Group-Analytic Contexts

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Newsletter of
THE GROUP-ANALYTIC SOCIETY
International

Editor: Peter Zelaskowski

GAS INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members are invited to present their ideas; CONTEXTS is a newsletter, therefore the copyright stays with the authors, and the GASI Committee does not necessarily agree with their views. The editors preserve the right to correct language and grammar.

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Editorial

As I hope you are by now aware, this publication has made a break from paper publishing, this being the second digital-only issue. Contexts is now at the start of its life away from our bookshelves, out there online only, to be read on iPads, tablets, smart phones, laptops, etc.. The potential this move generates will become apparent over time, as we begin to exploit, not only the possibilities of digital publishing, but also that we no longer depend on Sage Publications, this issue being the first one fully edited by myself without their involvement. So far I have dedicated my efforts towards making this transition and for now, as you perhaps have noticed, Contexts is still only an exact digital replica of its old self. The only change of note so far is that we are now able to include more colour, a small but not insignificant shift which potentiates all sorts of future changes. Over the next year or so we will be re-designing the publication to create a format more suited to digital life.

        Another significant aspect to this change is that there will no longer be a three month delay. In the past the copy for the June issue, for example, had to be sent to Sage by the end of March. Now, your writing can be added to the current issue as close to a week prior to publication. In time, I believe this change will alter the mood and feel of Contexts, putting greater emphasis on the news that the newsletter purports to deliver. I should add that this issue still carries some element of delay, as it is caught somewhere between the old and the new. I should also add that this was not an easy issue for me to put together. For reasons difficult to understand my recent attempts to prompt writing, from myself and others, have met with little success. An occasional fantasy that plagues me is that one day soon there'll be an issue without content…like a group in total silence…a session without members. The Foulkes' refrain "trust the group" keeps repeating itself in my head, but my doubts persist.

        In contrast, at the same time as I'm writing this editorial, the GASi forum is buzzing with life, dialogue, wit and wisdom, with one thread not that long back jamming on the theme of "we" in groups and how too often we illegitimately use "we" as if speaking on behalf of a group. One view of course is that "I" am made up of nothing but "we" and that "I" am nothing more than a convenient fiction, "an artificial though plausible abstraction". Of course, at some point soon the forum will, just as inexplicably as it sparks into life, dry-up and leave us wondering where it has gone and when it will return. But this is the

way of things in GA life, the way we are together. We also know that in the silences there is always so much going on, just as there is in GA world: preparing for the next Management Committee meeting; the GASi Summer School in Athens; the Autumn Workshop; the Shadow workshops; the 2017 Berlin Symposium, and so on and so on. In my role as chair of the Online Communications Committee, I am currently preparing the ground for modernising the GASi website. Terry Birchmore, former editor of this publication, who set-up and for many years managed the website, has now retired from that post and deserves our gratitude for carrying out this invisible and at times thankless task. Another excellent example is the Group Analytic Dictionary project. In this issue we have a first progress report from the new editorial group who have taken over the work of carrying this ambitious task forward. There is also a letter from Kristian Valbak on the work he is doing promoting quantitative research in GA, as well as a piece informing us of a new important initiative of a trades union for psychotherapists and counsellors in the UK. This issue also includes contributions by two Greek colleagues, Vagelis Thanellos and Theodora Skali. They serve as a reminder of our forthcoming GASi Summer School in Athens, which I hope will once again be the focus of the December issue of Contexts this year. I say this with a heavy heart, having been at the last one in Prague and now not able to attend this one as I'd hoped. In my absence, please DO NOT FORGET to send me your reports, reflections and photos from Athens, because, whatever the multiple changes currently happening, this publication continues to depend on the work of members putting digital pen to paper and sharing something of themselves with the group. Otherwise, Contexts would just be a big digital silence.

Peter Zelaskowski

President's Foreword

We are experiencing emotionally difficult times these days. Mainly I am referring to the violent life-threatening and explosive events in Europe and the refugee 'crisis' which is troubling and uncontrollable in a different way. These threats colour the matrix in which we live and may influence our lives deeply. In recent months, terror in the streets and trains of Paris and Brussels, and potential dangerous situations in other places in Europe, make us weary and alert. Suddenly, we are also more alert to suicide attacks in Pakistan, in Iraq and in Sinai. The violence infiltrates our homes. Terror may easily invade our preoccupation and is an experience which for more than a generation has been unfamiliar in Europe.

The refugee situation often has a similar impact on our feelings and thinking. Although many of us identify unconsciously with children, women and old people who have had to leave their homes and are on their difficult way to find a secure place, it is also threatening being confronted by the refugees. Besides the threat from the sheer number of people coming into Europe, there is a tendency to connect the terror with the refugees. The threat felt by those opposed to accepting the refugees also has a conscious and unconscious impact on us.

Both situations, being terrorized and being a refugee, resonate deeply in our minds – both are universal experiences which every person carries in his 'fundamental matrix'. We can also say that our social unconscious surely tries to process these threats, created by situations that cause anxieties with multiple outcomes which sometimes we are not even aware of. From my experience, the average outcome of such a situation is either an effort to deny the dangers by retreating as much as possible from the political reality or a polarisation of positions. Suddenly we look for enemies, and we can easily find them. We get closer to hate and we are ready to fight - or take flight.

How can Group Analysis help in these times? I believe that being more aware of group processes and societal situations, many of us may have the possibility of being better informed of emotional movements in the people close to us and in our communities. I also see these issues with patients and group participants, some of whom come to therapy to help elaborate their own anxieties and fears, or else those feelings of their own close ones. Presently, group participants may have to receive more legitimisation to discuss their anxieties and

hate than ever. We also know that in these difficult times, in which "soldier's matrices" tend to return to our lives, the personal also recedes, more than ever in the face of the societal. Many of us see, how whole communities join in helping others but also in repressing their own individuality.

We may have an opportunity to help individuals to adapt to this new situation in a way which is not destructive to their own self or to other large parts of society.

One of the difficulties these days is to continue our normal lives as if there is no threat. To go on working on the Berlin Symposium and many other issues may be the most adaptive move we can make.

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!

Now that Contexts is a digital publication only, the deadlines are different. We are now able to receive your writing up to only a week or so before publication.

- For publication at the end of March: March 15th
- For publication at the end of June: June 15th
- For publication at the end of September: September 15th
- For publication at the end of December: December 15th

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Ms Jasmina Stojkovic Pavlovic
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Psychiatrist working at the Institute for Mental Health in Belgrade.
Since 2003 she has been in education in Group Analysis and has
finished all the theoretical parts, as well as her personal therapy.
Now, she needs to finish her clinical paper and, after that, hopes that
she will become a group analyst.

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Dr Jasmina Knezevic-Tasic
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Jasmina Knezevic-Tasic is from Belgrade, Serbia. She is a
psychiatrist, with many years of psychoanalytic training. She has
worked in the field of drug addiction for 30 years. Nineteen years
ago she founded "Lorijen Clinic for Drug Addiction and other
psychiatric disorders" in Belgrade where she is also a director.
Associate member of the Group Analytic Society Belgrade. She has
finished the clinical training in group analysis and is currently
finishing her clinical paper.

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Corina brings over 25 years' experience as a senior OD consultant,
Psychologist, Lecturer, Author and Group Analyst with senior
leadership experience. She is a Director of Grace Consulting, a
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change programmes across a range of business sectors both in
Ireland and In Europe. Corina also lectures in UCD business school,
co-ordinates their personal development and planning modules and
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Born in Switzerland in 1978, she attended the medical faculty at the University of Zurich und finished her studies in 2004. Since then, she has worked in the Psychiatric Clinic of Munsterlingen in the northeast of Switzerland in various units (psychiatric intensive care, therapy of legal substance addiction, psychotherapy of severe personality disorders, outpatient care, and crisis intervention and triage). Her therapeutic background is analytic – she attended the psychoanalytic training institute of Zurich PSZ to get her specialization as a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, before becoming a member of the training institute for group analysis Zurich SGAZ in 2011. The focus of her work is the treatment of patients with severe personality disorders and crisis intervention.

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Group Analytic Dictionary PROGRESS REPORT

We would like to make our membership aware of new developments in the Group Analytic Dictionary (GAD) project.

Following the presentation on the Group Analytic Dictionary by Dieter Nitzgen, Soren Aagaard, Lars Bo Jorgensen and Paul Bener on the 6th November 2015 at the IGA, London. The Group Analytic Society International (GASI), agreed to take over the management of the GAD project. At the next Management Committee Meeting on the 8th November, it was decided that Marina Mojovic, Carmen O'Leary and Svein Tjelta would form a group to lead the project. In a subsequent meeting of the GASI MC, this decision was ratified and they were given a mandate to take responsibility for setting up and managing the project. The stated aim of the project is the publication on the net and in hard copy of a group analytic dictionary.

Marina, Svein and Carmen have now formed a Management Editorial Group (MEG) lead by Svein Tjelta as the Principal Editor, and are in the process of setting up a Central Editorial Group (CEG), a GAD Advisory Group, and Local Editorial Groups. Lars Bo Jorgensen has taken the role of blog Administrator.

There are already functioning Local GAD groups (Denmark, Germany, Serbia and Israel) but we need more volunteers to form a local group in the UK and other countries. We also need volunteers to work with Lars Bo Jorgensen on the blog. The role of the Local Editorial Groups (LEG) is crucial in stimulating interest amongst Group Analysts to submit definitions of group analytic terminology. There is already a list of terms awaiting definitions that has been compiled, please visit the Danish GAD blog link (http://iga-kbh.dk) to see the work in progress. We envisage that the Local Editorial Groups will have a great deal of autonomy and would cooperate with each other, either directly or via the GAD blog.

The plan is to move the current Danish GAD blog into the GASI website to make it more accessible to the whole membership. Peter Zelaskowski is involved in facilitating this move and we hope that it would be in place by the beginning of this summer.

We intend to adopt the Wiki principle, where groups or individuals can collect and assemble concepts and terms in whatever

language they choose, and send them to their Local Editorial Group. The local group will then edit and upload them in English to the blog, with copies to the Central Editorial Group. The Central Editorial Group in consultation with the Advisory Group is responsible for the acceptance or refusal of any concept or term submitted for publication. The other principle of production is to ask authors who have coined original group analytic concepts to write lexical articles for the GAD and to send them to the central editorial group for proof reading and final acceptance. We are still working on writing clear guidelines on what to include and how to arrange the definitions of terms.

In order to advance and promote the GAD project there will be presentations in the following events:

- IIGA International Workshop in Gonen (Israel), Exchange and Growth in Groups - June 16-18th.
- The Nordic Symposium in Group Psychotherapy next September 8-10th in Helsinki
- International Conference on Psychosocial Dialogues in Belgrade, 23-24th September.

We think that the way we carry out this task is as important as the end result. We are committed to using a collaborative, group analytic approach. Therefore we would like to ask for your contributions and invite you to get involved in whatever form you might think it would be of help.

You are welcome to contact any of us for further information.

Organizational Charts:
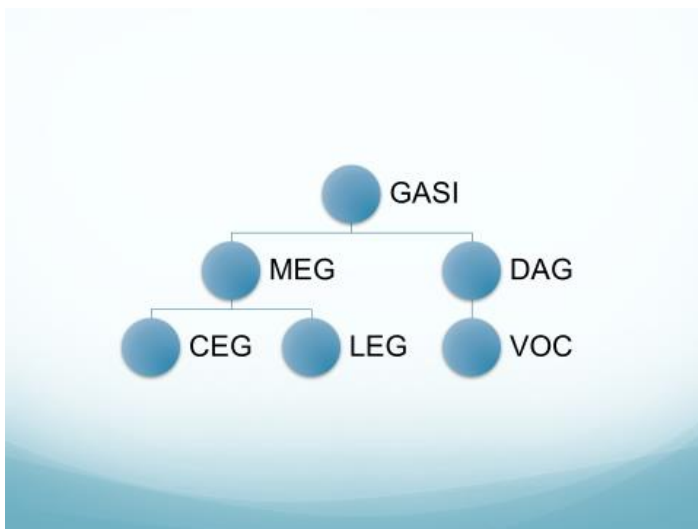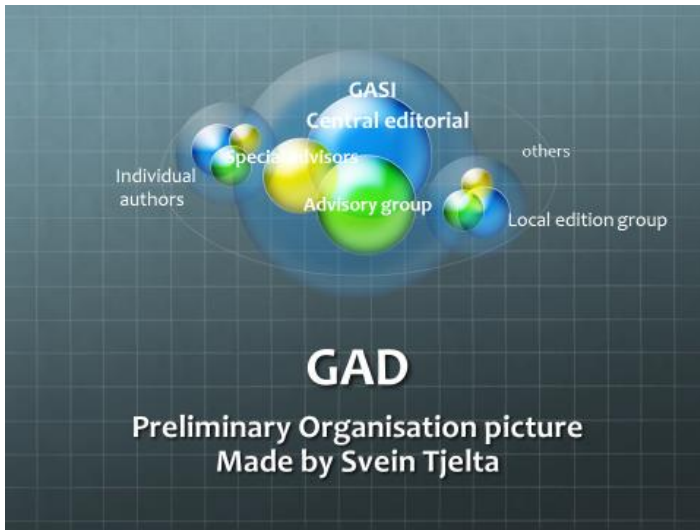
GASI = Group Analytic Society International
MEG = Management Editorial Group
DAG = Dictionary Advisory Group
CEG = Central Editorial Group
LEG = Local Editorial Group
VOC = Various Other Consultants

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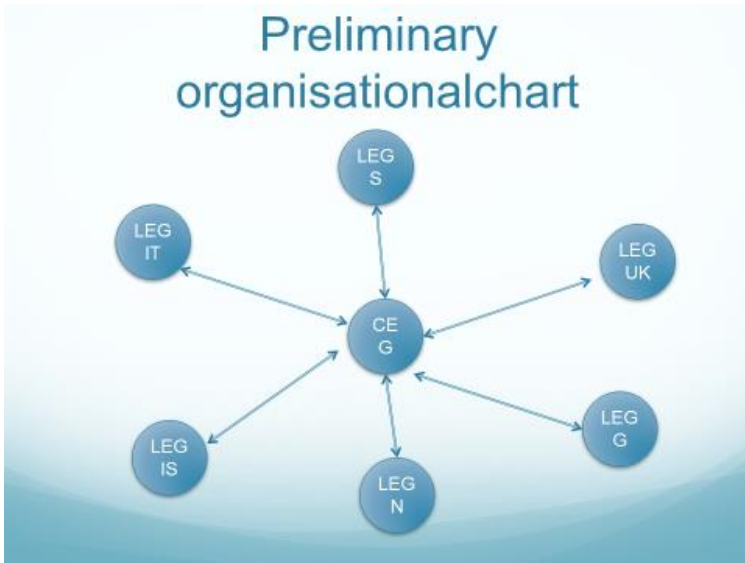**Carmen O'Leary**   carmenoleary@hotmail.co.uk

Researchers in Group Analytic and Group Dynamic Data Based Research

Dear GASI Colleagues,

As part of my portfolio, as a member of the GASI Management Committee, I have been working on creating a network of researchers or research interested colleagues connected to our society. As a result you can see below a list of researchers involved in group analytic and group dynamic data-based research.

A wish has been voiced to have a list of data-based research that includes and goes beyond what the Sheffield systemic review identified. We imagine such a list to be helpful when we are asked by members, service directors or organizations for the evidence base for Group Analysis. We would also like to have better knowledge of who is doing what research in other countries, what we could do to work together to address some of the recommendations of the systemic review and whether there are research projects that different countries could collaborate in.

As a result the GASI Management Committee decided as a first step to compose a list of researchers from different countries and Institutes from mainly Europe and North America. I have been in contact with people who have published in this field as well as people who have stated an interest. Thank you for your answers and for your interest in the project by agreeing to be on the list, which will always be temporary. All interested colleagues are welcome to join, if you are involved in this kind of research or will service as a contact in these matters. This is no obligations being on the list.

This list is a place to find colleagues who share interests in research and who, for example, would be interested in running joint workshops on research for members, or maybe creating some small working parties to take forward small scale projects. In order to promote interest in research I have suggested to the Editorial Committee of Group Analysis that we include experienced researchers for - in a special section - regularly recommend selected scientific articles of interest. That would give the reader information about 'unknown articles' - perhaps unknown because of the language or because the articles are not focused on group analytic or group dynamic psychotherapy.

Finally, we also wish to create an internet forum for researchers and those with an interest in research in group analytic and group dynamic psychotherapy.

