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Editorial

2016 is grinding to a close. Looking back, it feels that not only has dissonance predominated but a regular and disturbing series of bum notes have been threatening our ear drums, like a particularly bad Les Dawson piano piece (<https://youtu.be/9nNGlaiVypU>) – here offered as a kind of seasonal gift. It's been a bad year for heroes ('best not to have them' I hear you say) who have been dropping like flies: Bowie, Prince, Ali, Cruyff, Sachs, Cohen, Castro... And then of course there's been Brexit and Trump, that particularly disturbing and incredulity inducing pair of hits, which has left at least one half of us reeling. All this played out over the constant dire percussive rumble of austerity, Aleppo and mass migration.

For this publication, 2016 has been a year of significant change. For many, the loss of the hard copy Contexts has been another bum note, a concession to cost-cutting and modernity that many have not been able to accept. While the benefits of going online have yet to be properly realised, it is hoped that in 2017 we will be able introduce a design for Contexts which is more suited to the digital form as well as more aligned with the new visual forms and colours soon to be launched on the GASi website. For the moment, you will notice that this issue, while containing colour and photos (from the Athens Summer School), is still essentially visually the old Contexts.

Next year is, of course, an important year for GASi. Whenever are they not? The year of the Symposium always carries a heightened feeling of expectation. However, in recent years the Summer School, which takes place in the years between the symposia, has added something very fresh and distinctive to the GASi calendar. First, Belgrade (2013), then Prague (2015) and now Athens. I am delighted that this publication has the 'deal' to publish the lectures from the Summer School and this time the core theme of 'polyphony' feels particularly apposite, given the core value of internationalisation so central to the overall Summer School project.

A particularly distinctive approach to the supervision of groups was showcased in Athens and is described by Bessy Karagianni. In addition, the work of the Open Psychotherapy Centre (OPC) in Athens (the organisation which hosted the Summer School)) is elucidated by Ioannis K. Tsegos. The OPC is a remarkable place, as well as, apparently, an extraordinary setting, perhaps unique in the group analytic world for the range of training and clinical services it undertakes.

In a particularly thoughtful and stimulating paper, Tiziana

Baisini explores polyphony and the inherent musicality of groups, making use of the themes of counterpoint and harmony in the music of J. S. Bach. Yael Doron, with the permission of the small group she conducted in Athens, takes us right into the “magic and the challenges” of the Summer School by writing about 3 dreams brought into her group. Greek trainee group analyst, Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou, has written two pieces: one, a brief reflection on the Summer School and the other, a kind of diary of her experience on a one-year postgraduate course in group analysis.

Finally, Magdalena Kolínská Singerová and Denisa Schücková from Prague, write about a very interesting development: their experience of setting up and running a local GASi Summer School, inspired by their experience the previous year in the GASi Summer School. It seems to me that the model of the Summer School, rather like the GASi Quarterly Members Group, is a model that can be applied and used locally, thus providing some kind of much needed counterpoint to the London-centrism, of which GASi is understandably often accused.

I wish you all a satisfying break and ‘felices fiestas’, whatever it is you happen to be celebrating.

Peter Zelaskowski

President's Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

The time before Christmas and New Year is special. It seems to me like a pause in every day's doing which provides for an opportunity to approach the new and new-born with more positive energies. While most of us don't rely on hope, the ability to renew ourselves and the ability to be inspired by hopeful aspects can be helpful, especially in difficult times. I was wondering about the question of our expectations and worries about the future, after and in the midst of difficult moments which maybe cause us to despair. On the other hand, this time of the year may help some of us to be more resilient and go from moments of despair to an effort of doing what is in our means to improve life and stand up to challenges. I know we usually don't talk about these emotional movements as we do not usually discuss the possibility that faith may be something important for many therapists. Faith in the ability of a patient to work himself out of a crisis or a difficult pattern, faith that the group will help to cure...some have to keep the faith, to hold the relations until patients get better. Is Faith the same as trusting the group, believing in the ability of the group, that if given the opportunity and the right conditions, it creates the best possible conditions to grow. I think this is something which makes Group Analysis unique.

I am referring to this because in these days, where much of what we see in the world outside is disappointing and discouraging, we may need therapeutic experience, in order to keep faith, in order to survive psychologically. From Syria, to Turkey, from America to Brexit, and many other places, we may have to find some points of trust in the positive and creative aspects of humanity, to not succumb to despair and passivity or even retreat.

This is why we are engaged ever more deeply in everything which can bring us together, learning about Group Analysis or practicing it with a continuous effort and belief. We have had a very interesting meeting in Aarhus, where the local psychiatric hospital hosted us. We were enriched by many lectures which centered on the way we can help inpatients. Again, we saw how important groups are in these institutions and what kind of expertise is created in such environments. The hope for even better ways to approach inpatients was especially highlighted through the contributions of mentalization, which has a special place in recent Group Analytic development. In my way of considering new approaches to the group, we should be open enough to them, experiment and 'play' with them. It is often

impossible to really believe that one can know what the possibilities and advantages of one approach are if we don't give it a try.

We have made some changes in the Society's Management Committee, following the departure of Frances Griffith, our Treasurer, in order to become the IGA London's Chair. It is never easy to separate from someone with whom we have worked for some years, and especially someone who invested so much and so successfully, as she did. So, with a heavy heart, but with many congratulations and expectations we wish her and the IGA London much success. In order to replace her we decided to go ahead with 2 Co-Treasurers: Sarah Tyerman, who will Chair the Finance Committee; and Linde Wotton who will be responsible for the office and our growing administration. Five years ago, we were less than 400 members, now, on the last count, we were 720 members. Also, the volume of activities we have to manage has grown substantially. We wish Sarah and Linde much success and satisfaction in their work.

The preparations for the next 2 important events are in full speed: the Foulkes Lecture, which will be given by Sylvia Hutchinson and the 17th International Symposium of GASi in Berlin. We are making great efforts to reach these events in our best possible form. Both promise to be high quality events, in which you are invited to present if you wish and certainly to participate. We have made it a tradition to mix small and large groups in the most interesting way...and have a lot of interesting presentations.

I would also like to announce that 4 members of our Society were elected as new Honorary Members: Werner Knauss (Germany), Juan Tubert Oklander (Mexico), Earl Hopper (UK) and Avi Berman (Israel). We are very lucky that we have such members who provide us, from the past and the present, with valuable contributions and we are happy to honour them for that.

Finally – there are vacancies in our Management Committee. If you want to contribute actively to the Group Analytic Society International, please consider volunteering and putting yourself to be democratically elected. You will find more information about this in the Society's site: <http://www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/>
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Dr Robi Friedman
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****ANNOUNCEMENT****

GASi BREXIT Large Group

Sunday 22nd January 2017

10.30am – 3pm

VENUE: IGA

1 Daleham Gardens, London. NW3 5BY

To book please follow this link:

<http://subscribercrm.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/Event-Search/Event-Booking/EventId/9>

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 GASi 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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Born 1963 in Mannheim, degree in business administration, doctor of medicine at University of Cologne. First clinical job as a house officer for general medicine in Northern England. Psychiatrist and psychotherapist. Experience in clinical work in psychiatry and psychosomatics, psychodynamic psychotherapy and group therapy in Bad Saulgau, Stuttgart and Berlin. Since 2008 psychotherapist in private practice in Berlin and working as a group analyst. Group analytic training in the 90's in Göttingen, member of the Berliner Institut für Gruppenanalyse (BIG) and of the German society for Group Analysis (D3G). Board Member responsible for Finances in BIG, currently local treasurer for GASi Berlin 2017 “Crossing Borders“ and member of the Management Subcommittee for the symposium.

Associate Members

Robert Hsiung

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Psychiatrist in private practice in Chicago; inventor of the Continuous Online Group (COG), a two-week 24/7 asynchronous experiential learning opportunity; member of the Board of Directors of both the American Group Psychotherapy Association (<http://www.agpa.org>) and the Illinois Group Psychotherapy Society (<http://www.ilgps.org>); co-founder and past president of the International Society for Mental

Health Online (<http://www.ismho.org>); editor of E-Therapy: Case Studies, Guiding Principles, and the Clinical Potential of the Internet (<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=9189>); and founder of Psycho-Babble (<http://www.dr-bob.org/babble>), a large public online peer support group.

**Programme, 3rd International Summer
School in Group Analysis
13-17th July, Athens**



Wednesday

17.00 Opening/Welcome
17.15-18.15 Opening Lecture-Discussion
18.30-20.00 Large Group
20.00 Welcome reception

Thursday and Saturday

09:00-10:30 Small Group
10:30-11:00 Coffee break
11:00-12:15 Lecture-Discussion
12:15-13:45 Lunch
13:45-15:15 Supervision
15:15-15:45 Coffee break
15:45-17:15 Large Group

Friday

09:00-10:30 Small Group
10:30-11:00 Coffee break
11:00-12:15 Lecture-Discussion
12:15-13:45 Lunch
13:45-15:15 Large Group

Sunday

09:00-10:30 Small Group
10:30-11:00 Coffee break
11.00-12:30 Large Group
Directly thereafter Closing ceremony.
End 13.00 h

Lectures and Lecturers

Wednesday: Robi Friedman: Hate, Love and Becoming Polyphonic. Simple Visions and Complexities

Thursday: Bessy Karagianni: Using Polyphony in Supervision: a Group Analytic Approach

Friday: Tiziana Baisini: Harmony, Counterpoint and the Well (enough) Tempered Group

Saturday: Ioannis K. Tsegos: Visible and Invisible Psychotherapy

Members of staff:

Michalis Athitakis (GR), Tiziana Baisini (IT/UK), Francesca G. Bascialla (IT/GR), Nicholas Cassimatis (GR), Joan Coll (E), Amalia Deli (GR), Yael Doron (IL), George Gioukakis (GR), David Glyn (UK), Angelika Golz (GER/UK), Bessy Karagianni (GR), Dimitris Livas (GR), Regine Scholz (GER) and Denisa Schückova (CZ)



Hate, Love and becoming Polyphonic. Simple Visions and Complexities

By Robi Friedman

Therapy, in the forms we usually apply it – in individual, couple, family and small group settings – has accomplished significant change for individuals in the last century. Group therapy, especially group analytic therapy has unique qualities which makes it an optimal setting as either a primary or a complementary route to therapeutic change for the individual and his relations. It is positively indicated for alleviating mental and somatic pain and relation disorders (Friedman, 2015). In contrast to development in the clinical field, the development of Group Analysis, as an agency of societal change, is still in its first steps. Foulkes thought the Large Group was “a therapeutic instrument...in...social therapy” (p. 256). By socio-therapy, I mean at least two domains of change: the developmental aspects of the individual influenced by a society, and the developmental aspects of a society itself – for example the ability to conduct a civil dialogue, or the possibility to transform aggression into thinking and talking.

In this lecture, I will try to look afresh at the possibility of developing settings which can contribute to such social development or therapy, but also at the obstacles we have to overcome. Especially when therapists only work individually and even if one has primarily small group experience, they can be tempted to think that societal changes may be possible with relative small investments. The wish (and maybe illusion) that recognition, religious forgiveness, acceptance and tolerance, compassion, etc., can cause changes, is widespread. Until now the application of all these 'methods' has not been very successful. We may even conclude that the common denominator of forgiveness, tolerance, compassion, recognition, etc., is that these approaches address mainly the personal and the intrapsychic perspective. Maybe the repeated failure of these approaches has to do with the usual vertical application of therapy....no, it seems to be that you need to apply interpersonal and relational methods, which approach conflicts and hate 'horizontally'. The Group Analysis approach, which has at its centre the 'trans-personal', meaning a reciprocal/relational perspective, works primarily on the relations. As such Group Analysis suggests that social transformation is unthinkable without the use of groups, especially with some encounter in Large Groups. I will discuss at the end of this lecture a setting, which I call "the sandwich model", in which the small group (SG) and

the large group (LG) are mixed. This model has now been applied often and in different locations in the world, and has proved not only efficient for professionals but for the general public and civil society.

What is Polyphony

In music, polyphony consists of the interplay of two or more different voices (or instruments) each with its independent rhythm and melody. Group Analysis uses Polyphony metaphorically (Pines, Mies, Bakhtin, Kaes, 2002), the “many voices” who lead in theory, together with resonance, mirroring and exchange, the interpersonal, intersubjective change. Since Foulkes (1948) ‘discovered’ Polyphony as a royal road to health, we group conductors learn and get used to facilitate the listening and talking to the Other. When Foulkes (1948, p. 37) said: “material produced in the group and the interactions of its members are ‘analyzed’”. By ‘analysis’ he meant that the interactions “are voiced, interpreted and studied by the group”. Today we are even more convinced than ever that Polyphony, respecting the different voices in groups and the value of their interaction, is the main element in Group Analysis. Here in the Summer School, Polyphony itself has become the subject of the group’s study and I would like to think with you about some meanings and unconscious aspects of the Group Analytic application of “the many voices”.

Example: in a group-analytic group there is a heated discussion of the corruption of the peripheral municipalities and especially of some Arab town. The Arab women in the group become angry and for a moment it is not clear if their anger is against their corrupted municipalities or the critics of their Arab society. Suddenly a Jewish female participant, as if from nowhere, remembers a dream: “I drive my car up the hill and it gets slower and slower. It gets stuck in the middle of an intersection and suddenly I see an enormous car coming down the hill at high speed. I wake up in panic when I think the collision will be impossible to stop.” We could say that the dream-teller is a detached woman who is not in tune with the group’s “music” (Wotton, 2015). But another way to look at this is considering the dream a deeply resonating voice which has to be listened to and which if the group trusts, it opens to deep unconscious communication? While I conducted the group I decided for the latter and thought some unconscious associations were connected with power, violence and some sort of castration.

When accepting Polyphony and its ability to resonate unconscious aspects of a subject and ‘dream’, thus digesting it, the

responding tears of one of the Arab women can be taken as part of an unconscious dialogue. She then talked about the difficulties she experiences to be significant in her town and to share her views. Her sorrow resonated the potential violence in the dream and the threatening encounter between the slowing car and the huge vehicle quite soon would be understood as symbols of oppressive men in her community. Through the mere attention to Polyphony and acceptance of the resonance, a dialogue started between those relating in the group, between men and women, between the group and the conductor, and the conflicts became more coherent. What had happened was a special (but not the only) direction of the work with the group - in a way in which the material emerging was taken to be the social oppressing influence of the matrix on all the involved participants.

Getting one step deeper: in the GAG (group-analytic group), when we work with dreams, since Foulkes, with few exceptions, as said before, Polyphony actually would be used to interpret the 'oedipal' and not the 'sphinx' (Lawrence and Biran, 2002) which means the society. When we refer to the 'personal', rather than the 'social', the 'big car' translates into the dreamer's father, to her husband and not to her socialization, to the society and the difficulty of being stuck - because the community is afraid of this woman's drive, motivations, energy and "driving up the hill". What this means is that even in an extremely mixed GAG we will encounter much resonance and mirroring to the personal aspects of the emergent issues and we will tend to use Polyphony to work through personal difficulties, in order to achieve insight, oversight and ego-training in action. But I think we should also learn to practice the use of elaboration of the influence of social discrimination (for example) or intergenerational heritage. Another aspect is that the Small Group is not automatically apt to accept the divergent social voices. Why? Probably because the SG is based on the familiar promise and defense that no one will be rejected from this group. Families, who have a secret demand to be united, hate to disagree on political and social issues. Disagreement in families usually makes for the bloodiest and craziest of conflicts. Think about the many consequences this issue has had in the life of families throughout the centuries, e.g. voices, usually female ones, been silenced and Polyphony avoided. Likely, the SG tends to discuss issues which would not threaten rejection, scapegoating and expulsion from the group. Addressing in the small group the more appropriate and personal contents, who are "in" instead of the menacing social, can be considered part of this defense. Personal openness is reinforced, while social openness is shunned when in conflict because it is a

'transposition' to a dangerous area and could be punished by expulsion.

In a time like today, where at least the liberal part of the world is progressively open to many and differing voices, it might not seem such a big thing. The younger generation, having had another upbringing (e.g., that homosexuality is not a perversion) seems better able to accept Polyphony. Are the younger really more able to learn to profit from divergence? It indeed seems that we have today a less submissive way to deal with the group and authority and I am sure that Group Analysis helps. Women, who are increasingly more used to add their voice to dialogues and co-create Polyphony, actually follow one of the basic preferences of Group Analysis: the richer and healthier heterogeneity over homogeneity. But all these are developments which were achieved during the last decades, and we see this also in our relations with dreams, music, sexuality and relational disorders. Today minorities have a place in the Group Analytic Society and we are trying to expand our dialogue from being a mainly British, or North-European voice, to a wider cross-cultural Polyphony.

Polyphony, its functions, vicissitudes and dangers

Unfortunately, if others are socially and politically different...polyphony is in danger, and then, love, if there ever was love, evolves easily into hate. It seems to me important to investigate this transformation in order to continue our line of understanding.

We could start to look at the difficulties by understanding that the 'personal Matrix' of those who potentially could start a dialogue, has to develop into being dialogic in order to encounter others. Many, coming from familiar and educational traditions that are not conducive to polyphony, feel threatened by dialogue and react with rejection. In many areas, people have strong concerns about causing hurt and fear feeling shame or shaming others. More so – if the personal culture combines with a communal culture and a social matrix in which there is opposition to the voicing or hearing of differences...then everything turns against real polyphony. Again, we will find the necessity of going through the need to develop and transform the social and collective unconscious.

Two years ago, I made, together with some colleagues from the International Dialogue Initiative (IDI, www.internationaldialogueinitiative.com), an intervention in Northern Ireland aimed at promoting dialogue between conflicting politicians and civil society. The person who took me from the airport

to the small retreat of Corrymeela, a sanctuary where dialogue with the enemy was unofficially 'allowed', briefed me about the most important communication principle in Northern Ireland: "if you have something to say...don't say it". I was humbled...but later I became aware that this principle prevails not only in Northern Ireland. Thus, in the fundamental matrix (Foulkes, 1948), in the basic culture, there often can be an inherent communication difficulty, which makes polyphony difficult. Can we say that until there is no change in the ability of this Northern Irish culture to change its communication, there will be no conflict resolution?

Many places and societies who were at war or under non-democratic regimes will have a traditional difficulty with polyphony. An extreme example of difficulties with polyphony is the relationship and communication in the soldiers' matrix (Friedman, 2015, 2016). This is a culture in a society resulting from either fear of annihilation or fantasies of glory...or both. Great existential anxieties and omnipotence influence the emotions in society, and individuals lose shame, guilt and empathy –emotions which are significant in order to stop aggression. Thus, a soldier's matrix can transform a society from being more or less able to talk and dialogue through massification (Hopper, 2002) processes into distancing itself from polyphony. Not only is society in the soldier's matrix unable to cope with hate but actually amplifies the destructive emotional atmosphere, making scapegoating and similar processes possible – and making Koinonia, and certainly love, impossible. I would like to stress that when I describe the soldiers' matrix I certainly don't think only of soldiers; I include whole communities, families and societies, because soldiers may actually be only delegates of a society at war. In the soldier's matrix, identification with the general culture is enhanced and often total, and the roles of civilians, women, children and the old, become rigid and narrow. In a massive, dramatic and often monstrous emotional movement, society enlists the general culture and every individual. This huge emotional movement, which feels like a vast emotional wave, usually dominates societies and cultures for decades before and after the war. Certainly, in Germany it took at least 2 full generations in order to move the culture in a different direction. I believe the German distancing from the Nazi matrix, and even a transition through an 'anti-soldier's' matrix is one of the most significant achievement of recent German generations. They had to go themselves through shameful times and by re-introducing guilt they co-created a unique unconscious process by which German society re-included formerly expelled and destroyed societies and succeeded to

be itself to be re-integrated in the liberal world. I hope the concept of the Soldier's Matrix can also be useful to discuss Greek social history.

Thus, in theory we would also like to be in the I-Thou" of Martin Buber (1937). Buber showed us the way: mankind is not changed by the I-It 'experience', what changes us is only the "I-Thou" "encounter". Direct encounters between conflicting parties help by directly facing fear from others and even fear and hate from polyphony itself in order to accept transitory hate and distance. One of the most difficult moments in groups, especially in large groups is when splitting and 'black-and-white' painting emerges. Only if this split is met and tolerated is a deeper dialogue made possible. If the conflict is avoided it may become chronic and adverse results in the society may be a result.

More about coping with hate

Can we cope with hate through reason? Since Socrates, who thought that we should try to reason with each other, dialogue has promised to stop conflicts. A different approach to stop hate is through forgiveness – colleagues like Ivan Urlic suggest an inner process leading to forgiveness, unless it is an 'automatic' religious process. A difficult achievement, because humans are not readily convinced by belief and religion when it comes to change a powerful emotion like hate.

Hate may also be transformed through an effort to grasp Lacan's 'real', which he describes as giving thought and words in order to make symbolization possible. This is also how I describe 'dreaming' and 'dream-telling'. Dreaming, the nightly digestion of difficult emotions and relations, is done through internal and external voices which cannot be heard during the day. Thus, only through a difficult process of containing and elaborating polyphony, if listened to as I and many of us listen to dreams and its voices, may help transform hate into some closeness and result in koinonia, the fellowship communion. Re-dreaming with others the difficult dream while being awake – may also show how creative this work can be. Our strong emotions, our sweat, our heart beating and other somatic powerful reactions, provide us with a taste of how difficult is polyphony. Winnicott calls the elaborative dream: a "good dream". And what is a bad dream in Winnicott's thinking? If I dream that I kill my brother in law, and in the morning I buy a gun and kill him...then it's not a good dream.

Now, through the understanding of how difficult a 'good dream' may be, we get closer to what I want to convey here as the hard

work we have to do to transform hate, through dialogue and the culture in large groups. Pat de Mare (1991) said (p. 62): “Hate...is the inevitable irreversible outcome of the frustration of Eros...it lies...in the reality of *ananke* (which is) the external necessity. We have to cope with *ananke* and that is why we evolve through dialogue, mind and culture...”. Pat thought that through dialogue we can “humanize the setting” – this is sometimes more efficient than making individual humans healthier. Pat’s suggestion was to create a state of anomie through the LG and the median group. Anomie, which is the weakening of normative standards of conduct and belief, helps to emphasise more ‘thinking’ and reflection on norms than ‘doing’. The struggle to change the soldier’s matrix goes through weakening stern laws in society. The LG, through encounter with other and different humans, through the non-verbal presence of each other, unconscious elaboration of the relations between the individual and the mass and threatening authority – can work through hate and destruction.

When annihilation anxieties and the exaltation of glory push a society towards massification and the melting of the individual amoeboid character into the unified matrix (Hopper, 2002), this unity translates into the opposite of what Pat de Mare tried to achieve – it dehumanizes the setting. The individual will be under the enormous influence of society, which co-creates minds and influences hearts...and attracts strong identification and identity. The context seems to take over. Not that the individual cannot, in theory, influence the matrix too – but his influence is usually not symmetrically reciprocal.

The Small Group and the Sandwich Model

Therapists usually have to learn to work with social influences - conflicts and norms - in Small Groups. Unless we learn to approach the social, we will tackle these aspects by approaching traditionally only the personal. Among the many reasons to deny society’s enormous influence on a person’s everyday life, the insult of being controlled not only by an unconscious, but by forces in the group and the community, are among the strongest. In order to understand and deal with the many influences a Matrix has on our daily life even individual therapists will have to deal with the group-analytic group. In our example from the beginning of the lecture, one may say that this participant’s dream was actually dreamt for the other women, it was told for the other women and especially for the Arab participants. In my way to look at dreams (Friedman, 2008) – our dreaming may not only digest our personal difficulties but also our close ones’

difficulties. Thus, dreaming may be described as our ‘internal Polyphony’: during the day, I have no anxieties but in my dream another voice shouts: “I am afraid”. After Dreaming, Dreamtelling is the later complementary interpersonal Polyphony.

Polyphony now gets also a deeper meaning: the ‘voice’ of the other may be voicing something for myself and from myself. Another participant’s voice may speak the listener’s own feelings. Because our wish to distance ourselves from the “not-me”, and often even to split it off, joining to outer voices is a difficult, but also one of the most creative human processes. In the group of my example, there was a choice: To work on the dreamer’s personality and relations (vertical and horizontal, but personal) or instead to increase awareness of how much this dreamer is under her own community’s influence and why. Being aware of the choice between the personal or social is already a progress and it’s not an either/or choice anyway. In the group of the example, two of the participants became aware of the connection between the slow car, of being stuck and societal connections. While the conductor’s intervention met with quite heavy resistance, it was rethought by the group and agreed. The Sandwich Model (2016) is an application of Group Analytic thinking on social conflicts when Polyphony becomes very difficult. The model uses a combination of the relative familiar Small Group which promises security from rejection with an encounter in the large group encounter where less of this security is provided and often deep social anxieties and desires arise. The advantage of the ‘Sandwich Model’s is that it is a short intervention (about 3 and a half hours), and goes from a short ‘introduction’ to the small group, then the large group, then back to a small group and ends with a ‘closure’. This intervention is especially effective with non-professionals – who usually respond to it quite powerfully. But the translation of the I-thou idea into a social setting is something which therapists need too, and the Group Analytic large group provides for a unique opportunity for all of us to use Polyphony to deal with our anxieties, our relations with the mass, with massive authority and, in the end, with Democracy.

