

# Group-Analytic Contexts

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International

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## Editorial

Contexts serves group analysis and GASi in a number of ways. One of which is to facilitate communication among a diffuse membership spread across 40 or more countries. While this function is still at the heart of what this publication is about, it should be acknowledged that the presence of the Forum, even though it does not include all members, has to some degree taken over this role. The Forum, always open 24/7 and requiring no editorial intervention of any kind, apart from the inner editor of each contributing member, contains contributions and exchanges ranging from the startlingly banal to the most well-informed and original – both of which often conflate such that it is hard to know which is which. The urges to write and to communicate with the wider membership, both of which are vital to the survival of Contexts, can be more than met by active participation in GASi's virtual large group agora. Since Contexts became a digital publication only, it increasingly begins to feel that it has been to some degree supplanted by the forum as a space through which to be in touch with GA peers and colleagues. A current thread on the forum, continuing with issues present in the recent Foulkes weekend, concerns whether, how and to what degree the forum might also be impacting our face-to-face encounters. Is our disembodied online communication in some sense hurting the GASi body?

So, what does this mean for Contexts? The commissioning side of the editor's role, encouraging and badgering people to write, sometimes for the first time, has taken on a greater significance and has become more necessary. I am increasingly drawn to inviting guest editors to share in this work, developing theme-centred issues. From time-to-time I receive proposals for special issues, nonetheless I would like to use this editorial to openly invite others to come forward and become involved in this way. Some ideas for special issues I have been hoping to develop, are: GA and social class; applications of large groups outside of clinical settings; GA and sport. If you think you might be interested in taking on the guest-editing of any of the above or have an idea yourself for a special issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

This issue covers a number of themes. As someone heavily involved in the planning of the next GASi Symposium in Barcelona, I am very pleased to include reports of the co-chairs of the various committees involved in putting together the Berlin Symposium. There are always so many lessons to learn and to avoid the feeling that we are constantly reinventing the wheel, these reports, as well as the

continued and generous involvement of Kurt Husemann – co-chair in Berlin – provide vital much-needed continuity, information and wisdom.

Harold Behr and Kristian Valbak provide two contrasting yet complimentary pieces around the themes of “how not to” and “how to” run groups. Harold Behr remembers an early uncomfortable moment in his evolution – he has also drawn for us, I’m delighted to add, one of his wryly witty cartoons to illustrate something of the experience – and Kristian Valbak explores, from a Danish and EGATIN perspective, the making of a good enough group analyst.

This issue also includes a piece by Dorothe Turk on how she combines individual and group in her own private practice. It would be interesting to hear from others on this important clinical theme. As with much of what we do, there are divergent opinions and approaches and it would be good to include these in future issues.

Finally, in case you were wondering, this issue includes no reports from the Foulkes Lecture and Study Day. Why? The easiest answer is that nobody has written to me with a report or series of reflections. It worries me that this centrally important event in the GA calendar will not have been registered in Contexts this year. Perhaps this is a sign of the times, a reflection on the place Contexts currently holds in our collective project - I hope not!

**Peter Zelaskowski**

## President's Foreword

Two weekends ago, representatives of GASI had a first face-to-face meeting with our Spanish and Catalan partners in the creation of the 2020 symposium, in Barcelona. These first encounters, in what will be a complex extended collaboration, are moments that imprint themselves on the whole subsequent process. And this was a good meeting, where we had our first exercise in making ourselves understood in the context of language differences, which will be at the heart of the Barcelona Symposium. Language has always been an issue in our big meetings, but in 2020 it will be at the heart of our thinking. So, now is the time for you to begin thinking about how language, in all its senses, and translation, in all its guises, enters into the groups that you work with.

One important decision that we made, at our meeting, was to set the dates for the symposium. Normally, these take place in August, but our Spanish and Catalan colleagues were convinced that this would create insuperable obstacles to participation by their fellow countrymen. After discussion, we agreed that the symposium will take place between 1-5 September 2020, so put those dates in your diary.

The Summer School, in Ljubljana, - Between Generations - is imminent. It's now well-subscribed, but there are places remaining, so feel free to become a late registrant - you can find a link on the GASI website.

