it's how most experiential groups start: unnervingly. The main reaction to the lack of instruction was silence. The group was struck dumb. And week after week the silence returned for long stretches. Often I was the one who broke it, until I began to feel guilty about breaking it … and so helped to renew the paralysis. I wonder if experienced conductors learn to distinguish between various kinds of silence, like an Eskimo tells the difference between types of snow. To me it was all the same: a shared failure to think, to work.

By the time the group relaxed, something emerged that separated me from it. I could remember almost everything that everyone had said in previous weeks. It may sound odd, but this was as much a surprise to me as it became an irritant to others. My late father, a scientist, sometimes said he had a photographic memory. I never thought of myself as having any similar capacity for remembering, yet I quoted verbatim statements made in the group months before. My recaps weren't welcome. One group member said it was like having a surveillance camera in the room; another compared me to a court stenographer. I felt abashed by the remarks and I feel abashed again now as I write this, fearing readers will imagine me to be robotic, machine-like. Nevertheless it's true that I wanted always to proceed analytically. This was never to the exclusion of discussing painful incidents and difficult emotions as far as I was capable of doing so, but it was always my hope that distressing subjects could then be mastered rationally (perhaps with the help of a quote from a previous

session!). The trouble was that no-one else was taking the same approach.

The unconscious was clearly at work in the group, despite my best intellectual efforts. We bristled, jumped at shadows, took offence when none was intended, saw in others what was denied in oneself, competed in an unannounced butter-wouldn't-melt tournament of compassion, or went the other way and committed minor delinquencies. There was much walking on eggshells. Disturbingly, uncannily, the group became preoccupied in the third term by suicide. I won't say more about this except that it was is if a certain tragic (and sometimes black-comic) story that belonged to no-one possessed the group. A sort of poltergeist invaded the room. This development bewildered me but I won't deny evidence of something having emerged in the group that couldn't be reduced to common-sense psychology.

I'm not sure if our group got the measure of projection and projective identification, which is supposed to be one of the outcomes of the course. Certainly no explicit discussion of these concepts occurred. This was probably a good thing since they can be made to mean what anyone wants them to mean. Still, I was disappointed that the group didn't mull over the problem of envy much. It may be that the thing about envy is that it's elusive, being sullen and slinking, so it only ever comes into view for a moment. Perhaps envy must be glanced at in passing not pinned down and discussed. Yet I felt like the group was missing something important. Unless it was just me. For I'm a twin. Twins have to share time, space, food, love from the very start in a way that single children usually don't. Maybe that means envy can't settle down in a twin – or perhaps it means envy has to lurk in especially dark corners of a twin's mind. I had difficulty, anyway, when sibling rivalry was an element in the small group.

I think part of me would have liked to join a solemn, arcane group of what Winnicott called "observing egos" (Winnicott, 1975a) or even the more dangerously cut-off "mind-psyches" (Winnicott, 1975b). As the year went on I could see the flaws of my attitude, but it didn't entirely stop me wanting thought to trump emotion. There's a passage in *The Book of Disquiet* by Pessoa that captures well this detached outlook – or resistance – of mine: "And so, not knowing how to believe in God and unable to believe in an aggregate of animals, I, along with other people on the fringe, kept a distance from

things, a distance commonly called Decadence. Decadence is the total loss of unconsciousness, which is the very basis of life. Could it think, the heart would stop beating." In the actual and not-so-solemn experiential group of which I was a member, I was often a decadent in Pessoa's sense … but of course the life of the group carried on regardless of my attitude.

During the last small-group session of the second term I got lost, as I had been lost in the past in my family. Believing, perhaps wrongly, that a tricky topic I had raised was being brushed under the carpet, I withdrew into claustrophobic silence. Bridges were rebuilt later, but I never again looked forward with pleasure to these sessions. This adjustment must have had something to do with the lectures ending and the large group starting: for I found that I felt perfectly at ease in the large group, which fascinated me from start to finish. Others hated it, but for me the large group was the best part of the course.

In preparation I read Pierre Turquet's classic paper, which claims that large groups are "constantly suffused with the struggle to dominate" (Turquet, 1975). Perhaps his observations only apply to large groups composed of people accustomed to large groups. They certainly didn't seem to apply to ours, which in fact was often not-so-large because of multiple absences. I never checked this but I heard it said in the corridor that attendance at the large group wasn't required to pass the course. More than once someone expressed worry in a session about the group's missing persons, as though an unfortunate incident must have befallen them, but it seems more likely that they just had better things to do. (One group member who had been the cause of concern returned after an absence of three weeks to describe her holiday in Cuba.)

The group was afflicted by nervous silence and a wary, often unspoken deference to the small-group conductors who now sat among us. Something appeared to be being played out about what it's like to survive in today's draining workplaces, with the conductors taking the role of bosses. No doubt, too, the anxieties of childhood bubbled away in all of us. They were kept firmly in check, however, in the stiff silences that once more prevailed. The group was in lockdown. For the first eight weeks it seemed as if we were always *waiting for something to change*. Perhaps one of the absentees would return and bring fresh energy; perhaps the conductors would take matters in hand; perhaps an angry outburst would galvanise the group. All of these incidents did

occur – but half-heartedly, with insufficient force to lastingly relieve the nervous tension. So life in the large group repeated life outside. We're unsure where power lies and how malicious it might be so we watch what we say, we feel the tremor of out-of-date childhood panic that we hold inside for fear of being shamed or punished, and so it all goes on and on…

Change came in the penultimate week, when grief burst in. A member's father was dying in hospital, unable to communicate with his family. She cried openly and repeatedly, her emotion so raw it made it hard for her to say what she wanted to say. She apologised for what she did say, and for the intensity of her emotion. Even more than usual, the group was frozen by this contribution. It couldn't, like our group member's father, like she herself, like myself after I left my job, find an answer. The fear that nothing can be said to make an agonising situation better was paramount. We all shared the grief but we also couldn't bear it. Caretaking failed. For me, this proved the power of the large group to go to the painful heart of the matter – to frame without fixing the experience, which can't be escaped, of not-being-able-to-bear-it.

It's tempting to say that I feel less alone as a result of what I learnt at the IGA. But that isn't right. In 2013 I feared, not for the first time, that I couldn't make it on my own. I felt cast drift, exiled. Perversely I longed for the citizenship I'd chosen to renounce. I'm sorry I couldn't resolve by myself the conflict I felt (and still sometimes feel) between outsider freedom and insider security. I'm glad I found help after I realised I needed it. It has enabled me to go back with gratitude to the margins. I don't feel less alone, I feel better able to be alone. For now, I need to live without both the privileges and the pressures of being the citizen I became, the citizen I used to be.

A couple of weeks before our large group met for the first time, I went as a student member to the April session of the GASI Members' Group in South London. I spoke there, as I've written here, about the loss of institutional identity. When I had finished, someone commented that I was contributing rather more than a newcomer might usually be expected to contribute. (This remark was accompanied by an obscure reference to the plant species Fallopia japonica.) After a pause she resumed, taking a slightly different tack. She said that she sometimes dreamt of a workplace she had left but missed more than she wanted to admit. I think I knew exactly what she meant. If we're

there together at the next session, I'd like to tell her about a notion I have. It's this: only simple beginnings don't have histories. *New* beginnings can't ever be free of the past. New beginnings always involve fear and grief. New beginnings are haunted. I don't know what anyone would make of this idea, but I've found that I'd like to say it out loud in a group.

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Orbiting the Giants: A Modest Plea for Linking and Creativity across Generations

The Personal Perspective of a "Trainee"

By Sasa Bogdanovic

> "*It is in playing and only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.*"
> D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*

Although unusual, the title of this letter is thought provoking - so I hope. I would like for this letter to be an invitation to all of us to create together this paper in our minds; that is, to hold in mind challenging concepts such as *virtual reality encounters*, *linking*, *creativity* and the meaning of *authentic encounters*. These would probably be the key words. And even more, to challenge our minds and to contemplate the necessity of having and acknowledging *diversity* and its powerful concomitant anxieties that are bringing us together and simultaneously, yet paradoxically, separating us. On the other hand, it appears as if sharing a common space is being experienced as a *claustro-agoraphobic* dilemma. Whenever we are sharing the same space within the *matrix* – objective and/or virtual, at the same time – why do I have this odd alienating feeling of being detached from my colleagues? Do we feel paralysingly threatened by each other? Now, besides having in mind theories of Large Groups, try also asking yourself: Do you really feel connected and linked with other colleagues, particularly if you are trainee? If not, how do you understand this quite interesting dynamic, and is there anything we can do to mitigate unnecessary wide gaps? It is kind of a strange experience for me to be trained in Group Analysis but to feel detached, although it seems a necessary dynamic for a variety of reasons. But should it be an alienating one as well?

For some time now, I am wondering: Why is it so difficult for us to share even a virtual space as a common space? Is it a repeating ritual of some kind of necessity, and/or some other kind of individual/ group signature of a yet unspecified dynamic, that simply cannot be denied? Is there a difference in the quality of structured Large Group encounters in the objective world from those unstructured ones that

are taking place in the scope of virtual reality? Is the space of virtual reality acting as a magnifying glass for all those (in)visible dynamics that operate as *anti-group phenomena* against *linking*? What is it if not the *work of negative K*? These questions became more apparent and quite prominent after I became a member of the GASI Forum, and after witnessing surprisingly interesting dynamics. It appears to me that the qualities of (un)shared experiences, in objective as well as in the virtual reality, in addition to Large Group dynamics, have something to do with the *foundation matrices* we are all institutionally coming from and carrying with(in) us, whilst continuously (un) exposing ourselves to every single encounter. Even more, what is the influence of the *Social Unconscious* on virtual reality?

Orbiting the Giants

The only 24/7 available *space* where we can hopefully interact with international colleagues and some of highly respected authors in the group analytic field is the GASI Forum – a space of virtual reality – created for the purpose of dialogue and linking. When I first became a member of GASI Forum I was very excited. I was imagining this to be a welcoming, and above all a learning place, where people are involved in thoughtful academic discussions; where you can freely ask questions, interact with colleagues and authors, and meet new people in a more informal way. Above all, I imagined this virtual place to be safe and including experience, as a platform for networking and trainee visibility, since we do not have an international trainees' organization. I thought to myself: "*I will be orbiting the giants in the field! How fascinating and unique an opportunity is that!*"

I realized I have had high expectations, and that I denied powerful large group *vortices*. It could also be interpreted as *naive* or even *immature* on my part – God forbid more malignant interpretations, in which case I would have to have a serious talk with my analyst regarding my sanity and monthly billing. Joking aside, on more than several occasions I felt as if I was witnessing a real battlefield, visible and invisible. More than once I felt confused, amazed and sometimes even ashamed, but mostly invisible. I couldn't be more surprised to find out how easy it is to forget and even violate the boundaries sometimes. In a matter of days I learnt *who is who* in this virtual reality. Actually, I became fully aware of the consequences, due to missing mirroring

processes which are a prominent characteristic of Large Groups. Furthermore, it appeared as if virtual reality accentuated a more visible splitting between the everyday and virtual personalities we all have – *virtual-doubles*. I even had a phantasy of how accelerating this experience could be since it is making unconscious dynamics more visible, almost in a second, than years of therapy would. I was eager to share in my analysis my own *virtual-doubles*. We had a great time, but what actually bothered me was the magnitude of those feelings. As if they were significantly magnified in (by) the field of virtual reality. Why am I feeling alienated?