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Using Polyphony in Supervision: a Group Analytic Approach

By *Bessy Karagianni*

Polyphony is a compound Greek word, deriving from “πολύ” (poly) and “φωνή” (phoni) that means the existence of many voices, thus reflecting very well the concept of the group.

One of the most significant ways, in which the Institute of Group Analysis of Athens (IGAA) exploits the idea of polyphony, is the “Greek Model of Supervision”, also known as group analytic supervision. It is a method of peer supervision within the group, by the group, including the experienced observer, which was introduced at IGAA in 1983 and has been applied ever since (*Tsegos 1984, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2002, 2007*). It is also applied at the three Training Institutes of the Open Psychotherapy Centre (OPC), the Institute of Psychodrama-Sociotherapy, the Institute of Diagnostic Psychology and the Institute of Family Therapy. These four Institutes are functioning under the same roof with the Therapeutic Sector of the OPC and its corresponding departments and are in close collaboration with them.

The above model has been used quite extensively in supervising several kinds of groups (i.e. group analytic, sociotherapeutic, psychodramatic, family and couples’ groups) or dyadic sessions (individual psychotherapy, psychological assessment, etc.). Supervision groups are functioning either within the framework of each training or intertraining supervision groups.

A. Description of the Structure and Process.

1. The Structure

Supervision takes place within a group setting. The supervision group consists of fellow students -the supervisors- and one experienced observer (who is a member of the training committee or an undergraduate student). One of the students present coordinates the supervising group. The function of the observer is that of a group member. Of course, he/she is more experienced, but is not there in order to lead, conduct or co-ordinate the group. This group has a stable frequency of meetings (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) and membership during the whole length of the training.

2. The Process

a) The Presentation.

During the presentation stage, a therapeutic activity is presented, with the student reading out his/her notes and marking group exchanges on the blackboard. For the psychological assessment, a psychologist usually presents the answers of the subject to a certain battery of psychological tests.

b) The Analysis.

The supervision group sits in a semi-circle in front of the blackboard and is expected to take an active part in the second stage of supervision. This is the analysis, which follows the presentation stage. During the analysis, each of the supervisor-students records on a special format, the *supervision protocol*, his/her emotions, fantasies and the main topics, which have been evoked during the presentation.

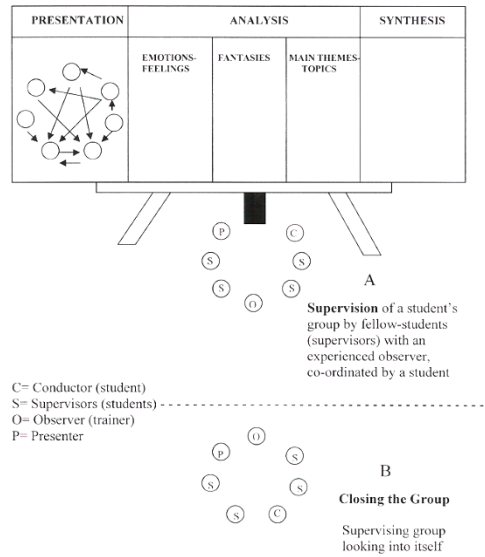


Figure 1: Two Phases of Peer Supervision


c) The Protocol.

The Protocol provides structure for the whole process, enabling students/supervisors to participate in the supervisory procedure right

from the beginning, actively and effectively. The various parts of the supervision protocol also provide important information for dynamic (structural) and practical as well as research purposes (Tsegos, 1995a, p. 125).

The Supervision Protocol

1. Supervisory session of the ... year students of the Training ☐ -
Intertraining Supervision ☐
2. Present members of the supervisory group (no): 3. Absents (names) :
4. Name (supervisor student or trainer) :

P R E S E N T A T I O N	Supervisory Activity 5. Type of Therapeutic Activity Group analytic group <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential group <input type="checkbox"/> Sociotherapeutic group <input type="checkbox"/> Psychodrama group <input type="checkbox"/> Oneirodrama group <input type="checkbox"/> Dyadic meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Family-Couple-therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Therapist (Presenter): Co-therapist (Presenter): 7. Date of Session: 8. Location: 9. Time: 10. Frequency: 11. Absences:	 12.	Supervisory Group 13. Conductor (student): 14. Observer (trainer): 15. Location : 16. Date: 17. Time:
			18. Additional Information:
	19. EMOTIONS-FEELINGS	20. FANTASIES	21. THEMES-TOPICS
A N A L Y S I S			
S Y N T H E S I S	22. Comments and Conclusions:		
	23. Was there any need to «close the circle»? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> 24. Who intervened ? Conductor <input type="checkbox"/> Observer <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor-students <input type="checkbox"/>		

© IGA (Athens) *Figure 2: The Supervision Protocol*

d) The Synthesis.

After the analysis, the presenter reads out loud the material gathered, under each column (emotions, fantasies, and topics). Some members may ask for clarification about the presented session and the whole group begins to process the material of the blackboard: it highlights differences and similarities between emotions, fantasies and topics,

tries to capture the atmosphere of the supervised activity and the emotional state of the presenter, through the resonance created in the supervision group. As S.H. Foulkes (1964) quotes M.L. Abercrombie (1960): “only by seeing how we resemble and differ from other people do we understand ourselves”. The supervision group finally formulates some suggestions to the student about his/her interventions or interpretations, or about the supervised situation as a whole.

B. The Greek Model of Supervision is a Group Analytic Situation.

The stability of the wider context of the supervision group (part of a wider training program, specific time, place and duration) and its structural elements (membership, conductor, experienced observer) as well as the clearly defined process (presentation, protocol, analysis, synthesis) create the conditions for a group analytic situation, which promotes the appearance of general and specific group phenomena, such as resonance, mirroring, condenser, etc.

During the group analytic supervising process, each member is exposed to an audiovisual stimulus, the presentation of the supervised activity. This audiovisual stimulus (body posture of the therapist, tone and tinge of the voice, the narration of the facts taking place in the session etc.) arouses emotions, fantasies and rational elaboration of the supervisory group that are related to the presentation. This is an interactive process and a resonance phenomenon.

The interaction between the presenter and the group members consists in the overall impression of the group towards the presented activity as well as the presenter. The resonance consists in the production of emotions, fantasies and rational elaboration by each group member from the presence and narrative of the presenter. The synthesis of all the individual responses by the group as a whole will consist in its feedback to the stimulus presenter-narrative.

It is worth mentioning that, sometimes, a supervision group may find itself struggling with poor emotional and imaginative production from the members as well as a sense of malfunctioning. In that case, there is the possibility for the group to “close the circle” and sit in a group-analytic setting, where the members will discuss what’s going on, here-and-now, and exchange on what impedes the supervisory process. All members, students or the experienced observer can intervene and ask for closing the circle. It is a very revealing and fruitful experience, enabling the supervision group members to focus on matters that may occur between them and process with free-floating discussion. After this, the group returns to

the semi-circle setting and supervision continues.

C. The Necessity of Research Studies on Supervision

It seems rather strange that there is a lack of research evidence concerning the different models of supervision (dyadic/group) or the ways through which a better combination between theory and practice would be successful for the trainees. The lack of relevant studies concerning group supervision in the existing bibliography, prompted us to study the issue.

D. The Aim of the Studies

From the very beginning of the application of the Greek model of supervision, very interesting discussions concerning the registered material in the “supervision protocols” have occurred occasionally. These discussions concerned either the confirmation of the necessity and the benefits of the application of this model in diagnosis, therapy and training, or the usefulness of the various elements which are being recorded on the protocol (i.e., emotions, fantasies, etc.).

Therefore, it has been decided that an effort should be made so that this plethora of data, be studied, starting with the recording and categorization of the above elements.

METHODOLOGY.

The methodology was designed on the basis of using our data in the most valid way.

a. Record of the data: derives from the archives of the supervision protocols of all supervised activities, individual (dyadic) or group, during ten years (1992-2002), as the model had been established and the participants had been familiarised with the process. Each protocol (N=225) contains the data (emotions, fantasies and themes/topics) which are completed by ALL the participants, trainees and observer, who were present in the supervision group (n=1027). During this extended period, a lot of supervision groups took place and the sample which was recorded was the following:

b. Sample of the Study: The total number of the supervision protocols was 225, corresponding to 1027 different entries of supervising students:

44 protocols of group-analytic groups;

44 protocols of the therapeutic community groups (activity/sociotherapy groups, i.e. art therapy, play therapy, dance therapy, etc.);

*18 protocols of group-analytic psychodrama groups;
25 protocols of couple therapy sessions;
17 protocols of counselling sessions for parents;
14 protocols of family therapy sessions;
20 protocols of psychological assessment (stages of the psychological assessment: record of the individual's personal data, history, responses to the tests, M.M.P.I., Rorschach, T.A.T., Rotter, etc.);
12 protocols of individual psychotherapy;
31 protocols of the informative dyadic (individual) meetings before entering the therapeutic community as a member;*

Three out of four studies were based on these protocols; the fourth used a different methodology.

1st Study: Karagianni, B., 2004. “Comparison of the three components between Supervised Therapeutic Activities”

The fundamental question was: if there was a correlation between the kind of the supervised activity and the reactions of the supervision group members (emotions, fantasies, topics), in other words, “mirror phenomena”.

METHOD

The EMOTIONS, FANTASIES and THEMES/TOPICS classified into three categories, positive, negative, indeterminable and connected with the supervised activity.

EMOTIONS

Definition: “The feelings created in each member of the supervision group, during the presentation”.

Total number of entries: 5410. Number of different entries: 433. Examples:

1. Positive Emotions (i.e. pleasure, familiarity, joy etc.)
2. Negative Emotions (i.e. agony, anxiety, sorrow etc.)
3. Indeterminable Emotions (i.e. surprise, query, astonishment etc.)

FANTASIES

Definition: “Images that passed through the mind during the presentation”. Total number of entries: 1315, all different among them. Examples: Positive Fantasies (i.e. children playing happily in

the school yard); Negative (i.e. a monster is threatening a young couple); Indeterminable (a small boat sailing in the winter).

THEMES/TOPICS

Definition: “The specific themes and topics which are discussed during the activity”. They were classified according to:

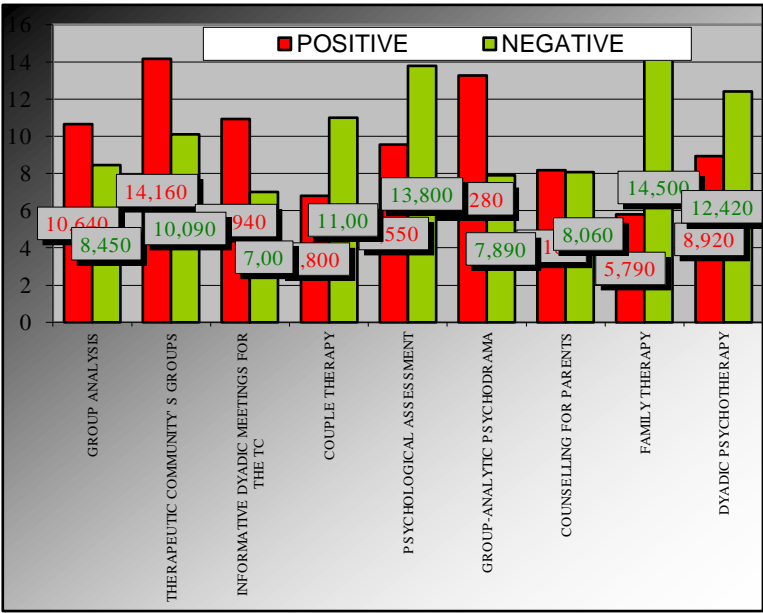
- a) the number of entries for each protocol;
- b) the number of similar entries for each protocol.

The data analysis was preformed with the use of the statistical program SPSS 11.0. The Analysis of Variance–ANOVA was also used, in order to compare the means between three or more groups.

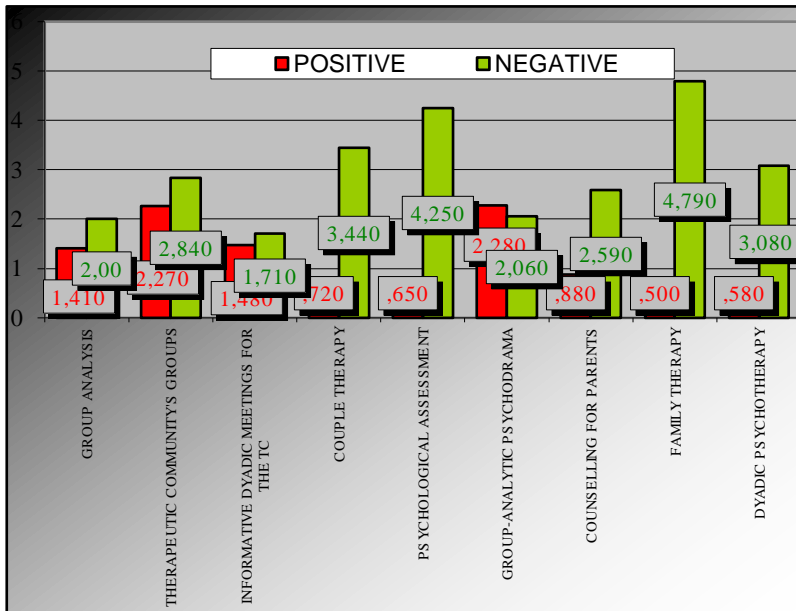
FINDINGS

You can see the differences between the various activities in the following diagrams.

Means of the Positive / Negative Emotions corresponding to each type of the Supervised Therapeutic Activity (N=225)



Means of the Positive / Negative Phantasies corresponding to each type of the Supervised Therapeutic Activity (N=225)



The main findings are:

- Positive emotions and fantasies occur in group activities, especially in *Therapeutic Communities Groups* and *Group Analytic Psychodrama* (highest means).
- Negative emotions and fantasies occur in *Family Therapy*, *Psychological Assessment*, *Couples' Therapy* and *Dyadic Psychotherapy* (highest means).
- Negative emotions and fantasies occur in *individual* activities such as psychological assessment, individual psychotherapy present (highest means).
- The *Themes and Topics* present the same means with a small deviation with the supervised activities.

COMMENTS

The type of the presented activity provokes different emotions, fantasies and mnemonic perceptions in the supervising group.

The fact that certain therapeutic activities cause more positive or negative reactions to the supervisory group, does not mean that they are more or less therapeutic. On the contrary, it is the different character of each activity, which is highlighted. This finding may constitute as motivation for further interesting research studies.

It is important for the supervision group to be aware of its mirroring response to the supervised activity.

2nd Study: Mitroutsikou, E., 2005. The Emotions: Conceptual and Interpretative Analysis.

Mitroutsikou's (2005) study was based on the research study by Karagianni (2004) and focused on the analysis (conceptual and interpretative) of the recorded emotions which come to 433 different entries.

METHOD

Mitroutsikou analyzed first the recorded Emotions, according to the etymology which was given from valid dictionaries and, secondly, defined which of the words that were recorded express a pure emotional state and which of them express facts, physical senses, interpretations, qualities, situations or something else.

FINDINGS

Mitroutsikou, find that, from the total of 433 recorded words, only 99 of them express real emotions because, the majority of the words designing emotions in the Protocols were misused. They expressed facts or qualities of the supervised activity, situations observed in it, physical senses or interpretations of the student/observer. There was also a tendency for the student or observer to record emotions which he/she supposed that existed between the members of the supervised activity, but did not concern his/her own personal emotions just from hearing the presentation.

COMMENTS

It is well known that therapists deal with emotional matters in their clinical work and it is rather difficult to deal with their own feelings/emotions. There is a tendency to interpret rather than to feel. This is critical in the following sense: in the specific model of supervision which "obliges" the participants to clarify and write down their emotional state, as a part of a structured procedure, one could therefore imagine what could happen when such a procedure was absent. It is a great advantage for the students to have to record their

feelings from the very first day in their training. However, the above findings indicate that the Greek model of supervision is not a panacea for the latent, ‘psychoanalytic’ or authoritarian tendencies of the trainees or the trainers. The specific model can be more productive if the experienced observer is convinced of its usefulness, and the context (institution) within which it takes place trusts the group more than the experts (Tsegos, 1995a, p. 128).

3rd Study: Panagopoulou, K. & Zerva, E., 2008. Fantasies in Group Analytic Supervision.

The imaginative level is of great importance in every human activity, all the more in psychotherapy. So, it is rather strange, that even though we utilize and enhance imagination for therapeutic purposes, there is a lack of evidence on what kind of images can be created in the therapist’s mind during a supervision session and how supervision turns to advantage the produced imaginative material.

The new study concerned the fantasies reported by the members of the supervisory group. The total number of records of fantasies was 1320 reports.

METHOD

In this study the data was classified through a different encoding system. As the three - axis categorization used in the first study, could not approach fantasies, either as personal or as collective (per group) production nor to relate each one to the presented specific supervised session, the Rorschach’s scoring process and the Rorschach Interaction Scale (R.I.S. - Graves et.al., 1991) was used. This scoring system is appropriate for perceptions and images. The scale R.I.S. is designed to approach the mode of relating which is included into the image.

FINDINGS

Quantitative data shows differences and similarities in qualitative characteristics of fantasies, according to the type of the supervised activity. Concisely:

- Every type of supervised activity provokes a different kind of imaginative reaction;
- All supervised activities, except *psychological assessment* and *individual psychotherapy*, provoke in the supervisory group images of confrontation (ex. two men boxing, dogs fighting over a bone);

- *Individual meetings and family/couple therapy* provoke images of personal inner conflicts (ex. a child weeping alone in a dark room);
- Group activities impel supervision group images of cohesion and acceptance, which suggest a rather emotional function, in comparison to individual activities that provoke images of confrontation, which impel to rational thinking (R.I.S. - Graves et.al., 1991);
- A common feature is that the supervision group functions on a high level of creativity, internalized thinking, an ability for empathy, an intense interest for people, as well as a tendency for exercising excessive critique.

4th Study: Mastrandrea, Ch., 2010. The Contribution of the Greek Model of Supervision to Diagnostic Procedure.

Another question was: can the supervision group function as a diagnostic instrument? In order to examine in which way the supervision group perceives the subject's emotional and imaginative status, a case study was conducted. Also, the degree in which this image is consistent with or complements the profile that results from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the tests' protocols was studied.

METHOD

Four supervision protocols, which referred to two adult and two adolescent Psychological Assessments, were examined. Only the responses of the projective tests Rotter, Rorschach and T.A.T. were presented to the supervision group. The synthesis of Emotions/Feelings, Fantasies and Themes/Topics was compared with the results of the Psychological Assessment's protocols.

FINDINGS

The results indicate:

- A dominance of negative emotions, while positive ones are very few or completely absent from some supervision protocols;
- The emotions and fantasies of the four protocols have mainly an isolated and depressive content;
- Themes/Topics are in accordance with the qualitative analysis of the themes/topics that results from the responses in the four cases' tests. Particularly, common themes/topics concern mainly

familial, interpersonal and sexual relationships, as well as themes of self-identity and differentiation.

SYNTHESIS

Group vs. Individual

The results from the four studies indicate generally that the reactions of the supervision group (emotional, imaginative and mental level) depend on the presented material. Concretely:

- The majority of group therapeutic activities present the highest means of positive emotions and fantasies, while individual and family/couple activities, present the highest means of negative emotions and fantasies;
- The emotions reflect the inner emotional reaction of the supervision group (empathy) and, also, the comprehension and the interpretation of the presented material (an “objective” attitude);
- Each supervised activity induces particular types of Fantasies (images) to the supervision group: Group activities impel the supervision group to function rather emotionally (images of cohesion and acceptance), in comparison to Individual activities, which impel to rational thinking (images of confrontation). Furthermore, Individual meetings and Family/Couple Therapy provoke images that refer to a stirring of personal inner conflicts, intense self-criticism and also introspection;
- It seems that the supervision group can effectively -or, sometimes, excessively- control emotions, while in fantasies induced from family therapy, it demonstrates ineffective control of emotions, with possible outbursts of anger or aggressiveness;
- The emotions and the fantasies of the “supervisor-students” are independent of: the severity of the participants’ psychopathology in the therapeutic activity; the membership of the supervision group.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Summarising the evidence of the above studies, concerning the reactions of the supervision group to different types of therapeutic activities, we can say:

As concerns Individual Activities (Therapy/Assessment)

1. The supervision group fulfills a function of mentalisation, that is, it thinks and organizes what it feels.

2. Probably, it mirrors the defensiveness and avoidance of both, the therapist/psychologist and the patient/examinee.
3. Helps the therapist/psychologist to record, organize and understand better an integrated picture of the examinee on the rational level.
4. Neutralizes the resonance of the therapist-psychologist/patient's relationship.

About Group Activities (Group Therapy/Family)

1. The supervision group facilitates the emergence of group phenomena (mirroring, resonance, condenser etc.).
2. Group activities provoke positive emotions and fantasies, mutual understanding and acceptance of the differences, probably because of the absence of family relationships between the members, both of the supervision group and the presented group.
3. Families and couples provoke conflict-ridden fantasies with negative emotions, probably because of the existence of family relationships between the members of the presented session which impel inner conflicts to the family romance of the supervisors.
4. Sociotherapeutic groups and psychodrama provoke more positive emotions and fantasies than group analytic groups.

Concerning Training

1. The student comes to realize his/her own feelings, fantasies and abstract thoughts which he/she learns to verbalize without fear and censorship (integrated mental procedure).
2. Students are trained not to hide themselves behind the specialist role but to acquire an insight into their inner process (Authenticity).
3. Students are trained in interchanging of different levels of functioning (emotional, imaginary, rational) as they have the possibility to conduct different therapeutic activities and also be members of the supervision group with different roles (Child, Peer, and Adult).
4. According to the findings of a previous *Research Study on the Training Factors in a Training Community*¹ (Fikiori, 2007), the

¹ The aforementioned study, through a structured questionnaire, was addressed to the students and the trainers (N=74) of the four Institutes (Group Analysis, Diagnostic Psychology, Psychodrama

majority of the participants (trainers and trainees) evaluate supervision as one of the most important factors for personal development and establishment of the professional identity and the most important factor in helping trainees to fulfil the demands of clinical practice (83%) and acquire theoretical knowledge and clinical experience (69%).

HYPOTHESES

Based on the findings mentioned before, we could formulate the following hypotheses:

- The mirror phenomena, which are indicated by the findings, possibly reflect a resonance among the supervision group and the supervised therapeutic activity, through the therapist's emotional reaction.

Individual vs. Group Activities:

- The presentation of an individual situation provokes more negative responses to the supervision group, probably because of the restricted network of communication and relationships;
- Whereas, the group situation provokes more positive responses to the supervision group, probably because of the conveyance of a wider network of communication and relationships.

Therapeutic Community Groups and Group-Analytic Psychodrama vs. Group-Analytic Groups:

- Sociotherapeutic and psychodrama groups, provoke more positive responses, probably because of the presence of group activity (wider network of communication, action, play, etc.) and the focusing on reality and the relations with the others;
- Group-analytic groups, provoke less positive responses, probably because of the focus on the relation with the self.

Concluding, the Greek Model of Supervision can exploit the interactive potential of the network of communications and relations of the wider context (matrix), in relation to that of the supervision

- Socioterapy, Family Therapy) with the purpose of evaluating the impact of the different training activities in two major areas: personal development of the trainees and establishment of the professional identity.

group (Tsegos et al., 2007).

Using polyphony in supervision prospers group development at deeper levels of awareness. The contribution of group supervision is valuable especially for those who are in the early stages of training, helping to understand the overall situation. It synthesises the inner processes of all participants to the benefit of the therapist/psychologist, as well as of the patients.

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Harmony, counterpoint and the well (enough) tempered group

By Tiziana Baisini

Polyphony



This article is about the musical texture. For other uses, see [Polyphony \(disambiguation\)](#).