I've been informed by one or two members that they experience the Management Committee, and me as part of it, as inaccessible. I hope that this is not the case, but in order to make it easy to communicate with me, I've created a dedicated email address, for that purpose. Please feel free to write to me, at [gasipresident@gmail.com](mailto:gasipresident@gmail.com) about any matter you would like me to be aware of. Of course, the office - [office@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk](mailto:office@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk) - remains the place to write to, for most GASI matters, where Julia continues to look after our affairs with the great dedication, which we should not take for granted.

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## **Be a Contexts Writer!**

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

Contexts welcomes contributions from 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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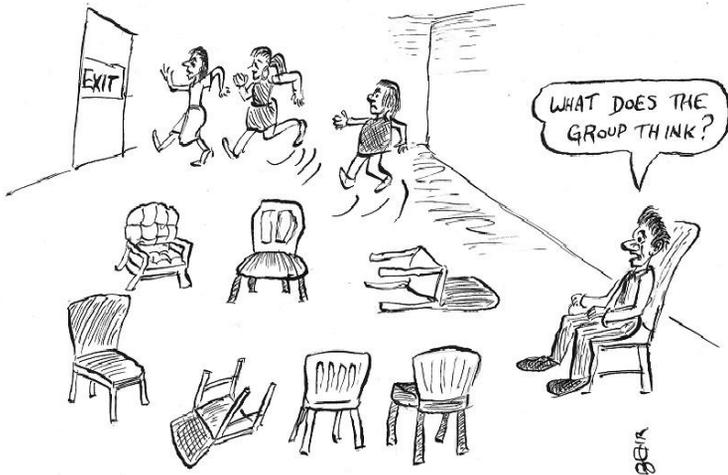
## How Not to Run a Ward Group

By Harold Behr

The year: 1969

The place: Tara Hospital, a psychotherapeutically-orientated psychiatric hospital in Johannesburg.

The therapist: Me, a novice psychiatric registrar.



I was inspired by the example of a psychologist whose group technique consisted mainly of long, empathic silences. When faced with head-on attempts by group members to draw him in, his sole intervention, uttered with mind-numbing repetitiveness, was: 'What does the group think?'

Thus armed, I decided one day to run my own ward group. Seventeen patients in all were invited to disport themselves in a large circle around the lounge. None of the patients had any idea of what to expect. A mildly interested ward sister and two occupational therapists joined the circle.

An expectant hush settled over the group. 'Well,' I began, 'the purpose of this group is to raise any problems that might have arisen recently,'

Silence.

‘Or indeed,’ I added desperately, ‘to speak about any topics at all.’

More silence.

‘At this stage’ I added lamely, ‘it’s really over to the group.’

After a few more minutes of silence Miss C giggled and made a poor effort to stifle the sound. Some of the others looked at her and smiled uneasily. She then followed this up with a remark to the effect that the whole business was ridiculous.

Longer silence.

Eventually Mrs N addressed me deferentially: ‘Could you please tell us, doctor’, she asked, ‘what is it about the atmosphere in the ward which affects one’s mood?’

This was my cue. ‘What does the group think about this?’ I said grandly.

Further silence, after which Mrs N elaborated, saying that she had felt that the ward atmosphere the previous day had given rise to a general feeling of depression and she wondered whether it was the atmosphere alone that could have been responsible.

At this point Miss C stepped in challengingly to say that she hadn’t been aware of a particularly depressing atmosphere. Other members of the group maintained that, to the contrary, there had been. We were off!

Or not. A moment later Miss T put up her hand, and looking directly at me, asked whether she could be excused. ‘Well, how does the group feel?’ I said robotically. Miss C, definitely representing the anti-group by this time, remarked that since Miss T had been called away from a softball game and since nothing else seemed to be happening, she should be allowed to go.

Miss O then asked Miss T whether she didn’t think it more worthwhile that she stayed. Miss T retorted that nothing seemed to be happening, that she enjoyed her game of softball, and that she only had the opportunity to play once a week. Mrs B agreed that Miss T should be allowed to go if she wanted to.

Eventually Miss C said, ‘Hands up those who feel that Lorraine [Miss T] should be allowed to go and play softball.’ Mrs B and Mrs N raised their hands inconspicuously shoulder high. The rest

of the group uneasily abstained. After a further pause, Miss T asked more firmly to be excused. Someone said she needn't get permission, since I had obviously left it up to the group to do what it felt like. Another member said emphatically, 'I think she should stay.' Finally, Miss T got up, and with an apologetic smile, excused herself and walked out. I nodded a slight acknowledgement in her direction, not daring to ask yet again what the group felt about that,

After a further pause, Mrs D locked me into her gaze and asked, 'Doctor, will I be able to go home over the weekend?' adding with a nervous smile, 'You've got to answer that one.'