I decided to give more attention to GASI Forum's history and to read past posts as much as possible. Struggling to understand, I was looking up for the answers. After having one particular dream: I felt as if I was a completely irrelevant, just another trainee; a tiny celestial body who has strayed into cold, airless space and is surrounded mostly by debris. The realization I've had again was regarding the whole psychoanalytic field that was, and still is, saturated with power struggles and transgenerational transmissions of all sorts, of unreconciled conflicts and traumas. But, more obvious than anything else was the following question: How to understand the virtual GASI Forum that is not a large group but heavily saturated with (conductorless) large group dynamics? That was enough, at least for me not to consider participating at all. At one point I even wanted to ask the Forum Moderator to get me off the Forum list. But, before making any final decision, and with a true need to understand my increasingly complex impressions, I naturally decided to dive into the bottom of my reactions. I've raised different and quite complex questions and topics in my personal analysis. Well, that wasn't fun at all… Besides a subtle *decontamination* process, I was gradually de-idealizing our field, people I considered to be *giants*, but most importantly I understood more deeply how dangerous and destructive it is not to be truly oneself – imperfect human but humble enough not to be silent when faced with destructiveness.

These insights are certainly not seeking to justify unbalanced behaviours, neither can they neutralize the omnipotent anti-group phenomena that are a natural component of any group. But there was a particular insight which happened to be the most striking one: How odd it is to witness the *virtual* behaviour of people, some of whom I've already met, but never had a slightest idea about their *virtual-doubles*,

especially when trainers and authors in the field whose books and/or lectures we are always happy to acknowledge and appreciate. I'm not talking about something that happens occasionally. What I'm talking about is how essentially disrespected one can feel to be when ignored almost all the time, whenever trying to raise her/his voice or to join what appear to be meaningful discussions. And I was asking myself: why is this happening? Why is it so difficult for older colleagues to share a common space and to talk about disagreements instead of putting each other down? Why are some of those *spokespeople* not considering the group dynamics, as well as their roles in continuous enactments? Why are trainees so invisible and segregated? Are we experienced as *immature* and/or incompetent? It is sad to witness an international professional community being unable to have and maintain meaningful and inclusive discussions. Nonetheless, once again it became obvious that '*men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing ever happened'* (W. S. Churchill). Actually, it wasn't so comforting a quote to rely on, although … I've got much more thinking to do. My idea of the group analytic *universe* was alarmingly shrinking. After all, we are all just humans (?) And it became apparent to me that this phantasy of the *cold and airless universe*, *orbiting*, *giants*, *lonely celestial bodies being lost* and so on, besides being of archaic quality, somehow is suggestive of an existing order within a disturbed global matrix of which we, as the participating global group analytic field, are an important part. Then, how are we participating when not giving lectures or writing articles and books; when not being praised by the *others*? It seems to me that it is not only about *Love* (L) or *Hate* (H), it is predominantly about *Knowledge* (K) and our *attitude* towards it. The work of negative function is still discussed insufficiently, or not at all. As if the hovering question is: '*How much of my Self I have to give up in order to fit in?*' Paradoxically, there almost seems to be a great deal of *hidden pleasure* in not getting along…

"Do I Dare Disturb the Universe?"

Now, I'm much of a neo-kleinian inclination, and considering this (sub)title it is obvious that I'm also in a mourning process for James Grotstein's death. I believe this loss will heavily impact the psychoanalytic field and professional communities all around the

world. For me personally, the death of James Grotstein confronted me again with the inevitability of transience, the quality of psycho-analytic training in the 21st century, and of the necessity to value and celebrate the life, experience and knowledge of those who are still here with us. It brought me back to the essential importance of linking and networking. Sadly, he is one amongst many of wonder-ful departed Souls who by their generously shared presence shaped us into who we are today. I couldn't help but wonder how many wonderful and gifted colleagues are amongst us but invisible, silenced, un-present; symbolically *murdered* by the virtues of igno-rance, marginalization, envious isolation and institutional/societal oppressions, just because they are different - just because they are challenging our narcissistically saturated conceptions about pro-fessional life and relationships. Thinking about those who already left us, and about those who are unacknowledged and still amongst us, I decided to write this letter and to bring up one of the most important questions: How to keep alive, creative and enriching relationships with colleagues worldwide? Struggling with that question, I finally decided to thankfully accept the thoughtful invi-tation I received from Peter Zelaskowski, who invited me to write for Contexts.

The resemblance of the space of virtual reality with the human mind is striking. It is a true paradise for the externalization of imagina-tion and creativity, yet a *stage* for exercising powerful destructiveness. Virtual reality is like a many sided mirror-diamond that reflects the light and darkness of the mirroring minds – or should I say self-mir-roring. Faced with the infinity of one's own unconscious virtual reali-ties and those of the others, surrounded by self-evident, and infinite, continuously self-creating Universe(s), we are essentially floating in the *primordial soup* predominantly composed of the substances spec-ulatively called *dark matter* and *dark energy.* In the realm of psychic experience, these would be equivalents to, no less speculative, proto-mental constituents of the primitive mental states. However, as funda-mentally projective creatures, we are heavily dependent on ongoing metabolisation processes which are possible when introduced to the containing relational matrix. I'm hypothesizing that the omnipotent quality of virtual reality resonates with similar qualities within indi-viduals, differently for sure. But, the sustainable relational matrix is always hard to conquer and a challenging quality to maintain. This

relational difficulty is the very signature of Large Groups. Not surprisingly, there are occasionally worried voices seeking loudly for the *leaders* to be chosen or for more active *conductors* able to put their minds into the state of *primary maternal preoccupation*, while members of the large group are in constant pursuit of re-creating familiar self-soothing thought-forms that could hopefully ease the anxieties of the archaic unknown by depleting omnipotent phantasies instead of challenging linking, whether operating in objective or virtual reality. But, this quality appears to be more prominent in the matrix of virtual reality. Defensive subtleties against linking are countless in their arithmetic progression. If it's our destiny to live as a walking paradox within the dualistic realm of existence, then it is our obligation – if we want to survive as a species (or a group) - to pay closer attention to our creative potential when faced with inevitable destructiveness that needs to be studied, eventually resulting in better understanding. However, I wonder would Foulkes and Bion think about virtual reality as narcissistically created technology? Would it be looked at as hypothetically relational space for play and creativity as an extension of the unlimited unconscious; yet, more revealing in its alienating and potentially perverting qualities?

Virtual reality appears to be as a perfect medium for improving the visibility of the ongoing *developmental seesaw* on the axis of **D** to **Ps**. These ongoing developmental transitions appear to be a more visible regressive phenomena in the space of virtual reality, with its deviations into different forms of what I would like to refer to as *autistic-like virtual communication vortices* – emerging virtual group dynamics as a particularly prominent (anti-group) phenomena noticeable within the virtual matrix of (group) communication. What sets them apart from already known and well-studied anti-group phenomena in face-to-face groups, I believe, is the presence of the basic medium of omnipotent vastness of the anxiety-provoking virtual reality, the absence of conductors and the absence of critically important mutual *mirroring*, which in turn re-creates a more provoking/ accessible, potentially highly regressive, environment in which narcissistic self-mirroring could easily be provoked, resonated with, and enacted or evacuated. Occlusive to reflective communication, with the lack of containment and the absence of mirroring, these *claustro-agoraphobic*-like phenomena have a *bi-dimensional*-autistic-like quality. Reflective space would collapse accordingly with prematurely closed or abandoned discussions and/or underdeveloped

conflicts often followed with *uncanny gaps* that are not of reparation quality. I'm imagining these *virtual communication vortices* to be similar to smaller or bigger tornadoes that are of unpredictable and more or less destructive nature; wiping out everything that stands in their way. These *autistic-like virtual communication vortices*, when '*touch-down'* is reached, appear to operate through *envious attacks* and fundamentally as reflections of the *work of negative K*. These phenomena are, of course, extensively described in their similarities under different terms – '*envelopes*', '*Black Holes*', '*shells*', '*excursions*', '*islands*', '*pockets*', etc. – predominantly as pathological defensive constellations recognized in psychotic, neurotic and borderline patients within a scope of analytic impasses. But, it is interesting for me to think about these phenomena outside of an analytic situation and a dyadic relation, and to try applying these concepts to understanding the functioning of virtual groups, and considering adding them to the cluster of anti-group phenomena. But, a solid theoretical and applicable conceptualization of these phenomena will come, as a result of professional group efforts, I sincerely hope.

While struggling to offer a starting point – still highly speculative – for conceptualizing the problem, I keep in mind the concept of *transitional space* and *linking.* Whatever obstruction to communication dynamics we are faced with in virtual reality as conductor-less and *free-floating discussion* virtual groups, these phenomena should be grown into a reflective relational matrix and thoughtfully analysed. Since projective content could be recognized and understood as a communicational feature, the holding and containing qualities of a relational perspective could transform reflective space into potentially transitional space, where a process of transcending anti-group phenomena could also take place. However, as professionals in the field, we are challenged to somewhat omnipotently take knowledge for granted and to dismiss complexity and subtleties when it comes to our own participation and the responsibilities of being involved in anti-group dynamics within our professional groups. It is my impression that anti-group phenomena generated within group analytic professional groups, that are taking place in Training Institutes and in varieties of professional gatherings such as: clinical workshops, lectures, conferences, congresses and so on, are of a particularly intense nature, immensely challenging and hard to deal with. Sometimes these, predominantly institutional anti-group phenomena, are displaced into trainees and younger colleagues, which in turn could easily result in troublesome

institutional dynamics saturated with, to mention a few: invisible/visible oppression; lack of transparency; paralyzing formality and rigid boundaries; paranoid atmospheres; negative selection principles; double standards and sub-grouping; a culture of wild analysis; envious conspiracies resulting in malignant attacks toward colleagues; and institutional *mentality* could be confused with the *culture of creativity*, and/or interpreted as a *guardian quality of traditional values*. Blind spots are inevitable, after all. However, *turning a blind eye* shouldn't become a normative or common practice.

'Waiting for the Barbarians'

When it comes to improvement of linking and networking I sincerely lay my hope into us, the younger generations of international GA trainees and group analysis all around the world, hoping that this letter will resonate as an invitation for international discussion. Whenever I have openly talked about and advocated local and global networking I have noticed certain resistance, as if the idea was an unimaginable one to be implemented. In personal correspondences and conversation with colleagues it soon becomes clear that the idea of organizing trainees in more official bodies within Training Institutes is anxiety provoking to both sides – Training Institute and trainees. As if each side is overwhelmed with a similar phantasy of being *intruded upon* – Training Institute by trainees and trainees by Training Institute. The more I talked about this idea, the more ignored I felt. The more avoided was the topic the more emails and Skype calls I was receiving from colleagues who felt insecure or even frightened to openly support the idea.