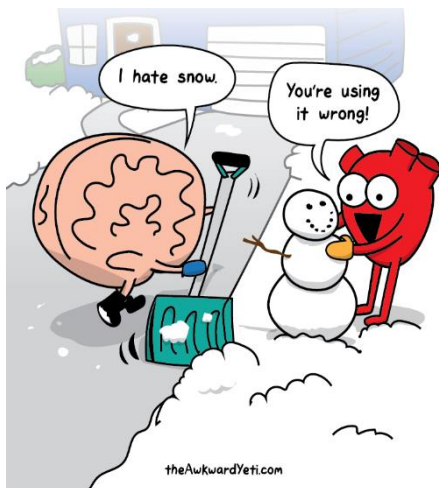
A bar from J.S. Bach's "Fugue No.17 in A flat", BWV 862, from [Das Wohltemperierte Clavier](#) (Part I), a famous example of [contrapuntal polyphony](#). Play

In [music](#), **polyphony** is one type of musical [texture](#), where a texture is, generally speaking, the way that melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic aspects of a musical composition are combined to shape the overall sound and

I remember quite well the moment when I was asked to think about a theme and a title for my lecture at this Summer School. After a comprehensible initial moment of “freezing” - due to performance anxiety – I read once more the evocative title of our event, “Growth in Groups: the creative potential of polyphony” and I noticed that every time I did, spontaneously, a theme by J.S. Bach was evoked and started playing in my mind. “Why Bach?” I imagine you wonder. This is, of course, an association linked to my passions and interests: I have a deep emotional link with his work, that has always struck me for being very cerebral, precise, with a mathematic rigour, but at the same time incredibly moving, passionate, and emotional. His music sounds

to me as if he was able to unify emotions and passion with rigour and precision – heart and brain – and this sense of connection has always deeply touched me, as we all know that connecting heart and brain is not always easy.

But, apart from my personal inclinations and passions, another reason why Bach was evoked by the title of our event is that



he is widely considered a master of polyphony – and in fact, opening the page of Wikipedia dedicated to the term “Polyphony”, is a bar of one of Bach's fugues from his work “The well-tempered clavier”.

No surprises, then, that the word “polyphony” evoked his music in my mind. I decided to follow this association: to play with words and concepts belonging to music and to link them with groups – and I have found a quite creative playground in doing so.

Music and groups have a lot in common, and, since the very beginning of theorisation about groups, words like “attunement” and “resonance” have been used to describe their processes and their therapeutic factors. Within the Group Analytic Society International and in our journal “Group Analysis” the use of musical metaphors has creatively appeared in many interesting articles (Powell, 1983; Sharpe, 1983; Thomas, 2012; Wotton, 2012, 2013) and I was surely inspired by having attended last year's Foulkes Lecture and Study Day, where John Schlapobersky (2015) and Linde Wotton (2015) have both poignantly highlighted some of the parallels between music and group analytic psychotherapy. I am definitely in good company, and I would like to join this choir of colleagues that have already played around music and groups.

As Linde Wotton has pointed out in her writings, *human communication rests on our innate musicality* (Malloch and Trevarthen 2009).

We have a sense of timing that is based on biological processes and a nervous system that senses and processes emotional experience in terms of rhythmical patterns so that human intention and emotion are immediately shareable with others through gestures of the body and voice. (Wotton, 2012, p.49).

Studies from *infant research* have explored and highlighted the importance of the musical qualities of the dialogue between mother and baby in order to reach an emotional attunement and to develop a creative exchange. As Daniel Stern writes:

The entire flow of maternal social behaviors can be likened to a symphony, in which the musical elements are her changing facial expressions, vocalizations, movements, and touches. [...] So the caregiver, in trying to engage the infant and have fun, as well as overcome boredom, will create themes and variations of sound and movement which the infant, by virtue of the nature of his mental processes, will gradually retranspose into the classes of human social behavior that he must understand and engage in. (Stern, 2002, p.105-106).

While *infant research* was focalised on interactions within the dyad (typically mother-baby), studies in the field of systemic family therapy have shown that infants appear to be active participants in complex interactional sequences with both their parents far earlier than previously theorized. Elisabeth Fivaz Depeursinge and her colleagues at the Centre d'Etude de la Famille in Lausanne have developed a videotaped play procedure (called LTP- Lausanne Trilogue Play) which documents the capacity of 3-month-old infants to share attention with two partners (mothers and fathers) simultaneously, and traces links between this capacity and early family group-level dynamics (Fivaz-Depeursinge, Corboz-Warnery, 1999). Another study of triadic play between parents and their infants, inspired by Fivaz-Depeursinge's research, also shows an inborn need for three-way relationships:

the infant, as early as four months, is not only responsive to the parental interactional offerings but also actively contributes to the triadic family interactions (Von Klitzing et al., 1999, p.82).

Those researchers, and the clinical work they have inspired, show a previous huge underestimation of infants' interactive capacities.

Human beings are not only born with an innate musicality that allows them to be attuned to a caregiver, but they also have a polyphonic innate attitude.

Since a very early stage in our lives, we are orientated towards the possibility of engaging in relationships with different people and we are able to adapt ourselves to diverse relational styles, or, to say it in different words, to build harmony in different keys and with different instruments. Human beings have an innate ability to connect with diversity.

But what is harmony and how could this concept be used as a metaphor for human relations?

Harmony

(Definition from the Oxford English Dictionary):

NOUN

1 The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce a pleasing effect:

1.1 The quality of forming a pleasing and consistent whole

1.2 The state of being in agreement or concord

2 An arrangement of the four Gospels, or of any parallel narratives, which presents a single continuous narrative text.

Origin

Late Middle English: via Old French from Latin *harmonia* 'joining, concord', from Greek, from *harmos* 'joint'.

Harmony is the more basic element of polyphonic music: it implies the mere fact of "being together", but also refers to a connection, not simply because of a casual simultaneous presence.

In the English language (and also in many others as far as I know, for sure in Italian as well) this word has an implicit positive connotation and, in the second meaning listed in the dictionary, explicitly implies "the state of being in agreement or concord". One could be led to think that conflicts are not included in harmony, and in fact our daily language seems to imply it, but music is a surprisingly creative field and there are plenty of "discordant" chords.

How to explain it? I ask you to bear in mind the etymology of the word and its derivation from the Greek term for “joint”. It looks like the origin of the word was more neutral and didn't imply the somewhat corny feeling that is now associated with the expression 'being in harmony'. A joint is a connection, and harmony, in music, is the art of connecting notes. This could happen through dissonance as well as consonance, and the presence of both, linked by resolution and suspense, creates an interesting and emotional musical colouring:

A dissonance has its resolution when it moves to a consonance. When a resolution is delayed or is accomplished in surprising ways—when the composer plays with our sense of expectation—a feeling of drama or suspense is created. (Roger Kamien, 2008 p.41).

Video: <http://www.nytimes.com/video/arts/music/100000002837298/dissonance-in-classical-music.html> (from the beginning to 3:24 or 4:22)

In a musical composition, the presence of dissonances gives movement to the piece and makes it more interesting, exciting and moving.

“Harmonic progression, the horizontal dimension of harmony, thus arises as a result of dissonance being resolved by a subsequent consonance. [...] Such patterns of tension and relaxation are what give tonal music its forward momentum and were used throughout the common practice period to powerful expressive effect.” (The Oxford Dictionary of Music)

A dissonance is still a harmony because there is a link, a connection between the notes. They are not played by chance in a disarticulated way.

This is a common aspect between music and groups that I would like to highlight: “being in harmony”, from a musical perspective but also in group analysis, involves the feeling of being together, all part of something. This sense of connection is what defines the boundaries of the group – as well as of the musical composition – and is present through different emotional colourings. When a dissonance makes its appearance in a musical composition, as well as in a group, it stirs things up and adds intensity, favouring a

movement towards a resolution – if the group is able to work through it. Consonances and dissonances are interconnected and the presence of both creates the energy that allows dynamism and the existence of a process.

I would like to share a clinical vignette from a weekly support group for people on the waiting list of a primary care service in London.

Ronald is sharing his concern for his daughter, who is dating a boy he doesn't like and he is worried that she could be involved in something dangerous. He is very angry at her, since she had a good boyfriend before and feels violent instincts towards the boy she is dating now, whom he threatens to beat up. He fantasizes of cutting his hands off and has warned his daughter that she would be to blame for making her dad go to prison – he repeatedly said going to prison was nothing new for him, so he would not be bothered, but she would. (He has been talking about those worries and intentions for a few weeks and the conductors exchange an exhausted glance).

Andrea, who has joined the group only today, says that having heard Ronald talking has made her thinking about her dad and about her being a daughter. She says to Ronald that he is responsible for what he decides to do, not his daughter, and she wonders whether he thinks about his responsibilities as a dad. Her dad was a very cold man; he has never praised her, he has never told her that she was good at something, he only had bitter words for her. He used to drink and was violent and made her suffer a lot. He was seen as a good man from people outside the family though, they could never imagine what kind of person he was at home. Andrea gets increasingly upset while she talks, she becomes more animated and raises her voice. It is not clear anymore whether she is talking to Ronald or to her father while she cries out: “you should take your responsibilities, try to be a better father, say something positive, show some affection to your daughter!”.

Ronald is frowning and getting visibly upset, he answers in an angry tone that he is not as cold with his daughter and that he has never been a “tough one” with her.

One of the conductors intervenes, clarifying that Andrea was talking about her dad and her experience as a daughter, and not about Ronald, when she talked about her dad being cold. (Andrea nods) But those memories were triggered by what Ronald has shared and the message about being responsible for what he does was a suggestion for him. Is there something useful for Ronald in what she has said?

Ronald is still visibly upset and says he is going to think about it. [...]

After few minutes, Ronald says to Andrea that he has understood that what she said wasn't meant as a personal attack and he adds that he is aware of never having said "no" to his daughter; maybe this is why he is so upset with her now?

In this extract from a group session it is possible to find a dissonance: Andrea's tone of voice escalated, getting increasingly angry, and she shifted from the third person (when she was talking about her father) to the second (when it wasn't clear anymore who she was talking with – Ronald or the ghost of her father?). Ronald felt unfairly attacked and a conflict was about to break out. In this kind of format, a support group with a high turnover of members, it is generally advised not to allow conflict to escalate, since it is quite likely that the group won't have the chance to work through it. Nevertheless, this hint of conflict allowed Ronald to exit from a sterile repetition of his plans ("I shall cut his hands and go to prison, so that my daughter will feel guilty!"), and to access a more reflective position about his relationship with his daughter.

I am sure you all have in mind similar examples, which show the positive effect of confrontations and conflicts in groups.

Of course, not all the dissonances in groups reach a resolution. Sometimes our work sounds more like dodecaphonic music, where dissonances and ruptures follow one another, as Morris Nitsun has well illustrated with his concept of the *anti-group* (Nitsun, 1996).

Here is another example of a dissonance in a group, but this time not followed by a resolution:

It is the 19th session after I have taken over this weekly psychotherapy group in a secondary care unit. So far, we have gone through a relocation of the service, the Christmas break and one of the members leaving – quite suddenly – right after the break. After an initial phase of "honeymoon", in the last few sessions I had the feeling that the group was taking an omnipotent attitude and putting me in a corner: it was hard to intervene, as I felt that what I was about to say could be inappropriate or badly timed and in a couple of occasions I did receive such remarks from some of the members, who felt "cut off" by what I said. I felt emotionally detached from the group and it had become hard and tiring to go to the service for the sessions. Thinking that the group was trying to defend itself from the multiple losses it had gone through (their first conductor, the building where they used

to meet, the group itself during the break, one of the members), and that they were trying to react to their feelings of impotence by taking a defensive omnipotent attitude, wasn't helping me to feel more connected to it.

The session starts with the members present (4 out of 5) asking me whether I was feeling better (I had to cancel the previous week's sessions due to a flu – maybe not a coincidence taking into account the difficult period we were going through, but also another loss for them to deal with).[...] Then David starts to talk at length about a difficult situation he is facing at home and the frustration he is experiencing because of the lack of help and support he is receiving from the authorities. [...] Mark says he is surprised that David has never talked about it with the group in all those months and asks whether we can do something in order to help him, other than listening to his story as we are doing. David starts talking again and says he is very frustrated because it looks like no one is able to help him. He has written an angry email to the authorities and is waiting for an answer. First Carl and then Carolyn say to him that maybe it would have been wiser to keep a calm tone in his letter, since he is asking for their help. David shows an increasing distress and starts talking about previous problems he had with neighbours in another house he lived in. He gets more and more angry and says to Carolyn that there is nothing to laugh at, since he is suffering. Carolyn points out that she wasn't laughing nor she had the intention to; the conductor tries to calm him down underlying the intention the group has to help him, but he stands up and goes away, slamming the door, in the middle of the session.

David never came back after this session. In this case, the conflict had generated a rupture, a disconnection; an interruption of the harmony – up to the point of breaking the boundaries of the group, which lost a member.

In her writings, Linde Wotton refers to the group matrix as the music of the group and to the conductor as the tonic note. I find it a useful way to look at those concepts and I wonder whether the matrix of this group – the music we were creating – had some disconnected and dodecaphonic characteristic we were all resonating with? The group had been under the threat of being closed before I took it over, and the matrix had been disrupted by many concrete circumstances since I started running it. Moreover, I had been feeling disconnected from this group for a few weeks – the tonic note was not only dissonant but even not in harmony with the group – I was entrapped in the disconnected matrix. David was disconnected as well: since he

joined the group, around six months before, he never mentioned the problems he talked about in his last session, as if he was keeping parts of himself, and of his experience, apart from the group and he couldn't bear to keep a connection with it after having shared them. I can't help but notice a parallel between his accuses towards authorities that weren't helpful and the absence of interventions from the conductor – myself. Was he particularly suffering the disconnected matrix – and the disconnection I was feeling from the group? As Foulkes stated:

"In the group-analytic group, individuals not only resonate on a large scale to each other, simultaneously and reciprocally, but also to the group as a whole and particularly to the group conductor, who in turn is influenced by his own resonance." (Foulkes, 1990, p.299).

In this group, apparently, we were resonating in a disarticulated and disharmonic way and this has broken the boundaries of the group. Were we in an aggregated state (Hopper, 1997)?

On the other hand, I wonder whether this way of reading what happened could be an oversimplification of a far more complex situation. I shall never know what kind of outcome had for David the decision of leaving the group. It could have been a way to distance himself from the suffering, and apparently split, parts that he has deposited in it just before leaving. But the very fact that he had shared them before going away and that, up to a certain point, he has been able to dialogue about them, could have been the start of a reconnection with them and of a merging of the split.

The outcomes of an apparent disconnected and disharmonic interaction are quite often unpredictable, as Daniel Stern describes well when he talks about an intrusive mother and her daughter he was very worried about, up until he discovered, seeing the dyad after three weeks, that they were doing pretty well (Stern, 2002).

How to define a disconnection then? And where is the boundary between a connected conflict and an expression of disconnection? I shall leave these questions open.

Harmony, connection among notes, is the fundament of music, and in order for music to exist the presence of harmony is necessary. Both music and groups require a sense of connection. But it seems that, to grasp whether harmony is present or not, we would need a longer temporal horizon. And this has something to do with the concept of counterpoint.

Counterpoint

While harmony is the vertical connection of notes played together, counterpoint is also called “the horizontal aspect of music”. It is not as immediate as harmony, which can be punctual and refer to a single chord, but requires a timeframe to be developed. Counterpoint has to do with the formulation of multiple “musical discourses”.

Good counterpoint requires two qualities: (1) a meaningful or harmonious relationship between the lines (a “vertical” consideration—i.e., dealing with harmony) and (2) some degree of independence or individuality within the lines themselves (a “horizontal” consideration, dealing with melody).

[Enciclopedia Britannica,

<http://www.britannica.com/art/counterpoint-music>]

Video:

<http://www.nytimes.com/video/artshttp://www.nytimes.com/video/arts/1247468479041/counterpoint.html/1247468479041/counterpoint.html> (from the beginning to 1:44)

From the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music:

Counterpoint: The ability, unique to music, to say two things at once comprehensibly. The term derives from the expression *punctus contra punctus*, i.e. 'point against point' or 'note against note'. A single 'part' or 'voice' added to another is called 'a counterpoint' to that other, but the more common use of the word is that of the combination of simultaneous parts or voices, each of significance in itself and the whole resulting in a coherent texture. In this sense counterpoint is the same as “polyphony”. (my underscore)

Counterpoint is the art of combining different melodic lines, all equally important, in a musical composition, a characteristic that sounds very "group-like" to my ears. In counterpoint, there is not a melodic line more important than the others, but an interplay; a dialogue between voices, where the first presentation of the melody sets up the discourse that the other voices will follow in a quite independent way, even though connected, and on an equal level. I find

this a good metaphor of the group situation, quite similar to the one used by Linde Wotton when she defines the conductor of the group as the “tonic note”.

Groups are based on counterpoint, and I had the chance, a few years ago, to experiment it in a particular way. I was working in a therapeutic centre for children and felt that I wasn't helping some of my little patients in the most effective way, taking into account my background and their difficulties, which were linked to a disconnection between body and mind. Some of them were dealing with physical chronic illnesses or impairment (and therefore they needed to “make peace” with their body, which had betrayed them) and many others showed behavioural symptoms (or, said in other terms, they had great difficulties with the body-mind integration, and therefore tended to act out unfelt feelings). Luckily, in the centre there were also psychomotricists, and some of them were experiencing a frustration both similar and opposite to my own: they felt that some of their little patients needed more symbolic work and that psychomotricity wasn't enough to help them.

Psychomotricity is an independent science born in France and quite widespread in the south of Europe. It is a form of educational or therapeutic intervention aimed at the development of motor, expressive and creative possibilities through the body. Thus, psychomotricity focuses its activity and interest in the use of the body at a basic level – i.e. action, movement, relaxation, pre-verbal and pre-symbolic experiences.

Putting together our competences, we created a quite peculiar setting: we started therapeutic groups co-conducted by a psychomotricist and a group analytic psychotherapist. Our aim was to combine the attention on body, sensations and movement on one side and the attention on group dynamics, unconscious and symbols on the other.

It would be legitimate to wonder why we decided to experiment the co-conduction of a psychotherapist and a psychomotricist and not either a “play therapy” setting or psychodrama. We weren't exactly aware of it at the beginning (it was a gut decision), but I found a quite convincing answer – that makes a lot of sense for how we worked together, each one of us maintaining their peculiar expertise within the group – reading Behr & Hearst's “Group-Analytic psychotherapy. A meeting of minds”:

A children's group can be led effectively by one person.
However, there are advantages in having two people

leading the group [...] A further advantage of co-therapy is that it offers a model to the children of how two adults can cooperate. When differences or disagreements arise between the therapists, the group can witness these and join the attempt to resolve them. This provides a corrective emotional experience for those children who associate disagreement with escalation into conflict, violence or family dislocation. (Behr, Hearst, 2005).

Through our work in the group, we were trying to provide a corrective emotional experience through body and mind being put in communication and integrated. The very presence of our two different expertise mirrored the body/mind split within the children and, conducting the group together, we deliberately introduced in the matrix the separation between body and mind the little patients were struggling with. At the same time, we introduced also a possibility of integration through the continuous maintenance of the relationship between the co-conductors: the dynamics between them, either in the sense of harmony or disharmony, were read as a parallel process of what was going on in the group, an expression of the matrix. These groups were rich, playful, pleasurable, and also very effective; we ran them for 6 years.

In this experience, the counterpoint of the many voices within the group was enriched by another one: a dual melody sung by the co-conductors, and, as I said, most of the work consisted in the maintenance of the harmony – the connection – between them.

Counterpoint is the art of matching and combining music themes even though they remain separated and clearly distinguishable. They blend and yet remain different. Dependence and independence are both possible at the same time – music, like groups, allows the existence of paradox.

Counterpoint is all about blending and connecting differences. Bach was a master at this kind of compositions, and one of his most famous works – the Well-Tempered Clavier – was all about exploring differences.

The Well-Tempered Clavier, BWV 846–893, German *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, is a collection of 48 preludes and fugues by Johann Sebastian Bach, published in two books (1722 and 1742). It explores the intricacies of each of the 12 major and 12 minor keys and constitutes the largest-scale and most-influential undertaking for solo keyboard of the Baroque era.

The compound adjective well-tempered in the title refers to the employment of a tuning system that would work equally well in all keys—a circumstance rare in Bach's day. "Well tempered" means that the twelve notes per octave of the standard keyboard are tuned in such a way that it is possible to play music in most major or minor keys and it will not sound perceptibly out of tune. [...] Further, by using the word clavier, Bach indicated that his music could be played on any keyboard instrument, including harpsichord, clavichord, and organ. (The piano, newly invented in Italy, was unknown in Bach's native Germany when the first book was published.) (From the Encyclopaedia Britannica: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Well-Tempered-Clavier-BWV-846-893> - my underscore).

The aim of the Wohletemperierte Klavier was to embrace differences: to have the possibility to play music in any keys with the same tuning and, also, to be played on any keyboard instrument, therefore using different “voices”.

The title indicates both the content (the music that Bach composed) and the container (a clavier where it would be possible to play in any keys due to its tuning – a container able to welcome differences).

This sounds like a powerful metaphor of a group, a tool able to welcome differences and to put them in connection through the creation of something that is bigger than the sum of its components (as it is with music). These features seem also very attuned to the polyphonic innate attitude of human beings that I have highlighted at the beginning of my presentation.

As Malcom Pines (1983) has pointed out, the group (hopefully) will go through a development, moving from a ‘cohesive’ group identity to a ‘coherent’ one that can allow individuality and difference to exist. A coherent group is a *well (enough) tempered* one, a group able to include different voices, features, opinions, emotions, without feeling threatened and therefore seeking refuge either in merging or in disaggregating, as it happens when the group enters the 4th basic assumption of incohesion (Hopper, 1997). If the group is able to do this, then it will allow creativity to emerge, since it will include a potential space (Winnicott, 1971) between members where it is possible to build a relationship, create and play. Creativity arises from the potential space between differences, neither from merging nor from disconnection. Through conflicts, differences are highlighted and, if some connection is maintainable, then something creative will

emerge from them, as we saw in the clinical examples before.

In the groups I co-conducted with psychomotricists, our different expertise were precious and enhanced the possibility of having a creative space – if and when we were able to work through our relationship and maintain a good connection between us.

Groups are a potential – and powerful – creative playground and therefore are particularly precious in this historic moment. We live immersed in the so-called *Culture of Narcissism* (Lasch, 1979), as capitalism and narcissistic personality traits share some important features like the importance given to the façade, grandiosity, illusion of omnipotence, and lack of limits (Baisini, Ceccon, 2015). Our times are marked by consumerism and global corporations, whose aim seems to be to flatten differences and to make us, to some extent, all the same, since it would be far easier to produce goods for an homologated society than for a diverse one. Also, this characteristic recalls a narcissistic trait, where it is difficult to have in mind, or sometimes even recognise, the other.



The ubiquitous presence of the Internet risks reinforcing this solipsism, since we are constantly connected, but quite often disconnected by our surrounding environment. Furthermore, virtual reality challenges the concept of body boundaries and risks enhancing the body/mind split in people with such a disposition (Baisini, 2014).

Those modern tendencies sound quite remote both from human beings' innate musicality – their primordial predisposition to relations – and to their innate polyphonic attitude. Therefore, they seem to bring us away from some basic elements of our being human – but these same basic elements are very present in groups.

Human groupishness that developed together with language is the strongest inheritance from human evolution that we have. (Power, 2015).

Group analysis has a vital task: to keep us human, diverse but connected, and to allow us to recreate the polyphony which is deeply rooted in ourselves.

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Visible and Invisible Psychotherapy

By Ioannis K. Tsegos

"Young psychiatrists talk about their cases, established psychiatrists talk about money and senior analysts talk about themselves" (Martin Grotjahn)

Taking a cue from Grotjahn, I believe that, as a senior analyst myself, I am allowed to present and discuss with you what we do here at the Open Psychotherapy Centre (OPC) and, more specifically, what we have succeeded doing during the 36 years since the foundation. The OPC, an open psychiatric unit functioning in Athens since 1981, constitutes a political intervention in the field of psychotherapy and psychiatry in general. It applied group-analytic principles in a mental health organization relying on Group Analysis and the therapeutic community through all its levels of function (*administrative, training, therapeutic*).

Our initial adamant decision to treat psychotics psychotherapeutically and to not accept any kind of State or European grants gave us the independence to act the way we thought best served ourselves or our patients/clients.

This decision to avoid seeking or, more accurately, to deny State finances resulted in, among other things, the intense use of the communal ways of functioning within the organization and, consequently, the more active involvement of the patients in order to make their therapy more effective. Soon after, and in addition to Group Analysis, we also utilized a communal scheme, which proved to be a method of paramount therapeutic, training and administrative importance.

The free and non-dogmatic use of the theories and practices of the Group Analysis and the therapeutic community, as well as the non-patronizing views towards common sense resulted in a number of changes, readjustments, novelties, definitions and applications, not only in therapy and training but also in the organizational function. Gradually, the acceptance and study of the communal scheme resulted in the creation and implementation of seven communities - three therapeutic ones (the daily, the fortnight and the summer TCs) and four training ones, which were linked to the corresponding four institutes functioning in close collaboration with the therapeutic work in the OPC (Institute of Group Analysis, Institute of Psychodrama-Sociotherapy, Institute of Diagnostic Psychology and Institute of

Family Therapy).