Once again, I addressed the group, saying, 'Mrs D has put a question specifically to me.' Another silence fell over the group. Mrs B stretched out airily in her comfortable chair and rolled her eyes to the ceiling.

Miss W was looking at no one in particular. She seemed to be studiously avoiding meeting anyone's gaze. Somebody commented that the silence seemed to be affecting everyone. Mrs B chipped in quickly, saying with an apologetic laugh, 'I know I can't stand silence.' Someone asked Miss C (anti-group) whether she wasn't perhaps affected by the silence. She replied calmly that it didn't bother her in the least, that loudness affected her, but not silence.

Mrs B then said that since nobody seemed to have anything to say for themselves, shouldn't the meeting be closed? Addressing Miss P directly she said, 'Pam, do you think that the meeting should close?' Miss P, speaking quietly and hesitantly, said that maybe it was up to the group to talk about something and that perhaps they could learn something from what was happening right now.

An exchange then ensued around the question of whether anybody had anything to say or not. Mrs B turned to Miss O and asked her point-blank whether she felt that the group should end. Miss O replied that she thought that the group should carry on. She mentioned that the staff were prepared to give up their time and that they wouldn't have done so if they had thought it was a waste of time. Somebody else retorted that it was their job but Miss O persisted, saying that I and other members of the staff could be doing lots of other things but that instead we had chosen to be with the group, and the least the group could do was to sit through until the end.

Undaunted, Mrs B then turned to each patient member of the group in turn, asking them whether they felt that the group should finish or carry on. Mrs G, who during the silences had been sitting sunken in her armchair with her eyes closed, said in a small voice, 'Close.' To the same question, Miss W replied in an equally soft voice,

‘Don’t mind.’ The ‘Don’t minds’ carried the day.

Mrs B then said that at any rate she was leaving, and left the room without making eye contact with anyone. After her departure, there was another long silence, punctured by the ringing of the ward telephone. This proved to be the ward sister’s cue to leave the group.

Despite the trickle from the group I held steadfastly to the time boundary. The group ended on time, not with a bang but with a whimper. Mine.

Two years later I began my training at the Institute of Group Analysis in London.

**Harold Behr**

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## **The Making of a Good Enough Group Analyst**

By Kristian Valbak, PhD

Lecture given during the EGATIN Study Days in Vilnius,  
Lithuania  
27-29 April 2018

### **Dear colleagues and friends,**

Thanks for the honour and the opportunity to talk today about what makes us what and who we are as professionals, and what I think is required to be a good enough group analyst.

I talk as a Danish psychiatrist, a teacher for 28 years in the Aarhus Training Programme and ... as a 'good enough' group analyst.

The title of my presentation points to professional development in an educational setting and emphasizes the perspective of the teaching organization.

Could proof that we do good training be that what we learn is helpful in our professional clinical or organizational work during and after graduation? I suggest that we from time to time should look at all elements of our training through utilitarian glasses, regardless of what kind of work we do: in the mental health service with patients; in private practice with clients; in society with larger citizen groups; or working in organizations with staff.

Looking back, group analytic psychotherapy has been influenced not only by shifting theoretical paradigms (ego psychology, object relations theory, self-psychology, modern group analytic theory, attachment theory etc.) but also by changing needs from the mental health services where patients referred appear to be still more disorganized.