Please contact me on the following e-mail (krisvalb@rm.dk) if you are interested in being added to the list below or if you would be interested in participating in a GA research forum.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kristian Valbak, Aarhus, May 2016

Member of the GASI-MC and of the Editorial Committee of the International Journal of Group Analysis

Researchers in Group Analytic and Group Dynamic Data Based Research

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RG: Has profiles on the research forum 'Research Gate'

kristian.valbak, 1.1 2016

A Voyage with Steiner Lorentzen through the Space-Time Continuum.

By Angela Douglas et al.

An Intensive Continuing Professional Development Training Workshop in Short-Term Group Analytic Psychotherapy (STG) London, October 2015

Introduction

How can we actively support the clinical and professional activities of group analysts working in the National Health Service (NHS) and Statutory Agencies of the UK? These last 10 years of economic stringency, imposing Nice Guidelines (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and stringent cuts to psychotherapy services have taken their toll on the employment and status of group analysts in the UK. Psychological therapies generally are being funded as time limited treatments. Many group analysts in statutory services find themselves turning to other models, e.g., Mentalisation Based Therapy (MBT), (Fonagy, P. Dergely, G. Jurist, E. & Target, M., 2004), (Karterud S., 2015) or the newly emerging Dynamic Interpersonal Therapy (DIT), (Lemma, A., Target, M. Fonagy, P., 2011) to address the issue of how to offer evidence-based and appropriate group psychotherapies in NHS and statutory agencies.

Steinar Lorentzen's work in Norway (Lorentzen, S., Ruud, T., Fjellstad, A., & Høglend, P.A., 2013) leading to his research based model of short term and time-limited group analytic psychotherapy (Lorentzen, S., 2014) raises possibilities for how group analysts might reconsider the tools of their trade and whether they, too, can provide a time-limited psychotherapy, one based on group analytic theory in addition to research based evidence to meet the scrutiny of Nice Guidelines. This shorter term model may be different from open-ended longer term group analytic psychotherapy but does that mean an inferior treatment for patients if used wisely? An intensive training workshop was the ideal way to begin exploring the possibilities.

The PMC (Professional Membership Committee of IGA) decided to host a workshop for members with Steinar Lorentzen on his model of Short Term Group Analytic Psychotherapy. We asked Steinar if he would undertake teaching all 4 stages of his model using

the successful methods adopted for the North East England workshop in Durham September 2014: experiential role play, didactic teaching and discussion over a 2-day workshop. Fortunately he was willing to 'have a go' even though he could not imagine teaching all of this in less than 3 days!

The result was an intensive training workshop in which participants experienced shifting boundaries of space and time in this group analytic approach and left keen to discover more of the possibilities for using this model.

The following account includes feedback from both the workshop team and general participants.

Voices from the Workshop

Angela Douglas - Workshop Convenor
Preparing the Workshop

Planning and preparation were paramount and Steinar was generous with his time prior to the workshop and keen to incorporate my ideas. His stance enabled me to collaborate actively in the shaping of the workshop. We agreed a format that would mirror the 4 stages of his STG model: Engagement, Differentiation, Interpersonal Work and Termination. There needed to be an opportunity for everyone to observe and discuss Steinar's demonstration of the 4 stages in a role play group as well as have their own opportunity to try out using the model. The IGA can hold about 50 people for an event so we fixed on this as the maximum number for the workshop and calculated for 5 small role play groups, 1 of which would be Steinar's demonstration group. Steinar decided on a 'goldfish bowl' format for demonstrating his 4 small group (7 members) role plays, his group being placed in the centre of the large group room with all the other workshop participants seated around it . Each of his group role plays was followed by a short question and answer discussion. He arranged a programme in which workshop participants split into small role play groups to learn about the engagement phase on day 1 and the interpersonal phase on day 2. There was also small group discussion on day 1 and a large group plenary concluding day 2.

In order to maximise the learning possible in such a short period, he provided preparatory notes and clear instructions explaining the characteristics of the 4 stages of STG groups, STG group therapist skills and group member roles and how to choose a

'composite' patient to role play in STG, for all participants in the workshop.

In addition, Steinar and his small group generously agreed to be filmed for each of the 4 demonstrations. A professional film-crew undertook this, their first venture in filming psychotherapy. Filming involves strict regulations and consent was obtained from every member of the workshop, as anyone might appear on screen in the audience at any time. This filming was in the spirit of discovery, to be scrutinised and edited or even abandoned if unsuitable for its educational purposes!

We formed a workshop team and enlisted small group role play participants for the demonstration group. They were volunteers of varying professional backgrounds and experience in group analysis who were kind and brave enough to be in Steinars group for the duration of the workshop:-

Workshop Team

Presenter and Role Play Demonstration Group Conductor: Steinar Lorentzen
Workshop Convenor: Angela Douglas
Small Group Role Play Convenors: Vivienne Harte, Anne Reilly, Sally Stamp, Sarah Tyerman
Event management and administration: Lykke Leszczinski, Mari Haugen
Role Play Demonstration Group: Vivienne Harte, Anne Reilly, Sally Stamp, Sarah Tyerman, Thomas Klonek, Fiona Parker, Ian Fairly

Commencing the Workshop

In opening and welcoming people to this workshop, I was aware of the exciting mix of highly experienced group analysts and the uninformed but curious. I invited participants to hold in mind that we were all new to this model, there were no experts, and asked that we use the weekend as an opportunity to explore what is possible with the model.

What followed was, indeed, a voyage of discovery. We experienced and witnessed the various stages and dynamics of short term groups at breakneck speed! Steinar's 'goldfish bowl' method of demonstrating his small group model for short term group analytic psychotherapy was engaging, interesting and unexpectedly powerful

as a teaching tool. He enabled the members of his group to reach into their clinical and personal experience in a way that rapidly created an authentic group analytic group. They, in turn, naturally and skilfully created a psychotherapy group that demonstrated many of the dynamics and processes detailed in his STG model, although none of them had any previous experience of being in an STG group.

Engagement Phase

The empathic response of the audience to the first 'engagement' phase role play suggested they had at times shared the pain and struggles of Steinar's group, opening themselves to the processes of the group. An audience atmosphere of appreciation and rapt interest had emerged. The camera crew were equally involved and fascinated by the characters emerging in the group.

Vivienne Harte - Member of Steinar's Role Play Group

'I had not anticipated the intensity of engagement that I experienced when I put myself forward as a role play member and small group convenor in the team delivering Steinar's STG training. From our first meeting on the Thursday evening prior to the workshop, I felt I was swept into a tornado……..

I had chosen to be a patient who had come into it following the death of her husband from cancer and would potentially do well in group analysis. However, this was a different kind of group! A Goldfish Bowl! Steinar introduced the group members to each other straight away and as my patient in role I quickly connected in an unsuspecting way to a male member in the small group role play and it became authentic rapidly, not just a role play, but yet it was. This was an experience of multiple layers and roles and observing aspects of myself in character and having the capacity to switch from one to another at speed without getting caught up in the story.

It was fascinating to be part of the STG goldfish bowl and allow myself to be facilitated by Steinar swiftly through the different phases of the group's development and move myself forward in time. I had to think ahead as to where my patient might have been at each phase and allow myself to let go and interact with the process, with the other group members and with Steinar, who at points, irritated me (as a *real* group conductor might have done).

Anne Reilly - Member of Steinar Lorentzen's Role Play Group

I had always been an admirer of Mike Leigh plays and on this weekend learning about short term groups, I felt I had been cast in one as Ella. My character was outlined in my mind, but the dialogue with Steiner as conductor and the other group members became a free-floating, edge of the seat experience. Steiner held us together, surprised us, confronted us and contained us whilst also demonstrating the model to the audience. As a group we quickly bonded in all aspects of the work we were doing together, paralleling the dynamics of a short term group in so many respects.

A recurring issue for all Steinar's group was how to make the shift from group member to workshop participant or small group convenor. We were grateful to Sally Stamp who was particularly helpful in directing us in how to come out of role following the role play sessions.'

The Differentiation Phase

The differentiation phase presents a different challenge for the conductor and the group in STG. It requires developing the capacity to engage in conflict and tolerate difference within the group so that members can take risks in facing the work of the later interpersonal phase. Steinar made all the appropriate interventions to encourage this differentiation process and most of the members responded accordingly, but later in the session one member poured scorn on the work of the conductor and the other members, the group became preoccupied with his anger, his futile state of mind and suicidal risk. An impasse began to develop. Frustration and boredom permeated beyond the small group, infecting everyone in the room. In the ensuing large group discussion, members offered various interpretations of the dynamics attempting to 'solve' the problem of this stuck group. This included considering whether there was a fear in the workshop as a whole that short-term group analytic psychotherapy would be the death of our dearly loved open ended longer term group analysis. Others wondered about the selection of members for short term groups, wondering whether this member had been wrongly selected. One member queried whether the group phenomenon of emotional contagion in response to manic depressive states (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957) is generated more rapidly and intensely in STG causing such

problems. Steinar expressed his observation that when a group is stuck in group analysis, group analysts often focus on generating more and more analytic interpretations in a search to move the group forward.

As the workshop drew to a close at the end of day 1, I was aware, as workshop convenor, that the format for these role plays relied on the group being able to demonstrate each of the developmental stages, so that being stuck at one stage could present serious problems to the whole learning experience for this workshop! *Nil Desperandum!* I trusted that Steinar and his group would come through this. Whether the onlookers in the rest of the workshop could tolerate this frustration and boredom was another matter! I looked forward to a rejuvenating sleep. There is always another day.

Interpersonal Phase - Day 2

Steinar briefly updated me with his intended solution to the impasse in the group at the start of day 2. It was a brave decision but one that seemed entirely right to me, whatever the reaction of his small group and workshop participants.

So the interpersonal role play began and the group was again preoccupied with 'Paul' and his behaviour in the group. Steinar carefully introduced his suggestion that Paul leave the group just 5 minutes into the group. No-one had anticipated this! Paul resisted, the whole group resisted, but Steinar consistently worked with them to consider what Paul could achieve in the group, given his reactions so far, and whether it was helping him. The group became lively, argumentative, and began to show signs of moving forward at last. The relief in the audience following this role play was palpable. The group could carry on without Paul but neither he nor the group would be damaged by this. Some of the audience expressed their relief that this group had at last expressed its anger in the here and now. Others commented how useful it had been to observe Steinar acknowledging that he had made a mistake in bringing Paul in to the group, so that he wasn't offering a model of perfection as a group conductor in an STG group, nor offering STG itself as a model of perfection.

Vivienne Harte - Member of Steinar Lorentzen's Role Play Group

Over the two days, the phased approach of the STG came out in the role play group in such an unexpected and authentic way. Each group member seemed to be able to access something that enabled us to work

interpersonally and with Steinar. Even the character Paul, a role played member stuck in his own world, helped us learn something about ourselves in the group and the real situation of our clinical work outside. Numerous times I have had to take someone into a group – either because I did a poor assessment or because I had no choice due to pressures on the service and over time it became clear that the person was not going to be helped in the group. Steinar was courageous and experienced enough to deal with it in front of us all and in the group role play it was as shocking and unexpected as it would have been in a real situation.

Convening the Small Group Role Plays for Workshop Participants

Interspersed amongst Steinar's demonstration role plays of the 4 phases over the workshop, were 2 role play small groups and 1 discussion small group facilitated by 4 of the members of Steinar's group: Sally Stamp, Anne Reilly, Vivienne Harte and Sarah Tyerman. We used the term 'small group convenor' to ensure it was distinguished from the role of a group conductor. Members in these small groups had the opportunity to be a member or conductor of an STG group. What a demanding schedule, but how accomplished they were in delivering it and how committed were the participants to using these role play groups! Steinar and I provided written instructions and we briefly discussed the sessions as a workshop team. The feedback from participants in the plenary and the questionnaires suggested they had learned from and enjoyed these opportunities as well as providing suggestions for how to improve the learning potential in future.

Vivienne Harte - Small Group Convenor

Intertwined with the role play in the Goldfish Bowl was my role as convenor of my small group of 12. When I saw the names on the list, I realised most were eminent group analysts with many more years' experience than I had. Again it was a humbling learning experience for me as they all attended to the task with enthusiasm. I was struck by how slow their "goldfish bowl" therapy group seemed whilst I acted as one of the observers and yet those in the group and the conductor all felt it was moving at such a fast pace (just as we did in Steinar's role-play group). This was interesting for me to consider in terms of the concept of time and space and where we are as we experience or observe something.

What was also noticed in our group was how easy it was to enlist someone who becomes like another "Paul", i.e., someone who may not be able to use STG (or any group therapy) and that perhaps this may not be easy to pick up at assessment anyway. But it also highlighted for everyone that the selection process for STG was vital and was missing in this training and they wanted more of it.

This was one of the best learning experiences I have been involved in. The intensity of going from one role to another so quickly, moment by moment, helping each situation move forward to the next stage and not getting stuck in any one of them was itself an extraordinary learning tool. To do this whilst at the same time reflect on what I was doing gave me confidence in my capacity and ability as a group analyst and I felt very privileged to be part of the whole experience. It was exhausting but well worth it.

Anne Reilly - Small Group Convenor

This was a very unusual experience for me, but a highly stimulating weekend learning about short term psychotherapy groups the group analytic way. As well as playing a patient in the filmed small group I had to switch to become a small group convenor. I was so glad Sally, another small group member and convenor, helped us de-role. This weekend was an extremely challenging, anxiety-provoking and intense experience for me.

Responding to Workshop Feedback - A Follow-up Workshop June 2015

I have not included direct quotes from general workshop participants here as this account of the workshop is already a substantial length! In summary, participants were effusive and generous in their appreciation of the workshop but also in their constructive criticisms and suggestions. Feedback in the plenary session suggested most participants wanted to learn more about the model and consider its application in various settings, e.g. with unsophisticated group members untrained in group analysis! A recurring theme in both small and large groups had been issues about selection for short-term group analytic psychotherapy. Of the 48 people attending, 32 (66.6%) returned feedback questionnaires (others had left early!). They gave a 97% rating of satisfaction with the workshop, 94% rating for improved knowledge and skills, 97% rating of satisfaction with the structure of the workshop and 93.75% wanted further opportunities to

develop skills in this STG model. Several participants were keen to develop local networks to support their short-term group work. In response to this, Steinar and the workshop team have agreed to schedule a follow-up workshop on June 11th 2016 with selection and assessment for short term group analytic psychotherapy as the theme. Meanwhile, we are editing the films and they will hopefully be available for this next workshop and later to the membership generally as a learning and teaching aid once they have been formally approved by the IGA. We are also considering how to enable the development of an STG network as requested by members. It will need enthusiastic members in various parts of the UK to do this. If you are interested, and have ideas and time to contribute to this, please contact:

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Angela Douglas, PMC-Chair@groupanalysis.org

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Angela Douglas
February 2016

A Union for Psychotherapists and Counsellors: Standing up for Therapists and Therapy

By Philippa Marx

The Union for Psychotherapists and Counsellors was set up as a single organisation working to:

- Bring together counsellors, psychotherapists and other practitioners from every corner of the field, including trainees on an equal basis;

- Campaign for true diversity and equal opportunities in the therapy world, and support individuals who are discriminated against;

- Campaign to reform IAPT and other 'therapy-lite' substitutes, while at the same time supporting IAPT practitioners with their grievances;

- Campaign against the use of therapy to get people off benefits and/or back to work;

- Change the system whereby starting practitioners have to work unpaid, often with very complex issues and without adequate support;

- Campaign to defend and extend the provision of open-ended therapy which is free at the point of contact, and where the client can choose their practitioner and modality;

- Support and defend practitioners in disciplinary hearings, and also against bullying and harassment;

- Support and defend therapy against attacks from government and media, and against creeping medicalization;

- Establish a policy and research unit to develop solid positions on a wide range of issues;

The Union is currently a work in progress. The founding conference

was held on February 6th 2016. The constitution states:

The aims of the Union shall be to improve the working conditions of psychotherapists, counsellors and allied trades (hereinafter, therapists) in the United Kingdom and to raise awareness of the contribution of therapists to society. To represent and advise its members in employment and contractual matters and with regard to complaints and grievances; to promote, protect and further the economic, social, emotional and legal interests of its members in their professional capacity; to achieve the best possible terms and conditions of work in all aspects in which our members are engaged; to propose and promote various changes and improvements in the institutions and practices associated with therapy, and in aspects of society into which our work gives us insight; to secure these aims by organisation and all other effective methods of unity of action.