Soon, one particular phantasy was hovering in my mind – *as if the change and the heralds of change were experienced as Barbarians who will create complete desolation*. Although an important historically painted canvas, in the following poem written by a Greek poet Constantine Cavafy[2] it is as if it portrays a particularly shaken *narcissistic internal organization* close to the horizon of the emergence of a tremendously important insight:

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[2]C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Translated by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Edited by George Savidis. Revised Edition. Princeton University Press, 1992.

Waiting for the Barbarians

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?

The Barbarians are due here today.

Why isn't anything happening in the senate?
Why do the senators sit there without legislating?

Because the Barbarians are coming today.
What laws can the senators make now?
Once the Barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.

Why did our emperor get up so early,
and why is he sitting at the city's main gate
on his throne, in state, wearing the crown?
Because the Barbarians are coming today
and the emperor is waiting to receive their leader.
He has even prepared a scroll to give him,
replete with titles, with imposing names.

Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today
wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas?
Why have they put on bracelets with so many amethysts,
and rings sparkling with magnificent emeralds?
Why are they carrying elegant canes
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the Barbarians are coming today
and things like that dazzle the Barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished orators come forward as usual
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the Barbarians are coming today
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

Why this sudden restlessness, this confusion?
(How serious people's faces have become.)

> Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
> everyone going home so lost in thought?

> Because night has fallen and the Barbarians have not come.
> And some who have just returned from the border say
> there are no Barbarians any longer.

> And now, what's going to happen to us without Barbarians?
> They were, those people, a kind of solution.

By C. P. Cavafy

"And now, what's going to happen to us without Barbarians?"

Sharing a common space of virtual reality appears to be an even more threatening experience than real-time encounters, maybe due to yet another question: Is there a mind but without a *body*? Yes there is, and it is scattered all over the *space*. Whenever I'm thinking about fellow trainees within international GA matrix I feel poorly detached. Some of us met and created wonderful memories. For now, there are almost no *bodies* of trainees' organizations within national GA Training Institutes, as far as I'm aware. There is certainly no common gathering *body* for International GA trainees. We are *un-embodied* international *mind* with great constructive potential, but scattered all over the world. This interesting phenomena appears to have something to do with the original GA foundation matrix, and consequently with local foundation matrices of Training Institutes.

We are commonly referred to as: *pupils*, *students*, *candidates*, *trainees,* regardless of contextual differences and the meaning attached to it. Being referred to as a trainee is the most liberating and appropriate entry, at least for me. Sometimes we are imagined to be *embryos*, *foetuses*, *children*, *siblings* outside of analytic setting and without appropriate context, as if *ideal* maturity will never be reached; well, it won't. Our older colleagues, trainers and Training Institutes are sometimes imagined to be our phantasmic *parents, families* and/or called the *elders*; as if there was almost a collective phantasy about them being the exclusive guardians of unlimited wisdom, knowledge and immaculate judgment, which is probably one of the reasons for us trainees to feel deeply ashamed and unbearably anxious whenever we are

witnessing inevitable conflicts between *elders*. On the other hand, it is well known that *totemic* worshiping is rooted in fear, envy and hatred, thus no wonder we, as humans, are ready without thinking to condemn imperfections and mistakes, marking them as abominations, of once heavily idealized figures.

But, the truth is that a tremendous amount of powerful projections and projective identifications have to be endured on a daily basis, on both sides. If we are skilful and resourceful enough, we would be able to monitor and deal with a majority of them, through a continuous process of '*learning from experience*'. One of the most interesting phantasies is the so called *tribal phantasy,* where achieving maturity, recognition and claiming power is a quite dangerous business, especially for *youngsters,* or other *enemy tribes* that would endanger the already war-won territory. There is certainly much more to be said about this phantasy and so called *tribal instincts, tribal Self's,* etc. However, realization that we are imperfect human beings, and that GA training and professional organizations are imperfect in their very nature as well, is one of the most important insights of the training experience, operating as an *optimal training frustration* and as liberating truth, thus bringing about remarkable relief and introducing spaces for reflection – to all parties involved.

Intergenerational power struggles will inevitably become more visible at some point, they occur quite naturally. In their essence, these ongoing struggles are externalized internal experiences of traditional values, authority figures in conjunction with the developmental need for innovation and inevitable change. But, sometimes they could be experienced as particularly threatening *attacks* to unhealthy power positions that are difficult to give up so that the natural order of generational change could continue gradually and respectively. When at a standstill, and when institutional development is threatening creativity and progress, I often think about Winnicott's words, when he said that between generations it is the task of the youngsters to rebel against the status quo, and the task of the elders to give them a good fight. It is through this struggle of sorts, that something *new* can emerge.

When younger colleagues are acknowledged, included and adequately supported by older colleagues and healthy authority figures, and vice versa, generational change is part of natural continuum that preserves tradition and historical continuity by a thoughtful adoption of necessary changes to traditional values. In other words, the foundation

matrix not only would be preserved and trans-generationally kept in mind, but would continue to serve as a powerful *stabilizer* and *shock-absorber*, an accessible resource for reparation in times of need. On the other hand, historical richness of continually acknowledged existence turns the foundation matrix into a *hall of ancestors* as opposed to a *hunted space,* thus enabling us to proudly *wear* and keep our *Ancestral Selves* as a genuine professional identity with functional linking capacities.

'The Leap of Faith'

Recently I shared on the GASI Forum one impression, using analytic language, regarding the paralyzing power of projections and anti-group phenomena which are decreasing capacities for linking. I tried to communicate an impression by deliberately using a phantasy in which trainees were in a position similar to that of a deprived *child* that has to invent a new *parental* function, which is essentially missing. If so, then what is it? I believe this question is in conjunction to institutional containing capacities and culture which are always resonating within its members and trainees. I think we can observe these on the GASI Forum.

This particular question simply needs to be re-introduced and to re-grow into the field of open reflective dialogue, over and over again. Ideally, to be acknowledged by Training Institutes which would provide safe, containing and supporting reflective spaces for open dialogue to emerge and develop. If we are to think about linking and networking, we have to *keep these questions in mind*, to deal primarily with the dynamic qualities of our institutional foundation matrices and institutional dynamics – learning together about our own linking capacities, and seeking answers within our Training Institutes to why is it difficult for trainee organizations to be created; to understand the difficulties in sharing a common space and our feelings and thoughts when considering the foundation of an International *body* of GA trainees in the future, as a symbolic representation of *embodied international mind*. There has to be reciprocity in *keeping institutes in mind* and *keeping trainees in mind*, which we should be able to keep in our minds as well. Especially when *transcending caesura's* and *liminal spaces*.

Are we resourceful enough to create, as a good start, Trainees Organizations as an essential part of Training Institutes?

In conclusion, we as trainees are not alone, but space for reflection is needed and has to be provided both within our Training Institutes and at an international level too. There is one informal international reflective space though, available to all of us – the GASI Forum - as a potentially creative space we should learn how to use it more creatively with regard to visibility, linking and networking. Essentially, it has to be done with the genuine support of our trainers and older colleagues. It has to be done as a part of a rich GA tradition, and as an expression of shared responsibility and above all of mutual respect.

At the end of this *journey*, I'm not surprised by my writing in this modest plea today. Before and after all, I'm a Serbian and I am proud to be part of a rich Serbian tradition, culture and history. After all that has happened in our recent history, we are struggling, as a historically tormented society, to mourn many of our unspeakable losses, our collective and personal tragedies, to re-build our sense of identity, to re-connect with our rich traditional resources *stored* and preserved in our traumatically split off foundation matrix and in our Social Unconscious. Above all to reach out, tirelessly working on reparations. As such, we are particularly vulnerable, *attuned* to be especially sensitive to the destructive dynamics, as a professional society and as individuals, yet more than aware that reparation is solely dependent on the relational field, linking capacities and capacities for '*seeing and being seen'*. It is tremendously challenging not to defensively transform our *contact-barriers* into *beta-screens*, due to the countlessly destructive manifestations of accumulated collective traumas. This is me, *reaching out* to all of you, regardless of our differences. After all, *there is no greater pleasure than the pleasure of creation.*

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GASI FORUM FRAGMENT

Posted to the GASI Forum on 27th March to 2nd April 2015
Subject: Trainees

This occasional feature highlights a post or exchange of posts on the GASI Forum. The theme in this exchange is the voice of the trainee.

Dear all,
Following a quiet period and leading up to a hopefully more active one in the next few weeks I wanted to re-introduce a trainee voice to the forum. I just received a three year - yes it's honorary - contract today from a UK NHS service. This placement will hopefully see me through my training and permit me to gain accreditations, if I work hard enough along the way. This is an important aspect of training and re-training, provided it is well supervised. Which mine is.

This forum made it possible, so I thank you all and wanted to celebrate it with you virtually as well as to make an investment in re invigorating the vitality of our ongoing debates and sense of purpose through change and ending.

Happy holidays to all.
Patricia

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Dear Patricia -- congratulations!
And thank you for thoughtfully re-introducing the voice(s) of trainees - awakening them from silence... It is important to be heard and acknowledged.

Trainees' voices and participation, support and inclusion should be functional and visible parts of a global group analytic matrix, and are necessary in order to bring some light and understanding of 'caesura's' that often re-introduce silence(s) and gaps as well.

Sometimes I feel as if trainees are voicelessly holding those disfunctional parts of the matrix - locally and globally - becoming silent and voiceless ourselves.

Most of the time almost invisible.
Sasa

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Dear Sasa
Thank you. I agree with the points you've made. Well said!
We don't have to be perfect or intellectual as trainees, or indeed as
analysts - in fact it may be more valuable to us all when we are not
and have the courage and curiosity to take a chance on each other. We
do need to use our voices in order to make ourselves a bit visible, at
least, as trainees. This is part of the beauty and the benefit of this
forum. Encouragement is always welcome though!
Patricia

This is truly interesting topic and, if I might add, not sufficiently
explored although now and then this dynamic is emerging in different
matrices and is often interpreted as '*trainees rebellion*' or '*envy toward
the elders*'. Most of the time this 'rebellion' would transform and unex-
pectedly become (in)visible conflict between trainees but very shortly
shut down with closing interpretations, or just without open and non-
interpreting participation of elders - leaving the trainees to fantasize
whether or not they were wrong and/or at the grace of the elders.

I observed similar dynamic when elders brought unresolved con-
flicts amongst themselves to the group - those conflicts were pre-
sented as if unmanageable and particularly exclusive - 'clash of
Titans'. Trainees were excluded, mute and petrified as if they looked
in Medusa's eyes - in a sense treated as if they are not capable or
mature enough to share their thoughts and to question unapproacha-
ble encapsulated dynamic. Therefore, field was heavily disturbed.