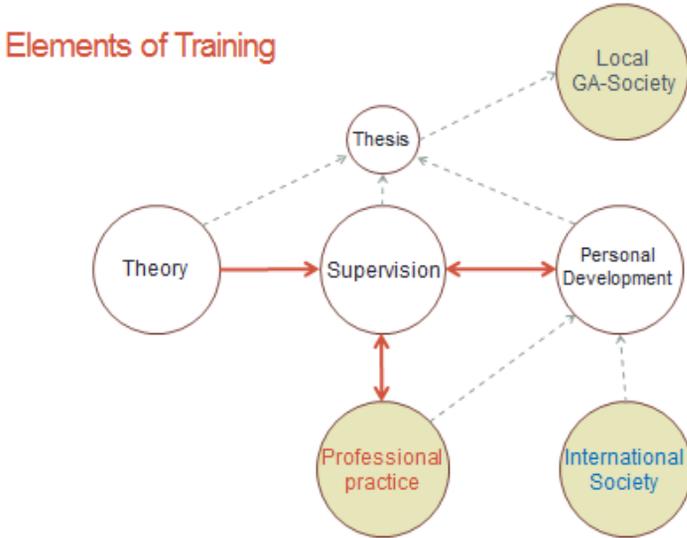
In 2005, at the EGATIN workshop in Molde, I posed the question: "Does change in clinical practice influence training?" And the answer was: "It should!" The training programmes must update the theory seminars with recent theory and be aware of the demands the candidates can face in their professional working life.

For some it is a controversial choice. I believe it's the only way. And I think it is possible both to make a living from our profession and do good-enough group analysis.

## Personal development and training

Now let us look at the elements of training:

Figure 1 - Elements of Group Analytic training



I know from the once-a-year evaluation made by the Aarhus candidates that the small groups are highly-valued and they are no doubt the most emotional part of the training. Personally, both as trainee and as training analyst, I liked the excitement of the small group. You never know what you were going to experience, sometimes also you face what you least like about yourself and others.

Again, it is difficult to know what in the tripartite base of Group Analytic training - personal development, supervision and theory - is *most valuable for our future work as professionals*. A small inquiry in Aarhus revealed that there was a slight edge in favour of the personal element.

However, we don't know that much about what we gain from coming to the small group. When experienced group analysts were asked about valuable experiences in their personal training, they mentioned, 'to be included and accepted in the group' as the most important (Valbak, 2014).

We might have some ideas of what we should become:

'The therapist ought to be a person who has experienced life to the fullest. He may be young, or he may be old, but he must have the courage to experience life in all its shades, and he must know how it feels to be alive. He must have known fear and anxiety, mastery and dependency. Most of all, he must not be afraid to love, and he does not need to be a stranger to hate.

The therapist ought to be well-read, since the experience of having lived with the great figures of literature is a part of his knowledge.

In order to safeguard his own mental health and the health of his patients and his own family, he must be aware of himself. This awareness must include parts of his unconscious. It is this awareness that is a tool of his trade, and that Theodor Reik called the 'third ear'.

(Grotjahn, 1983, in Rosenberg, 1993)

Grotjahn wrote more about the deeds of the psychotherapist, but he did not include the element of autonomy, here expressed by an American psychotherapist:

'Central to me is an individual's authority over his or her own life tempered with compassion for others and the recognition that there are many different ways of living an authentic life'  
(Lin Fraser, 2017)

Running through the suggested abilities of the therapist in EGATIN's Essential Training Standards, I find them still valid. They should serve as guiding ideals for all of us, not only the candidates. The question is how we can encourage and promote the development of these skills.

### **What do we learn from the personal therapy?**

Research has shown that unspecific factors work across methods. Most variation in outcome can be explained by factors associated with the patient and the therapist.

We also know that research cannot say that duration of training is positively correlated to positive outcome of therapy. What has been researched and 'proved' to be important is the therapist's

ability to recognize imminent rupture of alliance, her interests in patients feed-back and that diligence makes a difference.

Nissen-Lie et al. (2017) noted from their study that a combination of self-doubt as a therapist with a high degree of self-affiliation as a person was particularly fruitful, while the combination of little professional self-doubt and much positive self-affiliation was not. Training is about adjusting self-confidence and being conscious about the unintegrated grandiosity.

Personal development takes time and never stops. From the EGATIN Survey in 2008, we know that there are large variations from institute to institute in Europe regarding what is found to be an appropriate amount of self-experience, before graduating can be granted.

As something unique the group analytic society, including EGATIN, has a culture where we meet in small experiential groups, when we gather. A tradition which I think has a quality of still learning by experiencing new aspects about ourselves, not only because we change but also because 'the times are changing'.

Everyone knows that personal development is an individual matter, even though Foulkes' general recommendation of 'twice a week for three years' for patients has led to EGATIN's recommendation of a minimum 240 hours in a small group. The differences are based on different cultures, but leave us with the question: when are we 'good-enough' to 'handle' patients in our own patient group?