The Union was conceived in response to concerns, as specified in the Aims as listed. In particular, concerns that professional bodies such as the UKCP and BACP have tended to just support the public, with no real support for psychotherapists and counsellors who were complained about. Current Trade Unions, whilst trying to be helpful, both within the private and public sphere-NHS, know little about our work and psychotherapists have made little effort to join unions. This has meant for example that within the NHS and Education, they have not been as effective as they might have in saving services. A specific Union for our craft/profession, is deemed essential to address this situation. It also aims to draw attention to and campaign for the changes as listed, pushing for group responses rather than the individualistic ones that mirror our current society.

It is only through collective strength that we can influence for change, united rather than divided. This is a challenge to the sole practitioner but complementary to Group Analytic thinking.

We all live busy lives and may not be able to be so active in a Union. However, by signing up and paying a small subscription (see link above), you will be swelling the numbers. This means we will be able to consider our role alongside larger Trade Unions.

More information can be found on: http://pandcunion.ning.com/
The Interim committee can be contacted at: pcu.union@gmail.com

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Individual Transformations in Groups. The Role of the Focal Person in Periods of Archetypal Paradoxes

By Dr. Anil Behal

"The notion of the 'archetypal paradox' was advanced as the group context in which the 'focal person' emerges. Within the period of the archetypal paradox, the focal person serves to crystallize and to name the sense of the entrenchment that members feel and the unconscious concerns that are at the core of the archetypal paradox, to challenge and to critique the present order of things, and/or to energize the group toward transformation of the social order. Through these three key functions, the focal person facilitates a reframing of the group's situation and movement through the paradox." (Dirkx, 1991, p. 92)

Introduction

Given that group work is an inescapable reality in today's day and age, it would seem only natural that we make an attempt to understand how individual learning and transformation unfold within the context of a small group. My own experience of group work has thus far been in psychodynamic "self-analytic" settings where much of the work is self-directed and experiential, with little or no direction or guidance from a group moderator. Drawing from the early and contemporary work of theorists such as Lewin, Bion, Rice and others who have extensively researched and contributed to a greater understanding of group dynamics, it seems the group has a powerful impact on individual learning, both at conscious (manifest) and unconscious (tacit) levels.

Whilst the focus of human process facilitators who work in the National Training Laboratories (NTL) tradition, seems to be on the "individual" participant and how she relates interpersonally to others within a group setting, consultants that work in the Tavistock/AKRI Group Relations traditions, are primarily concerned with "group-level" (covert, irrational, and unconscious) phenomena. Both traditions are deeply embedded in social systems, of which the individual, group, and institutions are an integral part, but it does not seem very clear in either methodology, what if anything, has undergone transformation

within the system.

Perhaps, the difficulty arises from the fact that "what and how" an individual learns in these groups, is entirely left to that individual to figure out. This is not an easy process to understand, let alone internalize. For the novice, it presents an even greater challenge. On another note, the social, cultural, and personality systems in which this rich work progresses, seem to take a back seat. References are sporadically made to the personality system in NTL work and the social/cultural systems in Tavistock; however, the discussions barely scratch the surface of what is clearly a much deeper and more complex phenomenon.

In order to address these perplexing concerns, I decided to engage with the thinking of Boyd (1991) and associates, as it pertains to personal transformations in small groups (viewed through the Jungian lens). This means opening up an entirely new way of looking at groups and understanding transformations that seem to occur in those settings.

As I studied Boyd's work, I felt both excited and a bit overwhelmed. My excitement stemmed from knowing that Jungian thinking had already made its way into individual transformation within groups, previously thought of as the domain of psychodynamics. Depth psychology, for the most part, has centered on the individual rather than the group. Jungian analysts have typically shied away from what is commonly known as group analysis in psychoanalytic settings. I refer here to psychoanalysis as distinct from Jungian (depth/analytical) psychology, even though there are many commonalties between the two disciplines.

My feeling of being overwhelmed came from the realization that there was a lot that I did not know about transformation in groups from a depth psychology standpoint. The literature is so vast that it simply would not be possible to explore it all within this paper. I therefore decided to focus on something that is typically not addressed in mainstream transformative learning literature, that is, the emergence and role of a "focal person" in a group, especially at times of emotional upheaval, conflict, and strife when the group is going through periods of archetypal paradoxes.

Based on my own experiences and group study, I speculate that it is during periods of "dialectical tension" that we may witness dramatic individual and group transformation. This kind of tension always exists within groups as an outcome of the paradox of uncertainty, however, it seems as though there is a tendency to

somehow alleviate the tension and anxiety, rather than explore and work with it. In trying to quickly restore civility and normalcy to a group, we may be shortchanging the natural process of growth and evolution that all groups must go through as they progress through different phases of development. In addition to Boyd's work which is center stage in this paper, I will also draw from the work of other theorists such as Nitsun (1996) who have made a significant contribution to group analytic literature.

Boyd's Matrix Model

Boyd (1991) makes a compelling argument that in understanding and defining the leader's role in a small group, it is important for the leader to clearly have in mind a conceptual metaphor/framework of the group and the assumptions on which that metaphor is based. The observer's "*Weltanschauung*," that is, worldview or philosophy of life (Boyd, 1991, p-15) dictates in part, the structural aspects of the group that come together in a meaningful way and facilitate the process of sense making. This is not to suggest that a universally accepted paradigm may help explain all the small group complexities. It is conceivable that a different set of paradigms and worldviews may in fact converge and form a mental picture of what the group represents to the leader, who may then draw from different perspectives as she makes sense of what might be happening in the group.

Any conceptual framework of the group, according to Boyd, must deal with the following points of view:

1. Structural: Personality system, social system, and cultural system;
2. Developmental/adaptive point of view (each of the three systems in #1 above must face the three primary tasks of defining the nature of its identity, establishing modes of relating (norms), and developing means to respond/relate to reality-adaptive demands (Boyd, 1991 p-15);
3. Transactional point of view states that what is happening in one constituent part of the matrix, affects all other part as well;
4. Gestalt: Viewing the group-as-a-whole and using a metaphor such as an "organism" to describe it is central to an understanding of what might be transpiring within it at any given point in time;
5. Content point of view: refers to the forms the transactions take in the life of a group. These are not primarily the interactions between members, but also between the personality, social, and cultural systems, which may or may not be readily observable, but are present nonetheless.

In summary, what Boyd seems to suggest is that all three

systems, that is, personality, social, and cultural will inevitably face the three primary tasks of defining the nature of the identity, ways of relating (emotionality, norms, boundaries, etc.), and developing the means to relate to reality-adaptive demands. Using Erickson's (1950) epigenetic theory as a basis, Boyd posits that the stages of group development may coincide with stages of ego development. The struggle of the group around the issues of trust/mistrust in the early stages of formation, may often remind group members of their personal struggle with trust/mistrust. There will always be a dialectical tension in the group, between intimacy and isolation; togetherness and separateness; love and hate; idealization and devaluation. The small group then is a microcosm of similar tensions in the lives of group members. So is the case with identity formation in the cultural system, which is but a reflection of human nature.

At the level of emotionality (ways of relating), Bion's basic assumptions (BaG) group is contrasted with the more visible (manifest) WG (work group) and provides a unique framework for understanding the unconscious tensions that are mobilized when group members come together for any stated purpose. Building on Bion's popular theory of group dynamics, that is, basic assumptions dependency (BaD), basic assumptions fight/flight (BaF/F), and basic assumptions pairing (BaP), Boyd proposes another framework to understand the emotionality expressions of the personality system. Drawing on the research work of the Chicago group, he discusses six types of emotionality that small group members typically express:
1. Dependency;
2. Counter-dependency;
3. Fight;
4. Flight;
5. Pairing;
6. Counter-pairing.

Depending upon the effect that each of these six valencies of emotionality has on group transactions, they are classified as negative, positive, or neutral. This provides a more complete picture of the tensions that exist in the group. It is not uncommon to concurrently observe the social and cultural emotionality mobilized at the same time, but with entirely different dynamics. For instance, at the social system level, the group may be struggling with basic assumptions "dependency" (BaD), while the cultural system may tell a different story. At the cultural level, there may be a basic assumptions "pairing" (BaP) being enacted between members.

Boyd's model is a departure from traditional psychodynamic group theory and it is interesting to observe how different systems may be operative at the same time. A trained observer can often make sense of these systems and feed the observations back to group members as needed. Skill and timing are critical factors to be considered, for there is always a judgment involved in whether or not to intervene in the small group process. The timing of an intervention may be a critical factor.

The third and final primary task faced by all three systems is the reality-adaptive task that needs to be defined and understood in the context of analytical psychology, particularly with reference to the Gestalt, development, and transactional points of view. The unconscious content of this task is examined at the symbolic level (archetypes). In the initial phase, the small group is considered to be at the "*Uroboric Stage*" or Great Round and the group members feel they are in a circle that contains and defines. This often catalyzes anxiety in some and a feeling of security in others.

Once these issues are worked through, the group moves into the next phase of expansion of consciousness, the "*Great Mother.*" This too is a phase that is characterized by dialectical tensions and paradoxes such as feeding and devouring, nurturing and denying, and caring and abandoning (Boyd, 1991 p. 36). Members realize that something is happening within the group that is comforting and painful; exciting and anxiety producing; good and bad; however, the archetypal content and images are, for the most part, unconscious and reveal themselves to the group matrix in mysterious ways. Members who are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead (as the group progresses through successive stages) are often the ones that will experience the most transformation.

According to Boyd, groups in which the moderator typically assumes a silent, non-directive role and/or chooses not to identify the images and archetypes of the Great Mother, Great Father etc., will experience the greatest turmoil, but also significant opportunities for transformation.

Group transformation through the focal person concept

Having completed a brief overview of Boyd's Matrix Model, we can now move ahead and discuss the concept of the "focal person."

Dirkx (1991) writes,

"It is a common observation that certain individuals in small, face-to-

face groups develop considerable influence with the rest of the members. Despite the fact that these individuals are usually not in designated positions of leadership, they become the center of the group's attention during critical periods. It is as if the entity of the group has developed a certain relationship with these individuals" (Dirkx, 1991 p. 65). Also referred to as "influential member," this unique dynamic can be observed in many small groups with strikingly similar undertones. In particular, self-analytic experiential groups with no fixed agenda or directive leadership will invariably see the emergence of one or more focal persons who initially self-authorize and show up in the group to take charge, challenge, or prod members to engage or not engage in certain behaviors. They seem to have the courage to "stand in the fire" and face the consequences of their deviant behavior. Through their very act of stepping up, asserting, challenging, or confronting they may be *ipso facto* leaders of the group, albeit temporarily. Whether this is unconsciously enabled by the group-as-a-whole through a process of collusion with the focal person, or at the behest of that individual, the differences and confusion that ensue can seriously factionalize or polarize the group members.

Dirkx (1991) cites an example from his own work, of a small group that has been given few directions and no curriculum by the moderator. The group is having a conversation around when to schedule breaks during the day, with no clear consensus developing. At this time, one of the group members, Barbara shares how she loves being part of such a group that is so unlike her other groups at work. She feels that she could take the liberty of walking out and taking bathroom breaks, as and when she needed them.

Suddenly there is silence in the group and the group's attention is now centered on Barbara. The group members find it rather odd that she should take things in her own hands without consulting the other members. Barbara remains defiant, but courteous, which further raises the group's anxiety. They insist that the matter of breaks should be decided by consensus, rather than the free will of a member. Barbara does not feel obliged to go along, given that there were no previously agreed upon guidelines communicated by the moderator as the small group began to meet.

Tensions begin to run high, with some members in favor of Barbara, while others admonishing her for what they considered to be a transgression. Soon thereafter, the discussion in the group shifts from emotionally laden conversations to intellectualization, and concludes with no decision taken on the issue of the breaks. From this

brief case scenario it is apparent that Barbara emerged as the "focal person" in the small group, as evidenced by the group's continued attention on her.

Some questions that arise have to do with the circumstances or situations under which focal persons seem to emerge in groups. Is something occurring in the group at that time, consciously or unconsciously, which seems to draw certain individuals to that role? What are these individuals holding onto for the group-as-a-whole? How are the differences resolved, one way or another? From a sociological perspective, role differentiation, distribution of power, and members' expectations of peers, may all play a role (Dirkx, 1991 p. 67). The functional roles of energizer, encourager, evaluator-critic, and group harmonizer may be kept in mind from an archetypal standpoint. The psychodynamics approach on the other hand, offers a more covert, irrational, and tacit dimension. Examples include basic assumptions leaders (Bion, 1961), role specialists (Dunphy, 1974), emotional leaders (Beck, 1974), and scapegoats (Eagle & Newton, 1981; Toker, 1972).

For the purpose of this paper, I will make an attempt to explore the role of focal person from a psychodynamics standpoint. In particular, I am intrigued by the role of scapegoat and how this individual may be the desideratum for group development and expansion of consciousness. I have experienced deep and profound transformation at times when I have knowingly or unknowingly assumed that role in small groups, hence my interest in exploring it further.

When the individual meets the group

Colman (1995) challenges Jungian scholars to think beyond the traditional primacy of the "individual" over the "group" (collective), a problem associated with one of Jung's most fundamental concepts. He reasons that in true individuation there needs to be a withdrawal of projections; a desideratum for the development of consciousness, that requires a "person" who is a member of a group or collective, on whom these projections have been deposited. Colman views this "person" as the scapegoat, who becomes an important link between the individual and group consciousness, for without the scapegoat, the projections would have no repository. He conceptualizes the scapegoat as an "ancient archetype and scapegoating an ancient activity, so ancient that there are few primitive societies where evidence of the practice has not been found" (Colman 1995, pp 7-8).

The scapegoat for Colman is thus, "a critical intersection" (p. 2), "juxtaposition" (p. 5) through which *both* the person and the collective may individuate. The latter is one of the most important highlights of Colman's thinking. In a sense then, Colman attempts to go beyond the Western obsession of mentally-driven individualism and individualistic thinking, as it relates to personal transformation, and instead brings to the fore, the powerful influence of the "collective unconscious" on individual and group consciousness.

As Colman takes us on his personal odyssey, he boldly challenges the dominance of a primarily Western culture. Consciousness, for Colman, is "more than individual" (p. 21f); it exists in a variety of "non-individual consciousness states" on a continuum from lower to higher, "from individual consciousness to ecstatic merger states of group consciousness" (p. 22). According to this model, the ecstatic merger states that occur in group consciousness are an adult version of infant "pre-relational consciousness," itself originating in four "epigenetic ecstatic merger states" (p. 28), starting with the *total merger* of the fetus with the mother, through a *true symbiotic dyad* at six to seven months in which boundaries begin to be perceived, onto *merger in the family group* (p. 30), and, finally, the largesse of "*shifting group consciousness"* (p. 31), within and beyond the family confines.

Colman writes,
"*Ecstasy* literally means standing outside of one's person. Ecstatic consciousness can be looked at as a state in which one's personal boundary, one's 'I' is diminished or lost through merger with something or someone else. *If* ecstasy can be thought of as a merger experience in which the personal identity is diminished or lost, *then...* the dynamics of ecstasy reflect and invert the developmental dynamics of infant and child consciousness" (Colman, 1995 p. 22; italics added).

As I juxtapose the provocative ideas of Colman (with regards to the scapegoat) with the "focal person" construct developed by Dirkx, it seems to make sense that the focal person (scapegoat) should emerge in the small group as it goes through different stages of development, consequently shifting group consciousness. Before we get into a discussion about the archetypal "state of the group" that most attracts a focal person, it is important to understand the dynamics of the scapegoat.

Whilst the small group literature does not attribute the quality of charisma to the scapegoat, it is usually an influential person who comes to assume that role in groups. Among the various forms of

"symbolic influential members" (Dirkx, 1991), such as prophet (Brueggemann, 1978), charismatic individual (Weber, 1946), central person (Redl, 1942), covert role (Gemmill & Straus, 1988), and hero (Hartman & Gibbard, 1974) it is the scapegoat that stands apart from everyone else (Dunphy, 1974). As a central person, the scapegoat become the carrier of the group's anxieties and emotionality, so that the group members can unconsciously satisfy and/or get rid of undesirable drives and impulses, thereby avoiding feelings of guilt and shame (Redl, 1942).

Hartman & Gibbard (1974) write,

"The scapegoat symbolizes the social system's reaction to distress and an attempt to locate or identify the sources of distress. The perceived source of the distress is experienced as responsible for producing anxiety in the group or is viewed as abandoning, depressing, or potentially destroying the social system. The social system then seeks to psychologically extrude the source of distress from the group." The source of distress is unconsciously perceived as a "bad object" to be somehow eliminated so that the group ideal in which the scapegoat resides, may be replaced by a "good object."