Unboundaried activities

*Psychotherapy in itself is an art and not a science,
while Psychoanalysis is a fabrication*

From early on, we gave attention to the question of what is happening during the time when the patient is in between therapy sessions and the importance and usefulness of that period for insight and self-affirmation. Irvin D. Yalom notes that most therapists still today regard whatever happens outside or 'between' the therapeutic sessions as an 'empty' period or, at best, they ignore it (Yalom 1985). The importance of this issue was experimentally proved later as we noticed that the longer the intervals the better are the therapeutic results.

Our psychotherapeutic approach is free from Freudian and psychoanalytic orthodoxy. Therefore terms, notions and practice came under scrutiny for effectiveness in the everyday practice of psychotherapy. First of all, we focused on the therapy of patients who are regarded as untreatable or unsuitable for psychotherapy, i.e. psychotics and other similar categories. Moreover, we sought to learn about madness or psychopathology as a whole, including psychosis, and not just about the theories of neuroticism. Psychoanalysis has provided extensive theory about the origin of psychosis but very little about its treatment (most probably due to Freud's aversion to it). In order to do this, besides an unprejudiced approach regarding the type of patients, we try to study a number of very widely used terminology, and then we reform or reject them, as with analogous notions and ideas.

Analysis was a term, and a practice, we were suspicious and weary of right from the beginning, as it was noticeable, in Freud and the early analysts that their purpose was to build a science and not to alter a treatment. It is the well-known exhortation "don't try to treat, try to understand". For us, the importance of relationships and relating were the crucial aspects when practicing Group Analysis within the therapeutic community.

We regarded transference and countertransference as another fabrication, a phobic evidence of Freud who prefers to analyse these instead of accepting it as a normal feeling in every relationship. It is another example of the "scientific" terminology of Freud. The same is valid for the unconscious. According to Freud and his acolytes, the term is supposedly an exclusive invention of his. And Freud's argument towards Jung's proposition for the training of psychoanalysts is very significant: "there is no need for any training

as it is sufficient for the psychoanalysts to believe in the existence of the unconscious". There are more incidents underlying Freud's intention to create a religious type of theory and practice, as is evident in the story about the special rings that he gave to the inner circle of his followers, reserving the ring portraying Zeus for himself!!!

In Freud's theory and practice we have the revival of the punitive and also of the incriminating procedures with the contention that these are promoting insight and cure. Frequent examples of this mentality are the tactics of an intentional prolonged silence by the therapist during the psychoanalytic session; also, the analyst's invisible seat, which is maintained by some therapists despite its assimilation to the confessional (booth) of Catholics.

Interpretation, Hermeneutics and Explanations

"Psychoanalysis is the mental illness for which it regards itself as therapy" (Karl Kraus)

The discrimination between interpretations and explanations aims at the weakening of the cultivated pseudo-intellectual fashion of "interpreting" various phenomena or behaviors based not on common sense but on the exclusivity of the sociological or psychoanalytic theories by an "expert", whose knowledge and seriousness are usually reversely proportional to their need for domination and mastery. These unilateral and exclusive "explanations" have been adopted, cultivated and imposed by religious organised systems, whose glory was envied by following schemes imposing the one and only "truth". The explanations are usually characterized by ontology, while the interpretation is concerned with ethics. Thus, we defined the psychoanalytic interpretation as an arbitrary, usually unclaimed and not infrequent, incriminating justification.

For the restriction of similar mentalities, we consider that psychotherapy should also study and investigate other notions and practices such as the invention of the super ego into which the religious consequences are obvious, where its usefulness is rather dubious. As for us at the OPC, with the extensive use of Group Analysis and the communal schemes we created the term 'around ego' (Περί Ἐγώ), which is the main regulating factor in every group or communal formation of the organization for therapy, training and functioning activities. By this, the term and notion the 'around ego' (Περί Ἐγώ) is more precise, actual, expressive and appropriate for our approach.

Another crucial concern for treatment and training is to differentiate the concepts of power from strength, as the temptation

for narcissistic tendencies towards the former is not uncommon among therapists (as well as patients too, in the form of the incurable). The same applies to supervision, and, in order to reduce and restrain the inevitable temptation of narcissism, we constructed a new scheme of supervision (Tsegos, 1984), which restricts such temptations and also proved to be a very useful tool for research.

A definition for the Therapeutic Community

Moreover, we theoretically differentiated the notion of the collective from that of the community. Collectivism is characterized by the control of the common living and working environment, as well as accommodation, sleeping and meal-taking arrangements as a group. On the contrary, community can be distinguished by the participation of all its members in the decision-making process of the OPC's function and the maintenance of its specific culture. At the same time, however, matters of privacy and specificity of personal living (housing, family, etc.) are also present and separate.

Therapeutic or training community is the method of psychotherapy which mobilizes and uses the healthy and real part of the client's ego (therapists, trainees and trainers) with clarity, responsibility and flexibility, aiming at their personal development and the proper functioning of the unit and pursuing to gain the maximum of knowledge and experiences in relating and coordinating.

A crucial and decisive factor for the OPC and the institutes was the definition of therapy: "Therapy is a personal matter or affair of each person which he or she conducts either on his/her own or with his/her intimates, or with the experts." The decisive word here is 'with'. This is along the lines of S.H. Foulkes': "psychotherapy is done by the group, of the group, including the conductor".

Group therapy

The distinction between shame (Αἰδώς-Aidos) and guilt, is mainly achieved by the inclusion of the other, of more persons in the psychotherapeutic process, in order to reduce the abuse of guilt, weaken the use of ego and the super-ego and strengthen the ego with the use of the around/about ego.

In the group, everyone becomes visible and indeed from several visual angles, while the interpreting procedure cannot be very prosperous, due to the visibility of everyone's presence, this shortens the duration of the hypothetical relationships (roles) and provides opportunities for alternating these roles. Furthermore, it allows the undertaking of multiple and different roles and permits them to be

themselves and to develop real relationships in the here and now situation.

Unfortunately, the issue of visibility has not been given the importance it deserves in Group Analysis nor has the issue of the person, although it was sensed from the beginning by Foulkes who referred to the “human individual” (E. Foulkes, 1990). The person is mostly mentioned in juxtaposition to the statistical notion of the individual and in order to emphasize its uniqueness and also the particular qualities of the personality. It is worth noting that the corresponding Greek word ‘prosopon’ (πρόσ+ὤψ) draws its etymological origin from the verb to see or to face. Hence when an individual is placed in the cyclical setting of the group and is under the influence of several eyes (gazing), we may assume that being under the illumination of these constant looks and gazing upon the face of several spectators, “with whom he/she creates several hypothetical and also real (i.e., visible) relationships, it is then that he/she emerges and is stabilized as a person”.

Starting from the point of classical psychoanalytic training, Foulkes, the founder of Group Analysis, formulated his views about his new method, under the decisive influence of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and especially Norbert Elias (sociogenesis/social influence on the intra psychic), as well as neurologist Kurt Goldstein’s theory of the organism (a reference to the organism as a whole, the “total situation”), Kurt Lewin’s field theory and gestalt psychology. He stated that “*Group Analysis* is not the child of Psychoanalysis; this is only historically true. It is, in fact, a more comprehensive approach, which does or should comprise individual psychoanalysis” (Foulkes, 1969, p. 27). His pupil, and founder of group-analytic family therapy, Robin Skynner, even suggests that “Foulkes worked with groups in such a way that he seemed to understand the basic concepts of open systems theory (“Family Therapy: the Group-analytic Approach as an Open System”, 1981).

It should be added that, as luck would have it, our ancestral relationship with Freud was indirect and filtered. I had the honour of being a student in Foulkes’ theoretical group analysis courses and to have Skynner as my group therapist. I was fortunate enough to have some more incredible people as teachers, such as Malcolm Pines, Dennis Brown, Jim Hume, and Lionel Kreeger; plus, several others with whom I had brief but unforgettable encounters in groups, people like Jane Abercrombie, Elizabeth Foulkes, Adele Mitwoch, Irene Boomfield and others.

We, as teachers, usually know a lot, but most probably because of this, we don't continue our learning! And that is perhaps why Oscar Wilde wrote his poisonous aphorism that “everybody who is incapable of learning has taken to teaching” (Oscar Wilde, 1968, p.166).

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Dreams in Athens and the Challenge of Polyphony in the Summer School

By Yael Doron

I wish to thank deeply Robi Friedman and Earl Hopper for thinking with me about the summer school and re-dreaming with me the dreams and their meaning in the large group's context. I also want to thank the dreamers who gave their permission to share their dreams with us.

Three dreams which were dreamt, shared and worked through in a small group, will be used to demonstrate the magic and the challenges we were facing during the GASI Summer School in Athens, 2016. The dreams reveal a profound wish of the participants to belong to the community and feel safe and secure, together with an enormous anxiety to be controlled or rejected by unconscious intimidating forces. The dream-telling represents a whispering hope to be touched and even saved by the small group as well as the large group as a whole, and, at the same time, it may also reflect a wider process taking place in Europe nowadays, in which people search their way to face the challenge of polyphony, without falling into the solution of massification or aggregation.

Freud in Athens

Coming back from Athens' Summer School I was reminded of one of the most beautiful examples of self-analysis Freud left us, regarding his own memories from Athens. Freud wrote about it when he was 80, in a letter entitled "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis", to his friend Romain Rolland. In the letter, Freud describes an event which took place in 1904, while he went to Athens with his brother Alexander: Standing up on the Acropolis, instead of the expected admiration, Freud experienced an overwhelming sensation of de-realization, as if what he saw was not really there. Trying to analyse why he felt in this uncanny way, Freud understood that when he was a child, although he did believe in the existence of the Acropolis, he never felt he himself would have the opportunity to see it, because he came from a very poor family, so Athens seemed like an unreal dream for him. Seeing the Acropolis filled him with joy and pride but also guilt, because he felt, he has symbolically triumphed over his dead

father, who was a not well-educated businessman, and Athens didn't really mean so much to him. Thus, Freud was torn between the wish to be better than his father and his feeling guilty over it, and this is why, in his opinion, standing on the top of the mountain near the impressive monument, he disassociated and temporarily lost his sense of integrated self (Freud, 1936). I can trace similarities between Freud's story and the processes in Athens' Summer School, hence I will get back to Freud later.

Large Group, Small Group and Dreams

Every day of the Summer School ended with a large group - a total of five sessions. The small group worked every morning and had four sessions (The school was opened in the afternoon, so the small groups started only in the morning of the second day).

In every one of the first three sessions of the small group I conducted, a dream was shared by one of the group members. As opposed to the private and personal process of dreaming, which everyone is doing on his/her own while sleeping, *dream-telling* is an interpersonal, and may even be a trans-personal event, and as such it may both be a request for the group to process difficulties and also an effort to influence the relationships between the participants (Friedman, 2008). I felt that these three dreams propelled the progress of my small group and at the same time reflected the large-group processes as a whole, hence I wish to share this experience here.

First dream

The first session of the small group (in the morning of the second day) started with making acquaintance and sharing expectations and the anticipation of the participants, who came from five countries. During this session, a dream from the previous night was told:

"I am going to the pool which is on top of the roof of my hotel. The pool seems strange, in unusual shape, and filled only half with water. People are swimming, and suddenly I see a lizard-man climbing on the walls of the pool. His movements resemble swimming, although he is in the open air. I am puzzled but nevertheless feel safe. I get into the pool, with the rest of the people, and swim with them, happily".

The atmosphere of the dream was bizarre and strange, but for some reason it didn't sound weird to us but completely normal. The

group members resonated to the dream, and after a few personal associations regarding swimming pools, lizard-man and spider-man, they connected the dream with our first large-multi-national-group which took place the night before.

As opposed to the cozy feelings in the dream, the first LG session was tense and dramatic. It was the first day of the summer-school, we were all in the process of getting acquainted with each other, and with the rules and habits of our hosts, the members of the Institute of Group Analysis in Athens. In the middle of the first lecture, while sitting on the stage, the president of the Greek institute and their "father figure", started to smoke, and didn't stop even after it was announced that smoking is allowed only in the corridors between sessions. This act was taken later by the large group as an aggressive and insolent act. On top of that, later on in the same session of the large group, while a woman was talking, the Greek Institute's president interrupted her with a question, which seemed to her and to others as highly provocative. She told him quietly to "shut up" (which many of the participants didn't hear) and he shouted at her in response out loud "Shut up! Shut up!" - which made her leave the room. She came back a few minutes later, and the rest of the session revolved almost entirely around this incident.

The first session of the large group was filled with aggression and anxiety which reflected the atmosphere of the wider society, in Europe: The summer school took place shortly after Brexit and there was a lot of anxiety and tension in the air, for the British participants, of course, but also for others; What will become of Europe? Can people live together and cooperate in a large organization or international-union, or will every nation go separately its own way, and then, what will Europe's destiny be?

In the first day of the summer school I could smell in the air the fear from strangers, anxiety, hostility and even aggression. All of these feelings could be related to the lizard-man swimming in the dream's pool. Nevertheless, in the small group one could also feel the curiosity and the wish people had to get to know each other and become closer, "to swim together happily" as the dream ended. For our dreamer, and for others in my small group, it was their first international conference outside their country, so the dream must have also reflected their wishes for the coming days. The first session of the small group ended with a slight sense of confidence and hope, but it was still just a beginning.

Second dream

The second meeting of the large group in that evening was less hostile and aggressive than the first one, but still with a lot of anxiety in the air, which made the group oscillate between massification and aggregation (Hopper, 2003). There was a lot of stress and questions regarding leadership, gender, generations, minorities and power which occupied the large group's mind. The morning after we woke up to read the terrible news about the terrorist attack during Bastille Day in Nice, France. 84 people were killed – the same number as the participants of the summer school. The world outside the building felt mad and boiling.

The small group's atmosphere in the second session was tense and I thought we were asking ourselves if we can really open-up here and trust each other, or is it too dangerous because unexpected things are going to happen. The second dream, which was brought to this session reflected and propelled this atmosphere:

"I am going with my sister and her new born baby, when suddenly 2 men approach. They say they are from the government and that they are taking the baby, because we don't know how to take care of him. They say they will do it better than us. My sister is checking if the baby has enough food and clothes and gives him away. I am confused and don't know what to do: Do I need to fight for the baby to stay with us, his family? Or, maybe the authorities are right, and we don't really know how to raise him, and they will do it better than us? I woke up feeling frustrated and anxious."

The group associated to the dream, and produced many thoughts and feelings. They connected it to the tension between the international and the local committee of the summer school and conflicts inside various institutes. Robi Friedman, the president of GASI, who gave the opening lecture of the summer school the day before, and Ioannis Tzegos, the president of the Greek Institute, who was so dominant in the first session of the large group were not invited to the second session at all. They were missed.

The differences between people and nations became more prominent in the small group's room that morning. Every summer school has a title, and this time it was: *"Growth in Groups: the Creative Potential of Polyphony"*. In this small group session we could sense the huge difficulty which lies behind these optimistic words:

Can we have polyphony at all, here in the small group, in the large group as a whole, and outside in the wider world? Can we really listen and accept the Other? I felt the group and I were confused and anxious at this stage, and waited to see what the next days would hold for us. The dream raised questions regarding conformism, individuality and authorities: Who could be trusted to help us grow? Who would be a good enough container for difficult emotions?

Coming back to Freud's story about Athens, it is interesting that Freud understood his disturbing de-realization had to do with competition with his father, which mixed envy and guilt with his joy of being on the Acropolis. I think we could trace similar processes in the large group of the summer school at this stage, and also in the small group's dream: Competition with elder generations and authority figures, questioning of leadership, envy, guilt, and projecting the aggression onto the father figure, while dissociating from the group's own aggression. The group as a whole was trapped in it and we were searching for a way out.

Third dream

The next morning, we woke up to hear about the failed coup in Turkey. It was unbelievable to hear these frightening news stories day after day. I felt the world outside was going out of its mind and it made me feel an urgency to find a way to contain a dialogue in the large group (DeMare, 1991). The third session of the large group the night before was also difficult. We still had a lot of work to do, but time was rushing. We had already passed half of the summer school, beginning to think what we are going to take and what we will miss. The third dream, which was told in that session, was in the same spirit:

"I see two bottles of herbal medicine. One is composed of one herb and the other is made out of a four-herb-combination. I want to take both of the bottles, but for some reason I can't. I can only take the first one with the one herb. I woke up frustrated"

The group resonance to the dream linked it to our missing group member. In the first two sessions, we had an empty chair kept for a member who, without a notice, didn't come and aroused a lot of speculation. None of us, including the management, knew what had happened to her. That morning I took out her chair before the group started, and now suddenly someone said he met her yesterday and now he knows why she isn't coming to the small group: She is working

with refugees arriving in Greece, and can't leave her work, she can only join the summer school after lunch, after the small group. This incident brought the refugees into our room and associations, and the participants started to "play" with the numbers in the dream: What does the bottle with the one herb versus the 4 herbs represent? Those who are included? Those who need to stay out?

After a while, they started discussing what they will take from the summer school, what else is there to work, and what is there that maybe will be missed in the end. As in the second bottle, we had 4 sessions of the small group, and the summer school was almost coming to an end. We could already feel the sadness of the approaching farewell tomorrow, but we were still searching for a good solution for our relationship as small group members, and maybe also for the large group as a whole. Something was still missing.

The Challenge of Polyphony

In music, polyphony consists of two or more simultaneous voices, each with its independent rhythm and melody. Using it metaphorically in group analysis – we may say that Foulkes (1948) "discovered" polyphony, as the main vehicle in the search for the health of the group's members, when they try to learn how to listen, understand, accept the other and form their unique "music", the dynamic matrix. Still, finding *"the Creative Potential of Polyphony"* is a real challenge.

The next large group session was much more harmonious, without erasing the voice of the other. It opened with a woman telling the group that this morning started very bad for her and for her colleague because the apartment which they rented was flooded due to a problem with the washing machine: "There was water everywhere, it was like the flood", she said. Suddenly the long and narrow room we were sitting in – which yesterday, during the aggressive phase of the large group was referred to as a phallus – looked totally different to me: "If there is a flood, maybe we are sitting in Noah's ark", I said. The large group played with this metaphor for some time: If there is an ark, is everyone accepted there? Are there people who will be left outside? Is there enough room for everyone? There were a lot of references to Brexit in this connotation. Will Europe stay united?

The atmosphere was getting warmer and the large group, as sometimes happens, seemed smaller to me, familiar and hopeful. We could hear and acknowledge different voices, different opinions, different ways of thinking and behaving, but we could still live with these differences, and didn't have to find in us "one voice" (Doron, 2016) – monotony. We could keep being different but still feel close.

For me, the most impressive moment from the last session of the large group was when suddenly the door opened and the Greek institute's president, Tzegos, stood there and wanted to enter the large group, without invitation. A similar act was translated as violent a few days earlier, but something did happen in those days, for all of us, and now, he was accepted with applause and a sigh of relief by the same large group.

I return to think about Freud on top of the Acropolis – dissociating because he felt guilty for symbolically having triumphed over his dead father – and how it is connected to our large group. I guess the spontaneous "ceremony" of including the strong admired father-figure in the last session, without "killing" him, could be viewed as a sign of massification of the large group, but in my opinion it symbolized a development of the large group's new spirit, and its inner-freedom to move on, adapt, change and find a better position for us as a whole. With this spirit, we went on, later that evening, to the beautiful Gala Party our host made for us. I felt it was a good ending.

Epilogue

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us. And the world will live as one." (John Lennon, "Imagine")

Dreams belong to their dreamers, but when someone is telling a dream, it has to do not only with him, but also with the group, and the specific matrix of that group (Tzegos, 2002). The third GASI Summer School in Athens took place during a time of turmoil, with terror, aggressive attacks and political hazards in many countries all over Europe. This atmosphere was part of the foundation matrix of the summer school, and as such it penetrated the large group, affected each of us, the participants, and moved the group as a whole. All of this could be traced in the dreams dreamt and shared during these days in the small group. But although it felt sometimes as if we are all going to be "drawn" into the stormy water of the large group, the summer school ended with a gentle sensation of hope and Koinonia. Dreamtelling – the process of re-dreaming the dreams with others while being awake – helps individuals and the larger society to heal (Friedman, 2016). Although there was a lot of work to be done, and maybe we still need to work on many issues a lot more – coming back from Athens I felt *polyphony had indeed been achieved*.

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Alienated in my home town, Athens

Feeling (in) the Summer School, Greece, 2016

By Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou

‘There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting’ T. S. Elliot

Noon; July 14. 2016. Athens. The heat melts the stones. We are on the terrace of the Open Psychotherapy Centre, an old converted neoclassical building in the centre of the city. Lunch, wine and light talk under big umbrellas, as if on the beach. Roofing spreads far away, looking like sea waves. The 3rd Group Analytic Society International Summer School started yesterday, and I keep wondering – as a trainee in the Hellenic Network of Group Analysts - why were we not invited to contribute and participate in the preparations for a Summer School entitled ‘Growth in Groups-The Creative Potential of Polyphony’.

I still taste sour from the large group experience of the first day. Differences appeared in a passionate Mediterranean manner, lacking any hope of synthesis. I felt estranged from my compatriots, yet close enough to people from other countries. Various aspects emerged blindly provocative and pointlessly aggressive. Battles already fought revived, men versus women, nations versus other nations, powerful versus weak, old versus young. The bright sun gloriously blinds my mind. I am thinking not to come back.

Never in my life have I ever refused a challenge. Here I am again, searching for harmony, but power games dominate instead. Overtone from ancient clang arms mixes with contemporary angry voices. Subgroups of scientists indulge in the bitter satisfaction of tearing each other apart. I live in-between. Not a ‘sandwich group’, but a ‘sandwich generation’. Nurtured from parents bearing the ‘chosen trauma’ of the war and the civil war that broke out in Greece after 1944, I learned to walk silently on their steps. Today, abruptly devoid from the illusion of welfare, I long for my life; I seek a vision for my children. It is said that a large group simulates society. The urge to connect emanates from our prehistoric lives in caves, where survival was due to harmonization. Sometimes I think that, perhaps, Facebook (or face-look) is a contemporary means of reproducing the cavernous human condition and softening anxiety.

As I leave the Venue, an old man warmly salutes me and kisses my cheeks, as is customary. His eyes sparkle. A toddler’s complicity is implied. A lump in my throat prevents me from

speaking. I stand on his shoulders; leaving the past asleep, I cease my future.

Notes

1. T. S. Elliot, *Four Quarters*, Burnt Norton (2008) In: [Greek Edition. (2008) T. S. Elliot ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ Μετάφραση: Παυλίνα Παμποφδη. Αθήνα. Εκδόσεις PRINTA].

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2016 Local Group Analytic Summer School, Prague, Czech Republic

By Magdalena Kolínská Singerová and Denisa Schücková

Inspired and encouraged by the successful GASI Summer School held last year in Prague, Czech members of the Summer School 2015 international team decided to introduce a similar event to the Czech Republic. The first Czech GA Summer School “How to Experience and Survive a Group: Unconscious Dependencies in Human Groups” - took place in Prague on June 9th - 12th 2016 in the premises of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University.

The event was held by the Group Section of the Czech Society for Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy (CSPP). The program of the four-day seminar mostly drew on the format established by the GASI Summer Schools and consisted of self-experiential small groups, lectures followed by discussion, supervision groups and large groups. On the first day, following the participants' welcome, the program began with the large group, which was the main variation from the International Summer School format which opens up the first day with a lecture.

Thus, the participants were thrown straight into GA experience and the event took on the self-experiential form from the very beginning. Large groups held at the end of each day enabled good synthesis of new impulses, ideas and feelings that arose during the day and provided an opportunity to reflect on wider group processes. LG themes evolved around similarities and differences – “us and them”, intimacy of small groups and anonymity of large groups, and questions around authority, leaders and the need for rules. All these are issues of great importance on a global scale. The Summer School in this sense became the mirror of society as a whole and served as safe space in which to discuss and live through these often controversial topics.

The use of the Czech language limited the event to participants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia and thus deprived us of the international dynamic; however, the multiplicity of theoretical psychotherapeutic backgrounds and also, in some cases, of different professions of participants served as a good melting pot of feelings, expectations and opinions.

We listened to two lectures: Helena Klímová, group analyst and psychoanalytical psychotherapist (and a GASI member),

presented a psychoanalytical view of traumatized societies whose fragile terrain can give rise to totalitarianism. Helena noted that hope for the prevention of totalitarian developments and societal disintegration lies in the understanding and reflection of these dangerous processes on the level of small and large groups/societies. The second lecture was presented by Petr Zahradník, a psychiatrist and group analyst from Brno, who spoke about his clinical group work with clients addicted to alcohol and other substances. He summarized a psychoanalytical view of the dependence syndrome, compared it to the classical treatment focused on the support of abstinence, and described the specifics of a psychoanalytical treatment of dependent clients: i.e. working with deep origins of addiction with the emphasis on the importance of accepting the split off parts of the Self and the positive influence of containment.