My understanding is that transgenerational transmission of con-
flict, as I would like to call it, can be easily enacted by trainees when
matrix doesn't have enough capacity to reach beyond splitting and
projective identifications. Being visible means not only to be seen,
but also to be able to be seen by others. As well as ability in others to
see. What else can be seen and mirrored in trainees by trainees and
elders besides of our hierarchical positions and cultural/institutional/
training normative attached to it?

I believe this question is important one since we are creating pro-
ject of internationalization and linking. This embryo-thought was

born already. Will it manage to survive, develop and not transform to 'foetus in agony'? Since, I'm experiencing this Forum as yet another - *global womb* - container-contained 'space' for trainees as well, question of nurturing is quite obvious...
Sasa

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Dear Sasa
No foetus can remain in the womb. If it did it would die. And so might part of the mother in her grief. Being born involves a necessary struggle for both. It takes lots of nurture when a baby arrives. Some of it tedious! Some is a struggle, as our rebirth as a live forum shows, following a significant loss for some of our elders, who are grieving. Some however is joyous.

I enjoy that you've joined in the growth process. Let's see and continue to nurture the emergent pregnancy. I'm sure our elders will help us.
Patricia

Oh! If other voices join there could be multiple births.
Patricia

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Dear Sasa,
Try reading Kernberg's Thirty methods to destroy the creativity of psychoanalytic candidates, (Int. J. Psycho-anal 1996 77). It ought to be obligatory reading in every training institute for trainees and trainers alike. He has written a number of papers about the problems of training in subsequent papers.
    What you describe is probably universal in psychotherapy trainings. When I trained in London in the 80's any complaint or criticism we had was interpreted as being our problem in some way. I don't think it is appropriate to refer to your thoughts or yourselves as trainees as embryo/foetus. You come to training as an adult and can reasonably expect to be treated like one. One has to wonder how it is that we have created institutes where infantilization of trainees is a prevailing attitude; something which is diametrically opposed to the

developmental aim of psychotherapy. It must have negative consequences for practice and for engagement in organisational life e.g. how do you complain about a colleague, especially a senior, who you have reason to believe is practicing or behaving unethically?

This is indeed an important area of self-reflection on our own professional dynamics and one which is not easily discussed as it causes anxiety, hurt feelings and a range of powerful emotional responses which prevent serious thinking. There is so much that could be said. Let's see what is made of it.

With best wishes
John Hook

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Dear John,
Thank you for your response. It is interesting that I was thinking exactly about that particular paper when I was writing my previous post. I read it and re-read it for numerous of times, including papers on this subject and comments/reactions to Kernberg's paper - most of them are published on PEP. Somehow, his paper remained a 'golden standard', and I absolutely agree with you on the importance of the subject, not only in psychoanalytic training. This particular paper again raised an important questions in my psychoanalytic training Institute(s) (USA) and it was very interesting to participate and to observe institutional dynamics and trainees who were most of the time mute. One of important topics was a question whether trainees should be called students or candidates, since already mentioned infantilization is - as far as I can see - a very good foundation for mature dialogue in training to be replaced with 'wild analysis' and for having trainees treated as if they were 'patients' outside of therapy setting. Not to mention often troublesome evaluations they are receiving, and so on.

Anyway, I also completely agree with you about this unfortunate analogy of embryos/foetuses regarding trainees. When I mentioned 'embryo' earlier it was analogy for conception of one idea - project - started in Serbia (I called it embryo-thought since it is in its early stage of development) which is a project of internationalization amongst trainees worldwide, that will hopefully potentiate linking between GA trainees from different countries/continents and enable

more structured global communication. Development of this project is I believe solely dependent also on capacity of GA Training Institutes to support trainees to take more active participation (creating local/global candidate organizations, meetings, projects, writings, publishing and so on). By no means, I didn't want to link embryo/foetus analogy to trainees for the same reasons you mentioned, yet somehow it became a synonym for trainees... And Patricia raised a very important questions as well regarding 'delayed labour' and consequences, and my thoughts were more directed toward the question of *nurturing fathers* as well... One of them, Malcolm Pines, is about to celebrate his 90th birthday and I'm very thankful for having him with as and for his genuine support...   I wish we have more of *fathers* like him... However, many of us are already trained in different modalities and enriching GA training at so many levels, and I deeply believe that trainees could participate more and make significant contribution to the group analytic field while in training, if interested and adequately supported. You've made very clear and important points, and thank you once again for your kind support and openness.

Yes, let's see what is made of it.
Sasa

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Yes let's
Sasa and John,
And trainees.......
Patricia

Patricia Walsh, Sasa Bogdanovic and John Hook

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When Hopper met Grossmark: A review of the International Conference "The road not taken", a Relational Discourse on Pioneers in Individual and Group Analytic Therapy

By Liat Warhaftig-Aran

The conference took place in May this year, in Israel, attended by the guests of honour, Dr. Earl Hopper and Dr. Robert Grossmark.

The above title in not accidental, it relates to the movie "When Harry met Sally". I'd like to use this association in order to explore the following: Is becoming a couple the necessary result of intimacy? Will the "blind dates" between the guests of honour, between the ideas and the participants result in a relationship? And what kind of a relationship will it be: a remote and painful one or an intimate and creative relationship?

During the first day of the conference we heard Dr. Avi Berman's interesting lecture about "Multiple Truths in Psychotherapy" and especially in the group. Dr. Earl Hopper shared with us his ideas about turning points and crossroads. He focused on the "third" as a prototype of leaving dyadic relationships and being permitted to experience life in a group and community. In order to demonstrate his ideas he showed us the provocative picture of Gustave Courbet "The origin of the world". Even though many interesting ideas were shared it seemed that the picture was the only thing that will be remembered. The picture was experienced by many participants as hurting and not very productive.

My feeling after the morning session was that passion was not associated with intimate relationships and that an encounter was not possible.

Hanni Biran, Tamar Elad, Dr. Gila Offer and Smadar Ashuah were the couples who led the social dreaming groups. In my social dreaming group we were looking together for an innovation but instead, we only found repeated contents: The Israeli Palestinian conflict, men versus women and the group versus the facilitators. In spite of Dr. Gila Ofer's and Smadar Ashuach's professional and warm moderation, the "breakthrough" issue remained vague.

On the other hand, in the lectures given outside the plenum one could identify a beginning of a creative encounter between pairs of

ideas and people, for example, Dr. Ester Rappaport's lecture on the encounter between the relational school and instinct theory. Another example of linkage is the lecture I gave that dealt with the claim that the relational school "threw out the baby with the bathwater" when it neglected to discuss psychopathology. I claimed that patients diagnosed with personality disorders require a unique relational technique. Anka Ditroy gave an innovative lecture: "When Foulkes meets Ogden".

Yael Doron and Efrat Even Tzur presented a surprising and creative encounter of ideas around the social unconscious: Yael Doron described the "holes in the social unconscious" and Efrat Even Tzur applied this idea to the Israelis ignoring the Palestinian Nakba. In spite of these encouraging encounters, the whole experience of the first day was of remoteness and alienation.

The second day started with Dr. Grossmark's fascinating lecture on Narrating the Unsayable: Enactment, Repair and Creative multiplicity in Group Therapy. This was when I felt the beginning of a connection between us and the lecturer.

Dr. Robi Friedman's moving life demonstration of how to conduct a small group on stage was another meaningful moment for me. It seemed that the group and Robi were immersed in an intimate and touching encounter like lovers who are almost blind to everything around them.

The climax of the conference happened after it was finished: in my opinion it was the workshop "When Hopper met Grossmark". The workshop, with its unique structure of two guests of honour supervising each other, was initiated by Dr. Hopper. Marit Milstein Yaffe, the head of the Israeli IGA, helped the idea become reality, through holding the couple and the group during the whole conference.

Both, Hopper and Grossmark are senior therapists from similar and different disciplines. Together they supervised one another with the help of the training group which consisted of the participants of the conference. Each described a unique patient that is undergoing individual and group therapy. One could only be amazed at the love and devotion to the patients in such a long therapeutic relationship. One could also see the desire and devotion to the profession that enables these two outstanding professionals to treat a group of heavily disturbed patients. One could also detect differences between

Hopper and Grossmark between the group analytic ideas and the concepts of relational group therapy, and of course the difference in ages and styles. These senior professionals chose to share with us their apprehensions and misgivings and this convinced me that we are all human beings. The process in which I participated during the three days reinforced in me the insight that innovation involves pain and that many small breakthroughs will end with the significant breakthrough. To me the conference in this workshop had reached a point in which love and passion became integrated and meaningful ideas and experiences were created.

Finally, I'd like to use this opportunity to thank Dr. Pnina Rappaort and Ms. Suzi Shohani whose faith in me encouraged me to lecture for the first time. More than that, their faith and endless efforts made this conference happen.

Liat Warhaftig-Aran
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Group Analytic Concepts: Dynamic Administration

"In group analysis, 'dynamic administration' refers to the work related to the setting up of groups. The potential membership of groups requires detailed preparation (Stock Whitaker 1985, pp.63–4). This may mean thinking about the balance of personalities, differences, experiences and needs of each member. The size of group, time of the session and length of the input are also factors to be weighed carefully."
From: *Music Therapy and Group Work: Sound Company* by Alison Davies, Eleanor Richards. Jessica Kingsley, 2002.

"An important ingredient of supervision throughout the training is the emphasis on 'dynamic administration', another core concept of group analysis which refers to the necessity for the group conductor to attend assiduously to all the details that surround the establishment of the group setting. These include selecting and preparing the group members for the group, structuring the group in time and place, and ensuring that communications taking place outside the group are ultimately woven into the dynamic context of the group itself and used to advance the therapeutic process.

Block trainees therefore require particular attention to basic questions of dynamic administration early in their supervision period. Developing and maintaining a professional network, preparing the setting (physical, social, and organisational), selection and composition of the group, and 'boundary management' receive particular emphasis which will be repaid when fewer teething troubles are encountered in early sessions of trainees' groups. The first year supervision group provides scope for 'coaching' in the skills of dynamic administration, while preparatory work is going on towards forming the training group after the first year of seminars.

Group analysis as a subject does not lend itself readily to teaching. The problem lies in the elusive character of those concepts which can be regarded as specific to group analysis (e.g. the group matrix, mirroring, resonance, and dynamic administration) and the many non-specific concepts which inform group-analytic thinking derived from well-established schools of discourse, such as psychoanalysis and systems theory. A large number of theoretical antecedents are therefore woven together in a single fabric, making it difficult for the neophyte group analyst to discern a coherent theoretical entity."
From: *The Third Eye: Supervision of Analytic Groups* by Meg Sharpe. Karnac Books, 1997.