In my previous work, I discussed in some detail the dynamics surrounding the scapegoat and how these forces are intensified when a small group is in the throes of basic assumptions (dependency, fight/flight, and pairing). Ironically, the scapegoat seems to emerge at moments when the group is grappling with psychotic anxieties; which is also to suggest that periods of distress may be an outcome of the group's struggle with holding archetypal paradoxes; an anxiety that is defended against by enlisting the support of a carrier. It is typical for small group members at this stage, to feel polarized and unconsciously see the scapegoat as a convenient repository for their projections. The scapegoat's response to these projections is that of a "social critic" with an urgent calling that challenges the status-quo (present way of seeing things), prodding the group to look for alternate strategies. The groups' refusal to do so, either as an act of defiance or denial, further intensifies the paradox and keeps members deadlocked. It is as though the scapegoat has suddenly become the center of their universe.

Paradoxically, for the group, projecting onto the scapegoat is also a means of ridding themselves of the anxieties and moving through subsequent stages of group development. The scapegoat therefore becomes a desideratum for the group's progress. As consciousness develops within the group, it seems to release its hold on and obsession of the scapegoat. Ironically, the scapegoat's defensive function in the group also paves the way for transformation.

This is a key concept in the idea of the focal person. What starts as a singular voice of transformation led by the focal person, must inevitably take hold in the group-as-a-whole.

The focal person is a symbolic representative of the fundamentally archetypal nature of the paradox that exists in the group. Christ (1989) describes symbols as unconscious content, expressing much more than can be put into mere words. While the unconscious content is largely out of awareness and inaccessible, the behavior, interactions, emotions, and feelings present in the group are a manifestation of what is otherwise hidden. Symbolic representations in the group may also involve archetypal images of *the Good Mother and Good Father*. What may otherwise seem to be a rather insignificant, even miniscule issue in a small group, such as deciding when to schedule breaks, may assume the form of what Boyd and associates refer to as an "archetypal paradox" or state of conflicting and contradictory dialectic tension in a group, that is struggling to make sense and find meaning in their social and cultural milieu.

The archetypal paradox

The idea of the archetypal paradox is based on the theoretical framework of Neumann (1954) in analytical psychology. Smith & Berg (1987) suggest that the "paradoxical perspective is concerned with the observation that groups are pervaded by a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and actions that their members experience as contradictory, and that the attempts to unravel these contradictory forces create a circular process that is paralyzing to groups."

Neumann talks about the struggle with contradictory and opposing ideas as "archetypal" in nature and manifests as universal mythological motifs or symbols which mark the gradual stage-like emergence of consciousness within the social group (Neumann, 1954). Birth of the Hero, Great Mother, Separation of World Parents, Slaying of the Mother and Father, are all mythological motifs according to Neumann and represent the paradoxical struggle which gives rise to the term "archetypal paradox," the fundamental, primordial, and contradictory forces that groups face as they struggle for increasing consciousness.

The paradox is not something that the group is able to resolve on its own, despite its struggle to find meaning; therefore a focal person often emerges during this stage and helps crystallize and bring clarity to the system's own feelings toward the archetype. As an

example, a group working in a dominant culture of patriarchy may be unconsciously struggling to give expression to its feminine side, as symbolized by the *Great Mother*. The members are not consciously aware of this struggle, which may surface for them in the person of the scapegoat (in this case a man) with a dominant feminine trait (anima). At first, the group members suppress the softness, compassion, and touchy-feely demeanor of the scapegoat. In the act of suppression, they may be denying their own feminine side and the relationship that they hold with their wives and mothers.

The more the group members try to focus their attention away from the archetype of the *Great Mother*, the greater the dialectical tension that exists in the system between the mother and the father. Until the group is able to internalize the feeling that the father too can have a good and bad side, and possibly find a way to hold the patriarchy and matriarchy together, the scapegoat will continue to play a pivotal role in the group's struggle for identity. As a result of the scapegoat's behavior, the members are more able to mobilize their efforts in the direction of the archetypal paradox. Without the focal person present, the group can potentially remain directionless and undifferentiated.

Viewed through the psychodynamic lens of collective "projective identification" the focal person (scapegoat) can also be seen as a repository for the system's collective projections; feelings, emotions, and affect that are painful to hold together and therefore unconsciously stuffed into the scapegoat, who seems to have a hook on which the group members can hang their collective projections. In doing so, the group is more able to identify with and talk about their feelings. In our situation, the group might stuff the denied feelings of motherhood into the scapegoat who already has a valency for matriarchy and is able to contain those feelings for the group, but not without a great deal of virulent anxiety, emotionality, and possibly even conflict. If the scapegoat succumbs under this pressure, the group may seriously regress and even implode. The focal person must therefore have a certain degree of congruency between her own emotional needs and those felt, but denied by the group.

In summary then, the focal person must have a propensity for representing the unconscious concerns of the social and cultural systems, the ability to critique/reframe the present order, and add a powerful voice for change and transformation.

I want to briefly dedicate the final segment of this paper to three freestanding, but not necessarily unrelated theoretical constructs that are a gift to us from the field of psychodynamics. These are

particularly germane to a deeper understanding of the paradoxes and tensions that exist in groups, especially those that are self-analytic in nature, with no well-defined structure or primary task other than for members to examine their own processes.

The dependent group and hatred of learning by experience

Bion (1961) writes,

"The problem of a leader seems to be how to mobilize emotions associated with the basic assumptions without endangering the sophisticated structure that appears to secure to the individual his freedom to be an individual while remaining a member of the group."

Dependency groups often find themselves in the midst of an archetypal paradox and therefore often give rise to a focal person, who may or may not be the group moderator. The discomfort of being in such a group, Bion writes, "Is that they arise precisely from the nature of group itself, and this point should always be demonstrated."

Such groups are gripped by a sense of fear and paranoia (persecutory anxiety) and the group structures itself such that it can avoid an emotional experience peculiar to basic assumptions pairing and flight/flight. Members abdicate their personal authority and responsibility, with a feeling that the group leader will take care of their needs. Working on your "self" involves a form of learning which a dependency group seems to avoid. The group members seem to have a tendency to focus their attention away from feelings and emotions to intellectualizing and theorizing (a defense mechanism).

The focal member (scapegoat) emerges in such groups to remind members of their own need for autonomy. This may take the form of challenging an autocratic and highly directive leader to allow space in the group for members to do their work. Members resent the scapegoat because the individual calls attention to something that they find unpleasant. It takes them out of their comfort zones. The leader may also secretly resent the focal person because she may not be unconsciously ready or willing to give up control to that person.

Formation of social defenses in groups and institutions

Gibbard (1978) discusses how groups and institutions are used by their members to reinforce individual mechanisms of defense against anxiety, and in particular against recurrence of the early paranoid and depressive anxieties first described by Klein. In highly bureaucratic

social systems, including small groups, the archetypal paradox develops as a result of the enormous tension between the *paranoid schizoid and depressive states* (see Klein). The balance thus struck as a result of dialectical tension, contributes to the formation of "*social defenses*." It is beyond f the scope of this paper to go into an in-depth exploration of social defenses; however I introduce the concept here to further explicate how groups unconsciously collude to defend against the anxiety that may stem from the tension between the gratification and frustration of libidinal impulses. When these impulses do not find expression, they are sublimated to other pursuits.

The Anti-Group: Destructive forces and their creative potential

It is to the credit of Nitsun (1996) for developing the construct pertaining to the presence of destructive forces in groups and how their creative potential may be deployed and harnessed. In groups undergoing a lot of turmoil for instance, more active intervention by the group conductor is generally called for. The conflict and anxiety in such groups is thought of as something that needs to be eliminated or fixed. This can be a technical error on the part of a moderator. An astute moderator will choose not to intervene prematurely because she knows that the expression of hostility is perhaps one of the most important vehicles in groups that are undergoing change and transformation. It is to be seen as hope rather than despair, an opportunity for venting out anger and frustration, which are often followed, by forgiveness and reparation.

The paradox faced by the group moderator is to allow members to fight and annihilate each other or use her authority to intervene and do damage control. The members too face a paradox of their own. Should they engage in the fight, withdraw from it or take a neutral position? The "*life and death instincts*" are very often mobilized in such groups and conjure up archetypal images of the gladiator, executioner, savior, messiah, and peacemaker. The hostility and aggression in the group, if left unmanaged, can disintegrate the group. On the other hand, if managed too quickly, it can destroy any opportunities for closeness and intimacy to develop. After all, aggression and hostility do serve a defensive function, a defense against the anxiety of exposure and intimacy with peers. Experienced group moderators know the value of "containment." To the extent that they are able to contain the anxieties that are projected onto them by

members, the group is able to work with its own.

I would like to close here by stating that self-analytic groups can be important vehicles for individual and group transformation if one has the capacity to hold and work with differences without prematurely succumbing to the need for resolution. The work is by no means easy and should not be undertaken by someone who is not aware of her own countertransference. There are plenty of other settings more conducive to our temperament and disposition that can provide equally worthwhile opportunities for learning and transformation.

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What about liminality in Group Analysis?

By Vagelis Thanellos

Liminality

Arnold Van Gennep, prompted by his ethnographic research, coined the term 'liminality' to describe an intermediate state of a tripartite process (pre-liminal – liminal – post-liminal) in rituals associated with rites of passage. With the term Van Gennep (1960) [1909] defines a 'limen' (from the Latin līmen, meaning "a threshold") as a transitional state or the inception of a new process. Victor Turner (1967) turned his attention to the concept and revitalized it. He expanded the term, primarily used to describe ritual passages, to include small-scale societies. He viewed liminality as the entry into a state where current social structure is suspended, instigating an ambiguous and/or controversial social status for all those involved; as a transient antinomian liberation from certain behavioural norms associated with distinct social rules (Turner 1974). Moreover, Turner (1979) suggested that agents (individuals/ groups/societies) are not only extricated from socially and culturally grounded identities when in a liminal state, but, also, that such a liminal state, while designating a transition to a different state, also corresponds to the potentiality of a given agent to transmute.

Liminality, supplies the margin within which everything becomes negotiable, even reversible. The existing stratified structure may be disputed and, potentially, parleyed. And it is the boundless essence of liminality that allows and facilitates such a potentiality. As Turner (1974) posits, the agents in a liminal state are likely to consider each other as equals in a direct and impartial manner, a form of behaviour unique to liminality and in sharp contrast to what usually happens within the context of a stratified, hierarchical society. Hence, it may be argued that liminality is flexible in essence, accommodating the acrimonious scrutiny of social structure and its limitations (Turner, 1967, 1974, 1979).

In reference to the element of ritualistic performance, Eade and Sallnow (1991) propose that liminality be seen as a variable, often controversial, process, rather than a consolidated structure. Consequently, when in a liminal state, every agent experiments with familiar motifs shaping novel ones, and discovers new possibilities and arrangements. In essence, liminality amounts to an individual's

potential to refrain not only from his/her own (or another) social standing but, also, from prescribed social roles by contemplating alternative arrangements (Grathoff, 1970).

In actuality, liminality revokes established social schemata by promoting alternative ones that often threaten social hierarchy (Alexander, 1991; Turner, 1969, 1974). Liminality, if viewed not only as a transitional period but, also as an actualizing of potentiality, becomes the arena where other than usual social constructions may be ascertained (Turner & Turner, 1978). Turner and Turner (1978) identified this process as an anti-structure, or a meta-structure, delineating a context where various thoughts and intense emotions may unfold in an articulate or any other experiential manner; or, as I would suggest, a context for such thoughts and emotions to be "dramatized". Such dramatization is what makes this process creative.

As Turner (1967, 1979) advocates, humans, as elemental components of their society or civilization, recognize (and anticipate) culturally available social definitions and pertinent taxonomies. Moreover, a plethora of conceptual categories are mutually exclusive. Constituents of an antithesis, although complimentary, circumscribe a conceptual continuum where the two mutually exclusive conceptual categories stand in opposition. Humans treat such an opposition as a taxonomical dichotomy, where dynamic and ever evolving processes inherently entailed in liminality are ostracized. Alternatively, socially structured conceptual dichotomies are unable to subsume alternative dimensions of an ever evolving construct, possibly because it is not, yet, culturally consolidated and, thus, available as a new conceptual category. Hence, if we accept that a society is the aggregate of structured, adhering but mutually exclusive (nevertheless, interactive) positions[1], a liminal period may be regarded as an interstructural situation (Turner, 1979).

Communitas

The notion of 'communitas' is relevant but not identical to the concept of liminality. Communitas circumscribe a social margin that does not adhere to established social renditions. Within such an unconventional context (characteristic of a liminal state), it is the quality of social relations that creates a sense of belonging, a sense of community (Turner, 1969, 1974). On the contrary, social structure creates a context of alienation, inequality and exploitation that is expressed in power relations. Power distribution "objectifies" individual differences, diminishes human thought and action and alienates one from another (Turner, 1969, 1974). By contrast, in a communal

society, human relations are based on a common conviction about shared humanity and equality rather than social hierarchy (1969)[2].

In reference to daily life, in communitas people exist as complete entities of equal significance, in sharp contrast to traditional social constructs where subjects hide behind social masks and roles (Grathoff 1970; Handelman 1998). Instead, in communitas (Turner, 1969) arbitrary and repressive taxonomies are unmasked, deconstructing the social establishment. In communitas a human need emerges for candor, reciprocity and equality[3] in interpersonal relations and transactions. In actuality, communitas is a response to this human need (Turner, 1969).

A communal society is a criticism of existing social structure (Turner, 1974). Its mere existence questions social rules and limitations. More specifically, it constitutes an attempt by the individual to break free from social constraints and hierarchies. As Turner (1969) characteristically says, the explanation for the universal sanctity of the notion of communal society lies in the resistance and subversion of established social structures. Interestingly, although communitas denounce social status and conventional social prototypes they are in a dialectical relationship with social structure. Hence, communitas (or liminality) does not necessarily negate social structure. Turner (1974) explains that the use of the term 'anti-structure' or 'meta-structure' is employed in conjunction to the term 'structure'. Moreover, Turner (1974) discerns positive connotations in anti-structure, since it compels change in social forms by instilling conventional value systems with neoteric ones (Alexander 1991). Inevitably, every individual is exposed to both structural (i.e., stable) and anti-structural (i.e., transitory) contexts in his/her life span (Turner, 1969).

According to Turner (1969), 'Communitas' constitute anti-structures of human societies. They consist of elemental components of equal significance, are free of social rankings of status and share a common sense of "human kindness".

Turner (1974) accepts that social phenomena, as well as social rules that regulate individual behavior, are decidedly conditional upon social structures. Nevertheless, such structures are generated when human agency interfaces with social context. Moreover, Turner (1974) claims that social structure, however stable and inflexible, is the result of time and social action of many individuals, a process so dynamic that may only be regarded as an unstructured social process itself. Consequently, it is possible to view

human social life as a process that is devoid of structure, yet, it produces structural products.

Liminoid

Turner (1977, 1982) draws a distinction between liminal (e.g., ritualistic procedures) and liminoid experiences (e.g., artistic performance). He uses the term quasi-liminal phenomena to distinguish liminoid experiences from liminal experiences (1982). Many liminoid experiences may arise from non-ritualistic procedures. For instance, literature, cinematography, sports, festivals even revolutions have been studied as liminoid experiences. While liminoid experiences may be ritualized (dynamic administration I would say), they are distinctively different from ritualistic liminal experiences in the following ways: a) liminoid phenomena or characters are secular; b) liminoid experiences are optional; c) they are re-creational; d), they are not necessarily collective in the sense of relating to biological and/or socio-structural milestones, or relating to crises associated with social processes; e) they do not sustain social structure but chastise it. Hence, although liminoid phenomena do not serve all members of a heterogeneous society but, as rituals in pro-capitalistic societies they provide a transitional margin where social and cultural experiences are transformed by instilled anti-structure values (Alexander, 1991).

Turner (1977) claims that although both liminal and liminoid phenomena occur in all types of societies, liminoid phenomena are more common in industrialized, heterogeneous[4] societies. In contrast, ritualistic procedures are no longer dominant in modern societies, and are relegated to a customary status (e.g., seasonal/biological/ceremonial anniversaries) since they cannot accommodate the need to transform and transcend social structure (Turner, 1982). One might argue that ritualistic process is expatriated to the periphery of social process, thus, granting the room for liminoid phenomena to emerge. In industrialized societies that do not make provisions for structural liminality, liminoid phenomena emerge as a response to the need to defy and/or dismantle social structure. Alternatively, liminoid phenomena are experienced as transcendental events that contribute to a constructive criticism of human society.