Small experiential groups met three times for 90 minutes. Participants as well as conductors noted that despite the strict time limitation, small groups provided safe private space to work through some wider Summer School processes on a more intimate level as well as to open up some of the participants' personal issues. The experience of such strictly time-limited group which contains the presence of "The End" from the beginning gave group members a good opportunity to work through this topic which was appreciated by many.

The afternoon supervision groups met twice and enabled participants to discuss their own clinical group work and to draw on the guidance of experienced group analysts' support, ideas and inspiration.

At the end of the last full day we enjoyed an informal dinner in a downtown restaurant on the banks of Vltava river in a friendly relaxed atmosphere.

Inevitably, in the preparation of the first Czech Summer School we made a few mistakes: the dates of the event collided with three other psychological conferences held in the Czech Republic on the very same weekend. Also, the information about the planned Czech Summer School got distributed late, to some places. As a result, we didn't have many participants. The GASI Summer School - which since its first departure in Belgrade in 2013 almost tripled in the number of participants - is an inspiration for us also in this aspect.

We have started preparing next year's Czech School. We have learnt from our initial mistakes and through the first Summer School introduced the event into the local "psychotherapeutic scene". We are confident that we will attract more people in 2017. We have moved the event date in 2017 to May, thus creating SPRING GROUP

DAYS instead of Summer School for the future. The theme of 2017 is to be “What are Groups Silent about?”

Group psychotherapy has traditionally had a strong position in the Czech Republic: many psychotherapeutic groups run here and a large number of psychotherapeutic trainings use group as their self-experiential part. At the same time, the offer of continuous education and/or supervision in group psychotherapy in the country appears to be insufficient. We believe that SPRING GROUP DAYS will help to fill this gap.

In the end, we would like to thank especially Regine Scholz and David Glyn as well as GASI for introducing this valuable concept to us and for being our good teachers. Many thanks also to all of the Czech team members for their hard work, and all participants for their trust and interest in coming to the first Czech Summer School. A big appreciation belongs to the late Marie Hošková, who was Chair of the International Summer School in Prague. She made that event possible through her commitment and dedication and has been a great inspiration, mentor and friend to many of us.

Magdalena Kolínská Singerová is a psychiatrist, candidate of the Group Section of the Czech Society for Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy, and a Czech GA Summer School team member.

Denisa Schücková is a psychologist and candidate of the Group Section of the Czech Society for Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy. She was a member of international Summer School teams in Prague and Athens, and she is a member of the Czech GA Summer School team.

I was Born in the Group

By Kalliopi (Kelly) Panagiotopoulou

THE EXPERIENCE OF ONE ACADEMIC YEAR IN THE POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR: INTRODUCTION TO GROUP ANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY. (06/11/2015 - 27/05/2016). EVERY FRIDAY AT 17:30-20:30; THEORETICAL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION, PLUS EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS. ORGANIZED BY THE HELLENIC NETWORK OF GROUP ANALYSTS IN ATHENS, GREECE.

The sound was rhythmical and calming. My mother's heart was beating as usual, while she moved around occupied with her everyday tasks. Her voice was singing smoothly an old melody from Zakynthos, her native island in the Ionian Sea. Her hand caressed her belly in a reassuring manner. I was swimming in a comfortable pool. Late at night my father arrived. I recognized his anxious and tired voice. I started kicking and buzzed about impatiently. They shouted at each other. My grandpa grumbled asking for his dinner. The beat was now louder, I was afraid. I felt my father's hand touching my mother's belly. He murmured a tune often sung by old Athenian choirs in Plaka, about a little lemon smelling nice. I was reassured. A sudden glare cut the darkness; lights switched on, dinner was served. And the dessert, sweet taste: chocolate? I was growing in the group as a fetus and suddenly, a sunny day of September, I was born in the group.

My story unfolded as predicted. School, university, work, marriage, children, friends, voyages, hobbies...I lost the group. Riding on Pegasus as years went by...

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At a crucial moment of my life, I met Dr Kostas Morogiannis: Psychiatrist and Group Analyst in private practice; Full Member of the Group Analytic Society international; Founder Member of Hellenic Network of Group Analysts (HENEGA); Conductor of the Training Committee of the HENEGA; President of the Board of Directors of CPT/CPH. He informed me about group analysis and oriented me towards it. I decided overnight: it is in November of 2015 that a new era begins for me; I am a student in the POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR 'INTRODUCTION TO GROUP ANALYTIC PSYCHOTHERAPY', organized by the HELLENIC NETWORK of



GROUP ANALYSTS, in Athens, Greece, every Friday, 17:30-20:30.

#### THE PROGRAM

17.30-18.30: Theoretical presentation and discussion.

18.30-19.00: Recess.

19.00-20.30: Experiential Groups.

THE PLACE: Center of Professional Training/Center of Psychic Hygiene, 166 Agiou Meletiou str., near metro station Attiki.

Here I find myself, a chilly Friday evening of November, starting a new project. I have never been before in this part of Athens. Everything looks unfamiliar, old ugly buildings, people wandering hastily, smoking, talking to their phones, others carrying suitcases, vendors selling fruits and flowers outside the station, some giving advertising leaflets to passers-by, children crying. This neighbourhood is alive, what about me? Well, yes, I think I am alive again, my life having changed forever in a peculiar but final way.

I walk towards the Centre. I arrive on time. The old wuthering building stands up proud and solid, like an old nanny, firm and cleaned with soap. A sweet young secretary welcomes me smiling as I ring the bell. She shows me the way up to the third floor where the lecture begins in a while. Apparently, the elevator is tricky; never goes where it is told! Finally, I take the stairs. The lights are faint but the marble stairs are easy to climb. Having reached the third floor, I open the door impatiently, ah! There is another corridor! I still need to open another door in order to see myself in the lecture room! At last! It is a bright friendly room with big windows, comfortable chairs easy to carry, a projector, a computer, a desk, a white board, air-conditioned, square-shaped. Two big round clocks are hanging on the wall, each strangely telling different times... It seems a tradition of this place, no clock tells the right time, even if there is plenty of them, scattered in all the different rooms! Some people have already arrived. I don't know anyone. I take a seat watching the arrival of the others. How difficult was it to arrive here... is it resistance?

Once again, I become part of a group already existing, constituted without my knowing or willing, in a pre-shaped form and function, rules given from outside: this is the story of my life.

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During the previous Friday, 6/11/2015, Dr Kostas Morogiannis gave the opening lecture: General Introduction. Presentation of the Seminar:

Structure, Epistemological context, Dynamic Administration, Basic Theoretical Principles. Coordinator: Lily Stylianoudi.

Initially, HENEGA, as well as the Scientific Board of the seminar was presented. The dynamic administration of the seminar was described: experiential groups, choice of their members, time, place, financial arrangements and so forth. Basic concepts were successfully introduced: free floating discussion; here and now; matrix; communication; mirroring; condenser and chain phenomena; ego training in action; corrective emotional experience. The role of the conductor was highlighted. Types of groups, closed or open, long term or brief, analytic or not, were explained. The city as a means to conquer freedom, based on Aristotle's Politics, was described. Freud's quotation 'group psychology is the oldest human psychology' was mentioned. Bion's theory and his 'basic assumption group' were reported. The radical idea introduced by Elias that personalisation and socialisation evolve simultaneously was analysed. Foulkes's novel concept of group analysis and group analytic psychotherapy were presented in detail. His notion 'analysis in the group, with the group, by the group, through the group including the conductor' was further illuminated.

A fellow student provides me with notes. Awkward talks are exchanged. Everybody seems embarrassed and anxious at the same time. Smiles, coughs, glasses cleaned, pencils eager to note, coats taken off. It concerns a power showdown. Dr K. Morogiannis has already e-mailed us the summary of today's lecture, while photocopies are also distributed beforehand. The lecture begins.

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Friday, 13/11/2015.

'History of Group Psychotherapy', by Prof. Konstantinos Kanellakis, Psychiatrist-Psychotherapist. Professor at the Psychology Department of the American College of Greece. Coordinator: Dora Skali.

A historical flashback throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century was presented, with specific reference to J. Pratt, E. Lazell, L. C. Marsh, T. Burrow, A. Adler, S. Freud, L. Wender, J. L. Moreno, S. R. Slavson, F. Redl, A. Wolf, S. H. Foulkes, W. R. Bion, J. Anthony, W. C. Menninger, G. Thomas, H. Ezriel, I. D. Yalom, M. B. Parloff. A tour was managed between different sciences to various models of group psychotherapy and the conditions that incur in terms of its effectiveness.

## RECESS

Chairs are moved abruptly, meaningless voices mix, impatient steps direct to the basement, where coffee and tea are served hot, along with bottled cool water, fruit juices, cookies and cake. Second year students are familiar to the place. They act like hosts. Newcomers spread around trying to fit in. Three groups are formed spontaneously around small tables, beverages and sweets break the ice. Some wander around trying to make acquaintances. Jokes and laughs are exchanged sotto voce, conductors and teachers are present. A few participants smoke near the open window as if in conspiracy. Themes for discussion arise gradually. We start to connect.

## EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS

*While climbing to the second floor, searching for the experiential group I am assigned to, I am thinking about my first day in school. The other children have been together during the previous year in nursery school, small subgroups already formed, enemies and friends, as well as a deep poisonous hatred for outsiders, strangers. Second floor, yes, but where is the classroom? A door leads to another dark corridor. Two doors are hidden behind. I choose the nearest to the elevator, where my name is typed last on a sheet of paper with other student's names on it, and after I have knocked, I enter reluctantly. A young lady is already seated smiling at me in a sweet manner. I take the chair next to her, confirming it is the correct place to be. Unoccupied chairs are put in a circle far enough from each other, with no other furniture in the room. Gradually men and women approach saluting in a reserved manner. The other members have already met the previous Friday. I know no one. Miss K., being a silent observer, takes the only chair placed outside the circle. Miss E., the co-conductor, says hello as she gets seated. Mr A., the conductor, enters. A journey scheduled to last until the end of May, confronting all weathers, begins. We are asked to give our names and a brief description of ourselves. Just warming up, I guess. What am I doing here? Probably getting phagocytosed and vanishing! I will be no person anymore, becoming the Homeric Cyclop Nobody, from the Odyssey. Tangible aggressiveness floods the space. I feel exposed. The adventure commences.*

Friday, 20/11/2015

The Itinerary of the Notion of 'Group' in the Social Sciences.

Lecturer: Re.Prof. Lily Stylianoudi, Social and Clinical Anthropologist, Director of the "Centre for Greek Society" of the

Academy of Athens. Coordinator: Kostas Morogiannis.

It was astonishing to contemplate a universal scheme, representing the associations and interactions of social sciences and scientists in the course of human history. K. Marx, E. Durkheim, M. Weber, H. Spencer, G. Simmel, F. Tonnies, R. E. Park, E. W. Burgess, G. H. Mead, K. Lewin, R. Lippit, H. White, W. W. Whyte, J. L. Moreno, T. Parsons, R. F. Bales, G. Homans, H. Garfinkel, J. Habermas, E. Goffman, E. Schegloff, H. Sacks were mentioned, as different theories were explained.

Friday, 27/11/2015

#### Aspects of Aristoteleian Ontology

Lecturer: Aristomenis Matsagas, Psychiatrist-Group Analyst. Theologian. Coordinator: Eugenia Oikonomopoulou.

The ancient question of 'being' is approached through Aristotle's ontology, leading later to the theoretical conception of 'the group as a whole'. Aristotelian city (polis) is a total constituted of dissimilar parts (citizens) who do not lose their own identity in the whole.

#### *EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS*

*Arrows are crossing in the air. Someone is about to become a scapegoat, I feel it. Some of us may even welcome it, deep inside; how it may be possible for psychologists, medical doctors, social workers to have such feelings? The conductor prevents it in a non-apparent way. Like blind bats we are striking aimlessly, uncoordinatedly, hazardously. Trying to protect our own uniqueness, each one of us is helplessly devoted to their small little universe, protecting ourselves against the deepest fear of vanishing. Nevertheless, our special significance emerges somehow, via this un-understandable union of minds. Is it possible to be oneself within the group?*

Friday, 04/12/2015

#### The Psychoanalytic Theories of the Group

Lecturer: Nikolaos Chourdakis, Psychologist-Group Analyst. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis

A historical review of the group psychology is attempted, with special references to sociology, evolutionary biology and ethology. The anthropological dimension is addressed as a basic foundation of the function of society. Sociability as a pattern of behaviour reflects an evolutionary choice of major importance.

Friday, 11/12/2015

Nobert Elias's Theory and Relational Sociology: Ontological and Epistemological Considerations.

Lecturer: Dr. Charalambos Tsekeris, Psychosociologist, teaching at University of Athens, Researcher of Virtual Reality lab, Psychology Department, Panteion University. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis.

The evolution of civilization is cited; figuration, interactions, communication, social networks are analysed.

Friday, 18/12/2015

Group Analysis today.

Lecturer: K. Morogiannis. Coordinator: Konstantina Tsiraki.

With surgical accuracy, the lecturer explains theories expressed by K. Goldstein, S. Freud, N. Elias, S. H. Foulkes, K. Mannheim, Z. Bauman, D. Brown, F. Dalal, J. Lavie, M. Pines, E. Hopper. The point of convergence is that the process of individualisation and that of socialisation are concurrently evolving.

*EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS*

*Death wishes are floating all over the place. Suicide talk: doubts, life experiences of selves and others burden us. Our thoughts are heavy. Separation to come hangs its ugly face. We are probably killing the father, yet no relief caresses our souls: we are unforgivable and unforgiven. Stumbling like toddlers we proceed in life never really willing to grow up, ambivalent between painful journey and the promised fulfilment to come.*

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Friday, 8/01/2016

Group Matrix and Social Unconscious in Group Analytic Psychotherapy.

Lecturer: Dora Skali, Psychologist-Psychotherapist, Scientific Councillor teaching at UA, Department of Psychology. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis.

We are guided to the routes of group matrix, communication, social unconsciousness, as the means of recognition and understanding of the group analytic process.

Friday, 15/01/2016

Group Specific Phenomena in the Analytic Group.

Lecturer: Markos Skondras, Psychiatrist-Group Analyst. Coordinator:

Eugenia Oikonomopoulou.

Group specific phenomena are described, such as socialisation through the group, mirror, condenser, chain, resonance. Moreover, theorising, support, sub-grouping, silences, scapegoats, the stranger, the historian, rhythm and tensions are explained.

#### *EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS*

*As soon as we enter the room we realise there is a change in the circle. The chairs are placed closer to each other, the diameter is shorter. After an initial feeling like a nuisance, it feels acceptable, even though a little fearsome. Our interactions are now deeper, network interrelations are dense; we dare to discuss more difficult issues.*

Friday, 22/01/2016

#### Interpersonal Neurobiology: The Mirror Neurons.

Lecturer: Ilias Kouvelas, Professor Emeritus of Physiology of the Medical School of the Patras University. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis.

The discovery and meaning of the mirror neurons, in terms of understanding emotions in others, are described in detail.

#### *EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS*

*Our conductor is absent. Aggressiveness against him and among us predominates. The co-conductor receives hostility, annoyance, lack of trust, setup of traps, devaluation, wishes for failure, need for success, in a subtle and apparent manner at the same time. Fortunately, for our sake, she is holding the group. Her stability enables a diversified but equally important session to develop. It becomes clear that different personalities contribute better to the group's evolution.*

Friday, 29/01/2016

#### Creation of an Analytic Group. Indications and Contra-Indications of the Group Analytic Psychotherapy. The Role of the Conductor in the Group.

Lecturer: Konstantina Tsiraki, Psychotherapist-Group Analyst. Coordinator: A. Matsagas.

Practical but very important issues referring to the composition and function of an analytic group are analysed in a comprehensive manner. The specific role of the conductor is pointed out.

Friday, 05/02/2016

#### Therapeutic factors in Group Analytic Psychotherapy.

Lecturer: Kleio Andriakopoulou. Coordinator: Eirini Mitraki.

Factors as interpersonal learning input, catharsis, group cohesiveness, self-understanding, interpersonal learning output, existential factors, universality, instillation of hope, altruism, family re-enactment, guidance, identification, are mentioned.

### **EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS**

*Changes are happening. Decisions are made. We are motivated to take our lives seriously and do something about it. It resembles the slow but determined movement of an astronaut in a vacuum space. We are roughly trying to detach from our familial patterns, easily repeated aimlessly, leading to an unwanted distortion. Although painful, we proceed like a chorus in an ancient Greek tragedy, looking at each other, leaning on each other, counteracting with each other, singing with each other, performing what each person has to, having resigned from everything unneeded. It is our conductor who repeatedly reminds us to throw away everything useless.*

Friday, 12/02/2016

#### Transference and Countertransference in the Group Analytic Group.

Lecturer: Dimitris Kyriazis, Psychiatrist, Child Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist-Group Analyst. Coordinator: A. Matsagas.

How do paintings combine with a fluent speaker's lecture? Analysing them, he is; revealing the inner world of the painter, bringing up to the surface the creator's unconscious thoughts. We are breathlessly watching his efficient technique in guiding us through theoretical concepts into corporation and insight. Potential space, holding environment, transference and counter-transference are presented both in terms of the individual psychoanalytic relationship, as well as in the group analytic process.

Friday, 19/02/2016

#### Dreams in Group Analysis

Lecturer: Anastasios Koukis, Ph. D., Psychotherapist-Group Analyst. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis.

The dream in the group analytic context represents the primitive scene fantasy. The analytic group is born from the union of the conductor and itself. At the same time, it creates dreams using mechanisms parallel to those of the individual dreams, mirroring phenomena, for instance, absorbing them and displaying them as common property. Thus, the group promotes neurotic dreams, leading to a better resolution of the Oedipal. Moreover, this is gradually

succeeded by patients suffering from psychosis, as well.

### **EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS**

*Group dreams emerge often lately. An apparent cohesion is drawing us closer together. We are strengthened somehow, empowered. Attacks towards the conductor are differentiated in a more concretely matured manner. Acting-outs are disclosed by a sub-group in a provocative way. We have not yet reached insight. The big bad wolf still remains an outside menace. Indeed, I wonder, do we really want to uncover what lies beneath? A “scientific” approach disguises our deeper fears with effective ability, so as to not be obliged to confront and subjugate or even transform them.*

Friday, 26/02/2016

#### Borderline Patients in Group Analytic Psychotherapy.

Lecturer: K. Morogiannis. Coordinator: A. Matsagas.

Borderline patients are described in detail: percentage, classification, clinical appearance of symptoms, psychodynamic psychopathology - as a result of preverbal disaster - and defenses - denial, splitting, projective identification - the way group analytic psychotherapy functions in a more containable manner, technical and basic instructions to the therapists of those patients.

Friday, 04/03/2016

#### Group Analytic Psychotherapy of Children and Adolescents.

Lecturer: Alik Grigoriadou, Child Psychiatrist, Group Analyst.

A meticulous description of therapy concerning children and adolescents was approached; historical review, fundamental theoretical concepts, targets, indications, contraindications for group analytic psychotherapy of children and adolescents, selection, framework and technique of the therapeutic group, developmental stages and efficiency of the group analytic psychotherapy of children and adolescents.

Friday, 11/03/2016

#### Supervision in Group Analytic Psychotherapy.

Lecturer: K. Tsiraki and K. Andriakopoulou. Coordinator: E. Oikonomopoulou.

After a theoretical introduction, an example of a supervision group meeting is presented. We are given the place, time and members of the group, with a short description of their aims in therapy. The conductor narrows one specific session of the group. Afterwards, we



are asked to contribute to the formation of a scheme on the white board waiting in front of us, referring and interpreting this very session. An experienced trainee has the job of writing on it. Initially, a central scheme is drawn with a black marker, representing the members of the group, as they are seated around the table. Arrows show the direction communication interactions unfold between them during this specific session. Three vertical columns are designed underneath: Feelings coloured in green, Fantasies red, Main Themes (Topics) blue. As soon as the narrative is concluded, we are asked to declare feelings inspired, and our colleague writes them down, using numbers. If the same feeling is stated by many students, for instance, anger twice => angerx2, etc. Subsequently, we describe fantasies provoked, to be written down as well. In the end, main topics addressed in the session are exposed as we understood them, and also written down. The supervisor composes and comments on the information provided, revealing subconscious interactions and latent processes within the group.

Friday, 18/03/2016

Training in Group Analytic Psychotherapy.

Lecturer: K. Morogiannis. Coordinator: D. Skali.

The historical development of teaching future group analysts was presented, in connection with the theoretical basis supporting their education; treatment of the trainee, supervision and theory-concerning the study of: the basic group analytic theories, the contemporary trends, the fundamental psychoanalytic theories, the conjunction between psychoanalysis and sociology, the enrichment with information from resources such as neuroscience, genetics, neurobiology, developmental psychology. Educational institutes, theoretical differences, dynamic administration, were also mentioned.

Friday, 01/04/2016

Radical Group Analysis.

Lecturer: Farhad Dalal, Psychotherapist and Group Analyst in private practice in Devon, UK. He also works with organisations. He was Associate Fellow at the University of Hertfordshire's Business school. Currently, he is visiting Professor at the PhD School, Open University of Holland. His books are: "Taking the Group Seriously" (1998), "Race, Colour, and the Processes of Racialization" (2002), "Thought Paralysis: The Virtues of Discrimination" (2011). Founding Member of HENEGA Coordinator: C. Tsekeris.

In his deeply structured way of thinking and talking, Dalal

presents a critical description of S. H. Foulkes's radical theoretical ideas. Humans function in groups; the distortion of one unit reflects that of the whole network, as the part and the whole are interrelated. The social element urges human beings to relate, to communicate, to belong. The fundamental nature of humanity is sociability, participation in a group. The human factor is completely social and differentiates upon culture and experience. Social unconscious is the means to the attempt to understand experience. Communication is considered to be the tool leading to the prevention of disease and the promotion of health and balance.

Saturday, 02/04/2016, 09:00 - 15:00

GROUP ANALYSIS DAY CONFERENCE 2016

“THE SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS IN SOCIETY AND IN CLINICAL PRACTICE”

Venue: Porch of the Book (Speech Hall), 5, Pesmazoglou and Stadiou str., Athens, Greece.

Event languages: Greek and English, simultaneously translated.

Organized by the Hellenic Network of Group Analysts.

## PROGRAM

09.00-09.30: Attendance, Registration.

09.30-09.40: Greeting entry by Konstantina Tsiraki, President of HENEGA

Session A'

09.40-12.30: Coordinator: Anastasia Patrikiou.

09.40-10.00: Charalambos Tsekeris: “Introduction: Habitus and Social Unconscious”.

10.00-10.45: Farhad Dalal: “The Social Unconscious in Society and in Clinical Practice”.

10.45-11.30: Takis Theodoropoulos: “Social Unconscious and Contemporary Greek Society: The columnist view”. T.Theodoropoulos is journalist, author and columnist in the newspaper: “Ekathimerini”.

11.30-12.00: Dimitris Kyriazis: “Social Unconscious and Terrorism. The Group Analyst's view”.

12.00-12.30: Discussion with the Audience.

12.30-13.00: Coffee-Break.

Session B'

13.00-14.30: Coordinator: Lily Stylianoudi.

13.00-13.40: Tom Ormay: “The Social Nature of Persons: One Person

is no Person”.

Tom Ormay is Psychoanalyst and Group Analyst in private practice. He has been editor of the Group Analysis Journal, until 2014. Having taught at British Universities, he is currently teaching at the University of Physical Education Budapest, at the John Wesley Theological College Budapest and the University of Szeged. His book “The Social Nature of Persons: One Person is No Person”, has been translated in Greek, and launched at this very day. Honorary Member of HENEGA 13.40-13.55: Farhad Dalal: “The Social Nature of Persons: Another way to take the Group Seriously?”.

13.55-14.10: Konstantina Tsiraki: “Tom Ormay’s concept of Nos and the concept of the Social Unconscious”.

14.10-14.25: Kostas Morogiannis: “Nos and Group Analysis”.

14.25-15.00: Closing of the Day

Coordinator: Kostas Morogiannis

Discussion with the Audience and the Lecturers.

This Conference Day functioned like an opening to society from a completely new perspective for me. In a warm welcoming place, different people with common interests gathered in the audience, eager to absorb knowledge, experience, attitude, way of thinking, behaving and acting, as presented by the senior lecturers invited: the latter somehow expressed manner of being, rather than teaching, a feeling refreshing indeed! This whole event was homogeneously internalized as contain and content, simultaneously developing, consolidated through experiential processes.