## **Theory Seminars**

Selecting theory texts is always a challenge. There is a strong urge from the trainees to make it simple, not too complicated - which is a contradiction! Theory seminars should include core concepts - meaning they should embrace and explore the genuine thoughts of Group Analysis. It should also be relevant - meaning it should connect to practice.

A frequent complaint is that the texts are old, as if age should be a valid criterion. But it's relevant also that new developments are represented (for example more recent attachment theory). And the plea from the candidates is to serve all in a palatable balance of investment, gratification and time!

When I, from time to time, read diploma papers, it is recurrent, that many patients in groups are very disturbed and the candidates have problems with maintaining boundaries and preventing drop-outs. The method seems not to fit the task. Lorentzen

and Karterud wrote:

Supervising and reading the candidates theses, it become apparent, that many of the graduating candidates have major troubles with drop-out usually due to factors associated with the patients. I think it is fair to say, that there easily develop conflicts between the needs of the patients and the provision of gratification by the group. It is a problem that we have been addressing partly through a more extensive examination of the patient, partly by a more supporting group analysis, represented by ideas of a mentalization based group therapy. (Karterud, 2016; Lorentzen, 2016).

We have to do extensive training in applied group analysis. Also it is my long time experience, that we - working in the mental health services - need more knowledge about assessment, psychopathology and ways of structuring our understanding of patients' mental organization (diagnoses).

Steinar Lorentzen's book (2014), on how to do Group Analytic Psychotherapy, represents an attempt to guide the clinician in the treatment of personality disorder patients over a relatively short time. Some critics have stuck to the shortcomings and think we lose the essence of Group Analysis. A distinguished group analyst, Harold Behr, called the book 'disarming'. Interesting expression, isn't it?

I once suggested that valued 'local articles' used in training and written in the native language (for example Polish, Portuguese or German), should be collected and translated into a text book in English.

## **Supervision**

In our training in Aarhus we have mixed 1-4 years candidates in our supervision groups. A broad range of assistance is needed, from fundamental knowledge to sophisticated stimulation of own reflections.

In general, I believe we could be more interested in the *process* of the training. Rønnestad has suggested a cyclical five-phase model with two tracks, 'development' and 'stagnation'. Each developmental phase is characterized by an accompanying emotion/attitude. These phases are:

1. Confirmation and *enthusiasm*;
2. Awareness of complexity accompanied by *anxiety*;
3. Confusion and *depression*;

4. Exploration together with *hope*;
5. Integration and *realism*.

Development was conceptualized as cycling through these phases when confronted with different challenges and with the recognition of the therapist's own limitations and inadequacies (Rønnestad, 2013).

## Countertransference

Countertransference processes are present regardless of clinicians' theoretical orientation (Betan et al., 2005) and the analysis of countertransference is on-going work for the group analyst. Often encountered are 'the inability to deal with dependence', 'deviating to individual work in the group', 'guilt feelings when lack of progress', 'the Pygmalion Complex' and 'the wish for personal gratification'.

With the very disturbed patients many difficulties go back to the introduction of the patients and the initial preparations.

### *Clinical vignette I*

*For an 18-month closed group I included seven patients referred continuously. The last person was a 21 year-old man, who was sent to group analytic treatment after being rejected from therapy in another clinic at the hospital, mainly because he was found to have no personality disorder. He was late for assessment, critical of the system, complained about the rejection and aired the idea that he had Asperger's syndrome. He wrote in a letter to me, that he 'hated groups' and that 'I usually get my way'. When I, during assessment, was reluctant to include him, he cried and said that he did not know then how to get help.*

*He didn't show the first two times in the group and was late for another five times during the first thirteen sessions. He talked frequently, commented on nearly every other comment, mostly in a very advisory way. He several times stated that the interventions I made about the similarities in the group, was not for him.*

*He was critical towards me and, for example, devalued my interpretations about his late-coming as ridiculous. At a time he got into an argument with some others from the group about the behaviour of non-ethnic Danes. After that, he didn't return to the group, dropped out (after 6 months) and did not answer my mails. He rejected my invitation for an individual session. I terminated his therapy and wished him good luck. Three months later an official complaint reached my desk: I had made a wrong diagnosis, given him the wrong*

*therapy and like another Prokrustes, had tried to force him into my group and my ideas.*

He did cause me trouble in the group and it was hard work maintaining empathy with him. I was annoyed about his drop out and further offended and narcissistically injured when the complaint was exposed to my chief.