"Much of this and the following chapter underscore the importance of the holding environment for the safe development of the group. Failures and distortions of the holding environment are seen as exacerbating the likelihood of pathological manifestations of the anti-group as opposed to its developmentally appropriate expression in the group. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on the 'general management' functions required to establish and strengthen the group and thereby secure the holding environment. This view is fully congruent with Foulkes' notion of 'dynamic administration', which describes the conductor's core function as creating and maintaining the group setting.

The main therapeutic task, I suggest, is to develop a reflexive, systemic view of the internal needs of the group in relation to the surrounding organisational environment, its requirements and priorities. The former is assumed in Foulkes' concept of dynamic administration, the latter in Sharpe's (1995) notion of 'responsibility to the external context'. Together, these requirements constitute the ecological perspective of the group."

From: *The Anti-Group: Destructive Forces in the Group and Their Creative Potential* by Morris Nitsun. Routledge, 1996.

"It is clear that 'dynamic administration', an important group analytic concept, ensures the security of the setting in which group takes place. In the Therapeutic Community much of the dynamic administration is the responsibility of the whole community and not just the staff. For example, new members are accepted to the TC via case conferences involving a peer vote. In other words the whole community would assess and select a new member. Hence risk assessment and suitability for the TC should be looked at this stage by members as well as staff...... Dynamic administration refers to the responsibility of the conductor of a group to set, communicate the treatment model and promote aspects such as the values and boundaries of a group-analytic group..... Findings: The dynamic administration at the interface between TC with preparation groups has a potential pitfall which might increase the risk of aggression in TC."

From: *Marjan Ghazirad and Christopher Newrith. (2014). Thinking or acting: physical aggression in a therapeutic community: how best to manage it? Therapeutic Communities: The International Journal of Therapeutic Communities, Vol. 35 Iss 2 pp. 37 – 41.*

Compiled by Terry Birchmore

Citations and Abstracts from Other Journals

Richard Hougham. (2012). The matrix, group processes and drama-
therapy. The Arts in Psychotherapy, 39 (1), 60–65.

There is a paucity of published work on how group process informs
the teaching and practice of dramatherapy. This article investigates
ideas on groups and group therapy from the fields of analytical psy-
chology and group analysis, and goes on to develop these in the
context and practice of dramatherapy. First, the phenomenon of
regression in groups from Foulkesian and Jungian perspectives is
addressed, highlighting contrasting theories on the potential and pit-
falls of group experience. The idea of the 'matrix' as a multi-layered
intersubjective field in the group (Foulkes) and/or the entirety of the
unconscious (Jung) is explored, offering a background for discussion
on the nature of interpersonal and intrapsychic connections. Sesame
drama and movement therapy is referred to as an approach which
introduces cultural symbols through fairy tale and myth, and offers
the chance to explore these through dramatherapy methods. The
moment when a group creates a 'montage' from images from a story
offers an example of a 'constellation' of the group matrix, which can
lead to different modes of expression. The article finishes by return-
ing to broader questions of group therapy as set out by Jung, and
examining these in light of the ritual enactment of myth.

Bob Harris (2007). Inpatient groups: Working with staff, patients
and the whole community: Personal reflections of a group analyst.
Groupwork Vol. 17(1), pp.45–56.

In this paper the author shares with the reader his reflections on run-
ning inpatient groups. He provides two detailed case studies of his
groupwork. The first, took place in a traditional asylum in the early
1980s. The second was a more contemporary group, which took
place in a hospital secure unit. Both case studies illustrate the impor-
tance of gaining the support of the ward team, including doctors and
nurses, in establishing and maintaining a groupwork culture. He
illustrates how groupwork can help individuals with serious mental
disorders through exploration, reflection and acceptance. He ends by
making a plea for using groupwork to cope with wider societal

changes. Unlike the other papers in this series, this account has more of a narrative feel, and as such, it is told in the first person.

Micha Selders et. al. (2015). The development of a brief group intervention (Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy) for patients with medically unexplained somatic symptoms: a pilot study. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Volume 29, Issue 2.

The primary aim of this equivalence study was to compare the outcome of a brief group therapeutic intervention, based on the principles of dynamic interpersonal therapy (DIT) with an intervention based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in patients suffering from medically unexplained somatic symptoms (MUSS). Participants were 89 patients (aged 18 to 62) who were offered 20 sessions of either DIT or CBT, as central part of a treatment package, consisting of art therapy, psychomotor therapy, social therapy and physical therapy. Measurements were conducted at baseline, 10 weeks and 20 weeks, using self-rating scales measuring the level of anxiety and depression, the severity of medically unexplained symptoms and quality of life. Results showed that CBT and DIT were comparable. The conclusion was that it is recommended to design a larger scale randomised controlled trial to further elaborate the short-term and long-term effects of this novel psychodynamic group therapy for MUSS patients.

Slone, N. C., et al. (2015). Evaluating the efficacy of client feedback in group psychotherapy. Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 19(2), 122–136.

Monitoring progress in psychotherapy routinely (i.e., client feedback) has yielded positive results for improving both outcome and retention in individual and couple therapy; however, evidence of client feedback efficacy in a group format is limited. Using a randomized cluster design, group therapy participants (N = 84) were assigned to a client feedback or treatment-as-usual (TAU) condition in a university counseling center. Clients in the feedback condition used the Partners for Change Outcomes Management System (PCOMS; Duncan, 2011). Feedback participants had significantly larger pre–post group therapy gains (d = 0.41) and higher rates of reliable and clinically significant change when compared to TAU

participants on the Outcome Rating Scale (Miller & Duncan, 2000). Clients in the feedback condition also attended more group sessions compared to TAU participants. Study implications and future recommendations are provided.

Snijders, J. A. et al. (2015). Client-centered/experiential group psychotherapy with borderline clients: specific processes and challenges. Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies, 14 (1).

In this article a person-centered/experiential (PCE) approach of group therapeutic treatment for borderline clients in out-patient and day treatment is described. First, we focus on client-centered views on borderline processes. Then, we look at the general directives that are distilled from different borderline-focused treatment models to investigate to what extent these directives can be assimilated in a PCE approach. Next, we argue for a group therapeutic approach where possible and describe the selection criteria for participation. The core of this article describes the group process from the viewpoint of a client-centered/experiential and interpersonal orientation. A number of important processes and interventions are described according to the three main phases distinguished in the treatment process (beginning, middle and termination phase). These phases varyingly come to the fore in relation to changes in group composition. Typical borderline processes and challenges for the group therapist are illustrated with clinical vignettes.

Lorentzen, S. et al. (2015). Personality disorder moderates outcome in short- and long-term group analytic psychotherapy: A randomized clinical trial. British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 54 (2), 129–146.

In a randomized clinical trial, short- and long-term psychodynamic group psychotherapy (STG and LTG, respectively) schedules were equally effective for the 'typical' patient during a 3-year study period. Although several studies have reported good effects for patients with personality disorders (PD) in diverse forms of psychotherapy, the significance of treatment duration is unclear. Therefore, we tested the hypothesis that PD patients would improve more during and after LTG than STG. Conclusion: The effectiveness of LTG is higher for patients with co-morbid PD. Patients without PD do not appear to experience additional gain from LTG.

Rice, A. (2015). Common Therapeutic Factors in Bereavement Groups. Death Studies, 39 (3), 165–172.

Group therapy remains a popular treatment format for individuals experiencing bereavement. Although many innovative group treatments for grief are being developed, common therapeutic factors can also contribute to outcomes. The author integrates research on group therapy processes and treatment for grief, and examines evidence regarding group therapeutic factors that may influence bereavement group outcomes. Specifically, research on therapeutic factors related to sharing and support, interpersonal learning, and meaning-making is highlighted where it has relevance to bereavement groups. Potential research examining the interactions of these processes, their effects on group functioning and outcomes, and the moderators of these effects are discussed.

Selders, M. et al. (2015). The development of a brief group intervention (Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy) for patients with medically unexplained somatic symptoms: a pilot study. Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, 29 (2), 182–198.

The primary aim of this equivalence study was to compare the outcome of a brief group therapeutic intervention, based on the principles of dynamic interpersonal therapy (DIT) with an intervention based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) in patients suffering from medically unexplained somatic symptoms (MUSS). Participants were 89 patients (aged 18 to 62) who were offered 20 sessions of either DIT or CBT, as central part of a treatment package, consisting of art therapy, psychomotor therapy, social therapy and physical therapy. Measurements were conducted at baseline, 10 weeks and 20 weeks, using self-rating scales measuring the level of anxiety and depression, the severity of medically unexplained symptoms and quality of life. Results showed that CBT and DIT were comparable. The conclusion was that it is recommended to design a larger scale randomised controlled trial to further elaborate the short-term and long-term effects of this novel psychodynamic group therapy for MUSS patients.

Compiled by Terry Birchmore

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BOOK CORNER

Book Reviews

Morris Nitsun. *Beyond the Anti-Group: Survival and Transformation.* **Routledge. 2015, 266 pp.**

The importance and significance of Beyond the Anti-Group is in its challenge to the group-analytic community to think outside the box, take account of our rapidly changing social, cultural and ecological context, and develop and adapt group analytic theory and practice accordingly. Nitsun writes in a clear, articulate, fluent style, and is always a pleasure to read. He combines an extensive coverage of relevant literature and depth of analysis with clinical vignettes and personal accounts that greatly enrich and support the ideas put forward.

In this latest book he elaborates his views of destructive processes and their survival and transformation within, towards and between groups in a way that does indeed take us beyond the anti-group. Nearly 20 years on from the publication of The Anti-Group (1996), his views have been deepened and enriched by his continuing and extensive experience, primarily as clinician, but also as manager, group consultant and artist, in different contexts, in different roles and with different populations. An example of such developments is his comparison of his experience providing group-analytic therapy in the NHS and, more recently in private practice, with his growing awareness of the extent to which the personality resources and motivation of group members may facilitate or undermine the therapeutic potential of a group.

Thus his early attempts to balance what he saw as Foulkes's rather idealised, optimistic view of group-analytic therapy groups, with a focus on destructive processes, anxieties and hostile attacks, has shifted towards a more optimistic view. Such processes, in dialectical relationship to the desire for connection and love bonds, are seen as potential catalysts for creative transformation. This optimism is particularly evident in the chapter on "falling in love" and love relationships. Here he refers to his experiences conducting groups in the private sector which have led him to consider the superior potential of group therapy (in contrast to individual therapy), to transform early relational disruptions and blockages in intimate relating.

Anxieties about annihilation and the notion of *survival* of such attacks takes centre stage in this book. Quoting Winnicott's *"use of an object"*, he emphasises the importance of the containment, metabolising and processing of hostile attacks and the consequent creative potential for transformation. As a clinical practitioner of the same generation as Nitsun, I feel very attuned to the idea that a real understanding of the transformative potential of translating hostile and anxious attacks into direct communications takes many years of experience: namely to *trust* this process, and to judge when the consequence of more directly expressed hostilities and conflict can potentially be constructive and creative, rather than destructive.