As in the case of liminal phenomena, liminoid experiences are in a dialectical relationship with structural aspects of social life. They cast doubt, criticize, undermine, and even subvert structural qualities of social intercourse. The latter observation resonates with anthropology's perspective that liminoid phenomena are more effective than ritualistic procedures to bring a critical change in social

structure (Turner, 1974). Ritualistic processes are no longer dynamic or effective enough to bring change for the reason that they already subscribe to existing social systems, whereas liminoid processes retain their capacity to threaten established social structure although they are not associated with the effort of survival (Alexander, 1991). Finally, Turner (1985) suggests that liminal and liminoid phenomena are affiliated in the sense that they both provide a unique opportunity to revaluate and amend, a role traditionally ascribed to ritualistic procedures.

The Psychotherapeutic Condition in Group Analysis

Psychotherapy is a protected setting full of potential for the subject. This is the case for both interpersonal and group psychotherapy. There are several theoretical approaches which explore psychotherapy as a condition and as a process. However, it is not a necessary part of everyday life, and it is not, by any means, a structured, *common* social experience. The latter makes us wonder whether we should also discuss psychotherapy as a conceptual invention. After all it is a distinct historical and social phenomenon invested with sacred, if not mysterious, as well as scientific properties. The contradiction inherent to such properties places psychotherapy in a unique predicament, bringing into the discussion the dimension of psychotherapy as a *conditional situation*.

Psychotherapy as a conditional situation precedes any theoretical discourse about its nature or constitutional parameters. Psychotherapy as a conditional situation assumes an "in between and betwixt" space, in which, in contrast to everyday life, a negotiation between acting subjects may take place. Time becomes indivisible, since the past is re-envisaged and the trichotomy 'past-present-future' is unified. One might argue that when people are able to narrate their own history in novel terms, then they are able to move on with their life… Causal inferences, different subjectivities, any given "objectivities" are reassessed. Hence, what is of critical importance is the condition itself (a "space" which *allows and contains* all the above) rather than the theoretical overview that diagnoses a "symptom".

As with any other psychotherapeutic approach, Group Analysis focused on the development of a "correct" theory about "mental illness" rather than a discussion of psychotherapy as a conditional situation. Let's examine a few examples. Foulkes (Foulkes and Anthony 2014), although he refers to the power of the group and its transformative properties, he rather elaborates on associated factors.

There is a moment when he mentions the "therapeutic situation", but he goes back to theoretical point: psychoanalysis and *translation*. He often gets close to reading and conceptualizing the "therapeutic situation" as an autonomous theoretical consideration, but his theoretical starting point always *mediates* the latter consideration:

"This so-called psycho-analytic situation *is the best existing model of what we mean* here by a therapeutic situation. It is a situation in which the patient can freely voice his innermost thoughts towards himself, towards any other person, and towards the analyst. He can be confident that he is not being judged, and that he is fully accepted, whatever he may be or whatever he may disclose" (p., 60, my italics).

Foulkes (2014) recognizes the need for group therapy, since participation in other types of groups does not provide with the power and support that groups in group analysis have to offer. In addition he indicates that group analysis provides the means to deal with the apprehension induced by the disequilibrium an individual experiences when trying with managing his/her life (to fit to rigid socially structured dichotomies would say today), as well as his/her effort to manage such a disequilibrium, and possibly restore it; if anything else, psychotherapy as a conditional situation materializes from a need and a desire for *potentiality* and for *prospect*; from the need "to bring change":

"Change can only come about when there is disequilibrium in the personality, an unbalance which demands change and we *can bring that change*. […] Now it may, be of course, be said that all patients must be in a state of relative disequilibrium. On the other hand every individual necessarily strives to create a dynamic equilibrium for himself in the world in which he has to live. Therefore, in a sense, every individual at any given moment has established the best equilibrium that he is capable of achieving however precarious it may be. The validity of any individual's solution to the problems which beset him can only be seen and appreciated if we take into account the total life situation in which it *has been established*" (p., 70, my italics).

Apparently, Foulkes (2014) grasped group psychotherapy as an "in between" situational state/condition that is connected but also distinguished from the "outside" world.

"With regard to the frank disclosure of personal feelings and

experience, and of feelings toward other members of the group, this point is mainly achieved […] as *might not be made in an ordinary social situation*, and which are free or relatively free of censorship. *The total atmosphere* […] is one of tolerance and encouragement for such free disclosure. This is the salient point here" […] and participants "are in the thick of things, and are confronted continuously with situations which they have to meet actively. They are, therefore, in a sense undergoing *a training* in interpersonal relationships, but undergoing it *in a protected sphere*, *in that the situation is not part of ordinary life*. Events in the group are taken up in a different way and with different consequences from events in life *outside*" (p., 82, my italics).

"The procedure grows naturally *out* of the group experience, and *is implicit in the group situation*. In this *unusual* 'climate' of the group, in this 'atmosphere' of easy permissiveness, of free-floating discussion, things *begin* to happen. And they happen without a great deal of effort of anyone's part*, as if they were self-engendered by the nature of the situation*, which, to a great extent, they are" (p., 100, my italics).

Foulkes (2014) also grasped the "inside" of the group condition as an "in between" process that has an origin and is actualized as a social construction (see previous and the following quote).

"The *special* situation for group psychotherapy is the result of long and patient enquiry into the therapeutic possibilities of the group. It is *an empirical arrangement* based on the hard experience of trial and error and success. *Looking at the situation as a whole*, it can be described *first in terms of the material arrangements* and then from the purely psychological angle. The material arrangements have, of course, their *important psychological concomitants...*" (p., 90, my italics).

Even when he describes spatial features (e.g., chairs, table) and members' allocation within the psychotherapeutic condition, when he explains dynamic administration, he seemingly talks about an "in between and betwixt" situation (even in physical terms, borrowing the language of physics): "The concrete distance […] Not so close, not so far" (p., 90-91). Lastly, there are connotations that

allude to the liminal properties of the psychotherapeutic condition, even at a ritualistic level:

"What is the possible psychological representation of the circle? It is a figure which has always been *credited with magical properties* and widely utilized in symbolic and metaphorical language ('magic circle', best circles', 'circle of friends', wheels within wheels'). It has been taken *to signify a static* compromise, *an equilibrium*, of *peripheral movement to and away* from the centre" (p., 91, my italics).

Apparently, Foulkes (2014) sensed the liminal state of the psychotherapeutic situational state. But instead of recognizing the healing properties of such a state via the reinstated emotional experience, he treated it as a structural component of supporting therapeutic factors inherited from the psychoanalytic tradition.

Liminality: the situational condition. Why Group Analysis?

The word "clinical" originates from the Greek noun *κλίνη* that denotes the patient's bed; the edge between health and sickness, life and death. Talk therapy attempted to mediate the discourses that constituted an individual neurotic due to internal conflicts and the resulting experiences of a split self. The psychotherapeutic condition emerges somewhere in the middle, at an edge, which, however, does not further divide the self but integrates it. Consequently, the need for an 'in between' space arises, where someone can take some distance in order to assume a social perspective of the social self and the world; a space where someone can step out and assume a new perspective of "self". However, this "in between" space does not confirm a dichotomous view of the world, but, instead, it integrates dichotomies and stresses the indivisibility of the world. It is this synthesis (and not just a link) that *redefines boundaries between things*. This is a situational condition, or, even better, a state condition imbued with liminality.

This situational condition is the equivalent of its own existence. Within this situational condition individuals stand synchronously "inside" and "outside" of society. They carry their social history, but they preserve their ability to change, revive and negotiate new terms, without stressing about what happens in the "outside" world. What is interesting and critical about this condition is that, although, the "journey" does not take place "outside" the context of the problem, it takes place "inside" the context where the

subject lives and hopes to liberate him/herself[5].

The psychotherapeutic condition is a locus; a private, liminal but socially unique margin where the "physical" flow of time is abolished, a process that underlines the liminal state of group members (or pair). Time freezes and works to the benefit of the client[6]. Memory recall (of a past event) and memory narrative is an *action* that takes place in "present time" (an instance of time unification), and, always, with a sense of "*perspective*", a sense of continuity. It is possible that Foulkes (2014) implied this continuity of time (as hypothesized here) with his claim that transference is a way to recapitulate the past and present (or his equation: T=t+x); nevertheless, he never expanded on the significance of time indivisibility in the psychotherapeutic condition beyond the context of transference.

Indeed, it is in transference where the narrative is materialized; where reconstruction of the subject transpires[7]. In psychotherapy, as in the case of transference in psychoanalysis, the subject narrates and, thus, relives the trauma, the symptom, primitive relational patterns, and, ultimately, the *social*. However, the narrative is open to several *combinations and permutations*. Moreover, it is the narrative that facilitates time unification; it is a discourse that unifies time; when I recount the "past", I reconstruct it in the "present", while assuming a "future perspective". Psychotherapy/Analysis is also consummated when the subject identifies with a reconstructed narrative about the symptom and pertinent social implications/associations. Ultimately, it is the narrative itself that underscores the social: I narrate *with* others, *to* others, *for* others whether they are present or not. Narration is inevitably a social condition. Subsequently, the narrative encapsulates the trauma *as* an event, *as* an interpretation, *as* a deconstruction. Likewise, "analysis" is an act of conjunction, not only an act of distinction that constitutes a narrative in nature[8].

Psychotherapy is an instance of institutionalized logos[9]. To this effect, it encompasses other types of prevalent discourses. Many have expressed concerns about the induction of authority logos (or other sources of power), for that matter, in psychotherapy. This is inherent and inevitable in all contexts of intellectual discourses. It is possible that these concerns are aggravated when we consider "medicalized" contexts, or even practicing individuals. Consequently, one could argue, in Foucault's terms, those psychotherapeutic discourse/authority logos produce and reproduce docile subjects that return to society as domesticated subjects. Still, this does not reflect

reality as it has been suggested in Turner's view of liminality. On the contrary, since the individual is prompted to renegotiate, question, even challenge social structure *in* the context of psychotherapy, another kind of logos, an *anti-logos* may be produced, or even a *new logos* (i.e., a new narrative)[10]. In this sense, the "psychotherapeutic condition", the situational condition of liminality, constitutes a locus of *resistance* (in Faucault's terms). Moreover, we should not forget to pay attention to the instrumental function of imagination/fantasy as a fundamental element in the construction of the neoteric subject (Appadurai, 1996, p., 3, 58) (a fundamental element of psychotherapy, I would add).

At this point, I would like to bring into our discussion Elias' notions of interdependence, authority and difference in the social context. *In a social structure, potentiality is treated as a difference, whereas in a liminal state a difference is treated as a potentiality*. In post-modern societies, societies abundant with dichotomies, various political transformations, the ever expanding relativity in every domain, and the historically intermittent construction of the past result in miscellaneous differences. Such differences lead to "an internal chasm, equivalent to a border in the psychic realm" of the subject (Παπαταξιάρχης, 2014, p., 42). The existence and management of these miscellaneous differences *concerns the political* domain and is equivalent to ideology and identity; as Dalal conceptualizes the equivalence between ideology and the political/social with the unconscious (1998).

"Initially, miscellaneous differences may be disruptive oscillating between antagonistic discourses that meet with available political ideologies. Nevertheless, they instigate critical analysis of socially established schemas, constituting the informal level of cultural familiarization a place of revitalization of social thought; a turning point towards new directions. When life expands beyond commonplace and does not fit in a canonistic template, the resulting tension between individual and shared experience may lead to social transformations […] Critical analysis is mainly achieved by reframing individual experience, and by re-conceptualizing and reorganizing cultural categories. Such processes generate new cultural materials, often contradicting with powerful objecting tendencies, open to discussion and alternative discourses, available to either to further processing and incorporation to existing ideologies or to the compilation of new ideological arguments. […]. Still, miscellaneous differences operate at a deeper level where differences are culturally

expressed as political action" (Παπαταξιάρχης, 2014, p., 68-69)

The mere negotiation of differences, their abeyances, and, ultimately, the differences per se constitute a political and an ideological challenge. *It is a repositioning/re-locating to the social*. In the psychotherapeutic condition, the individual discovers and reveals his/her own alterity, beyond his/her inter-subjectivity.

The question is whether liminality can be considered as a therapeutic factor. Instilling hope, a sense of universality, as well as other factors, are complimentary elements of the healing process. But what is the core of the healing process, as Yalom (Yalom, 2005) eloquently put it? Liminality is the condition that *encompasses and facilitates* all other therapeutic elements. Other therapeutic factors may change or expand, but liminality is the situational condition where *anything may happen*. If it were not for liminality, this "in between and betwixt" margin, this space that stands both "inside" and "outside" of society, there would be no vital space where renegotiation (as a "psychotherapeutic praxis") could take place (or any need for meta-theories to explain the condition per se).

Liminality is the potentiality to brake from a perpetual cycle of re-peats, a re-civilization process, a re-invention of individuals, a re-construction of their history (narrative), a resuscitation of their experiences, and ultimately, a *re-location*.[11]

But why liminality in Group Analysis? Firstly, group analysis (and the group condition in general) is *more social* in its constitution. Secondly, group analysis, in all of its history from the forefather Foulkes all the way to today, is permeated by the task of "no task". Moreover, it is only group analysis that can accentuate and capitalize liminality as a situational condition in psychotherapy, taking into consideration concepts such as that of the matrix and the social unconscious. Group analysis is a socially coherent condition where all may be negotiable; it carries "within" the social unconscious which can be narrated[12], but it is located in an "in between" space "outside" of every day social condition, since, as a liminal state, it may produce new discourse and experience that both shapes and is shaped by human experience:

"Consequently, psychotherapeutic groups are not isolated rafts that float in vacuum, even if these are rafts of competitive but equivalent discourse, self-centred and self-referential, that perpetually interpret and breach each other's treatise. There are two separate pillars: 1)

groups consist of individuals that live in a world that imposes its own limitations, 2) the group analyst always refers to his/her own dominant theoretical discourse. Although the analyst's discourse is imbued with more validity than anyone else's, it is also put into test and deconstructed by processes inside the group. In this constellation of conflicting forces something new (and painful) is borne; this new thing is tested and rephrased constantly by the group/worldly experience. Possibly, we may claim that group psychotherapy has the potential to release one from the entrapment of a one and only discourse, of one and only experience of self and the world; and allow the possibility of connection with other discourses, other modes of existence and experience to which there was not access before. It is likely that we can only say one thing – there is no absolute health here, only flexibility as an instance of health". (Dalal, 1998, p., 259, my translation from the Greek publication).

Eventually, psychotherapy must be approximated, conceptualized, and theorized as *social*. A social condition "inside" social structure, but also (as if "out") objecting to it as an "anti-structure", as a liminal state par excellence.

Notes
1. An antithesis that goes further to the concept of "cosmos", what the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) will later describe as "a matter out of place".
2. Last year Tom Ormay visited the Greek Network of Group Analysts (GNGA). It was the first time that I came across the concept of "Nos". My impression is that the notions of "Communitas" and "Nos" share a common conceptual ground.
3. See Dubisch (1995) for a critique on class and other differences of liminality in Communitas". The critique is mostly concerned with ritual and religious practices (e.g., religious pilgrimage/worship) but it would be interesting to also consider it in the context of "more" modern societies. Dubisch (1995) discusses instances of religious liminality, in which cases individuals also incorporate in their desire (social construction) for a miracle or a pledge other social, non-religious, characteristics. Still, she recognizes herself communitas as liminality context despite the aforementioned characteristics.
4. Despite Turner's claim (1974) that rituals are used less frequently in modern societies, Mary Douglas (1970) suggests that the distinction between "primitive" and contemporary societies resides not on the observation that the former use rituals more frequently than the latter.

It mostly concerns the fact that primitive societies use rituals to create a stable, self-including cosmos, while contemporary societies use rituals to several smaller versions of cosmos (sub-cosmos) that are not so closely interrelated. This is probably the case because contemporary societies are more heterogeneous.