Introductory remarks by K. Tsiraki outlined the framework of the Day.

C. Tsekeris highlighted in a sophisticated manner the concepts of Habitus and Social Unconscious, providing examples and analogues from social sciences applying to the contemporary conditions of living.

F. Dalal inspired us, using his admirably thrifty solid expression, while sharing his deepest concerns about the evolution of the practice of group analysis; the counteractions between the individual-therapist, the individual-patient in a group analytic group, both combined with the applications of the social unconscious in everyday life. Interrelated features characterize human existence. Using S. H. Foulkes’s ideas, he develops a novel notion in psychotherapy. Reflections upon hate, racism, equality, multicultural society are puzzling him. Referring to ideas already presented in his books, (one of them translated and published in Greek), he is efficiently combining theoretical concepts and simple examples.

Moreover, he succeeds in interpreting some aspects of the Greek social unconscious, as displayed in this very seminar!

T. Theodoropoulos: In his fluent narrative talk, he guided us - not without humour - through mythological aspects and historical manifestations of the Greek Social Unconscious, blessing or curse of our people. It is painful to mirror yourself.

D. Kyriazis: Myths seduce us. He therefore uses mythological analogues in order to provoke a deeper understanding of how and why a terrorist is been 'constructed'.

Tom Ormay: Even though his plane landed after several hours of delay, he shows the vigilance of a teenager. His keen thinking and exponential talking carry us in a different dimension, where time and place limits are forgotten. We become parts of his 'Nos' – Latin word for 'us' - concept, as he explains the biological and evolutionary basis of the Social Nature of Persons. The application of this notion in psychotherapy places the contour of its intervention power. We are hence convinced that One Person is No Person, as he declares in his book, currently translated and edited in Greek, launched at that day.

K. Tsiraki: In a masterly way, she combines T. Ormay's Nos and Social Unconscious concepts in a diagram connected with experimental data and applied in every day clinical practice of group analysis.

K. Morogiannis: He composes this whole day's core idea in his well-known logical analysis, expressed simply, fully comprehensive, complete and solid as a hard rock.

Friday, 08/04/2016

Group Analytic Psychotherapy of Patients with Hematological Malignancies

Lecturer: Ioannis Nikolis, Psychiatrist-Group Analyst. Coordinator: K. Morogiannis.

A research program was developed mainly in Theageio Anticancer Hospital of Thessaloniki, Greece, during a three-year period (1992-1995), for patients diagnosed with hematological malignant diseases. The purpose was to investigate the psychosomatic dimension of cancer, as well as the impact of psychotherapeutic intervention to those patients. Three groups of patients were formed;

A: received conventional therapy in combination with psychotherapy  
 B: received only conventional therapy C: control group. The results showed considerable amelioration of all parameters measured (quality of life, stress, personality diagram MMPI, adjustment) except depression in group A as compared to the other two groups. Psychotherapy is therefore recommended to patients suffering from cancer, in combination with somatic treatment. Psychoneuroimmunologic mechanisms seem to be involved in the rationale of malignancies.

### EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS

*Good-byes are in order. Through a misunderstanding, we believe this to be our last small group meeting, whereas in fact there are more still to come until the end of May. In a way though, it seems as if a fulfilment has come to a conclusion, to wander beyond which, feels pointless. Tears in my eyes, pain in my heart. I don't like farewells! Will I ever see you again? Will anything be the same ever again? Shall I miss you? Will you forget me? I know I carry you within. I am not the same person anymore. The circle has closed.*

Saturday, 09/04/2016

### WORKSHOP: BALINT GROUPS

“The function of a supportive nurse's group ( Balint Group type ) in the setting of a Special Oncologic Hospital”

Lecturer and Conductor: Ioannis Nikolis

Venue: Center of Professional Training/Center of Psychic Hygiene,  
 166 Agiou Meletiou str., Athens, Greece.

09.00-09.30: Attendance

09.30-11.00: Balint Groups

Dr I. Nikolis divides the workshop in two sessions, in order to better explain his way of applying Balint's Group type in a Special Oncologic Hospital.

SESSION A': During session A' half of us are role-playing as patients suffering from terminal malignancies, members of a supportive group meeting in the hospital, him being the conductor. The experience is breath-taking. The conductor displays his support in a sensitive, calm, reassuring and stable manner. Dignity is the word. Tears are burning my face, I didn't realize my silent mourning. But in a peculiar way the burden of unfairness feels erased. Somehow the purpose of life overcomes death.

SESSION B': During session B' half of us are role-playing as nurses working with patients suffering from terminal malignancies. Although

the conductor is the same, he approaches in a quite different manner this group. A delicate balance between support to the suffering patient and firm professional attitude-without losing one's sensitivity- is revealed. Lives in and out of the hospital are mixed without imposing on one another. Through pain, perhaps even because of it, life goes on.

Friday, 15/04/2016 & Friday, 22/04/2016

Large Group Experience

Conductor: Dora Skali

EASTER HOLIDAYS

Friday, 13/05/2016

Large Group Experience

Conductor: Dora Skali

### *LARGE GROUP*

*What does it really stand for? Is it a simulation of society? Surrounded by people, yet I feel alone, drowning in a silence thick enough to cut through with a knife. Who will break in? Hero or victim? Is there a purpose? Will they support me or fight me? Are they also frightened? Am I strong enough to defy them? Dare I look for friends? Shall I be more secure among justified enemies? Finally, I speak. Someone speaks after me. Another one speaks after them. I walk in a mine field: Exposed. This is the path.*

Friday, 20/05/2016

Large Group: A Theoretical Approach

Lecturer: A. Matsagas. Coordinator: K. Kanellakis

Theories about large group are analyzed, as expressed by G. L. Bon, S. Freud, S. H. Foulkes, P. de Mare, T. Main, R. Pisani. The function of the large group as an independent therapeutic instrument, symbolizing society, is explained.

Friday, 27/05/2016

Report on and Evaluation of the Seminar. Closure.

Lecturer: K. Morogiannis. Coordinator: L. Stylianoudi.

An overall composition of the Seminar's proceedings was attempted. Questioners previously anonymously answered by the attendants were analysed. Propositions and ideas for the future improvement of the Seminar were discussed; Conclusion.

## EXODUS

Photographs are taken. E-mails and mobile phone numbers are exchanged. Some people are leaving the place hurriedly, as if hunted. Others delay their departure using excuses to prolong their stay. The unspoken is heavy. The conquered fades away. Some of us decide to meet later for a drink. This gathering feels fake, awkward, embarrassing. Cohesion is lost. Estrangement dominates. There is a burden upon us. I almost regret coming. On the other hand, maybe it is for the best: to realise the difference. We leave all together, afterwards scattering to different routes. We keep Hope.

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“Ask yourself, and keep on asking until you find the answer, for one can recognize a thing many times and acknowledge it, one can want a thing many times and attempt it, yet only the deep inner movement, only the indescribable motions of the heart, only these convince you that what you have recognised ‘belongs unto you’, that no power can take it from you; for only the truth that edifies is truth for you” (S. Kierkegaard).

The air blows strongly. Waves slap against the small boats tied to the pier. The horizon lies promising, far away. Passengers walk alongside me. I join them while talking. Is it a dream? No, this is real life. I am constantly reborn in the group.

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Group Analysis in Albania Opens Up a New Perspective on Understanding the Past and the Present

By Anxhela Gramo

‘Group psychotherapy helps to reconcile the individual to the group and to strengthen his roots within it, roots that are often disrupted by the complexities of modern living.’ (Foulkes, 1964)

Group Analysis has a special meaning in post-totalitarian societies like Albania. In our country, the social unconscious clearly is impacted by historical and current small and large group dynamics. In the Albanian setting, the most manifest is the long-term effect of physical and psychological violence in the context of social, cultural and political autocracy and authoritarianism. These complex dynamics have created an ambivalent attitude towards groups; not only a desire for the freedom of expression that group analysis offers, which is attractive in itself, but also deep anxiety about the destructive potential of authoritarian oppression.

It was two years ago, that these topics emerged strongly in our very first discussions between Dr. Erald Bekteshi, an Albanian psychotherapist who lives in London, Mr. Robert Harris, Senior group analyst, IGA UK, and myself. This is how we started, as a unique group itself, coming from different countries, yet sharing common professional and human interests.

Since April 2015, our team, and later on, the local organizing committee has coordinated six introductory experiential and theoretical weekends on group analysis in Tirana facilitated by Mr. Robert Harris. Concurrently, some talks on the social unconscious were well received by a larger Albanian audience, which reinforced our determination to further continue with great passion what had already started.

In only two years from the first introductory groups in Tirana, we have an IGA London accredited Foundation Course ready to begin in January 2017. We are delighted with this progress; our training group consists of experienced individual therapists, educational psychologists, a psychoanalyst in training, an internet journalist, professionals from other fields such as finance, and university students. The training group, based in Tirana, represents the cultural diversity of Albania in terms of life experiences, religion, sexualities,

professional and educational backgrounds. However, our training group is predominantly composed of women. One of the significant aspects of our cultural context is the absence of men in our psychotherapeutic environments. We aim to address this problem as we progress.

The association “Group Analysis Albania” (GAA) announced itself with a public presentation on November 10th, 2016 in Tirana, Albania. GAA was legally registered in April 2016, and is now running its activity through a steering committee to promote and develop the discipline and the practice of group analysis as well as to coordinate the qualification program in group analysis in Albania. Group Analysis Albania is also a member of EGATIN since April 2016.

We are very pleased to be joining the international community of group analysis. Of course, an aspect of Albanian history is our relative isolation, and we welcome the opportunity to join with others who are working to make some sense of our complex and interconnected world and its impact on the mental health of individuals.

With the support of the program director Mr. Harris, we are working hard in our groups in Albania to articulate and communicate our experiences together. The methods, process and experience of group analysis can make a valuable contribution to international understanding. We feel that our work to understand our Albanian experience has a great deal to offer, and we look forward in time to extending a welcome to overseas group analysts to visit Albania and to join with us in our group analytic explorations.

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Editor's note: see also <http://www.exit.al/en/2016/11/13/group-psychotherapy-in-albania/>

‘Groups’ and ‘Gangs’ in Group Analysis: The Importance of the Sociological Perspective

By Earl Hopper, PhD

Presented at the IGA Study Day in November 2015: ‘The Social Unconscious’ and the Inner City: Gangs and Communities

1. Our appreciation of the importance of the sociological perspective in the study of groups and gangs really depends on our appreciation of the importance of the study of the so-called “social unconscious”. For me, this is another way of saying quite simply that the group analytic perspective is very important in the study of groups and gangs. I really do believe that the individual and the group are two sides of the same coin, and that the study of them depends on what is abstracted as the unit of analysis from out of the magma (Hopper & Weinberg, 2011, 2015; Hopper, 2003a).
2. I define the social unconscious in terms of the socio-cultural arrangements of which people are “unaware”, which is a euphemism for making themselves unconscious and/or pre-conscious through repression as well as denial or disavowal, because recognising these arrangements in full would make them feel painfully anxious. I study persons and their groupings in terms of a field theory of the social unconscious. I focus through the lens of a dynamic, multi-variate and open social system. This might seem to be a set of contradictions in terms, a set of oxymorons, but it is really not. It is very important to understand that the environment of social systems is also at the very core of them. This is true of persons and all of their groupings. The main elements in a field theory of the social unconscious are sociality and socialisation, relationality, transpersonality, and transgenerationality and collectivity. The study of trauma is often associated with the study of the social unconscious, mainly because trauma involves failed dependency and relational defences against the fear of annihilation.

3. In the same way that whereas all families are groups, not all groups are families, all gangs are groups, but not all groups are gangs (thankfully). A gang is a particular kind of group, or to be more precise a group-like social system with particular features. Moreover, it is often not helpful to describe a gang as though it were a person, that is, to use the language and concepts that are apposite for describing a person for describing the gang as a grouping of a particular kind. A gang is not a person. They are, however, each social systems. I suppose that this is really a matter of not confusing analogies with homologies.
4. The sociology of the gang as a particular kind of social system can be traced to literature from the 1800s if not before. For example, see the entries for “gang” in Wikipedia. Especially useful is Claire Alexander’s *(Re)thinking ‘Gangs’*, published in 2008 by the Runnymede Trust. The sociological study of gangs reached its zenith in the 1970’s. The key argument in this work was that gangs emerged within the social psychological “space” created by the failure of society to provide the means for achieving those very same goals that it promoted, especially in marginal and under-dog groups of people, the so-called “down and outs”, perhaps especially those who might be visibly demarcated in terms of colour and/or who might be recognised in terms of their ethnicity, and who have relationships of interdependence and solidarity, such as those found in closely knit families, but who were not similarly integrated into the wider contextual society, for example, because they are unemployed. Sociologically, there were, and presumably still are, many different kinds of gangs, ranging from simple friendship gangs of childhood and adolescence, simple ‘street’ gangs, work gangs, and so on, to larger more complex criminal gangs, such as the mafia, both the Italian Mafia and other gangs who have come to be called “mafia”, which are similar to but certainly not the same thing as the Sicilian Mafia gang. In fact, the notion of gang covers a multitude of social organisations, only some of which involve what is sometime called “social pathology”. In fact, I resist using the notion of social pathology, because “pathology” is really a matter for negotiation, in that what might be criminal from the point of view of the wider society is not necessarily criminal from the point of view of the members of gang, many

of whom get a great deal of support and help from their membership of the gang, which is not available to them from any other source.

Gangs are really mini societies, although they are transitional formations. They depend on a membership that is “in-between”, for example, adolescents, ethnicity that is in a state of change, immigration status that is a state of change, etc. In fact, the provision of goods that are defined as illegal is subject to change, because the laws change. There are core members of a gang and there are also peripheral members of a gang, although it must be acknowledged that some gangs operate in terms of the rule of the morgue: once in the gang there is no way out but death, perhaps by murder. Today, the study of gangs is increasingly a way of studying adolescents in deprived and peripheral groups, often a matter of race as much as of criminality.

5. The literature on the psychoanalysis of what is in effect an “internal gang” is summarised in *The New Dictionary of Kleinian Thought* under the heading of Pathological Organisation. The psychoanalysis of such internal gangs began with a casual reference to the internal ‘gang’ by Meltzer in 1968 in an article about terrorism, which emphasized the externalisation of the internal world of a terrorised person. Of course, the emphasis was on fantasy terror, as in a severe nightmare. This was picked up by Herbert Rosenfeld in the 1970’s in two articles about narcissism and destructive narcissism in which he emphasized that the internal world of the destructive narcissist was like a mafia gang or perhaps a Nazi gang. Of course, this argument was based on an appreciation of the importance of innate malign envy, the source of which was assumed to be the death instinct, which I personally think is hardly the basis of an explanation of it. This idea was picked up by John Steiner who has frequently referred to the internal gang of the borderline patient. Steiner’s ideas were slightly refined and modified by Ron Britton in 2003 in connection with the tension and oscillation between the paranoid/schizoid and depressive positions. Between 1968 and 2003 most of the senior Kleinian analysts presented cases of borderline psycho-pathology in which they described their internal worlds as gangs, e.g. Brenman, Segal, O’Shaughnessy, and Spillius, and so on, but unfortunately not *as though* they

were gangs, in other words, confusing analogies with homologies.

The main idea is that of what Steiner called “pathological organisation”. Part of this idea is that on the basis of a surfeit of innate malign envy a person feels fragmented, through the internalisation of the object that has been fragmented through the envious attack upon it. Somehow each fragment is personified, and alliances are established such that the vulnerable self is protected through intra-psychic relations among these personified part objects. These relations are maintained through the application of great cruelty and ruthless subterfuge, following the Code of Hammurabi. Clearly, the stability of such a personal organisation depends on maintaining hateful relations with an external enemy. Again, whereas it might be appropriate to refer to the internal world of the borderline patient as a pathological organisation, this is not an apposite metaphor for a social system and in particular for a gang. It would seem that although the metaphor of the gang has been used to describe the internal organisation of the borderline patient, the psychoanalysts involved have not studied the sociological literature about gangs.

6. In my own psychoanalytical work, I have focused on the phenomenology of the fear of annihilation as a consequence of strain, cumulative and catastrophic trauma involving failed dependency (Hopper, 1991, 1995). People who are in the throes of the fear of annihilation tend to develop a variety of psychotic anxieties associated with a sense of fission and fragmentation, in oscillation with a further set of psychotic anxieties associated with fusion and confusion of whatever is left of the self with whatever can be found in another person who is perceived as potentially helpful. People oscillate between fission and fragmentation, on the one hand, and fusion and confusion, on the other, because the primary defence against one set of anxieties carries with it another set of equally painful anxieties, the defences against which involve a retreat to the opposite mental and interpersonal state of mind. People tend to use encapsulation as a particular kind of disassociation in order to go on living. It is worth thinking about negative encapsulations, which are usually what people mean when they use the term “encapsulation”, as well as positive encapsulations in connection with extreme fear of annihilation

in which the good is taken inside in order to protect it from the bad.

7. The group analytic point of view is entirely relevant to the study of gangs in at least two ways: 1) because it is relational, and therefore combines psychoanalysis and sociology; and 2) because we can understand the structure of gang life in terms of what I have called the fourth basic assumption of Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification or (ba) I:A/M (Hopper, 2003b, 2012). On the basis of projective and introjective identification as well as other forms of externalisation and internalisation traumatised people create patterns of interaction, normation and communication that are manifestations of their internal worlds. Gangs are characterised by states of massification as a defence against aggregation. Based on valence and role suction, people with certain personalities become leaders of gangs as well as the personifiers of particular processes and features of them. In the context of these horizontal processes and structures, fundamentalism as the law of the Father and the word of the Father is established in order to regulate these processes of maternal and sibling merger and enmeshment. Law enforcement within a gang is much more stringent, absolute and ruthless, than it is in the wider society. I hope to write more about fundamentalism in this context. I understand fundamentalism to be a perversion of the Word and Law of the Father in the context of the dynamics of the fourth basic assumption of Incohesion.

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Group Analytic Concepts: The Unconscious

NOTE BY COMPILER: The idea of the unconscious is fundamental to any psychodynamic form of psychotherapy and is an underlying theme in much of the Group Analytic literature. It is impossible, given the ubiquity of this idea and the differing ways in which it is thought about and employed, to do more than present some significant snippets from the literature that may help to illuminate how this idea has been used.

From: Complex Dilemmas in Group Therapy: Pathways to Resolution, by Lise Motherwell, Joseph J. Shay. Routledge, 2005.

“Enactment” entered the therapeutic lexicon in the 1970s and 1980s (Eagle, 1984; Kohut, 1977; McLaughlin, 1987) and refers to “events occurring within the dyad that both parties experience as being the consequence of behaviour in the other” (McLaughlin, 1998). Eagle (1984) suggested that enactments could be understood as “unconscious attempts to deal with, in the relative safety of the therapeutic situation, material related to early conflict and trauma, for the purpose of mastering such material”. Eagle’s conceptualization includes the notion of purposefulness (i.e., an effort at mastery).....Enactments, like PIs, involve mutual, reciprocal influence and purposefulness that serve defensive and communicative functions, and, with effective understanding and management, also therapeutic purposes. Group therapists should expect them to occur and to make use of them. In effect, the enactments are the external manifestation of the unconscious dynamics, the fruit of the PI. The group therapist must be aware of his own emotional responses and use them to manage the PIs and their enactments.

Grinberg (1979) distinguished between complementary countertransference (the patient’s projection links with the analyst’s unconscious conflicts) and “projective counteridentification” (what the analyst introjects comes almost entirely from the patient). The latter concept is hard to imagine without some existing hook in the analyst, unless one sees analysts as empty vessels waiting to be filled.....Bion (1961) was the first analyst to write about a psychodynamic theory of group therapy, with its powerful unconscious life of transferences and countertransferences. Foulkes (1964) subsequently wrote that every group “bears the stamp of its therapist, reflecting his own conflicts and blind spots” indicating the effect of the therapist’s own unresolved conflicts. Examples of

common conflicts would include need for approval, power and authority struggles, unresolved family issues, separation and individuation concerns, and abandonment

Therapists may have unconscious expectations of group members based on ethnicity, gender, or other differences. For instance, gender-related countertransference may create unconscious expectations that are different for men and women (Bernardez, 1996). Group therapists may expect the “feminine” expressions of sadness, inadequacy, and tenderness from the women and the “masculine” expressions of anger, competition, sexual desire, and power from the men. If this expectation is not brought to consciousness, then the group members' compliance to their societal roles will go unexplored.

Hayes (1995) described several countertransference reactions unique to group therapy. Therapists may overly control group interaction because of unconscious fear of conflict, or perform individual therapy in the group setting because of a wish to control, play favourites, not uphold the contract, or participate in scapegoating.

From The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Group Psychotherapy by Jeffrey L. Kleinberg. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

“Experiencing the Large Group is experiencing oneself as part of a social matrix, as belonging to some connecting web that exists all around us but is usually invisible in ordinary day life. In the small group, we sense existence and impact of the-group-as-a-whole and experience “the group mind,” which is a dynamic product of the interaction of the group members. When we move from individuals to groups and as we see groups as an entity, we also have to shift our perspective from the individual Freudian unconscious and focus on a new kind of unconscious that emerges: the group unconscious. Large Groups reveal what is called “the social unconscious” or the organizational unconscious. The social unconscious (Hopper, 2003; Weinberg, 2007) refers to the existence and constraints of social, cultural and communication arrangements of which people are to varying degrees “unaware.” It includes anxieties, fantasies, defenses and object relations, as well as various aspects of socio-cultural-economic-political factors and forces, many of which are also co-constructed unconsciously by the members of particular groupings. Large Groups, conducted in an unstructured way and developing an atmosphere of exploration, can reveal this social unconscious by

focusing on shared defenses, fantasies and anxieties existing in that setting”.

From Ring of Fire: Primitive Affects and Object Relations in Group Psychotherapy. Victor L. Schermer, Malcolm Pines. Routledge, 1994.

“The in-depth interpretation of unconscious phantasy is in some danger of becoming a lost art within group psychotherapy. In this chapter (Resnik’s chapter), the reader can look forward to discovering the work of one of the true artists of depth interpretation. Judiciously used and properly attuned to the patients’ needs, the grasp of the phantasy life and of internalized object relations is a powerful group therapy tool”.

“A cohesive group atmosphere is crucial if members are not to be overwhelmed by the intensity of rageful and competitive emotions and feelings which are often triggered by projections on to other members or the therapist of unconscious, archaic mental representations of a sado-masochistic nature”.

“If group pressures can enforce distorted perceptions of a line then they can surely enforce distorted perceptions of the members themselves. We know this goes on-the well-known forms of scapegoating, stereotyping, and so on. And we know that there are hidden sources of these pressures-the unconscious forces deeply hidden within each individual. These forces derive from the intrapsychic processes of the individuals, their unconscious phantasies and impulses and the way they cohere through processes of identification; and they become manifest as the group-as-a-whole (Lewin’s ‘social field’, Foulkes’s ‘matrix’ and Bion’s ‘group mentality’)”.

“Depression uses the language of complaining and blaming-a litany bemoaning fate and crying out to God. ‘Out of the depths I cry to thee, Oh Lord, Lord hear my voice’ says the 130th psalm. The voice of depression, reaching out in guilt; a sinner in repentance; justifiably abandoned; seeking forgiveness and love and bemoaning fate. But forgiveness and repentance bring, at best, only temporary relief. The crime of the depressed does not exist in reality. Relief comes only when the depressed gains access to the primitive violence in the retaliatory fantasies that are the reality of the unconscious. In the unconscious, where there is no distinction between thought and word

and deed, the crime has already been committed. When the unconscious is made conscious, there is no crime.....Despair is not only a matter of accessing unconscious fantasy, but also a matter of finding the way to the lost self and to the forgotten language”.

“In the clinical field we are increasingly paying attention to the difference that our clinical orientation makes to how dynamics manifest in groups. Take for example the differences in approach to the 'identified patient' and 'scapegoat' roles. One approach will analyse the unconscious motives of the individuals; another the interpersonal repetition compulsions or the role suction; another the games people play; and still another will focus on the here-and-now function of the behaviour for the developing system. As the twig is bent so the bough grows. Even more important to our field is the question of how we tell the difference, in our work in therapy, between when we address issues that are generic to treating human ills, and when what we address are iatrogenic, regressive or defensive constellations elicited by our own clinical interpretations”.

“In the early phases of group development almost all therapist communications, however descriptive, are experienced as super-ego injunctions. Inevitably, before the modification of the relationship with authority, interpretations of unconscious motives, however empathic, vastly increase group anxiety, defensiveness and dependency. What is worse, when the members imitate the intervention style of the therapist (as all members do before they gain autonomy in the group) their interpretative style is not only an identification with the aggressor, but also an effective method of turning communication into ammunition in the power, control and status fights of the first phase of group life”.