As unfair and unreasonable as he was in his accusations, he was also right. Looking back I was grandiose to take him on, despite contra-indications, which I neglected probably feeling superior in this area of assessment compared to the 'competing' department. I also felt sorry for him in the interview and was seduced by his hip-hop dress and youthful attitude.

My own training analyst, Harold Behr, always stressed the importance of detecting and breaking the destructive cycle of scapegoating:

'The group conductor has to foster a spirit of empathy with the isolated group member.' (Behr & Hearst, 2005)

Across all difficulties a 'negative personal reaction' from the therapist has a strong correlation to outcome. Research has found a surprising positive influence of 'professional self-doubt', which was interpreted as reflecting an attitude of therapist humbleness and sensitivity, which seems to facilitate alliance development (Nissen-Lie, 2010).

Symington (2002) believes, that the therapist's capacity to bear criticism and the capacity to manage confrontation are particularly good indicator whether emotional maturity has been achieved. In his book 'The making of a psychotherapist' he writes:

'... because I believe that no psychotherapist can be effective unless he can reach his own feelings, moral fortitude is an essential quality in a psychotherapist if he is to endure the pain that reaching those feelings entails. In other words, moral courage is needed to deal with mental pain'.

(N. Symington, 2002)

Gabbard and Ogden in their article 'On becoming a Psychoanalyst (2009) mention the ability to listen to ourselves speak with our patients and, in so doing, begin to develop a voice of our own. And they cite Bion for saying

'It's only after you have qualified, that you have a chance of becoming an analyst'  
(Bion, 1987)

This should not mislead somebody to believe, that the engine can run on intuition from the beginning! At the end of therapy the therapists desire 'for perfection', 'for gratitude' and 'to be known as a real person' are well-known difficulties (Gorkin, 1989)

### *Clinical vignette II*

*The patient was a painter who painted abstract and very black compositions. He gained through his three years in group analytic psychotherapy and left my consciousness till the day one year later, I suddenly saw him on TV in front of his exhibitions of very colourful painting in New York. A journalist asked him what had made such a change in his life that could explain his vivid work. I was prepared to collect some narcissistic gratification, when he responded: My little baby-daughter!*

Patients' expressions of gratitude sometimes need analytic exploration and sometimes plain and simple acceptance. The importance of 'the capacity to have pleasure in one's patients' pleasure' (Treurniet, 1997, p. 621) can hardly be overemphasized.

### *Clinical Vignette III*

*Recently a young woman at the beginning of a group session declared, that she had something important to announce. In the excitement that followed in the group I happened to think, that she might have become pregnant. Almost bursting into tears and warning that she had never before said this in public, she stated: I think I am a good person! I am not perfect, but I am good enough!*

I think the patients can come to that recognition, if the therapist feels good enough to hold a group, which is good enough.

'We all hope that our patients will finish us and forget us, and that they will find living itself to be the therapy that makes sense'  
(Winnicott, 1968)

## **The test and the final text**

What does the title 'diplomaed group analyst' imply? The final test is the writing of a paper that demonstrates the integration of all skills. Many candidates feel exhausted after the many training gatherings and find it difficult to find inspiration and energy for another effort, which requires intellect, sensibility and stringency. EGATIN has contributed to this sometimes neglected part of the training by a study day on this subject in Copenhagen in 2006: 'The Process of putting Group Analytic work into writing', which inspired Thor Kristian Island to create the fine guidelines: 'On writing a Group Analytic Diploma Paper' (Island & Karterud, 2013).

One can discuss how hard these demands should be. How good, how brilliant should the candidate perform? Sometimes I find myself in doubt and worry. Is this really acceptable? Was I not myself several times sent back to improve my writing, and did I not have to swallow my humiliation. Then I think of Kernberg's warning, how training institutions can destroy candidates creativity (Kernberg, 1996) and more important, how a strict evaluation may originate from an envy of the youth.