5. Danforth (1998) refers to "Anastenaria " - a paganistic ritual of fire-walking from Greek ethnography - as an example of a therapeutic strategy with anti-structural elements compared to formal religion take place in the established social structure. Specifically, Danforth (1998) refers to "Anastenaria" as a strategy that redistributes the social deck of cards for women (and men that have come to live into the bride's hometown losing in that way the status which comes from a lost "man" identity) experiencing low status, resulting in inner conflict that is supposed by everyone (and themselves) to be a sickness/disease (with "symptoms" in their behaviour) that gives them the right to take part in this social ceremony: "While a patient is involved in the therapeutic process, his/her social reality is reconciled with the social myth, which, in contrast to the patient's prior state, is free of conflict. Finally, conflicts responsible for the patient's disease are expressed and reconciled symbolically in parallel to conflict (structural) regulation at a social level. Thus, a patient's social reality may be transformed or restructured in such a way that it resonates with the free-of-conflict-social myth provided by the symbolic structure of the ritual. When social conflicts are resolved and tension is released through patient participation in this ritualistic method of psychotherapy, the patient is cured". (Danfoth, 1997, p., 177, my translation from the Greek edition. See also Danforth 1989, English edition). This religious practice, which is integrated within the formal but is anti-structural within the wider religious context, gives them the right to reverse their social status.

6. Van Der Kleij when referring to the uncompromising stance of the conductor of the groups' time boundaries undoubtedly outlines this margin, this luminal "in between" condition in which a group *takes place*: (all this) "…happens on that boundary between the actual interactions of the group members and the entire world around them. It is not that once started, at 5.30pm, that the group members exclude the world around them. On the contrary, at 5.30pm they begin their dialogue with it. And do so because so far they have failed to reach the outcomes they wished for. They would not be there (in the group) otherwise. To facilitate that immensely complex dialogue, my task (as group conductor) is precisely to ensure that, for once, the world around

them stops them moving around. I want it to stand still, as it were, pin it down, so that a proper dialogue can be held." (Van Der Kleij, 1983)

7. The liminal element in transference, is not exhausted in the therapist's position, in the therapist's or client's reaction (or the group as a constellation of relations). The liminal element is materialized in all contributing factors: the therapist, the client(s) and all that they carry as social beings, the relationship, the group dynamics, time and space; in other words, the comprehensive "condition" that is invented and devised and it encompasses all.

8. This makes us think of cognitive function as socio-cognitive process. Moreover, it brings us closer to a social view of consciousness (and/or the unconscious ?) as a continuum since it shapes and is shaped by "time": the poetics of consciousness presupposes a distinction of "self" in time and space provided that such a distinction results in an outcome that combines both a degree of similarity and differentiation against others. Consequently, analysis, in addition to being an act of division and subtraction in the service of consciousness' individuation, is also a narrative act and consequently, simultaneously an act of socialization as Elias put it. Narration as a poetic act (i.e., a ligature of fragmented time as a conscious act at the present time, regardless of any accompanying unconscious elements) facilitates and underscores the social dimension of consciousness: my narration both shapes and is shaped by the social unconscious.

9. During the translation process I had to contextualize the notion of "discourse" from a social sciences perspective for the translator. In the translator's view the concept of "logos" was a more appropriate word choice for this paragraph. In my initial editing of the passage, for reasons not entirely clear to me then, I left in some points as suggested (i.e., logos), whereas I used the notion "discourse", instead, at different points along this paragraph. It seemed right to me to have it as "logos" in the respective passage, although I was introducing two different concepts for the same reference. Later, I realized why I made that choice. The notion of "discourse" refers to a constantly changing conceptualization where resistance, doubt and change are fundamental, whereas the notion of "logos" refers to the structural products of such constant change. Interestingly, as in the case of social structure and anti-structural liminality, the relationship between discourse and logos is not mutually exclusive, but, instead, dynamic.

10. This is why "language and discourse remains the same during the process of change" (Cooney, p., 60-61).

11. When Foulkes (2014: 76) discusses the disturbances of human relationships and the need to rectify those, he refers to the term

dislocation. I suggest that the need for re-adjustment dislocation, the act of correction as he says, (or collect, e.g., Summer School report, *Contexts*, Issue 70), that is, the re-location.

12. "I am under the impression that the model of multiplicity of discourses that breach and diffuse each other is a fair description of all that takes place inside groups. The participants shape and narrate their stories using a specific type of discourse. One could claim that each participant employs a discourse that is natural, self-evident and almost complete as far as he/she is concerned. Participants seek out others' synergy for closure, by saying "this is how things were back then, this is how things are today, and this is how things will be in the future". Others in the group are the ones that identify discrepancies in terms of relevance and completeness, and those that will initiate a deconstructing process apparent. Subsequently, in this new discourse, a model of a functional group would consist of competing discourses that mutually define each other but also clash, of different realities that seek for an opening through the armour of various discourses in order to enter. To this effect, I think that the structure of group therapy reflects more efficiently the structure of life itself" (Dalal, 1998, p., 257-258, my translation from the Greek edition).

Acknowledgements

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A Large Group in Athens

By Theodora Skali

Abstract
The material presented in this article comes from the sessions of a large group that took place within a one-year postgraduate program in group dynamics, which was implemented in the period 2012-2013. The study of this material is associated with the effect of intrapsychic organization on individual relations, and with the interaction between individuals per se. Every Large group is a field in which the intrapsychic, the intersubjective and the social level constantly coexist, in the sense both of conflict and reconciliation of the participants. The large group is a self-exploration field that forces the participants to contact unseen personal sides, which may remain invisible in individual psychotherapeutic work.

Key words: large group, interaction process, coexistence of intrapsychic, subjective, social

Preface
The raw-material of this article comes from a one-year post-training program in group dynamics in which I was participating as a trainee and which was organized by the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens, in association with the 1st Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Athens. The program, which lasted for seven "three-day" periods, was attended by psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers etc., who have working experience in psychiatric fields. It was structured in theoretical (lectures, theoretical presentations, sessions of theoretical process) and empirical parts (group supervision sessions, small and large group sessions).

I would like to focus on the section of the large group sessions, which in our case was more a median group session. My attention was drawn to the transition from the influence of the individual's intrapsychic organization to the relations the individual establishes, and to the interaction between the participants as a separate field of study. The large group forms a field in which individuals as object-subject, inner-outer realities, conscious-unconscious processes interact and relate. There exists in large group sessions, "in vivo" and "right here and now", a field in which the intrapsychic, the intersubjective and the social element coexist with

the individuals' transaction, in a large scale, in the sense of continuous conflict and reconciliation. This is a field of self-exploration which may help someone understand or/and be aware of other sides of his personal development, that have not appeared in an individual psychotherapeutic process.

My first attendance at a large group was in 2008 in the United States, during the annual meeting of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) which I am still participating in, seven years later. The size of the large group I have experienced the last seven years in AGPA and IAGP, also, concerns large groups of over 150 people. This article's clinical material concerns a large group of about 50 people.

During these last seven years, my thoughts on large groups and, - perhaps, on the occasion of the financial, social and general political crisis that we are going through here in Greece - have focused on the concept of the Large group as a field of social representation and as a field which reveals the social unconscious. This training program was more than interesting to me for two reasons: The first reason had to do with my awareness that none of the participants had experience of participating in a large group process. The second reason had to do with my interest in the large group as a field of social conflicts and dialogue, especially knowing that most of my colleagues/participants, worked within psychiatric fields, were threatened by losing their jobs (many psychiatric centres were to be closed because of the financial crisis).

> *No man is an island*
> John Donne

Introduction

When we consider "everything to be a personal affair", the only thing we can be aware of, if we can, is "ourselves". In this case everything is our concern; it is as if someone is observing these *babushka dolls* and in each doll sees only himself or sides of himself. But, when we observe these dolls, which alternate in size, we may notice that they constitute series of inner connected systems, in which each part includes and is included, just like "graded systems of equal form".

We form closed psychic systems, with closed borderlines concerning the communication between ourselves and the outer world, unless the outer world matches with what we already know. Many

anxieties result from the fact that we regard ourselves "as the centre of the world" (Agazarian, 2009).

Nevertheless, "no man is an island". If one considers oneself not only as a subject, but simultaneously as a member of a system, one may be aware of many and different aspects of the world and may realize that one influences the world and the world influences in return. Therefore, we don't only exist as subjects, as intrapsychic organizations, but also as a part of a small group, which forms part of a larger one, etc.

The question posed in each large group is how differences can become a source of strength instead of cause of a conflict; how each and every piece of information can be organized by the subject in such a way, so that differences lead the subject to become a member of a group/system and not to be put to flight, which can happen in many ways: attacking differences; attempting to convert to one's side; viewing others as a threat and trying to "get rid" of them, etc.

Furthermore, as per R. Kaes (2007), who introduced the term "group psychic apparatus", the psychic group is not merely formed by different parts of oneself, activated by group process; it unconsciously pre-exists and on this basis, the psychic apparatus is being organized, like a group imprint. It is in this manner that the relation between the subject and the group and their mutual relation exists.

Thus, in each and every group process, the group is becoming the place of negotiation and communication by means of the group psychic apparatus, in which a group association process and a large number of transference and counter-transference phenomena operate. The meeting point of associations, dreams, thoughts and wishes of every member of the group is the work of such a group process, where every member is a "voice" of the group, achieving a part in it at every moment of each group, and – one may consider – that the unconscious here can be understood by the unconscious representations, also interactively (Navrides, 2011).

Furthermore, recognizing and understanding the social unconscious, in the sense of the social nature of the mind (Bateson, 1979), which is perceiving the mind not as a relatively stable inner structure, but as a fluid, constantly transposing response to social influences, is adding one more level to group communication. Modern views speak about the social structure of the mind in the sense of constant evolution and change within constantly progressing social interactions. According to Bakhtin, no mind can remain totally independent of other subjects. Discussions arise from the relational mind and not only from the unique brain, meaning that it is defined by

the limits of the minds of the persons that a subject is relating to and is being adjusted by changes in its social, cultural and communication networks. Hopper & Weinberg (2011) introduced the term "cultural unconscious", in order to underline the significance of internalizing values, rules and other significant elements that are being interpreted as culture in a society at a particular historical moment and within a specific financial, historical, political and ideological field.

The large group experience

The large group formed a part, from the very beginning, of the program's structure. It created many and contradictory sentiments, varying in degree and intensity, on all levels: intrapsychic, intersubjective and social, as expected. The question of the identity of the large group was posed from the beginning: *Who/What are we? What is this group? What's its purpose? How do we define/determine ourselves in such a group? Who are the facilitators? Do we know them? Are they "friends" or "enemies"? Do they lay down the rules or not? Do we want them to be involved or not?*

Then we proceeded to question our existence in the large group: "W*hat do and don't we say?"; "What do we keep within our small group, what within the large group and what just for ourselves as individuals?"; "How do we part from the small group in order to become members of the large group?"; "How do we re-connect with each other and in what ways?"; "What do we need?"; "What does this group mean in relation to the whole training program in its entirety?"; "Who are the facilitators of the large group?"; "Do or don't we know them?"; Do we want them and what role do we want them to play?"*

Then the question of preference was posed: "*Do we prefer the facilitators of our small groups to those of our large group?"; "Do we prefer our small groups to our large group?"*

It is as if, all of a sudden, in the large group, we appreciated the small group's stability and safety, our small "family".

Agonizing with cross-firing questions, especially during the two first three-day periods, and equally quickly, agonizing and cross-firing answers, in spite of the surface sense of humour, in order to explain and avoid the issues that emerge, rather than letting ourselves go and exploring them.

For this reason, laughter immediately came as a relief. By explaining, we were coming back to the subject, to the individual, to

our personal system, and more obviously to our psychic safety also at the group level; there were many who played that role in the large group and "settled" the group either in an aggressive manner or by way of explanation or … (Agazarian, 2004).

Searching an exploring our sentiments that were disguised by every question and could introduce us to what we didn't know about ourselves, both in relation to ourselves (intrapsychic process) and to us, as members of a large group, was something extremely difficult for us to do and we tended to avoid or/and form barriers through our various defence mechanisms.

The anxiety that we might "vanish" and stop being ourselves, that we may not be "seen" within the group, made us take a role in the Large group as members, often not relating to the one who spoke before us, leaving him with an "empty", "threatened" feeling, etc. The expected outcome: threats and aggressiveness, not only on the contextual level, but also on a level of vast loneliness and "invisibility" experienced between *"me as a person"* and *"me as a member of this group"* and *"me as the voice of the group"*. It is no accident that some who were not speaking, later described their relief at having spoken, although this had seemed frightening to them before.

The above reveals the group as an intersubjective field, where the group is an instrument of transformation of the psychic reality of the members; at the same time, each member's psyche contributes to the establishment and functioning of the psychic reality of the group. With reference to this, I associate the dreams, that often appeared in the large group of the two first three-day periods, where the dream field was connected to the somatic, the intrapsychic and the intersubjective fields, and seemed to concern the large group as a whole "case of dream polyphony" (R. Kaes), at the same time as constituting the subject's personal area.

Nevertheless, I often remarked that dreams were arriving at moments of long "difficult" silence and gave the large group an "object", a dream to deal with, in order to speak for its presence. There was a comforting and calm ambiance during the self-reflection of the dream. I was thinking that perhaps, it is not an accident that the voice "Lena", who shared two such dreams, stated how stressed she felt with the large group and her verbal message was accompanied by intense physical symptoms (intense blushing, sweating, voice quivering, etc.)

And finally, on another psychic reality level, there was also the case of "John', literally and also on a level of group dynamic, as a carrier of a function or of a symptom, as stated in the systematic approach, "John", as representative of his own story and, at the same

time, as representative of what was happening at that particular moment in the large group (there were many similar moments like this one during the two penultimate two-day periods of the large group). The way I saw and heard the "John" voice, made me consider the function he had been assigned, beyond his personal story and through the process of group bonding, in relation to diversity and acceptance of all the different participants who came from different vocational fields, almost "hostile" to each other in some cases, from different theoretical fields and – if I look back at the case of the newly established psychotherapist association – also having different motives in participating, and all the difficult emotions that accompanied this, that had remained in the background, found this person, "John", to bring up and prematurely verbalize, even though the group as a whole wasn't yet in a mature phase of evolution. I often found myself considering the different meaning of the "scapegoat" as introduced by Agazarian (2004), according to who the scapegoat is a "pathfinder", prematurely introducing a change to the group for which the group system is not yet ready.

Finally, there was also the following peculiarity: The coordinators of the small groups also took part in the large group. What was their role in the group? *They were simply equal members of the group. How did we address ourselves to them? Using formal or informal language? What was the meaning of what they said? Did they speak as group leaders, as organizers of the program or as our coordinators-parents of our small groups? Did they behave as those "who are judging" us? As persons we were sharing the same anxieties? As persons in positions of authority in our professional contexts, on whom we are depending?*

We had difficulties in calling directly upon somebody to speak, in disagreeing with them, quarrelling and conversing with them in equal terms. And what about the leaders of the Large group, who didn't meet them in any other activity? Did this facilitate them or not (the lack of familiarity with the two coordinators of the large group)?

According to Dalal (1998), the most essential component of the social unconscious is the internalization of social authority, in the way that our thoughts, emotions, as well as our mutual communications are organized, in the way that the social unconscious differentiates from the cultural unconscious, considering that this includes normality, the habits and the ways of viewing of a particular civilization, so deeply imprinted, they turn out to be unconscious. He defines civilization as something concerning a complete restructuring

of personality and psychic economy in the process of historical change

Nevertheless, beyond the difficult aspects of the large group, there was this new experience: accompanying each other in an absurd and impersonal way (we didn't even remember or/and know the names of many of the participants). There were often voices, who expressed their surprise and awe for all the good feelings within this chaos. It was common that one of the leaders of the large group used to remind us of this aspect of the large group as "Democracy" or "KINONIA", as per Pat de Mare, a kind of "*togetherness and amity that brings a serendipity of resources…*" - "*Communication as it is understood in the Greek Orthodox Church*" (Agazarian, 2013).

In such moments of the group I was thinking that this is maybe the best contribution of the large group to society: that it forms a context within which you can put (or try to put) hostile thoughts and feelings (aggression, hate, rage, etc.) in the frame of dialogue, which is very close to a "KINONIA" interaction.

Myself in the large group
"I want to be myself in order to keep walking."

My initial thought about participating in this psychoanalytic educational training program, in particular in the large group, since I am fully qualified as a systemic psychotherapist, can be described, according to Winnicott (2003), "*as a place from and towards, without these two being determining factors. The in-between position gives you the opportunity end the space to be available for anything that happens, for creative behaviour*".