This book is a personal account of his thinking, based on ideas first expressed in various lectures and talks and further developed and integrated in the writing of the book. In true group-analytic style he looks, from different perspectives, at the challenges to therapeutic practice and theory in a rapidly and dramatically changing world, a world of accelerating technological, environmental and social change.

In Part I, Nitsun considers the social impact of technology, climate change, the collapse of time, the loss of society, notions of immortality and crises of authority. In a fascinating chapter he draws on literature from a wide range of discourses, and brings together numerous relevant perspectives on accelerated and exponential change in a creative and interesting way. This then links to the need to look again at group-analytic theory and practice, at how our increasingly globalised society and expanding internet networks require an expanded version of the matrix, together with a reconsideration of the impact of changing communication patterns. He raises questions about the implications for analytic psychotherapy of the dominance of "present time" at the expense of past and future, and challenges us to consider our role in safeguarding human communication in its non-technological form. In the second chapter, using the current state of the NHS as an example, he makes a strong and convincing case for the destructive effects of repeated restructuring and rapid change in the NHS.

Part II has as its focus the clinical setting and includes chapters on the status of group psychotherapy in the public sector. Here Nitsun considers the ambivalent attitudes towards group psychotherapy and its ambiguous status in the NHS, where group-based approaches such as mentalization-based therapy (MBT), mindfulness-based cognitive

therapy (MBCT) and dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) utilize groups but do not take into account group process or the intrinsic potential therapeutic value of the group itself.

Keeping a focus on clinical setting, Nitsun questions the clinical implications of the recent increasing emphasis in group analysis on the social and the social unconscious, suggests that in his view, it compromises the notion of individuality. Claiming full commitment to the importance of social context in group analysis and acknowledging the probable controversial nature of his views, he suggests that the current emphasis on the social marginalises individual subjectivities. Here I found myself at odds with his views and interpretations of Foulkes's writing. He seems to imply that the social perspective excludes or diminishes the notion of an individual's inner world, rather than shapes it, that the individual is decentred by the current dominance of the social, rather than that the individual and the social/group are co-constructed and represent different perspectives in a constant dialectic. Group-analytic therapeutic method aims to treat the individual (not the group) using the medium of the group. Although he quotes Foulkes on this, it is nevertheless obscured in Nitsun's writing. On the other hand, his call for a formulation of a developmental theory, a theory of individual development based on a group analytic perspective, in my view identifies a significant gap in group-analytic theory and will hopefully stimulate theoretical development along these lines.

In the chapter comparing group analysis and CBT groups (likely to stir strong feelings in group analysts!), Nitsun challenges the stereotypes held by many (group) analysts, of contemporary CBT theory and practice. He describes aspects of modern-day CBT approaches with its emphasis on notions of "collaborative empiricism", socratic dialogue, meaning-making and controlled experimentation informing its model for therapeutic engagement, as having some similarities with group analysis. He also specifically details similarities and differences between a group-analytic and a group CBT approach - in this regard he suggests that group analysts have much to offer group CBT practitioners (aiming to enhance their practice and maximise the therapeutic potential of group work) by transmitting their understanding of group process and dynamics. As a clinician with many years of experience supervising and managing both CBT and group-analytic practitioners, Nitsun is in a

strong position to challenge stereotypes and to provide a comparative view of these modalities. He suggests that the promotion of CBT by IAPT (initially to the exclusion of most analytic approaches) and other such political forces, has contributed to the tendency towards a polarised, oppositional stance amongst group analysts in relation to CBT.

He points to the inevitability and need for short/medium -term therapies in an NHS that is underfunded and increasingly in demand, and to the clear advantage that a modality with a strong "evidence-base" has in terms of NICE recommendations and guidelines. He also implies that the fast-moving diversification of CBT approaches to include for example, schema therapy and mindfulness might further erode the clarity of the distinction between CBT and analytic approaches.

I welcome this chapter as a challenge to stereotyped thinking. I did however find myself missing a more sceptical approach to the politics of research (the common practice of adapting one's method and statistical strategies to get the results one is looking for) and research-based evidence, and to the short-term, fix-it attitudes that currently prevails in the NHS.

The challenges of providing a group analytic psychotherapy service in inner London with its changing population is the final chapter in this section. Here Nitsun makes a convincing case for "the group as refuge" for a contemporary urban mental health population. The picture presented, with its fluent interweaving of narrative and clinical illustration will, I think, resonate strongly with the experience of current practitioners.

Part III addresses the developmental journey of the group therapist, looking at the influence of personal, historical factors predisposing us to the chosen field of group therapy and how this and life development factors influence our practice and our style of group leadership and conducting. The profound influence of the person of the group conductor on the shape and workings of the therapy group is familiar to group analysts. Although acknowledging that these issues are commonly addressed in group-analytic supervision and training, Nitsun attempts to fill what he sees as a gap in the literature on this topic. The inclusion of autobiographical sketches from different stages of his own development to illustrate his ideas is both effective and moving.

In the final section, Nitsun enters the relatively uncharted territory of group analysis and the creative arts. Although there is a substantial body of writing on psychoanalysis and the arts dating back to Freud, it is only in recent years that group analysis has extended its reach to link to cultural products and forms of expression. Nitsun explores the convergence between group analysis and performance art and in a further chapter he analyses themes of authority and rebellion in four iconic movies: Rebel Without a Cause, If, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and White Ribbon. Here again Nitsun challenges us to extend our thinking beyond the consulting room and into wider society.

To conclude: this book represents a distillation and a maturing of Nitsun's thinking. Always the challenger, ready to court controversy, he has nevertheless written a well-researched, original and creative treatise on group analysis and its potential in the 21st century. It challenges us to develop and adapt to contemporary society, one in rapid flux and subject to accelerated and unpredictable change. I warmly recommend this book to those interested in the future of group analysis.

Sylvia Hutchinson
May 2015

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Harold Behr. *The French Revolution: A Tale of Terror and Hope for our Times*. Sussex Academic Press, Eastbourne. 2015, 180 pp.

Psychoanalysts since Freud have always been keen to use psycho-analysis as a means to understand history despite its basic premise being a one-to-one dependent relationship (which has never deterred its adherents from interpreting historical events and movements with grand finality). Freud's great sociological essays from 1915 onwards were each of them dependent on the two-person relation as the paradigmatic *sine qua non* of all human interaction; the value of psychoanalysis to explain the entire human world reminds me of Pat de Mare's remark about "playing ludo on a chessboard". Freud remarked,

"And as regards the therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neuroses, since no one possesses the authority to impose such a therapy upon the group? But in spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities." (Freud, S., p. 339).

Harold Behr explains in his Personal Note that he has been fasci-nated by the French Revolution 'since childhood'; this volume is the outcome of his lifelong study of this epoch-making revolution. He is to be thanked for being so dogged and doughty in his search for greater understanding of the events and the persons who acted in them, because he has provided us with a fascinating account that is 'out of left-field', as he uses what psychiatry has given him to look more closely at early influences on the main actors in this drama, and uses group-analytic understanding to bring fresh insights to this event. It is also a primer for further investigations into historic events and epoch making moments which can be enlightened by the applica-tion of group-analytic ideas.

In clear prose that is easily comprehended Behr moves easily from discussing in a Theoretical Preamble his methods and approach to looking closely at what is known of the main protagonists; Louis XVI and his queen Marie Antoinette; Robespierre and Danton the con-trasting revolutionary leaders trying to represent and interpret the People's Will; lesser protagonists and groups who have their moments

such as Charlotte Corday and Marat, Desmoulins, the Girondins and Hebertists and other 'heroes, tyrants and martyrs'. Most ride the tsunami of the revolutionary mob for a short while and then are sent to the guillotine by the ominously named Committee of Public Safety. He tells a fast paced story of events as forces gathered for the Reign of Terror and the culmination of group paranoia. Robespierre's fall and execution helps to bring the entire large group of Paris to its senses - that and the dire necessity for the Republic to face the reality of foreign invasion and need to organise and confront such reality. Oh, and Napoleon's "whiff of grapeshot" on the Paris crowds (killing 1400 - thank you, Wikipedia), a reminder of Elias' insight that modern states insist on a monopoly of armed might.

The sense of polarisation is regularly present in the increasingly tense and dramatic unfolding of the story; all must hate the one and love the other or despise one and honour the other - and which might be reversed the following week with disastrous consequences for those unable to keep up. This process of praise and denigration is something that de Mare was always insisting that large groups were more likely to engender than small groups - the larger the gathering the more likely is there to be polarisation. It is useless to stop there of course; such situations need to have this pointed out to them as soon as it is on the horizon. Harold Behr is well aware of this and cites the main wars and civil conflicts presently occupying the television screens of every land, to illustrate how poorly this history is understood.

This is the kind of approach to the understanding of history that has been largely absent, in my experience. No longer 'Just one damn thing after another'; instead an approach that ranges across the individual personalities acting as dynamic interactive entities and the world they inhabit and act in. Then what opposes their actions and what their action and attitudes have given rise to, due to the exercise of political power. The point at which this becomes too much is reached and there sets in an opposition that might lead to violence and social upheaval. And then those who start to populate the political scene and to take action on their own behalves and on behalf of those who either elect them or whom they are said to represent.

Using group-dynamic and group-analytic ideas, he makes a fulsome examination of the revolutionary crowd, explaining it and its contradictory moods and actions to offer some understanding of how

this first successful People's uprising did what it did. When the mob brought down the feebly defended Bastille without a struggle, and then executed those inside with barely a second thought, the mob realised its power. Five weeks later it forced the Royal family to return to Paris, and within two months the National Assembly's authority had been fatally wounded by the People's trespass into its deliberations though there was no way of telling how this had happened, who controlled it, nor where it might go. Agreed responsibility had been overthrown, received authority had been swept away and only power remained which became in these circumstances increasingly rapacious in its demands for blood (I am reminded of Byron's poem 'Darkness': 'I had a dream which was not all a dream...'). How and why this happened are questions for which Behr offers some explanations.

He twice quotes George Santayana, the Mexican-American literary and cultural critic, that 'If you forget your history then you are bound to repeat it'; such history has been repeated too many times. Most recent in the Arab spring revolutions, where a number of outcomes have been reached. In Tunisia with what seems a reasonable stab at righting wrongs; in Egypt a counter-revolution that brought back to power the military in even tougher mood than before; in Libya, chaos; in Syria even greater chaos and the rise of radical fundamentalism well equipped with military hardware: 'Cry havoc/And let slip the dogs of war'.