## **The acquisition of a group-analytic attitude and a professional group-analytic identity**

Joining a training program usually happens at a time, where we are well beyond our youth, but we are still expected to develop more. A goal for the training - parallel to the personal therapy - is a development to professionally and *on your own* to conduct a group analytic group. The transformation from trainee to group analyst is a transformation which can be compared to the transformation from adolescent to adult. An important milestone on the way is when you start up your own therapy group with your own patients. The special feelings around that special moment are often shared with the other trainees in the small group with pride and can become the subject of admiration, rivalry and envy. However, the first attempt with an analytic patient group often results in dropout of two or three members, - usually a blow to the initial optimism and the grandiose feeling following group start. To suffer and overcome the drop outs from ones first therapy group can be one of the trials, that constitute what has been called the 'make- or breakpoint' of becoming a group analytic therapist (Knauss, 2000).

When do we identify ourselves as group analysts? One thing important is to meet other group analysts elsewhere, from other countries. I find that foreign locations and cultures provide the

participant with a unique opportunity to be inspired, challenged and to experiment new perspectives on self, both professionally and personally. There comes a certain freedom with a foreign - and I will say predominantly - kind and holding atmosphere. It is often away from the usual context, you come to experience other colleagues' appreciation and acknowledgement.

### **The only good group analyst is one with a good enough analyst (mother)**

In Aarhus we were 'illegitimate children' of the teachers from the Copenhagen Institute who trained us back in the eighties but left us without true acknowledgment of our capacities and disregarded our wish to build our own institute and identity as group therapists separate from Copenhagen. However, the spirit of being founders and pioneers became an important drive to become 'us' different from 'them'.

Instead of bonding with the Copenhagen Institute, a distinguished row of supervisors from Germany, Norway and England were invited to the training programme in Aarhus and gave it credibility, not primarily to the outside world, but to ourselves.

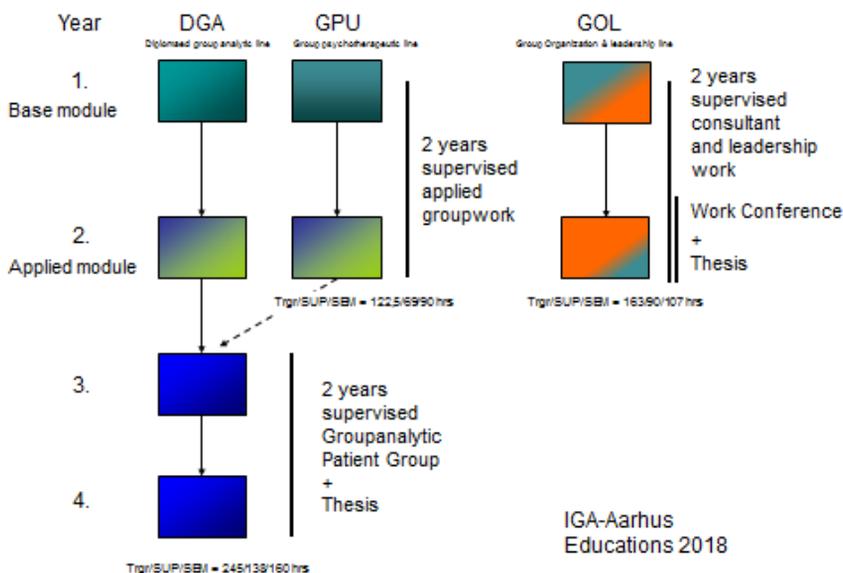
In the Institute, identity as group analyst or group analytic therapist truly lies in the ability to handle authority. That is, when you become one yourself in your own group of patients and when you get and take authority in the society of members and associates of the institute. After 28 year the teachers group in Aarhus has still no executive committee. All eleven teachers meet regularly to discuss matters of interest, from economy to the intake of new trainees. This concept has been discussed and criticized to be an immature construction avoiding differentiation of members and issues of power in the way that some teachers were more influential than others. Not that there is no rivalry, not that there is no envy. However, what we have lost in time and search for consensus, I think, we have gained in shared information, responsibility and not least identification.

It has also been a matter for discussion, how to engage the candidates in organizational work in the institute and how to keep them engaged, so they eventually could continue in training or become a teacher or a member with a bilateral relation to the institute's activities. Institutes all over Europe have different approaches to how active this inviting engagement should be - from a more orthodox analytic stand in London to a much more 'real' and institutionalized didactic approach in the institute of Athens.