But, in spite all the above ideas, as soon as the large group opened, I found myself organizing all my defences, as per S. H. Foulkes, "*…you are going to take over your usual role and function thorough your connection to others*". The very first thing I found myself organising was my critical-logical self. I felt that I was participating in something like a trade union, all the others seemed to feel unappreciated, all were complaining about the programme, the circumstances, the changes, etc. As I tried to be involved by saying something different I felt that there was no space for something else, something different, I felt something restraining me, a "politically correct psychoanalytic message", as the psychoanalytic point of view was the only truth.

So, first I was thinking of fleeing: "*I've made a mistake! I have to abandon this programme. What bad professionals they are! They only know one truth, theirs!*" Next I was rationalizing: "*Why*

don't they abandon the program, if they don't like it? Why did they apply for this program? Sometimes I was thinking like a mother, in a protective way: *"It is something good for them, they have to see it"* and sometime I was felt that the group was hidden behind the pleasure of a psychoanalytic dialect. Then I found myself getting angry with them, as the words became more separated from the experience we were having with each other. I was sitting there and I was watching the group choosing avoidance of the experience, instead of the exploration of the "here and now" experience. My feelings moved from anger to compassion, to contempt, etc.

But, in the end of each large group session, when we left the room and went outside, through our short exchanges (short ironic, aggressive comments or bitter jokes) and through the way we ran away (we didn't even look at each other), I felt that the participants left the group with difficult feelings, feelings which hadn't been expressed in the "here and now" experience of the Large group, such as: anger, rage, insecurity and a lack of self-confidence. That observation was very helpful to me, as it made me move from my personal system to the "me as a member of the group" system and to observe my behaviour and the others' in the context of the meaning of the large group.

During large group sessions it was very common - since I was very involved – to ask me questions such as: "What are you talking about?" in an aggressive manner and then there were comments about me which felt like projections. I felt very lonely. I felt constantly misunderstood, like a "Chinese" among "Europeans". I couldn't understand why they didn't hear me, instead of giving explanations why didn't they stand by me in order to explore what I was saying "here and now?" What did this mean for them and what was moved in them? In almost every session, I had to deal with such things**:** *"You are intellectualizing again", "I can't understand you", and "you are such a nice person, so polite",* etc.

I often felt despair at the way we seemed to be like pre-kindergarten children and had a long way to go until finding out how to communicate like human beings, give space to each other, sharing thoughts and feelings without criticism, build a sense of belonging and provide acceptance. As I was thinking of all the above as being aspects of "democracy" and "kinonia", sometimes I felt very disappointed that people will never manage to overcome themselves and be synchronized for the same goal and sometimes I felt compassion for those who suffered, who were too afraid, who were unable to let

themselves be in the "here and now" experience, to trust themselves and the group/society. I never found myself synchronized with the group as a whole.

A big surprise to me was the conflict about time boundaries that suddenly occurred at the end of the first Large group session between a small group leader and one of the leaders of the Large group. The large group leader interrupted her as she was talking, saying "time-up" (actually, we were out of time). She insisted on finishing what she had to say but the group leader left the room. This stirred up a lot of feelings in everyone. The echo of that incident could he heard in all the sessions of the large group, also, at least, the first two sessions of my small group (the one that argued with the leader of the large group was the leader of my small group). I was thinking about the incident in terms of "psychic bonds", and "unconscious alliances". I was thinking that on the level of unconscious alliances and unconscious bonds a lot of things happened: repressions, denials, dichotomies and/or rejections. Then, I realized that the moment the incident happened I felt inside me feelings of an unconscious (until then) alliance, which suggested (unwanted by me) obedience and loyalty to my small group leader. I thought very quickly that it wasn't only my feeling – it was something that had to do with shared feelings in the room. I saw this incident as a spark which opened topics about the presence of the leaders of the small group (their presence in the large group had to do with "leader" or "member" issues? Could we confront them as equal members or as seniors, which we had to wheedle? Furthermore, I was thinking about the hierarchical systems in society.

An important moment of insight was when I was trying to say that John was the voice of all of us, for the participant, whom the large group had put in the middle. The reactions towards me were: *"You are such a nice person …", "you are good at whitewashing ....",* and as I was whether to attack (fight) or withdraw (flight), one of the small group leaders, who was sitting next to me, said something similar, which at first made me feel understood by at least another member and then brought me back into the "here and now" process of the group. Then I was able to follow him in his own thoughts and feelings (he talked about the internal psychic difficulties that make people behave in the way of putting somebody in the spot). I still remember the feeling of synchronization I felt. And while a "boxed pairing" (Bion) could have happened, it did not. It was a brief moment in which I felt that he and I coexisted in the group and this synchronization feeling made me follow his thoughts and focus on the

large group as a whole. My free association had to do with the "*two that seemed one*" of Winnicott (2003), but also with the theoretical concepts of Agazarian (AGPA, Boston, 2014) "*join-separation-individuation - to the group*", meaning "*connecting to the previous speaker, getting a   synchronization feeling, separating from him/abandoning him, staying in yourself and offering your own to the group".*

Another moment of insight for me was when I stated that each of the coordinators of the large group create, with their permissiveness, a containment space. Feeling this, I spoke to another member, who had spoken much earlier and had expressed feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty which prevent her speaking. I emphasized how much I had allied with her emotionally, but I did not dare to express this. One of the large group coordinators at the time, in response to what I said, commented something which made me feel again the same synchronization of feeling. Then he, after connecting with me, continued his train of thought, which was indeed in a completely different direction from what I'd said. I felt again this synchronization, I felt accompanied, and, at the same time, that "*mommy has also other children and/or her thoughts other than my own and I'm fine with it, I got my share and I can stay in the relationship despite differences, because I feel connected and understood (Greek word: kanakemeni)".*

Last but not least, I also remember how perfectly synchronized I felt when the group attacked one of the organizers of the program, because "*this educational program does not lead to a Masters, which you had implied it would"*, etc. In the beginning of this attack I didn't identify myself in it, because I'd not heard about this. The only thing that had been expressed from the beginning was the likelihood of a future transformation of the existing educational program to a postgraduate programme. It never crossed my mind that a psychoeducational training program of this level could be considered equal academically to a formal postgraduate program, or that my need was such. But, beyond the content, I felt "*hatred as the frustration of love"*, as Pat De Mare puts it, (Agazarian, 2013) and I felt perfectly synchronized with the frustration, and disappointment felt by the majority of group members - I felt very close to other group members. I felt like Winnicott's mother, while the baby is desperate and is crying, the mother feels baby's despair and comforts it, and, at the same time, she can be herself, containing baby's despair without identifying with baby's despair (Winnicott, 2003).

After this attack the group no longer referred to the frustration and disappointment issues. Only, during the last session of the group, one of the leaders of the commented, during a difficult moment, about the group, when expressing much anger on another subject, *"I wonder what did you expect from this program, what expectations did you have?"* At that time I considered this comment irrelevant. Now, as I am thinking about it, I wonder about all those difficult feelings, which didn't appear again. Where did anger and frustration go, anger and frustration that were expressed by the majority of group members, the deep grievance that was expressed by people working in very difficult, from the perspective of power relations that develop, professional contexts, by professionals living under the threat of losing their jobs, because of the financial crisis, professional contexts where a postgraduate diploma puts you in a better professional and occupational position.

Group developmental phases

Bruce Tuckman, the developmental psychologist, first used the words "forming, storming, norming, and performing", in an article in 1965 entitled "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups", to describe the trend in most groups as they grow and produce work. Later, he added a fifth stage that he called "adjourning", which is now known as "mourning".

Developmental phases of a large group

Very little has been written about the development phases of a large group and the goals and dynamics on which it runs. In attempting to "follow" and to capture in writing what I experienced I will highlight the following:

The goal of each group and the main purpose of the large group, is for each member to survive, develop and be transformed. When the differences between the participants are very large, because of the destabilizing experience which in this case is high, the participants as individuals and/or as members of the group close their boundaries, in order to survive the intense threat they feel. But differences are necessary for the development of systems. So, it is vital in a group to develop interaction so the members stay sufficiently open to take in the information provided and still sufficiently closed in order to process this information and so be helped in being rebuilt and changed.
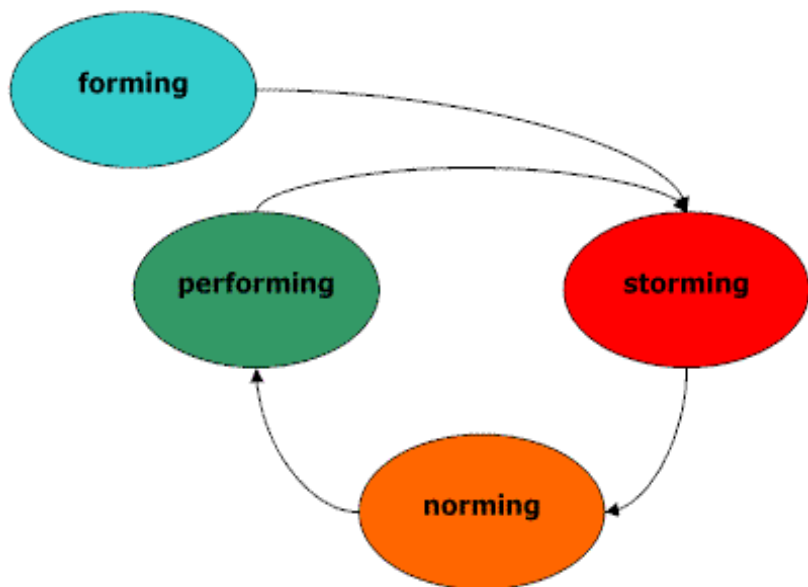
Following the literature on the developmental phases of a group, I observe the following:

Forming: It was obvious from the beginning that the participants in the large group were not familiar with this type of interaction. Everything seemed to be ambiguous to participants (the purpose of the group, the leaders' role, their role, etc.) and this ambiguity was expressed constantly. As I entered a little late in the first session of the group, I found the participants presenting themselves by saying their name, their professional status and their working context. Silence prevailed immediately after. Feelings of embarrassment and anxiety were all around, although the group leaders had clarified the objectives, the roles and the procedures of the group. Then a heated discussion began concerning the room in which the large group was taking place, due to lack of any other room, which was the amphitheatre of the University of Athens Medical School, also about old roles and college life, since many of us had been medical students

in the past, and during this intense discussion some of us wanted explanations, some responded with incomprehension, etc.

The initial guidance given by the head of the group was, *"You can say what you want",* was not facilitated at all. Each member struggled with internal censorship, the group as a whole also, without being aware of this. This situation made communication and dialogue between the members of the group even more complicated. In addition, there was intense stress, caused by the presence of the other, in an unconscious, repressed, unknown and not familiar way. When otherness in everyday life is not rejected and persecuted, and is dealt with through denial or accelerated appropriation of the other or is treated with the co-constructed illusion that *"we know each other"* or that *"we have met"*. Finally, each member in order to become familiar to the opposite/other, becomes "another" against itself, abandons itself and vice versa. This caused great anguish and annihilation in the participants of the group.

Storming: At this stage, competition prevails. Everything is under negotiation, alliances are created, divisions, conflicts, etc. So, the large group became a chaotic place, very threatening and confrontational, almost a nightmare for anyone who was unable to contain and explore this kind of experience. We were angry with the responsible trainers of the program who *"even in crisis can do educational programs"* with the one of the leaders of the group whom we *"did not like",* with the changes in organizational level, for which *"nobody cares"* for, with the words of others, whom we did not understand what he/she/they meant, etc. Everyone was trying to make his presence felt and to balance his cognitive map. Also, in this first session of the group, there were many silent members and some of them did not appear again until the next Large group sessions and it remained so until the end of all the large group sessions. This phase lasted a long time and we continued the sessions surrounded by the general confusion around us (strikes, occupations, political mobilizations, financial crisis, etc.). There was a sense of uncertainty, competition, and anger. And the way we skipped it was taking refuge in the security of "small" talk such as *"the news says that the program has failed and is going to stop" or "the leaders of the program have fought each other", etc.* In every way the members were leaving the "here and now" situation because of the unbearable uncertainty of the feelings they had.

Norming: Gradually I understood that the participants started to realize the role which each of us was taking in the large group, that the group as a whole felt that it had goals to which we looked forward, and procedures were consolidated, etc. My impression was that somehow the group regulated itself, again and again in each meeting but also globally, though often the group felt regressed - mainly when facing new data and new processes. I remember during one meeting a member, who constantly asked questions about *"What are we doing here, in this group?", "Will it be helpful in our work? Or won't it?"*, said in a moment of insight *"I realize now that one goal here is to see how I treat myself in a large group"*. This insight had a strong impact on me and put me in the "heart" of the group and reminded me De Mare's saying about the "*socializing process of impersonal friendship"* (Agazarian, 2013).

Performing: Integrating group goals or regression (Bion's basic assumptions: dependency-fight/flight-pairing)

I do not know whether we reached this stage. I do not think the group managed to evolve to a performing group stage. There were of course some minor glimpses. The group meeting room wasn't helpful since, due to its structure (it was a university auditorium), it did not facilitate the process; and the long intervals between group meetings also weren't helpful. It seemed that while some members of the group (beyond the reasons above) could take part in the process, and could stay connected with the other group members in the "here and now", for others it was very difficult. At the end of the group sessions, another member wondered about the usefulness of the epistemology of psychoanalysis, she wondered if *"analysts are better people?...is their life better than other people?"* I understood this as Bion's basic assumption "*fight/flight"*, and maybe if the lifetime of this group continued we could have worked on it.

In conclusion

Overall, as I am reflecting upon this experience, I am thinking of the different psychotherapeutic concepts, as they have been developed in various epistemological areas. The participants in the large group often expressed their certainty about their interpretations. I am thinking of Agazarian's ideas about therapist's interpretations. She says that "bad" interpretations (premature, soft, unsubstantial, etc.) interrupt the process by dissociating people from "here and now"

process. She insists that interpretation is merely the expression of one's opinion about what the other is saying and that if, as the therapist gives an interpretation, the other looks at him like *"a surprised baby"*, then the therapist has done a meaningful interpretation. Otherwise the therapist simply expresses his/her opinion and there is always the risk that the other person will follow this opinion and not take responsibility in the "here and now" procedure and process (Agazarian & Byram, 2009).

Also I was thinking about the meaning of the words in the sense of structure, and the meaning of the speech in the sense of process. De Mare emphasizes the idea that while we make structure with words in the world, our hope is that speech establishes relations. He argues that the challenge is to move from the talk to speech and from there to *"socialization and citizenship"*.

Another related psychotherapeutic field is that of Open Dialogue Theory (Seikkula et. al., 2006), which poses the following reflection: *"How to help a person using the vocabulary of the specialist?" You are an expert when the other accepts you as such. What if the other tells you "I don't want you as an expert". Does he have the right to do so? Is psychotherapy something which grows only between and not from one to another, only within an authoritarian relationship, under the species of a "politically correct" epistemological hierarchy?*

Of course, I observed myself being affected and influenced within the process of the large group: from the other as strange, different and threatening, in the here and now process to the other with all of its differences. Many of my initial questions were answered, as they formed from meeting to meeting and as the process entered in the "space between" participants or/and between participants and leaders. From the perspective of a "bad leader", we moved to the perspective of full recognition and acceptance of him in the "here and now" process. Maybe it was an attempt by us to stay with the large group or, perhaps, it was a situation of idealization while dealing with difficult feelings. Also, it could be a condition (optimistically) of acceptance of our differences.

Finally, above and beyond all this, my big advantage was all this complex large group level I was participating in, all these "40 waves" situation, filled with the feelings, behaviours and questions I described above, that still are accompanying me in a continuous process.

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BOOK CORNER

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:

Group_Analytic Society
1 Daleham Gardens
London NW3 5BY
Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6611
Fax: +44 (0)20 7443 9576
e-mail: admin@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk

EVENTS

GAS International Quarterly Members Group (QMG)
The dates for sessions in 2016:
Saturday 23rd January
Saturday 23rd April
Saturday 9th July
Saturday 22nd 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.

For the above mentioned application form please go to the website of GASI www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/events/

Crossing Borders: Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges

**17th International Symposium
of the Group Analytic
Society International (GASi)**
- first announcement -

**Berlin ǀ 15 – 19 August 2017
Maritim Hotel Berlin**

www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk   www.d3g.org   www.gruppenanalyse-berlin.de

Crossing Borders Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges

**Berlin
15-19 August 2017
Maritim Hotel**

17th
International
Symposium
of the
Group Analytic Society
International

Welcoming Letter

It is with great pleasure that the Group Analytic Society international (GASi) in cooperation with the Berliner Institut für Gruppenanalse e.V. (BIG)and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gruppenanalyse und Gruppenpsychotherapie (D3G) invite you to the 17th International Symposium in Group Analysis – Crossing Borders: Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges in Berlin 15-19 August, 2017.