Questions around the mob are the most inexplicable. Behr resorts to the notion of a 'primitive' mind but is that the apt descriptor? A little later, and in between bursts of violence, they were organising well, the same minds were defeating all invaders and then going on to reorganise the entire country; they were not 'primitive' doing this. Better perhaps to speak of primitive aspects of mind, or primordial aspects of mind. I wonder too if we need to consider the uniqueness of the situation: no other mob in history had been allowed to take over an entire kingdom: no other large group in history, hitherto without a shred of political power, had overthrown a government and taken the reins of power itself. That it so easily assumed reckless power and exercised it; that it was indulged by the various leaders of the crowd with their praise of its actions lest it overpower themselves; that it did get itself organised throughout the districts of Paris and became the foundations of the later and highly successful army under Napoleon: all this says something about grassroots ability to organise

spontaneously and thoroughly. However when thought was required as to whether what the mob was doing was actually right or not, 'thought' in this large group did not take place. Instead came appeals for unity that very quickly became demands for allegiance to surreal beliefs which took the place of any kind of reason. That the Enlightenment had in part stimulated the revolution with its demand for reason, as an anchor for implementing the changes that France had to undergo in order *not* to end in a bloodbath, tinged the whole era with a dismal irony.

The details that Behr explains are at times gruesome. While many thousands were killed by their fellow countrymen the numbers are small against the twentieth century's roll call of many millions. That it was done as neighbour against neighbour at the behest of dema- gogues whom it seemed impossible to question does have the tone of the history of the crazy century we have left behind and the one we now inhabit.

Behr explains the lure of the myths of history becoming received and unquestioned 'knowledge' and then as spurs to further dreadful action. In this, what Adam Philips has called 'over-interpretation' may achieve something:

"You can only understand anything that matters... by over- interpreting it; by seeing it, from different aspects, as the product of multiple impulses. Over-interpretation means not being stopped in your tracks by what you are most persuaded by; to believe in a single interpretation is radically to misunderstand the object one is inter- preting, and interpretation itself." (Philips, A., p. 14)

It takes only a few moments to see the passage's relevance for group-analysis and understanding historic events, in this statement by a psychoanalyst. The group reflective process provides each mem- ber with those individually-crafted mirror reflections that give an individual member a choice of how to be, how to understand situa- tions, events, persons. Behr brings a hall of interpreting mirrors to help restore a more holistic view, that sees the king as isolated and lonely, the queen as vain with no preparation for such a role, and the system at least fifty years out of date for managing the political and social pressures of the 1780's. The fledgling USA would never have survived but for France's military intervention on its behalf yet its rulers had not the wit to consider what new experience might seep into France's body politic after its only victory over its cross-Channel

imperial rival Britain. The implications of the situation that had one empire defeating another empire on behalf of a infant republic whose founding ideals (despite being entwined with elemental contradictions such as slavery) would later provide seeds of searing revolution in Europe, escaped those entrusted at the time to do just that.

This is a great book for group-analysts. Read and refresh yourself.

References

Freud, S. p 339 Vol 12, Penguin Freud Library.
Philips, A. (2015) Against Self-Criticism, in *London Review of Books*, p.14, March 5th

Kevin Power

Report of the IGA/GASi Librarian

Please note that the journal '*Matrix'* is no longer received as hard copy in exchange for '*Group Analysis*' but is available in full text online at: www.matrixtidsskrift.no [Weblink valid 23/06/2015].

Note: ***Matrix Nordisk Tidsskrift for psykoterapi,*** published by Dansk Psykologisk Forlag, in Danish.
'Home page' and current issue will translate to English – so easier to read than the hard copy version! Back issues are present, but don't offer translation – but we hold these in hard copy, and English language abstracts are present.

Elizabeth Nokes, IGA/GASi Librarian

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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 GASI office if you would like to donate any original or copied documents:

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Events

GAS International Quarterly Members Group (QMG)

The dates for sessions in 2015:
Saturday 24th January
Saturday 18th April
Saturday 5th July
Saturday 24th October

Format: there are three 90-minute sessions with a 90-minute break for lunch; the day runs from 9.30am - 4.30pm with the first group starting at 10.00.

Conductor: Ian Simpson.
Venue: Guild of Psychotherapists
47 Nelson Square, London SE1

The venue is a three minute walk from Southwark Underground Station. In addition to the large group room, we have the use of a kitchen. Morning refreshments are provided. For lunch, the Guild is in an area where there are many good, inexpensive places to eat.

The fee for the group is £25 per day or £80 for the year.
You can pay on the day by cash or cheque
or in advance at the GASI office:

1 Daleham Gardens, London, NW3 5BY
+44 20 7435 6611

All GASI members are welcome to the QMG.

The Institute of Group Analysis

Saturday 5th December 2015- 9:50am – 6:30pm

Group Lives: Tales of Attachment

A Commemorative Conference on John Bowlby's 25th Anniversary

This is a homage to psychoanalyst, psychologist and child psychiatrist John Bowlby (1907-1990), father of Attachment Theory. A tribute to his gentleness, compassion and encouragement; to his overwhelming humanity; to his genius. Bowlby worked for 50 years at the London Tavistock Clinic. His message was deceptively simple: we need our mothers… and fathers… and groups; we need one another. Guest speakers shall deliver a reasoned integration of attachment theory, research, training and practice through the lens of Bowlby's legacy: attachment is a primary force for human contact, as essential for survival as feeding and sexuality.

The Bowlby-Attachment Conference is unashamedly inclusive. Ideas shall be presented in a jargon-free, sensitive manner, making them accessible and understandable for anyone who is interested in relationships and personal development or has ever been a patient. Participants will be able to identify with vivid and moving real life experiences that show our struggle to become attached, survive, and grow within our families and groups. Space for further thinking and reflection will be provided by professionally conducted analytic groups.

A celebratory music and dance party will add a touch of magic to make this event a day to remember.

Sir Richard Bowlby a scientific and medical photographer, is John Bowlby's eldest son and regularly presents a personal perspective of his father's work on attachment to professionals and lay audiences across the world.

Dr Gwen Adshead is a consultant in forensic psychiatry at Broadmoor Hospital, a psychotherapist and group analyst. She is an expert in Medical Law and Ethics, and in attachment-based group therapy with offenders.

Dr Felicity de Zulueta is a consultant psychiatrist in psychotherapy, group analyst and former Head of the Trauma Unit at the Maudsley Hospital. She is an expert in neuroscience and complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders.

Dr Arturo Ezquerro is a consultant psychiatrist in psychotherapy, group analyst and Former Head of Medical Psychotherapy Services in Brent. He had six years of supervision with John Bowlby.

Programme:

Time	Session
09.30 – 09.50am	Registration and Coffee
09.50 – 10.00am	Welcoming Introduction – Dr Arturo Ezquerro
10.00 – 11.00am	Dr Gwen Adshead: "Attachment, Language and the Social Mind"
11.00 – 12.00am	Dr Felicity de Zulueta: "Complex PTSD from an Attachment Perspective: Implications for Group Analysis"
12.00 – 01.15pm	Lunch at nearby restaurant
01.15 – 02.15pm	Small Groups
02.15 – 04.15 pm	Sir Richard Bowlby: "Personal Insights into the Development of Attachment: the Evolution of a Theory"
04.15 – 04.30pm	Coffee
04.30 – 05.30pm	Dr Arturo Ezquerro: "John Bowlby's Group Attachments"
05.30 – 06.30pm	Question Time and Plenary
6.30pm onwards	Cheese, wine and music
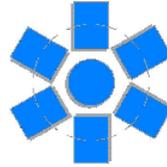
IGA

Speakers:
Sir Richard Bowlby
Dr Gwen Adshead
Dr Arturo Ezquerro
Dr Felicity de Zulueta

Convenor:
Dr Arturo Ezquerro

Cost:

Fees	Early bird, paid before 31st July	Fee paid after 31st July
Public Fee	£110.00	£125.00
IGA Member	£90.00	£105.00
IGA Student	£79.00	£89.00
Lunch	£10.00	£10.00

Conference fee includes:
Cheese, Wine and Music at 6:30pm

To book:
Book online at www.groupanalysis.org
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Venue:
IGA
1 Daleham Gardens
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Tel: 020 7431 2693
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41st Winter Workshop November 6/7th 2015
Followed by the AGM

EXPLORING FUNDAMENTAL FEARS IN OUR GROUPS

**Dr Amal Treacher, Dr Christopher Scanlon, Dr Lene Auestad and
Dr Robi Friedman**

Venue: The Institute of Group Analysis, 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3

The moral framework of group-analysis suggests a world where there is respect, inclusion, space for reflection and boundaries of right and wrong. However, we also live in a social context where the zeitgeist is increasingly preoccupied with fears of invasion from foreigners, extreme religious attitudes and a binary framework where war or violence is the only response to opposition.

It seems that what we understand as healing is in direct contrast with the world in which we live. Clearly this contradiction enters our groups but does our work prepare either ourselves or our members to deal with this frightening outside world or even help them to recover from their need for therapy?

Registration Fees (in Pound Sterling)	Before 28th September	After 29th September
GASi Member fee	£145	£155
GASi Student	£115	£125
Non-GASi Member fee	£180	£200

SLOVENSKO DRUŠTVO ZA SKUPINSKO ANALIZO

FUNDACIJA POTI MIRU

10th International Workshop in Group Analytic Psychotherapy

PEACE AND WAR

A group analytic exploration in small and large group, 2 – 4 October 2015

Kobarid, Hotel Hvala, Foundation Poti miru
Kobarid is a small town under the mountains where the Great War took an enormous toll. The front on the river Isonzo killed more than five hundred thousand lives on both sides. There were soldiers of around twenty nations. For many, it was not only the blood bath but also humiliation, suffering and starvation in POW camps that marked them for life. People's awareness of the tragic and senseless combats is still alive, even gaining momentum.

The horrors of the Great War call for a reflection of peace and war. Only now, a hundred years later, can we talk openly about the experiences of our grandparents and great-grandparents. Some say war is unavoidable, at least occasionally. However, it may well depend on what we, as individuals and members of social groups, do with our personal and collective aggression.

Here, we are putting 'peace' first, reversing Tolstoy's original order. In the intra-uterine beginning of our lives, we were at peace. Our great struggles, inner and outer, developed only later.

You are kindly invited to join us in the exploration of this important theme.

Accomodation:
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e-mail: topli.val@siol.net
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You are kindly advised to book a room soon, with a note "for the workshop".
We recommend: www.potmiru.si , www.dolina-soce.com
http://youtu.be/CGqS7doARbk

Online registration for the workshop at: www.sdsa.si/en

II Jornadas Grupoanálisis Mallorca
"TRABAJANDO EN GRUPO. NUEVAS PERSPECTIVAS"
27-28 noviembre 2015
Hotel Araxa, Son Armadams - Palma

Viernes, 27 noviembre

16:00 – 16:30: Entrega de documentación

16:30 – 18:00: **"Cultura e Inconsciente Social: experiencias grupales en Cisjordania, Sudáfrica, Guatemala"**

Ponente: Elisabeth Rohr. Socióloga, grupoanalista, supervisora psicosocial a nivel internacional, escritora. Frankfurt.

18:00 – 18:30: Café.

18:30 – 20:00: **Grupo Grande**. Conductores: Joseph Acosta, Joan Coll.