“The notion of an unconscious invasive, evacuative, controlling or communicative phantasy, an interaction with an internal object, is extended to include congruent impacts on external objects; and the stage is set for the application of the theory of projective identification to the infant-mother dyad, to the analytic transference-countertransference and to an understanding of unconscious group dynamics”.

“Understanding Bion's group basic assumptions (predicated on an unconscious symphony of projective and introjective processes in the paranoid-schizoid mode of experience) allows for a grip on these

complex phenomena. The group basic assumptions of dependency, fight/flight and pairing can be seen as a group-level crystallization of this transference/countertransference matrix and a collaborative defensive effort against the primal anxieties generated by the task of growth and development”.

“Seeking a link in the complex and essential network in the labyrinthine life of the institutional unconscious, is 'macroscopically' complementary to what happens microscopically in the group in question”.

From Dreams in Group Psychotherapy: Theory and Technique. Claudio Neri, Malcolm Pines, Robi Friedman. Jessica Kingsley. 2002.

“A dream being a transient encounter by the dreamer of his or her repressed wishes, fears, hopes, inhibitions and conflicts provides a fertile soil for exploring not only the unconscious of the dreamer, but also the ‘here and now’ setting in which the dream is presented.

How the group, along with its conductor, is able to recognise, hold, contain and respond to the raw emotions expressed in a dream, along with the transference of the dreamer to the group, is an art in its own right. Such work is actualised only after years of experience and a very sound underlying theoretical framework”.

“The above helps explain how some day’s residues (that cannot be properly defined as unfulfilled wishes) finally serve to realise a wish, which is, after all, the aim of dreaming. In fact, every type of daytime thought, even if negative, enters into a relationship with an unconscious infantile wish, which can then be ‘transformed’ and brought back to consciousness”.

“The dream appears to the dreamer with the same realistic character of external sensorial perceptions as found in hallucinatory phenomena. To explain this, Freud (1900) assumed that, while during the state of wake excitation follows a path across the psychic apparatus from the structures involved in perception to those controlling motility, in the state of sleep, excitation coming from desires which stem from the unconscious proceeds backwards. Using the mnemonic traces reprocessed by the dream-work, excitation activates the perceptual system in which the representative content of the dream appears with the vividness of a real perception or of a hallucination.

Scenes representing the compromise between desire and censorship (and in the case of the group, the reciprocal bonds among participants) function, in this way, as ‘desire hallucinatory fulfilment’”.

“Dreaming and dream-telling are thus different prototypes of change, representing two complementary models of the human mind’s development. Therefore, dream-telling as a powerful vehicle of projective identification may be the royal road to the self through the other’s unconscious.....Psychoanalysis began by considering the interpretation of dreams to be the main road to the unconscious of the dreamer. Now it seems the royal road to the dreamer’s unconscious is through audience identification, and a main road to change for all involved. Dreaming and dream-telling represent two complementary models of the human mind’s development and transformation. If preliminary autonomous attempts to process conflicts through dreaming remain unsuccessful, dream-telling may be used in a second interpersonal attempt as a powerful vehicle of projective identification onto a willing audience”.

“...projective identification seems to be the main unconscious interpersonal relational process active in groups (Rafaelsen 1996), as well as central to the dream’s unconscious function. Projecting disowned feelings onto an identifying group may fulfil at least three tasks: building some kind of object relation with the recipient of these messages; changing this significant ‘other’ through communication; and changing the self through the transformation this ‘other’ will accomplish for him”.

“Often the dreamer can work with the dream only up to a certain point, but the unconscious is surprised by the disguise in the metaphor in the dream and may open up other members in their own associations regarding their own experiences.....I strongly agreethat group dream associations in a safe playful workspace further deepen self and group understandings while on the unconscious ‘royal’ yellow brick road of discovery”.

From The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy. Irvin D. Yalom. Basic Books. 1995.

“The task of therapy groups is to engage in meaningful communication with the other group members, to reveal oneself, to give valid feedback, and to examine the hidden and unconscious aspects of one’s feelings, behaviour, and motivation”.

“The powerful and unconscious factors that influence human behaviour are by no means limited to the past. Current analytic theory makes a distinction between the past unconscious (the child within the adult) and the present unconscious (the currently existing unconscious thoughts, fantasies, and impulses that influence our feelings and actions). Furthermore, as I shall discuss, the future, as well as the past and the present, is also a significant determinant of behaviour.

The past may affect our behaviour through pathways fully described by traditional psychoanalytic theorists and by learning theorists (strange bedfellows). However, the "not yet," the future, is a no less powerful determinant of behaviour, and the concept of future determinism is fully defensible. We have at all times within us a sense of purpose, an idealized self, a series of goals for which we strive, a death toward which we veer. These factors, both conscious and unconscious, all arch into the future and profoundly influence our behaviour. Certainly the knowledge of our isolation, our destiny, and our ultimate death deeply influences our conduct and our inner experience. Though we generally keep them out of awareness, the terrifying contingencies of our existence play upon us without end. We either strive to dismiss them by enveloping ourselves in life's many diversions, or we attempt to vanquish death by faith in an after- life or by striving for symbolic immortality in the form of children, material monuments, and creative expression”.

“Enigma, ambiguity, absence of cognitive anchoring, and frustration of conscious and unconscious wishes all facilitate regressive reaction to the therapist and help create an atmosphere favourable to the development of transference. These therapists wish to encourage such regressive phenomena and the emergence of unconscious impulses so that they may be identified and worked through in therapy”.

“Projective identification, an unconscious process involved in mirroring, consists of projecting some of one's own (but disowned) attributes onto another, toward whom one subsequently feels an uncanny attraction-repulsion. A stark literary example of projective identification occurs in Dostoevsky nightmarish tale *The Double*, in which the protagonist encounters a man who is his physical double and yet a personification of all the dimly perceived, hated aspects of himself”.

“One patient wished that through therapy she would become so well that she would be even more superior to her adversaries by "out mental-healthing" them; another patient wished to learn how to manipulate others even more effectively; another wished to become a more effective seducer. These goals may be unconscious or, even if conscious, well hidden from others; they are not part of the initial contract the patient makes with the therapist, and yet they exert a pervasive influence in the therapeutic work”.

“...the patient has conflicting motivations that cannot be simultaneously satisfied. For example, a male patient may wish to establish mature heterosexual relationships; but at another, often unconscious, level, he may wish to be nurtured, to be cradled endlessly, to assuage castration anxiety by a maternal identification or, to use an existential vocabulary, to be sheltered from the terrifying freedom of adulthood”.

From The Social Unconscious: Selected Papers. Earl Hopper. Jessica Kingsley. 2002.

“The concept of the social unconscious refers to the existence and constraints of social, cultural and communicational arrangements of which people are unaware: unaware, in so far as these arrangements are not perceived (not ‘known’), and if perceived not acknowledged (‘denied’), and if acknowledged, not taken as problematic (‘given’), and if taken as problematic, not considered with an optimal degree of detachment and objectivity. Although social constraints are sometimes understood in terms of myth, ritual and custom, such constraints are in the realm of the ‘unknown’ to the same extent as the constraints of instincts and fantasies, especially in societies with high status rigidity. However, ‘constraint’ is not meant to imply only ‘restraint’, ‘inhibition’, or ‘limitation’, but also ‘facilitation’, ‘development’ and even the transformation of sensations into feelings.

The concept of the social unconscious may be used to refer to the social and cultural elements and processes that exist within three categories of unconscious phenomena: that of which people are unaware but of which they were formerly aware, for example, the thoughts and feelings denoted by the ‘Oedipus complex’; that of which they are unaware but of which they were partly aware, for example, fantasy life that occurred prior to language acquisition; and that of which they are unaware, and of which they were never aware. Information that was and is barely accessible to knowing, and that

could not and cannot really be known directly, is called 'archaic', or more helpfully 'the unthought known' (Bollas 1987), although I prefer to think in terms of the 'dynamic non-conscious'.

The social unconscious is not merely a matter of the preconscious, and cannot be reduced to questions of awareness. The social unconscious is 'lawful' in the same sense that the dynamic unconscious operates according to 'primary process'. Structural dilemma and contradictions abound, and some arrangements and cultural patterns preclude others.

It is misleading to assume that people have unconscious minds in the same sense that they have complex brains; it is more appropriate to assume that people are unconscious, pre-conscious and non-conscious of much thought, feeling, fantasy and even sensation. Similarly, social systems do not have 'unconscious minds' or any kinds of mind, and the use of the concept of the social unconscious should not be taken to imply otherwise. After all, social systems are not organisms, and the notion 'group mind' is rather misleading. Nonetheless, whereas we have come to accept the validity and utility of the concept 'unconscious' for phenomena originating in the body, we need a concept like the 'social unconscious' in order to discuss social, cultural and communicational constraints".

From The Group as Therapist. Rachael Chazan. Jessica Kingsley. 2001.

"Freud (1924) spoke of the aim of psychoanalysis as making the unconscious conscious. This we might liken to perceiving shapes in what was previously darkness. Insight is one kind of change of perception. One might say it means learning to see aspects of oneself to which one had been blind".

"...every therapist, by virtue of being human, has personal assumptions about social norms, some of which may be unconscious. They exist however hard we may try to be neutral and objective. Let me illustrate this with an anecdote from the life of the neurologist and anthropologist W.H. Rivers (Barker 1991). He asked a group of islanders what they would do if they found or earned a guinea – would they share it? At some point they turned the tables on him; they asked him the same question. When he said he was unmarried and saw no need to share it at all, they began to laugh; this seemed very strange to them. 'He suddenly realized that their reactions to his society were neither more or less valid than his to theirs and saw not only that we

weren't the measure of all things, but that there was no measure' (Barker 1991). Any group may, of course, have its own bias, its own prejudices. In one experiential group for professionals the motto was: 'Speak for yourself, do not discuss the group process.' In another group of the same kind, this did not feature at all. Every group has its own culture, and has developed tacit precepts of what should and should not be done in the course of the group".

"Families had various expectations of the therapist, conscious and unconscious: reassurance, relief from anxiety and guilt feelings, possibly a magic 'cure' for the identified patient that would turn her into just the kind of person they wanted without any need for change on their part".

"What I mean by the group being a system is that its members, while remaining individuals, act in ways they could do only in that particular group. They remain themselves but also become group members, and by virtue of this can take on special roles and functions. Their actions and communications are interconnected; for example, a kind of free association occurs between members, so that apparently unconnected communications are found to be connected after all, because they have common unconscious roots. The group can act as a whole; one member may sometimes express feelings on behalf of the whole group..... the basic rule, saying whatever comes to mind, produces free-floating discussion – the equivalent of free association in the individual. Thus, apparently unconnected communications may have related unconscious roots.

"There is a type of countertransference which is a projection of the unconscious of the patient (Searles 1965) and this can be very useful. The group may be communicating a sense of hope or despair without this being evident from their words. For the therapist to say so may open up communication in this direction".

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

"The symbolic maternal link is not surprising: the powerful conscious and unconscious resonances of the mother-infant relationship inevitably occur in group psychotherapy and the metaphor provides a rich associative context for interpretation of group phenomena. At the same time, it is significant that a possible point of reconciliation can be reached only within a symbolic framework, as if more direct

consideration of group behaviour precludes this degree of integration”.

“The group-analytic model is a more benign one than the Bionian, the therapist more actively attuned to the needs of the group. However, the task of the group remains open-ended and the leadership essentially non-directive. The rationale is that this stimulates a deeper level of communication and relating in the group, including the evocation and projection of unconscious material. Additionally, as Foulkes emphasised, this encourages the assumption of authority by the group itself, in this way strengthening the group”.

“As therapist, the conductor fundamentally represents the containing function of the group. In the course of ordinary group development, this function is to a large extent assumed by the group, as it grows stronger and more autonomous. But in the anti-group condition, the containing function of the group breaks down and there is added pressure on the conductor to supply this. The conductor may find himself very challenged. The anti-group is likely to evoke powerful feelings in him too, stirring up a host of conscious and unconscious attitudes that threaten his capacity to ‘hold’ the group, in particular testing his ‘neutrality, empathy and forbearance’”.

“Free-floating discussion: this is the group equivalent of free association in psychoanalysis. Since various members of the group contribute spontaneously to this process, the associative pattern in a group can build up in particularly rich, imaginative ways, releasing unconscious imagery and emotional expressiveness that lead to insight and understanding. Dream material particularly lends itself to this process in the group, often in highly generative ways.”.

From Using Groups to Help People. Dorothy Stock Whitaker. Routledge. 2000.

“Earlier I made it plain that I consider interpretations to be a high-risk form of intervention, especially if they impute unconscious motives or feelings to one person or to the members in general. In my own groups, I make infrequent use of interpretations. If I offer an interpretation I try to keep it close to the language used by the members themselves”.

“With reference to the first point, a group therapist can recognise group-level dynamics in the group, such as norms, shared beliefs, degrees of cohesiveness, prevailing themes, shared unconscious fears,

and so on, without either assuming uniformity within the group with respect to them or feeling compelled to offer interpretations 'at the group level'. Kibel (1993) has said that 'a clinical focus on group-level processes is not the same as construing the existence of group-as-a-whole dynamics'. There is a distinction, in other words, between what a therapist thinks-the meanings which he or she puts on observed events-and what the therapist then says or does in the group. A group therapist may note group-level dynamics. This does not mean that he or she will necessarily intervene or interpret at the group level, and it does not follow that the therapist is 'treating the group'".

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Compiled by Terry Birchmore

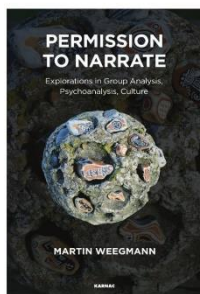
BOOK CORNER

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
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NEW FROM **KARNAC**

PERMISSION TO NARRATE
Explorations in Group Analysis,
Psychoanalysis, Culture

BY MARTIN WEEGMANN

Price: £ 19.99/\$ 32.95
Pbk 168pp, October 2016
ISBN: 9781782203629

BIC Code: Psychoanalysis (JMA)

Permission to Narrate develops exciting new theories and explorations for group analysis with accessible clinical and historical examples that bring theory to life. The book addresses the ways in which silenced, submerged, and less confident voices emerge in groups, finding permission and narration, often against the odds. It will be of interest to clinicians and academics across disciplines, including history, social psychology, and cultural studies.

'These excellent and elegant essays extend the frontiers of group analysis, adding further depth and breadth, not to mention innovation, to our discipline and researches.'
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'Very original, imaginative and striking – a different point of view on what we do.'
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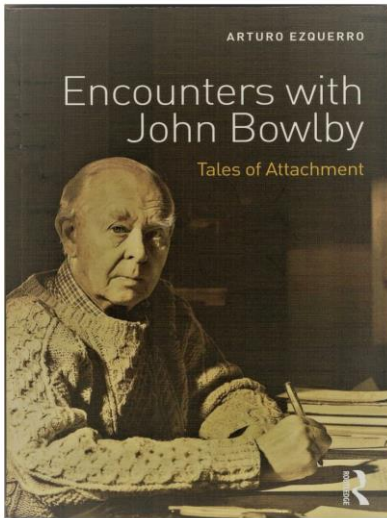
Contents

- The rhetorical ground of group analysis
- Taking position: what groups do we bring?
- Remembering monsters
- "Naught but a story to tell": Alcoholics Anonymous
- Revolutionary subjects, bodies, and crowds
- Psychoanalytic fascinations: my seven Freuds ...
- Discipline anxiety—time for paradigm change in group analysis!

About the Author

MARTIN WEEGMANN is a clinical psychologist, group analyst and author. He has edited two influential books on addiction and is the author of *The World within the Group*.

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**FRIDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2017, 6.00PM
TAVISTOCK CLINIC**

You are warmly invited to this book launch

ENCOUNTERS WITH JOHN BOWLBY: TALES OF ATTACHMENT

Publisher: Routledge. **Author:** Dr Arturo Ezquerro (consultant psychiatrist, psychoanalytic psychotherapist, and group analyst)

Programme

6.00 Doors open

6.30 Film and presentations

7.30 Guitar performance

7.45 Light refreshments

9.30 End

"Part festschrift, part eulogy, part love letter: a rare amalgam of common sense and inspiration"
(Prof Jeremy Holmes)

"My father would have been deeply moved by it"
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"Brings to life a great man in a way the best of biographies can"
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"Transforms a 'theory' into a lived experience" (Liza Glenn)

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(Dr Sebastian Kraemer)

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"No-one interested in Bowlby and attachment will want to be without it"
(Dr Ray Haddock)

VENUE

Tavistock Clinic, Auditorium
(5th Floor)
120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA

RSVP by 26th January 2017
Ring Institute of Group Analysis:

0207 431 2693

or email:

arturo.ezquerro@ntlworld.com

EVENTS

GAS International Quarterly Members Group (QMG)

The dates for sessions in 2017:

Saturday 28th January

Saturday 29th April

Saturday 15th July

Saturday 21st 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 £30 per day.
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.

Crossing Borders: Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges



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

- first announcement -

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

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



Welcoming Letter

Crossing Borders Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges

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

**17th
International
Symposium
of the
Group Analytic Society
International**

It is with great pleasure that the Group Analytic Society international (GASI) in cooperation with the Berliner Institut für Gruppenanalyse 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 psychotherapists 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 unconscious 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 experiential 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



CREATING LARGE GROUP DIALOGUE IN ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY

A two-year IGA professional developmental programme



BIRMINGHAM 2017 – 2019

12 weekends over 2 years – from June 2017 to Sept 2019

This programme is designed for senior practitioners from any professional background facing the challenge inherent in settings where large group processes operate. These might be an organisation, project team, community group or any group where there is a wish to include people in decision-making, encourage consultation processes, bridge racial, cultural and religious divides, or tackle local and global challenges. The particular focus is on how hidden processes in the socio-political context impede the capacity to think creatively when making decisions, developing policy or building strategy.

Based in an easily accessible residential setting at beautiful Woodbrooke in Birmingham, Europe's only Quaker Study Centre, the programme takes place over twelve weekends over two years. Delegates will have the opportunity through experiential work and seminars to learn how to apply group analytic principles to facilitate dialogue in any setting. Delegates will work on a 'live project' based on their own working environment as a piece of 'action research' to apply their learning to their specific contexts.

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Year 1: £2760.00 (£2500.00 early bird if paid in full before 1st Feb 2017)

Year 2: £2760.00 (£2500.00 early bird if paid in full before 1st May 2018)

Full accommodation costs: approximately £200 + 20% VAT per weekend for 12 weekends over 2 years payable in addition to delegate fees

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Course convenor:

Teresa von Sommaruga Howard

Dates 2017 –2019

Year 1

2 - 4 June 2017

28 - 30 July 2017

3 - 5 November 2017

19 - 21 January 2018

2 - 4 March 2018

11 - 13 May 2018

Year 2

31 Aug - 2 Sept 2018

2 - 4 November 2018

18 - 20 January 2019

1 - 2 March 2019

10 - 12 May 2019

30 Aug - 1 Sept 2019

Please note that delegates must attend all 12 sessions over two years.

For more information visit:
www.groupanalysis.org



FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

41st S.H. FOULKES ANNUAL LECTURE

Friday 19th May 2017 at 7:00pm

***The Times They Are A-Changing:
Evolving Group Analytic Identity***

Foulkes Lecturer: Sylvia Hutchinson

Respondent: David Vincent

Please note that the Lecture is at 7-8.30pm. Drinks afterwards until 10pm.

Study Day to follow on Saturday May 20th 2017

From 9am to 5pm

Respondent: Dr Kurt Husemann

In dialogue with Sylvia Hutchinson and David Vincent

Chair: Sue Einhorn

Large Group Conductor: Dr Thor Kristian Island

Please Note **New Venue** for both events:

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS (RIBA),

66 Portland Place
London W1B 1AD

(nearest tube stations: Oxford Circus, Regent's Park and Great Portland Street)

Full programme to follow

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Phone: +44(0)20 7435 6611
www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk
E-mail: office@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk

Contact:
Julia Porturas
Administrator



Dear GASI Member,

It is with great pleasure that GASI invites you to the Film Premiere of:

'Pioneers of Group Analysis'

by Wilhelm Rösing and Marita Barthel-Rösing

Liesel Hearst and Malcolm Pines remember their approach and their contribution to the development of group analysis, supplemented by influential group analysts of the following generation.

With Jane Campbell, Vivian Cohen, Farhad Dalal, Sue Einhorn, Robi Friedman, Earl Hopper, Sylvia Hutchinson, Morris Nitsun, John Schlapobersky, Meg Sharpe, Gerhard Wilke and Hymie Wyse.

The documentary film connects all these memories to a collective story and charts the spread of the ideas of S.H. Foulkes in the UK and abroad.

The Premiere will take place on **Sunday 22nd January 2017 at 4pm**

at the Guy Whittle Auditorium,
Royal Society of Medicine,
1 Wimpole Street,
London, W1G 0AE.
(Nearest tube: Bond Street or Oxford Street Station)

The Premiere will be opened by Sue Einhorn
with an introduction by Marita Barthel-Rösing.

After the film you are invited to talk together over a drink.

Robi Friedman
President

To book on-line, please follow this link:

<http://subscribercrm.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/Event-Search/Event-Booking/EventId/9>

The Visitors

A Psy-Fi Tale

By Mike Tait

Part II

When selected dignitaries arrived at the cell block many of their worst fears were realized. The Visitors had opened the cell doors of some of the most unpleasant individuals and invited them into a larger space to join in conversations. Hardened criminals fluctuated between excitement, suspicion and bewilderment at being invited to this encounter. Prison staff had been briefed up on enhanced security. Both groups seemed perplexed by their roles as hosts. Delegates had a variety of motives for attending, overtly representing electorates or areas of expertise, but it had crossed the minds of most of those present that they might be indelibly etched into history for their part in this historic moment. The Visitors' expressions were unfamiliar and seemingly impossible to read.

The introductions went on for ever. It was as if the Visitors were less interested in expertise or crimes than in life stories. They made enquiries as to the evolution of all of those present and the nature of the relationships within which they emerged. 'Why was hurtful behaviour viewed in relation to its perceived harm rather than with curiosity in relation to its evolution?' 'Why were criminal rather than kindly acts kept on record and regarded as defining the 'true nature' of an individual?' The questions they asked were likely to draw out similarities between individuals, despite attempts by several dignitaries to draw distinctions between themselves and the inmates whose company they had been forced to endure. They asked about occasions when the condemnation of crime was ambivalent with some criminals even admired. They asked about the location of the power to decide who was a criminal and the evolution of the thinking which decided what was a crime. They remained puzzled by the ways that some expressions of impulse resulted in imprisonment whilst others seemed to lead to wealth and social validation - despite explanations concerning how these things were organized. They asked why prisoners were met by a social response involving exclusion rather than inclusion as a result of their actions. 'Was this a way of ensuring the continuity of relationships with which alienated individuals were more familiar?'

They were curious about the evolution of morality and its purported link with justice throughout history particularly in relation

to those in whom badness was located. 'How might the reticence of those present, including inmates, who it was clear had their own hierarchies, to relinquish the moral high ground be understood? Was it not important to explore the life stories of both those who defended and those who denigrated the high ground? Why were words like exploitation, abuse, sadism and bullying seen as requiring action against individuals rather than as beginning an exploration with a social dimension? Why would a mind express strong views about something without seeking to understand it? Why did words used in this discourse lead to a narrowing of the eyes or a hardening of the jaw by discussants? Were these bodily manifestations accompanied by the focus on morality and the law an indication of a retreat from difficult thoughts and sensations?'

The trickle of questions became a river. 'Was condemnation a younger form of mental processing than seeking to understand? How were the impulses that led to offending behaviour understood developmentally – both in the context of personal life histories and the evolution of a society? Why did chronological rather than developmental age dictate the judicial response to offending behaviour? Could individuals operate at different developmental ages intermittently or even simultaneously? Why was condemnation apparently more intense around violent or sexual behaviour? Why had theories of early sexual development been central to psychological exploration a century previously but largely disappeared from social discourse? How might rage be understood, why did it sometimes get sexualized and when did love, hate, control and eroticism get mixed up? Could individual cruelty only be met by social cruelty? Was this dynamic of ensuring that suffering happened elsewhere an indication of an unwillingness to think about disturbing matters as well as a form of social regression? Might a cultural willingness to struggle mentally, to tolerate complex feelings and thoughts, reduce the prevalence of cruelty?' As the Visitors' questions permeated the room, several individuals felt quiet satisfaction about suffering that happened elsewhere. Sometimes they caught each other's eyes. Such interactions were momentary and quickly forgotten.