The theme of the Symposium goes right to the center of today's problems with thousands of people on the move away from wars and poverty, indeed crossing borders. In the social context there is growing fear of being invaded by refugees and immigrants and on top a fear of terrorist attacks. Our world today is fast moving and in constant change.

It is a global village where the mix and clash of cultures pose new challenges for individuals, families, groups and organisations and danger of social disintegration. As Group analysts and group psycho- therapists we have some powerful instruments to help understand and analyse the phenomena we see around us and hopefully also to be instrumental in helping groups of people. Some may say that we are not able to solve problems in this massive scale as they are for now, but we should not hold back, but try to use and apply the knowledge we do have about the dynamics conscious and unconsci- ous of small and large groups and in this way contribute to making the world a better place to live in.

Together we can gather still more knowledge by sharing experiences from the clinic from groups, organisations and from scientific projects. By sharing theoretical ideas, research and clinical experience the participants of the symposium will be instrumental in heightening the effectivity and quality of the group analytic method.

The symposium will give you the opportunity to explore the theme in both theoretical and experiental ways through lectures, papers, panel presentations and workshops and through participation in small, median and large groups. It will also give you the opportunity to expand your professional network and meet friends and not least to develop connections across national and cultural boundaries.

We look forward to seeing you in Berlin in August 2017.

Chairs:
Kurt Husemann and Gerda Winther

In cooperation with

International Conference

Belgrade
September 23rd - 24th 2016

Psycho-Social Dialogues:

Inner and Outer Places and Spaces for Conversation in Our Organisations, Neighbourhoods, Communities

Conveners

Carla Penna, Christopher Scanlon, Marina Mojović and Svein Tjelta

Organized by:

Group Analytic Society-Belgrade
Psycho-Social Section

Consulting-Art Belgrade

Conference Program

Registration Fees in euro:	Before July 1st	Before September 1st	After September 1st
Trainees GAS-Belgrade	130	140	150
GAS-Belgrade members	140	150	160
GAS-international, IAGP ISPSO, OPUS members	160	170	190
Others	170	180	200

Lunch, coffee and refreshment included in fee

All questions regarding registration, fees & payment and accommodation should be directed to office consultingartbeograd@gmail.com or to Marina Mojović dr.marinamojovic@gmail.com mob. +381 (0) 63 77 87 642

Venue: Consulting-Art doo. Belgrade, Banovo Brdo, 115 Petra Lekovića Street

Venue photos: http://www.flickr.com/photos/belgrade-conference-june-2013/sets/72157633097384770/show/

El Grup com a lloc, espai, llar o terra, on l'altre, el diferent, l'estranger o l'estrany és acollit i reconegut a través de la integració de les seves diferències, des del treball clínic, i més enllà. Aquest VII Congrés de l'APAG pretén reunir tots els professionals de la salut, de l'educació i del món sociocomunitari, i té per objectiu actuar sobre totes aquelles formes d'integració d'individus, grups, col·lectius i comunitats en risc d'exclusió.

Tres eixos constituiran els espais de diàleg i reflexió dissenyats per a aquest fi: **Obrint Fronteres: La integració de la Dona**; i **L'Estigmatització en Salut Mental.**

I, des de la diferència, el nostre propòsit serà que tots els que participem, ho facem des d'aquest país horitzontals, inclusius. Ponències, taules rodones, grups grans, grups petits, tallers i activitats lúdiques, complementant-se per tal que allò racional i allò vital que havia dins cadascun de nosaltres s'integrin a l'igual que persones en el grup.

Benvinguts a Mallorca! Una illa, petita terra, que ha acollit multiplicitat de llengües i maneres de veure el món sense oblidar les nostres arrels i cultura. Llar per a persones i pobles de tot el planeta, espai de vida i convivència. Des d'ara mateix, considereu-la ca vostra.

El Grupo como lugar, espacio, hogar o tierra, donde el otro, el diferente, el extranjero o el extraño es acogido y reconocido a través de la integración de sus diferencias, desde el trabajo clínico, y más allá de él.

Este VII Congreso de la APAG pretende reunir a todos los profesionales de la salud, de la educación y de lo sociocomunitario y tiene por objetivo actuar sobre todas esas formas de integración de individuos, grupos, colectivos y comunidades en riesgo de exclusión.

Tres ejes constituirán los espacios de diálogo y reflexión diseñados para este fin: **Abriendo Fronteras: La integración de la Mujer; y La Estigmatización en Salud Mental.**

Y desde la diferencia, nuestro propósito será que todos quienes participemos, lo hagamos desde espacios horizontales, inclusivos. Ponencias, mesas redondas, grupos grandes, grupos pequeños, talleres y actividades lúdicas, complementándose para que lo racional y lo vital que había en cada uno de nosotros se integren, como personas en el grupo.

¡Benvinguts a Mallorca! Una isla, pequeña tierra, que ha acogido multiplicidad de lenguas y maneras de ver el mundo, sin olvidar nuestras raíces y cultura. Hogar para personas y pueblos de todo el planeta, espacio de vida y convivencia. Desde ya, considerdla vuestra casa.

PROGRAMA

VIERNES, 25 NOVIEMBRE

09.00 h Recogida documentación

09.30 h PRESENTACIÓN. Oriol LAFAU y Emilio DE LA SIERRA

10.00 h CONFERENCIA INAUGURAL: Abriendo Fronteras. Lo Grupoanalítico en la Resolución de Conflictos Internacionales. Robi FRIEDMAN

11.30 h Coffee Break

12.00 h MESA REDONDA. La Mujer: De La Exclusión a la Integración?
· Mujer Virgen, Pura. Estela WELLDON
· Los Estereotipos de Género como Enfermedad Social. Rosa CURSACH
· MÉDICOS DEL MUNDO

13.30 h Comida

15.30 h COMUNICACIONES LIBRES Y PÓSTERS

16.30 h Descanso

16.45 h GRUPOS PEQUEÑOS

18.15 h Coffee Break

18.45 h GRUPO GRANDE
Conductoras: Nati SOLIVELLAS e Ibana HINOJOSA

SÁBADO 26 NOVIEMBRE

09.00 h TALLERES:
Taller 1. Social Dreaming. Robi FRIEDMAN
Taller 2. Poesía: Versiones y Perversiones. Toni FUSTER
Taller 3. Moviendo al Grupo. Jessica JIMÉNEZ

10.30 h Coffee Break

11.00 h CONFERENCIA. Lost in Translation: The Music of the Emotions. Farhad DALAL

12.30 h Descanso

12.45 h COMUNICACIONES LIBRES Y PÓSTERS

13.45 h Comida

15.45 h MESA REDONDA. Cuidado con el Paciente. Cuidado con el Profesional
· El estigma en el Paciente. José María AYERRA
· El Estigma en el Profesional. Ricardo CARRETERO
· Jugando con Dinamita. Estela WELLDON

17.15 h Descanso

17.30 h GRUPOS PEQUEÑOS

18.30 h Coffee Break

19.00 h GRUPO GRANDE
Conductoras: Nati SOLIVELLAS e Ibana HINOJOSA

20.30 h Asamblea APAG (socios)

21.30 h Cena/cocktail de gala

DOMINGO 27 NOVIEMBRE

10.00 h Programa social: Palma, Ciudad de Leyenda (Visita guiada. Prof. Josep BORNE).

TEACHERS WORK DISCUSSION GROUP

You are invited to a discussion group for teachers, in which we reflect on and consider aspects of teaching and learning that concern us.

Based on the work of Michael Balint with GPs and on Group Analysis, the group has a maximum of 12 members. It meets monthly during term time in a space that is supportive and confidential.

The facilitators help to focus the discussion on understanding our pupils and our responses to them. By reflecting on the challenges we face as teachers, we hope to better understand ourselves and those we teach so that we can provide a richer education for them and a more satisfying working life for ourselves.

If you would like to join or have any questions about the group, please contact Joan or Phil. We look forward to hearing from you.

Monthly at the Institute for Group Analysis (near Swiss Cottage tube)

7:30 – 9pm

Facilitated by a psychotherapist and a teacher

Forthcoming meetings:

March 22nd
April 19th
May 24th
June 21st
July 19th

JOAN FOGEL
Group-analytic psychotherapist
joan@fogel.co.uk
07887545703

PHIL HILLS
Teacher
Philhills@gmail.com
07919444916

OBITUARY

HOMAGE TO JEAN-CLAUDE ROUCHY

Jean-Claude Rouchy was anxious to finish his next conference before he entered hospital for some more investigation. He died some days after from a chronic illness he was fighting during these two last years.

Along with Didier Anzieu and René Kaës, Jean-Claude Rouchy was the foundation of group psychoanalysis in France. They had in common their professional profiles: psychologists and psychoanalysts together, interested in social and psychosocial questions. However, a difference with theses colleagues was that he was not university-based and is less well-known. He was a clinician and a teacher dedicated to the transmission of group psychoanalysis. He had a very eclectic clinical experience: he worked with individuals, with therapeutic groups, with training groups, he provided supervision, was engaged in clinical practice with institutions, teams and cultural situations. He was one of the very few French psychoanalysts to practice verbal free association in groups. Most group psychoanalytic practices in France use psychoanalytic psychodrama. Jean-Claude Rouchy created an original setting, using verbal association, in some sessions he used relaxation (with another analyst specialized in relaxation), and in some sessions psychoanalytic psychodrama (with a third analyst). These three approaches open up different levels of consciousness which was important for his conception of psychoanalytic group psychotherapy. He also proposed different original settings for his clinical work in/with institutions.

He was a creative and productive personality. His dynamic nature had a regular need for some conflict situations to express itself, which could be difficult for some colleagues, but this was a condition of his productivity. He was a friendly and rigorous person.

He had been involved in the foundation of many psychoanalytic associations and societies in France as well as at the European level, due to his openness to other cultures: SFPPG (French Society of Group Analytic Psychotherapy), EATGA (European Association of Trans-cultural Group Analysis), FAPAG (Federation of Group Analytic Associations), Abraham and Torok Association, ARIP (Association for Research and Psycho-sociologic Interventions), TRANSITION and EFPP (European Federation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy). Naturally, he has been president of them all, EFPP excepted (he was on the board for many years). He was also there at

the beginning of two scientific reviews which he managed until his death: *CONNEXION* and *RPPG* (Review of Group Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy) both dedicated to Psychoanalytic Group Psychotherapy, institutions and cultural and social clinical considerations.

Jean-Claude Rouchy was very active and involved in the transmission of group psychoanalysis. In his association TRANSITION he developed a full training for psychologists and psychoanalysts. His wife, Monique Soula Desroche, who died last year, was also one of the pillars of this work.

He contributed theoretical developments to the domains of group, institutional, cultural and psychoanalytic approaches, and was especially involved as a founder of institutional and cultural psychoanalytic practices. He insisted that each clinical situation has to be viewed in its context (time/space, social and cultural context). For example he observed that Freud isolated the Oedipus Myth form its collective and trans-generational dimensions.

He was strict about the concepts of transference and countertransference which, in his opinion, should only be applied to persons: he was against the notions of "group transference" and of "institutional transference". For the same reason he was against notions of a "social or political unconscious".

He wrote about the pre-conscious as a transition from instinct to social representation. After Abraham and Torok he developed the idea of "incorporated phantasms" (not through repression but as original psycho-corporal traces). And he designed "cultural incorporat" as sensorial impressions attached to a culture, a family group (primary group of belonging) "re-edited" in secondary groups (groups of friends, associations, institutions). These "cultural incorporats" appeared especially in the encounter with the other, the foreigner, sometimes creating a situation of un-understandable violence. He was open to the non-verbal manifestations in groups (it is why he incorporated sessions with relaxation in his setting). And it is on this ground that we have had the most exchanges together. His analysis of the institution (differentiation between institution and organization, and different levels and places in the structure) has been very enlightening and useful for many clinicians.

I met him for the first time at the EATGA, and I was very surprised and interested by the originality of the setting he proposed to analyze the cultural influence on the psychic processes in groups. It is the unique situation in which analysts from different cultures and

countries, from different languages and different schools of psychoanalysis accept to meet together in experiential analytic groups and offer their personal reactions to common research. From that time on we met in several of these associations (EATGA, SFPPG, FAPAG) and I collaborated with him on a number of articles in his reviews. He welcomed warmly my students of psychology interested in group psychoanalysis and took time to present his work and answer their questions. He was for me a very good friend, and along with Monique Soula Desroche we had some very good restaurant meetings!

His death is a huge loss for our psychoanalytic community.

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CONTEXTS' COLUMNIST

Quantitative Unease

By Susanne Vosmer

A column dedicated to demystifying psychotherapy research – love it, hate it, or both…at least try to know what it's all about!

Where did it all begin?
If you read my column in the previous issue, you probably would have had some thoughts about research issues. Whatever these thoughts were, have you noticed that research discussions in the media and public domain tend to centre on questions like: 'What's the hypothesis?', 'How big is the sample?', 'How representative is the sample?' 'How can you generalise if you have a small sample?' 'Was there a control group?' And the validity of research is assessed on how well it meets these 'scientific' criteria.

If you are unconvinced, try an experiment (perform a scientific procedure): Ask people what they know or have heard about 'research'. My hunch is that the majority will mention: 'hypothesis' (statement about the world that could be tested to see whether it is true or false); 'sample' (chosen people from the population of interest you wish you study or know more about); or 'control group' (group of people that closely matches the one you are studying and does not receive the intervention you are studying or applying, so it serves as a 'comparison group').

The other day, I was listening to a discussion on the radio about 'placebo' (a substance or intervention that supposedly has not the same medical or therapeutic effect than the drug or treatment given). What was interesting, apart from learning more about the 'placebo effect' (basically sugar pills or things which should not have an effect can have a similar effect as the drug or treatment, even if people know it's a placebo), was the ease with which the 'scientific model' or 'scientific paradigm' (a set of concepts or practices that define a particular discipline at a particular point in time) has been accepted as 'normal' (the norm).

So if you thought positivism was dead, think again. Thanks to Comte (1798-1857), 'positivism', and positive means here what we

can be certain about, rests on the belief that valid knowledge can only be gained through observation or experimentation, paved the way for the application of the 'scientific method' to social life. Methodologically, meaning how do you go about finding out knowledge and do your research, it's directed at explaining relationships. It aims to identify causes, which influence outcome, and formulate laws, which are viewed as the basis for prediction and generalisation. Correlation and experimentation are used to reduce interactions into constituent parts. Direct experiments and observations, empirical testing, random samples, controlled variables, and control groups produce valid knowledge. It's simplistic but today's research ease (or unease) originates in yesterday's belief that science is based on observation/experimentation and comprises all there is to the whole of human knowledge. A 'science' viewed through the lens of positivism and applied also to mental health difficulties and psychotherapy research.

Of course there is more to it but for reasons of simplicity and space, let's leave it there and turn to how you go about conducting a study. First of all, you need an overall strategy, a blue print. This is called a 'research design'. It tells you how you go about integrating the different components of your study in a coherent and logical way. It ensures that you actually can address your research question. You may have come across terms like 'correlational' or 'semi-/experimental' designs. It's important to remember that a correlational design can only establish associations and therefore you cannot make causal claims. This is quite important. When you read that 'aliens are the causes of havoc' and the study has used a correlational design (found associations between aliens and havoc), the authors cannot reach this conclusion and you can therefore discard such claims.

So the design sort of defines the type of study. There is a hierarchy and randomised controlled trials (RCTs) are considered to be the 'gold standard'. A RCT is a study where the people you study (called subjects or participants) are allocated by chance or 'randomly' to one or more groups where they receive one or more interventions. It's important that each person has the same chance to be allocated to a group. Researchers can use various techniques to ensure that this is the case (e.g. assigning numbers). There is a 'control group'. In this group, people don't receive the intervention you are testing, otherwise you could not test whether an intervention works. The primary goal of a RCT is exactly that: testing whether an intervention works by comparing it to the control condition. But you can also identify the effects of an intervention (so-called 'moderators') and understand the

processes through which an intervention influences change (so-called 'mediators).

Many things can potentially go wrong when you do a RCT so when you look at the method section you need to look at it quite carefully before you accept the conclusion of the study. This will be the topic of the next column. Cheerio until then.

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