Sábado, 28 noviembre

10:30 – 12:00: **"Grupoanálisis. Creando puentes: Foulkes – Cortesao – Ormont"**

Ponentes: Pere Mir. Psicólogo, psicoanalista, grupoanalista, editor. Barcelona

Isaura Nieto. Psiquiatra. grupoanalista, docente y supervisora de la Sociedad Portuguesa de Grupoanálisis y Psicoterapia Analítica de Grupo. Lisboa.

Joseph Acosta. Psicoterapeuta de grupo, Austin, Texas. Docente en Center for Group Studies, New York.

Moderador: Joan Coll. Médico, psicoterapeuta grupoanalista. Palma

12:00 – 12:30: Café.

12:30 – 14:00: **Grupo Grande**. Conductores: Elisabeth Rohr, Joan Coll.

14:00 – 16:00: Comida de Trabajo

16:00 – 17:30: **Grupos Pequeños.**

17:30 – 18:00: Café.
18:00 – 19:30: **Demo Group.** Conductor Joseph Acosta
19:30 – 20:00: Clausura de la Jornada.

Precio de la inscripción:
Antes del 12 de octubre: 90 euros (45 euros para estudiantes y residentes)
Después del 12 de octubre: 120 euros (60 euros para estudiantes y residentes)
Miembros de la ABSM: 90 euros independientemente de fecha de inscripción
El precio incluye la comida de trabajo y los cafés.

Inscripción a la jornada:
A través del siguiente correo electrónico: grupanalisimallorca@ gmail.com

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Obituary

Sheila Ernst, who died at Dignitas in Switzerland on March 20th aged 73, was determined not to let the illness, progressive supranuclear palsy, that was taking her mind as well as paralyzing her body, define the way she would die. She travelled towards dying as she had lived: honestly, determinedly and engaging others in the complexities of the decision. In her final large group at the IGA, she encountered both respect and disagreement with her decision, as well as tributes to her inspiring and charismatic influence.

I worked closely with Sheila for 35years, starting with the Women's Therapy Centre (WTC) in the 1980's. She was a pioneer of radical and feminist psychotherapy and through her writing and clinical work, she explored the ways in which the social and political world enters into our deepest and most unconscious feelings. When the WTC was threatened financially, she spearheaded fundraising and, at the same time stood in as Acting Director, helping to reform it into an organisation instead of a quarrelsome collective.

At this time in the mid 80's Sheila was training as a Group Analyst. Later, at the IGA she took on the tricky role of Chair of the Training Committee where she led the development of our academic link with Birkbeck. Sheila understood the importance of developing a more theoretical base for group analysis within the context of a respected academic institution. Sheila was very determined and I was only too aware that, despite allowing a lot of debate within her committees, she knew where she was heading and knew she would get there! Sheila's work was crucial in providing a sense of purpose and meaning in her life and for the past 35 years, the IGA had been her professional home.

She also worked with Norman Vella as a staff team consultant to the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture (as it was known then) when they were moving from a small collective to a well-financed, bigger organisation. Her knowledge of trauma and groups made this very difficult work valuable and was later developed in her work with Michael Kelly in Belfast where she conducted the Large Group on their GA Training. The Irish Training needed to process a war-torn history and this experience she was to take with her when she taught on the first Israeli cohort of Group Analysts. Working in Israel had a very powerful and personal resonance for Sheila. Many

of you in GASI will know her in these contexts as well as a committed member.

Sheila taught at Birkbeck on their Psychodynamic Counselling Course for many years. Even though she had achieved much professionally, having always wanted to work in the public sector, at the age of 64 she took on a new position at St. Ann's hospital. Here she conducted groups for patients with borderline personality disorders as well as offering supervision and training to other clinicians.

Around the same time we started working together in St Petersburg developing group analysis in Russia. I knew when I took on the Training of Group Analysts in St. Petersburg that if I asked Sheila to work with me, she would be completely reliable and support me in our changed roles. Previously I had been her protégé in the Group Analytic world but long years working together had meant dealing with her sudden eruptions of temper, often linked to competitive sisterly feelings. I was confident that our friendship could survive these eruptions and were indeed worth the risk. Friendship with Sheila was an adventure and I miss her very much.

It is important to emphasise that this summary doesn't include the many workshops, training events, supervisions, individual therapy sessions and therapy groups that Sheila conducted. They were the essence of her work and continued to be the primary focus while all these other commitments took place.

We often talked about that pressing question of how we had arrived at being the people we were. We realized how important our early women's consciousness raising groups had been. So we set up our own consciousness raising group for older women therapists. That was when we thought we were old. Sheila was probably heading towards 50 by then, and I was near my mid 40's. It has now been going for 25 years.

Sheila was always processing experiences, not just from the day before but also unfinished conversations that we may have been having or ideas from a book she was currently reading or unprocessed thoughts from a recent therapy group. I think Sheila was always both present and preoccupied at the same time. For example, our airport routine to St. P meant arriving early enough to have a coffee at Heathrow so that Sheila could text a family member about an arrangement, sort out a message to a student about a dissertation and always visit Boots for some travel essentials.

Sheila listened intently and was very present, taking all conversations seriously. She would often enter into a discussion by repeating the other person's sentence – long before her illness took hold. I think it was Sheila's way of focusing on the present and leaving all these other preoccupations for another time. Her talent as a teacher/supervisor and therapist was to do with her intense interest in others. I know for myself, that in thinking through ideas with her, she would respond as though they were fresh and new even though I knew that they were not particularly new for her. I think she was fascinated by how people's minds worked. How did a particular person's mind discover that idea? She loved to see people discover themselves so asked questions to help that process. She was not someone who wanted to show how clever she could be or what brilliant interpretations she could make – although I do know that she could have done so if she wished. Her wish was to teach so that others could discover their own mind and that is a very special talent and why so many trainees and patients are grateful to her.

As a colleague, as well as a supervisor and therapist, she was essentially collaborative. That is why she became a Group Analyst. She enjoyed the meeting of minds but it is also why all her books are written with others. I don't think that ultimately she really wanted to write a book of her own – she has written many papers as we know – although it would have been good if she had done so. Her book entitled *An Introduction to Group Analysis* that she co-wrote with Bill Barnes and Keith Hyde is an extremely skilled handbook. The word Introduction is a misnomer. It is an excellent teaching tool because although apparently simple she elucidates some very complex ideas.

Sheila was a charismatic, challenging woman of great intelligence and kindness who will be remembered by many in the IGA and also be sadly missed. She is survived by her husband Jonathan and their daughter Rosie, her stepson David, her daughters Darah and Emma from her first marriage, her sister Eva and six grandchildren.

I'd like to end with this quote from Helen Macdonald from H is a Hawk:

"The archaeology of grief is not ordered. It is more like earth under a spade, turning up things you had forgotten. Surprising things come to light: not simply memories, but states of mind, emotions, older ways of seeing the world."

Sue Einhorn, 2015

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GROUP ANALYTIC CONCEPTS:
MASHIFICATION

CONTEXTS' COLUMNIST

<u>MY WORLD – YOU'RE WELCOME TO IT</u>

(Mony, Mony)

<u>Mind(reduced-fat*)fulness</u>

In the early 70's one of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation teams offered free initiation to all the members of a psychiatric day centre in Camden. Despite the fact that most of them were on medication of some sort or another, sometimes with alarming side effects, it was decided that giving them a mind technique was far too dangerous so the offer was refused.

But now, allelujah, meditation has been re-branded "Mindfulness" (it's got a capital m), and rendered safe for humanity, at least for Western humanity. Yes, stripped of all that dodgy cultural context, it's been neutralized, packaged, franchised for the post-industrial age. Castrated and devoid of connection with philosophical, epistemological roots, theory of mind and consciousness, it has been rendered suitably bland for our Western tastes and can be consumed as a product to be taken in 5 minute doses. You don't even have to attend a course, you can buy a CD that will take you to the "deepest levels" in a few minutes (or your money back) the advertising assures us. Well that's a relief - imperialist theft without a conscience. But why kill an elephant for its tusks?

But, remember, just because you can paddle doesn't mean that you'll be able to swim.

* Edited to avoid the Scunthorpe problem!

<u>Doc's Den Of Deniable Daftness</u>

Lavinia Palace: Do you know what?

Doc: Why don't you just tell me what.
LP: I'm thinking of writing a paper "In praise of mediocrity". All this setting goals of excellence when most of us are just part of the bell curve where there are half of us on the sinister side by definition. Why should we think we're failures when everyone is doing their best. This is the sort of attitude

that leaks into schools and leads to testing, testing, testing so education becomes about learning to pass exams rather than enriching life.

Doc: So you'd like a satisfaction with failure.

LP: I'd like a redefinition of what counts as failure and less categorization of learning.

Doc: OK, your democrat credentials are impeccable but I have a question, well a couple of questions.

LP: Ask away.

Doc: You're going to a performance of the Goldberg Variations, do you want to see Angela Hewitt or an enthusiastic amateur?

LP: Not a fair example

Doc: Very fair. And say you've got a brain tumour, do you want the top brain surgeon in the country going in to get it out if you've got the choice, or just go to your local hospital.

LP: Woman does not live by aesthetics and medical intervention alone.

Doc: Perhaps not but you have to admit that you might have a weakness for excellence in some areas.

LP: Hmmm.

Doc: So are you trying to save me from failing to be excellent or just plain saying I'm mediocre.

LP: It's always you, you, you, isn't it?

But you may have a point since I'm not sure that psychotherapy isn't the ideal field for mediocrity. I mean, if you're too clever then clients will resent you, especially if you get there before them, look at some of the excruciating exchanges that Bion reports. But if you're too stupid then you're no use to anyone, though perhaps in groups this isn't so much of a disadvantage provided you're not too envious and can get out of their way (Come to think of it I do know some GAs who are a danger to shipping). So somewhere in the middle is probably just about right. No shame in mediocrity is just the point I wanted to make in the article. I mean, star Group Analyst, isn't that a contradiction in terms? Pedestrians walk this way - the door of psychotherapy is open for you.

Doc: So if you *were* implying that I am mediocre, you're saying that would be praise indeed.

LP: Yeah - stuck in the middle with you.

The Great Chain of Being a Group Analyst

Is it true that having been group analytically trained you can always trace your lineage back to Foulkes? You know, you were analysed by a GA who was analysed by Foulkes, what Pat de Maré called "the third wave", there must be a fourth by now, perhaps a fifth. Would this also apply to non IGA trainings, who did they see as their GA?

But Heinz Wolff was running groups before the war so there must be other lines of succession though maybe not for GA's. And what of those Grandparented in? Then it maybe wouldn't be so much not being a link in a chain as not having been worked over by a group. You can't really tell if Foulkes is behind anyone but sometimes there seems to be a screw loose in the mechanism. Who, then, can wield the screwdriver?

"Tories are for the bosses, Labour is for the workers"
                    The political conclusions of "Nan" Evans, 1953

I have nothing to say/ and I am saying it/ and that is poetry/ as I need it.
                                        John Cage