It wasn't that he regretted her murder. She'd cheated on him and there was no coming back from that. She deserved to die and he deserved to be in prison. He agreed with a politician who, in response to the Visitors questions, was droning on about consequences. Prison wasn't that bad – at least for him. 'Failures of empathy...developmental difficulties.....the nature of rage?' What were the Visitors asking? So he'd been pissed off by his mother's

boyfriends, but that was years ago. 'What was the tension that had built up inside? Had it always been there? Where did it come from? Could it be understood?' What were these questions?

He remembered a scene from when he was three. He thought that his mother was being hurt and he'd gone through the open door to where she was groaning. He didn't know what was happening. She had a look on her face that he didn't recognize and the man was on top of her. He felt frozen to the spot and watched. Then he walked back through the door, cut up his teddy bear and flushed it down the toilet. When his mother asked where the bear had disappeared to a few days later, he'd just shrugged.

A politician who recognized him from a tabloid photo gave him the evil eye and he glared back. The politician looked away quickly only to become troubled by his own thoughts. Would he have had the affair with his secretary if he'd known how nasty the divorce which followed would be? He just had a strong sexual drive. 'How was that impacted on by his earliest relationships?' Wasn't it just something that some men had? 'How did early attachments influence impulses?' He shook his head trying to shake away the questions. He'd probably marry his secretary. Unlike these criminals, he respected the law and took responsibility for his actions. He'd never needed psychiatric help. His eldest daughter was on anti-depressants but that was just a stage she was going through. He shrugged.

'What was ownership? Could anything be owned given that lifetimes were so short? In what psychological and social circumstances were other human beings, both relatives and strangers, viewed as property? What kinds of anxiety fuelled behaviour in this area? How was this moderated and how did concern evolve – both individually and within social organizations? When and why was moral approbation directed at fraud or crimes against property? Why had economic inequality sometimes been viewed as criminal? Was there an impulse towards sharing and repairing? What enhanced or interrupted such developments? How might these matters be understood in relation to the development of those in the room?'

A businessman recently convicted of fraud felt perplexed by the Visitors' questions. He was the only member of his family who'd been to prison – probably the only person in his affluent neighbourhood. There was nothing he'd blame on his parenting. He wasn't sure what the Visitors meant when they asked about the psychological impact of, what seemed to most of those present, unremarkable experiences. He thought that he'd just been greedy; probably a bit envious of colleagues who'd got ahead of him. 'Why was it that everyone in his

position was not a fraudster? Why were individual journeys in relation to greed and envy so variable? Might it be that the expression of greed was not a simple act but multi-layered and shaped by early experiences as well as the social context?' He'd broken the law and had been caught out. Anything else sounded like some kind of liberal excuse which would allow people to get away with anything. He shrugged off the questions - whilst wondering if there might be an angle in this to reduce his sentence.

'Was shrugging easier than thinking? What might a shrug communicate?' Those shrugging at the time of the question wondered whether they were being watched. Did the aliens have eyes in the back of their heads? Shrugs were not intended to communicate anything. Wasn't that the point of a shrug? Not everything could be understood. Several academics tried to steer the Visitors towards more 'objective' matters but the Visitors seemed to think that being objective included paying attention to all forms of communication and examining the personal and social context in which they evolved. Attempts to divert them only informed their subsequent questions. 'Might a word like 'objective' become a synonym for 'disconnected'? Was loving parenting, the apparent template for human development, objective? Why not model the judicial system in accord with a form of care more likely to address developmental needs?'

They seemed to regard descriptions of how humanity reacted to the behaviour of their often-raucous hosts as if they were hearing about superstitious rituals that had no connection with rational thought. They looked bewildered when the evolution away from familiar faces who tried to interact with, rather than prosecuting, offensive individuals was described as professionalism and viewed as progress. Such aspirations as charging offenders, a high prosecution rate and the meticulous recording of crime confused them. 'Did such statistics freeze individuals in pejorative categories which interrupted thinking? Were personalities capable of reinvention if social structures were sufficiently responsive and generative? Why was the residence of anybody in the prison perceived as a form of success? Were sustained periods of incarceration, not only unhelpful for individuals, but damaging to the social imagination – in as much as they pre-empted a more creative response? How did exhortations to support the forces of law and order – or indeed any exhortation - develop thinking? Why prosecute the police when they broke laws in the performance of their duty rather than seeking to understand the cruelty of professionals in role?' Each time the necessity for an objective form of justice was explained their skeletal structures moved in such a way that in a

human body may have been a shudder.

What the Visitors apparently found most perplexing was the lack of intensity that human beings devoted to understanding in relation to the energy they channelled into litigation. 'If an act or state of mind was unthinkable was it not important to puzzle away until it became thinkable? Why was swift action insisted upon in a crisis but similar priority not given to thinking subsequently? Why was investigating, prosecuting and punishing considered more serious than seeking to comprehend the personal and social origins of a hurtful action? Was strong action by authorities psychologically similar to delinquent action in which impatient reaction pre-empted a more thoughtful response? How was it that thinking, embodied in committees or reports, became followed up by an impulse to 'bring the offenders to justice' rather than by a more introspective form of social learning?'

'When and why were there such concrete responses to interactive problems? Was there an evolutionary development away from judicial systems involving execution and direct forms of physical pain, currently evolving through periods of incarceration and eventually moving towards long conversations? Why was thinking which involved a physical organ, the brain – alongside dialogue which involved the tongue, eyes and often arms – not yet considered as a sufficiently substantial response to difficult behaviour? Why were rewards also so often concrete: salary, living standards, titles, awards, promotions? Might these evolve into something more interactional – more emotionally substantial?'

They failed to comprehend definitions [however carefully explained] of justice, crime and sentencing. They were interested in how values were developed in relation to a changing sense of self within an intimate and social context - which to them made sense of resulting behaviour- but they couldn't understand why anyone would be punished for the results of their own evolution. It was explained that it was not 'evolution' that people were punished for but the anti-social actions that they chose to perform. However, the Visitors appeared unable to understand 'choice' - or why an action would be removed from its context and condemned or praised. They would trace the sequence of events leading to a particular act and ask at what point the notion of 'responsibility' began. They could see no point at all in a legal age of responsibility when personalities seemed so influenced by events much earlier in life. They inquired as to the ways in which the concepts of responsibility, choice and free will developed throughout life in personal, social and international contexts. It was

clear that they thought that these concepts were always in a state of becoming. They expanded definitions until they lost their reassuring familiarity and dissolved as moral markers.

A warder felt frustrated by the Visitors questions. He didn't kill people who hurt him. He put the lid on his feelings. That's how civilization worked. He exchanged glances with the murderer and for a moment their thoughts conjoined. The satisfaction felt in his moment of revenge by the man who'd killed was being chipped away at by the Visitors attempts to explore emotional texture rather than action and reaction. His hate was his own. He'd felt power in his decision to kill. The questions that probed away at his emotional evolution risked placing him within the context of a pattern of relationships which took away both his responsibility and his power. He could see by their scowls that most of those present, on both sides of the law, felt the same way. He'd rather be hated than seen as vulnerable. The warder found himself wondering if it was even possible to have a legal system if everyone was considered to be a vulnerable victim of life.

The unrelenting questions concerning the evolution of impulse infuriated several of those present who felt that the Visitors were excusing criminal behaviour. How could such activities as attentive parenting, learning to listen and thinking together become realistic forms of addressing awful crimes? Journalists, dignitaries and hard men found themselves in an uncomfortable alliance - concurring that crimes against children 'were the lowest of the low' - in response to the Visitors who seemed to view them all as children who harmed each other in a variety of ways - as much through neglect as violence. Those who had thought that they might be the Visitor's natural allies, found themselves wondering about this apparent lack of any appreciation of the need to protect victims. Sometimes, in more unguarded moments, memories from children's comics returned in which aliens were pictured as monsters.

Development in the understanding of the importance of 'protection of the vulnerable' seemed to be regarded by these visitors as primarily a protection against 'thinking together' – a phrase they kept returning to whenever they noticed an impulse to isolate from social interaction those defined as 'perpetrators'. The Visitors recognized the impulse to seek retribution and define ill doing - but seemed to see giving judicial expression to such impulses as about as helpful as an infant punishing a baby. They were puzzled by the apparent absence of interest in protecting the infant within the adult prisoner from the cruelties of prison life and social exclusion – as they were by the media vilification of some of those infant-adults by those

who claimed to be protecting children. ‘Were all forms of exclusion an indication of a break down in thinking?’ It was as if they questioned stigmatizing the guilty as well as the innocent. Sometimes, as the life story of a particularly despicable criminal unfolded there was a disturbing moment in which the child within the adult seemed to become visible – emotionally overwhelmed and vulnerable. Was this some kind of alien psychology trick - corrupting the morality of those present by the seduction of empathy?

Some of those present clung to the importance of the responsibility of adult prisoners even as childhood traumas emerged which seemed directly linked to adult crimes. Others found the culpability of prisoners more difficult to relinquish when there were no overt formative traumas. ‘Should all events which had an impact on development, even when there were no obvious culprits, victims or headlines to publish, be treated empathically? Was there a range of unresponsive or reactive behaviours which permeated interactions and institutions causing as much harm as criminal behaviour?’ The dignitaries made clear that there was ‘only so much’ they could do and the suggestion that they were equally culpable for harm as their brutal hosts, as long as they didn’t pay attention to ‘normal behaviour’, denied the existence of real evil in the world. The Visitors asked, in relation to all attempts to separate good and evil, whether they promoted curiosity.

‘Might judicial impulses be mediated thoughtfully – lest they become as much a problem as the original criminal behaviour? Might the impulse to punish be seen as primitive and even dangerous by more advanced civilisations if humanity ever reached deeper into the universe? Was the notion of crime and consequence a primitive form of linear thinking? To retain historical, social and developmental perspective, was it necessary to let go of the seduction of retribution? Would ‘a thoughtful community’ offer more protection against crime?’

It became uncomfortably apparent that the Visitors viewed criminal and praiseworthy acts through a cultural and social lens. ‘As individuals evolved in a social system in which each part of the system continually impacted on other parts, was there such a direct connection between them that thugs could be given awards alongside successful professionals and dignitaries? If the need for retribution was overwhelming, might a variety of representatives of that culture be imprisoned together – even in the same cell - for a crime, and then released together when they had sorted things out? Might this sorting out require a considerable amount of redistribution and sharing of

resources - including wealth, education, emotional articulacy and resilience?’ Most of the incarcerated hosts were thrilled at the idea of wealth being re-distributed but less enthusiastic at the prospect of hours of reflection, exploring the ways that impulse evolved - and how more creative and compassionate relationships might be sustained. Law abiding citizens were horrified at the idea that they had as much to learn about impulses and social interactions as thugs. How resilience might be shared was beyond everyone – although the Visitors suggested that engaging in and continuing to develop these intolerable conversations might be a first step. Most academics acted as if these matters were outside of their disciplines.

Some representatives attempted to explain to the Visitors that there were real victims of crime and any attempts to treat crime as a socially shared event did not take the need of the victim to see punishment for harm caused. Deterrence was also necessary. The Visitors questioned the cultural shaping of such needs noting the insistence on torture and execution as a proportionate response to crime in some cultures and eras. ‘Could reparation be more effectively made by a society mobilised to address damage for which it took responsibility? What was the nature of empathic disruptions? Were these progenitors of the behaviour for which their hosts had been incarcerated? What activities and relationships might reinvigorate developmental and reparative processes?’ Delegates explained that developmental age and social introspection had never formed the basis of any judicial system and was unrealistic for humanity. Each time this was reiterated, the Visitors raised some part of their anatomies which was thought to have a similar function to eyebrows.

They showed interest in the supportive possibilities of family courts, conciliation, reconciliation, group explorations - in any conversations motivated by an impulse to re-connect - or, when the sense of grievance was overwhelming, would seek to explore these matters in a wider cultural context. Their interest in societies in which ‘truth and reconciliation’ had been practiced was met by the explanation that these measures had been necessary because historical and violent polarization between large groups had meant that, in the interests of social cohesion, effective punishment of all perpetrators was impossible. It was pointed out those societies had often returned to more normal definitions of crime and punishment - to business as usual - once the crisis was over.

They showed interest in rather extreme ideas that they drew out of some psycho-therapists. These were ideas that had never been part of mainstream thinking – and professionals who were interested

in State registration [and being seen as scientific] appeared almost apologetic for explaining them. After all, they had not been subject to evidence-based research and emerged at a time of social exploration after a world war when unrealistic and idealistic notions were more likely to take root. Other psychotherapists had not read the papers being discussed, papers which seemed somewhat out of kilter with current social and professional priorities. The Visitors were relentless when any idea captured their curiosity and sought to explore the idea that the first boundaries might be understood as parental arms which, in the context of thoughtful parenting, become internalized - before inquiring how this process might best be adapted to adult prisons. They were also intrigued by the implications of regarding anti-social activities as hopeful, as individuals at a level of development who were looking for a social response to address an experience of deprivation, so that a judicial response could be addressed to 'meet and match that moment of hope'

[Winnicott D.W. (1984) 'The Anti-Social Tendency.' In *'Deprivation and Delinquency'*, Tavistock/Routledge]

Several psychotherapists present were more familiar with attachment theory and there was a general feeling that this was less threatening to the social order than the apparent direction in which the conversation had appeared to be heading. However, the Visitors seemed to grasp quickly the destabilizing potential in any body of thought and focused on the way in which protest might be understood as a psychological step forward from withdrawal. They then returned to their inquiries as to whether this meant that burglary might be understood as developmentally hopeful and could be responded to accordingly.

These ideas were familiar to some individuals who had worked in therapeutic communities with a delinquent clientele – closed when 'the free market' had been prioritized over a wider sense of communal responsibility. They however tended to remain silent, as they had done for several decades: probably out of a general sense of disillusionment, possibly because they had accepted forms of promotion which had led to such ideas retreating into the recesses of their minds - and more likely out of some anxiety with regard to being seen as allied to the Visitors. After all, given the speed at which security could become prioritized within previously liberal nation states, might those who helped the Visitors not become defined as treasonous if, when the Visitors left, they – and their ideas - became

defined as a security threat? The fact that the Visitors had only drawn out human ideas which were already in existence might be quickly forgotten.

Sometimes the conversations were interrupted by the arrival of partners and children of prisoners during visiting times, who despite the attempts of warders, found themselves being ushered into these meetings by the Visitors who soon included them in their inquiries. What were these different emotions – fluctuating between pleasure, curiosity, frustration, fear, rage and varying shades of excitement - of babies, toddlers and children in the highly-charged atmosphere? Why did these mood states receive so little attention in proportion to the focus on behaviour? Why were parents eager to correct their children's behaviour - as society seemed to be with their parents - whilst the state of mind the actions reflected appeared to elicit relatively little curiosity?

Some politicians tried to bring the conversation back to the reality of what the electorate would tolerate reminding the visitors that they operated within the constraints of a democracy. The Visitors inquired as to the shaping of what the electorate would tolerate and the ways in which public communication facilitated or impeded thought. 'Was sensational reporting a form of agitated narrowing which made thinking more difficult? Why not write thoughtful accounts of difficult events?' They questioned headlines which pre-empted and disparaged reflection and wondered whether the underlying motivation, as it had been explained to them, to sell news, involved the destruction of thinking. They questioned the social location of criminality as being external to the reporters of crime and wondered whether forms of communication which encouraged links between all sections of society might be considered more in accord with developmental impulses.

Were they now advocating some version of communism with control on journalistic freedom? It was clear that the Visitors did not regard the forms of communication they had heard about as enhancing freedom - which they seemed to equate with thought processes involving introspection and thoughtful dialogue. Some delegates worried that they were advocating restrictions on a free economy – with a market motivated by 'thought' rather than 'sales' and everyone expected to take responsibility for everyone else in some as yet unclear way. The Visitors looked at the walls in the venue they had chosen and questioned the reiteration of 'free'.

Others thought that the Visitors' focus on links between all members of society sounded like being forced to communicate with,

live with and even manage people who were cruel, anti-social, impossible to like and better locked away. Freedom of association, who you chose to interact with, was surely an important freedom? Representatives were willing to tolerate these meetings as temporary incursions into their time – but as a way of life? The Visitors continued to misunderstand the importance of ‘choice’ and [as they seemed to do with so many words] expanded it to the way that decent citizens were choosing to locate the source of social and psychological discomfort with the incarcerated hosts of these fractious exchanges.

The noise was often excruciating particularly for those who had imagined that humanity might be able to present their better side to extra-terrestrial visitors. Thugs swore at judges, politicians and journalists - many of whom alternated between icy silences and righteous dismissals - whilst notorious criminals justified shocking behaviour. Academics lost patience with journalists looking to reduce complicated explanations they were offering the visitors to snappy headlines. Politicians and journalists became outraged by academics some of whom seemed to be excusing the inexcusable as a way of conversing with the visitors.

The Visitors rarely said anything that could be remembered. The only knowledge they seemed to value was to be discovered in interaction. Context was everything. The interactions between warring factions held their attention and in the pauses they inquired about the evolution of the subjects under discussion and the language that was being used. Legal, psychological, political and moral formulations which were used to conclude arguments left them looking puzzled. They asked about differentiations between walls, doors and windows in language. The Visitors made no attempts to bring the meeting to order. And yet, there were periods in which one conversation was being listened to. There were even periods of silence.

Part III will be in the March issue

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!

In my *search for* Christmas Spirit, I have found the quantitative research paradigm and its philosophical underpinnings. It is a sweet, spicy blend of hope and optimism that taps into our need for security, reminiscent of the enigmatic 20th century philosophical movement: the faith that natural science, based on observation, comprises all there is to our human knowledge. It is a happy family reunion of positivists and logical positivists. Under the mathematic-logical spell of the enchanting spirits of Hume, Russell and Wittgenstein, (logical) positivism regards only statements which report empirical observations as meaningful. Statements must follow a strict principle of verifiability. So, my proposition that the “Christmas spirit and Santa Claus exist” will be rejected together with all the other ‘non-empirical’ statements that metaphysics, theology and ethics offer us.

In an attempt to take over its rein and restore your belief in the spirit of its epistemological and ontological position, I will guide you through some of its philosophical underpinnings: the building blocks of the philosophy of science. Philosophy can direct you when you have lost faith in (psychoanalytic/ group analytic) theory and/or quantitative research methods, and need procedural advice to address a particular issue.

When you hear positivism, logical positivism or logical empiricism, and get confused, don't. Basically, they are very similar. They investigate the world through the same means of analysis. We could loosely define them as a ‘meta-theoretical perspective’. Just like post-positivism and critical theory. But Christmas is not ‘*Just the Two of Us*’. Thankfully, the Christmas Spirit of *Silent Night* sees to logical positivism. It makes sure that logical positivism does not remain the odd kid on the block, who nobody wants to invite to the Christmas party.

To appreciate logical positivism and its contribution to science, its influence on social sciences and our quantitative research methodology/methods, we need to go back to *the night Christ* (logical positivism) *was born*. Unless we explore the origin of the Christmas

tradition and customs (Christmas Tree, Santa Claus, the Mistletoe, Christmas Presents), we won't appreciate the underlying meaning, spiritual or otherwise. It is the same with logical positivism. So, we need to understand philosophical schools of thoughts, their historical development and how it relates to logical positivism. The timeline I am using goes from Hume to Kant to logical positivism.

Logical positivism is situated within a higher school of thought: epistemology. Epistemology is about how knowledge is created and what counts as knowledge. How we understand the external world, perceive objects and interpret them. How we interact with humans and non-humans in personal and interpretive interaction. Epistemology tries to describe all this. It's concerned with our mind and what we do when we are thinking: the theory of knowledge. Our attempts to develop an adequate theory date back to Plato's Theaetetus. Epistemology has dominated Western philosophy since the era of Descartes and Locke. It became an extended dispute between rationalism and empiricism, and over the respective importance of 'a priori' and 'a posteriori' origins. To understand this, we need to make a detour via the empiricist David Hume.

Hume believed that all knowledge is gained through our senses and distinguished between two types of perceptions: impressions (direct experiences) and ideas (perceptions when reflecting on our direct experiences). He realised that there are two types of propositions: *synthetic* and *analytic*. The classical *synthetic* is 'the cat is on the mat'. I can identify the 'validity' (truth) of the statement by observing it. When I look at my cat (or Santa Claus) who sits under the Christmas tree on a mat, I can recognise that this statement is true. The statement has so-called 'truth functionality'. This means that it can be verified as either true or false by observation. Can you see the cat (Santa Claus)? Yes? Okay, we both can see it. So, we have verified the truth of the statement. That is pretty simply, isn't it?

He came up with an anti-thesis to the *synthetic*: the *analytic* proposition. The classical one is 'A bachelor is an unmarried man'. (Or 'Father Christmas is a big man'.) When we see a male ('big bearded man'), can we observe that he is a bachelor (or Father Christmas)? No, of course we cannot! But ... is it true that a bachelor (or Father Christmas) is an unmarried man (or a big man)? Yes. This means that it has 'truth functionality'. We don't have to verify it because we *already know* that an unmarried man is a bachelor and vice versa, both are saying the same things. Hume called these *analytic* statements '*tautological*', expressed as: $A=A$.

Hume regarded tautological claims as meaningless because they say the same thing by using different words. That is why Hume favoured synthetic claims, which he described as rich, meaningful, with data and information. He viewed analytic propositions as meaningless. Like other empiricists, the world is viewed in terms of verifiable, meaningful claims. This contrasts with rationalists, such as Descartes and Spinoza, who held that we gain all knowledge through reason.

Hume's famous 'fork' won't be much use for the Christmas turkey. It's a simple distinction between 'a posteriori' and 'a priori'. Related to *synthetic* and analytic propositions. The '*cat (Santa Claus) is on the mat*', is dependent on experience. First, we have to experience this phenomenon in order to assess it. That's why all synthetic propositions are '*a posteriori*'. All analytic propositions are independent of experience and therefore 'a priori' propositions. A bachelor is an unmarried man. A sister is a sibling. (Santa Claus is a big bearded man). Do we need to verify this? No, because the truth of the claim is assessed prior to the claim (we already know that). Hence, it's independent of my experience and 'a priori'.

To recap, epistemology is concerned with knowledge and what we are thinking. That's basically what empiricists do. There is another branch of philosophy, which is closely related to epistemology and that is metaphysics. Metaphysics is that part of philosophy, which attempts to explain what reality is. It's not necessarily about what an object is, but about what it means to talk about its reality. That's what metaphysics tries to explain. So we have epistemology, which attempts to understand reality and how we understand the object. This is a meaning ascribing activity. And metaphysics, which attempts to describe what that reality is. It deals with questions such as 'what is there?' and 'what is its nature?'

A sub-field of metaphysics is 'ontology'. It's the philosophical study of being, of existence, what entities exist. It's a list of what exists Do ghosts exist? Does God exist? Does Santa Claus exist? Ontology has often been described as drafting an inventory of the whole universe. Metaphysics seeks to explain what these entities are. Are ghosts real, and if they are, what is their nature? Some postulated that God (Father Christmas, the Christmas Spirit) exists. If God (Father Christmas, the Christmas Spirit) exists, what's s/he like? Now some believe that only material (physical) things are real, like the chocolate Santa Claus in front of you. But we are in the festive season after all. And in the Christmas Spirit, what would you say a spirit is? In the ancient world, people were talking about souls. Are

souls not a non-physical thing? Can they exist? Does a soul exist, and if it does, what's its nature, can it think? I am asking you, can your chocolate Santa Claus think? No? These kinds of questions led some to adopt idealism. Idealism is a belief that only mental entities are real, so that physical things only exist in the sense that they are perceived.

The German idealist Hegel thought that reality consisted of a fundamental unity, rational in nature, but unknowable in practice. If reality is rational, its ultimate structure can be revealed in the structure of thought. Idealism is opposed to perceptual realism and its assumption that objects exist independently of our perception of them. Idealism points out that you can think about a chocolate Santa Claus. When you do this, the chocolate Santa Claus becomes a mental thing, a concept, but whose physical locality you can verify.

Let's return to epistemology and metaphysics. Have a look at your chocolate Santa Claus: epistemology attempts to explain how knowledge is possible, how you understand the chocolate Santa Claus (object). It's a cognitive process or meaning ascribing activity. When you understand your object, it's a chocolate Santa Claus, you ascribe meaning to it. Metaphysics tries to explain what reality is at the highest level of generalisability, the structure of reality. So, in a way it's the core part of philosophy that holds the discipline together. Metaphysics tries to explain how your chocolate Santa Claus (object) occupies a particular space in time. So, you have one chocolate Santa Claus (object) and two different ways of explaining it: one epistemological, the other metaphysical. These two different branches of philosophy are closely related. This is where the story of logical positivism starts and the divorce between the two happens.

It's a bit like what's happening in the world at the moment. We may lose hope and faith when its powerful forces permeate us. To hang on to, or re-discover the spirit of Christmas, go searching for it in the philosophy of science. It could help keep the Christmas Spirit alive.

Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas & joyful New Year and most of all, love.

Susanne Vosmer

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