The affiliation to the psychiatric hospital in Aarhus has been

very important for the training program. There has been a positive attitude from the direction of the hospital. Moreover, rooms for the training have been provided free of charge.

Figure 2 - The training modules of the IGA-Aarhus

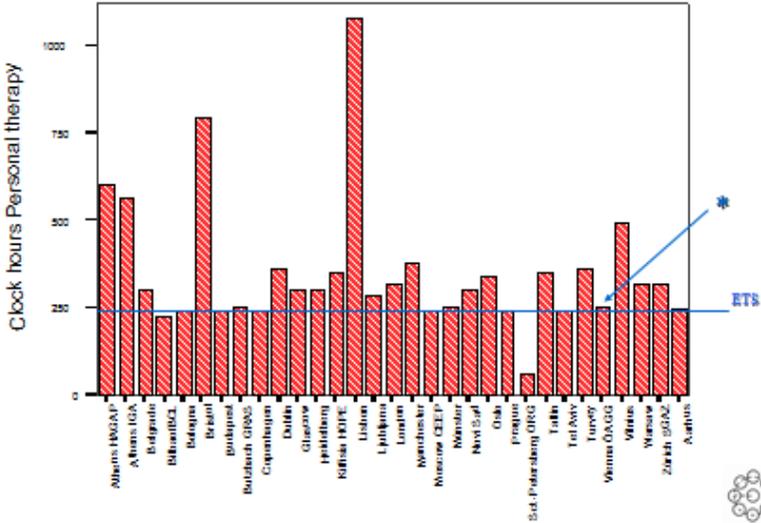


We have built a training to fit local culture and possibilities and tried to make it robust economically. It was, for example, an important decision to include in the Aarhus training a line of organization and leadership; in contrast to the institute of Copenhagen where a separate organizational training was established. Recently, however, the organizational and leadership line was reduced from three to two years to attract more applicants. More or less the Aarhus training program has been fully subscribed, with 30 candidates in training all these years.

Deviation from training standards are to be expected, because it is in the history and matrix of EGATIN to find creative and pragmatic ways to build training programmes in the different countries of Europe.

Figure 3 - The EGATIN survey on training hours

Personal Therapy



2011



This slide shows the number of clock hours of personal therapy reported from EGATIN member institutes in 2008. As already mentioned there is quite a variation - from 4 to 8 years - although most training programmes are at the level of the essential training standards or slightly over. Outliners here are Bristol, Vilnius, Athens and Lisbon, which have by far the longest personal therapy. This picture is 10 years old. I wonder what has happened since then?

**Practicing**

The duration of **supervised** groups required for training ranged from 2 years to 5 years. Central for the candidates in Aarhus is that during their training they are supposed to conduct an 'orthodox' group analytic group. That turns out to be a huge accomplishment. They must bring to supervision for at least two years (84 sessions)

'... a heterogeneous, slow-open, long term, mixed groups of 6-8 patients with significant psychopathology'...'

'At the same time..... that a group analytic process can take place which means that different levels in the patients' development can be in focus for analysis in a free-floating group discussion'  
(IGA-Aarhus requirements, 2009)

This is a very important requirement to meet for the person to become a group analyst. And it is often regarded as the most difficult part of the training. High drop-out rates and shortage of male group members have been traditional problems.

During the four years of training they shall, for at least one year, bring to supervision 'an applied group', like a group of in-patients, a homogeneous group with young patients, a PTSD group or similar, but not a psycho-educational group or a group of relatives. The key words *are* 'led by group analytic principles' or as it is phrased in the Essential Training Standards: 'to hold onto analytic technique'.

Talking about capacities my interest was caught by this statement:

'Capacity to make therapeutic judgements based on a response to the needs of the group in the language of the group'  
(Essential Training Standards, EGATIN, 1999)

What are the 'needs of the group' and what is 'the language of the group'? We might here have an example of a 'freedom' to nurture the group by supplying support and gratification (holding) by a 'good-enough' therapist.

And 'language' is more than the group analytic concepts 'matrix', 'mirroring' etc. It is also the ability and courage to understand and attune to different social and cultural expressions in the group. We can look forward to the next International Symposium in Barcelona, where the theme will be: 'Languages of Groups'!

## **Ending**

We know that local, social, cultural and economic conditions, as well as history, influence training and, in case of negative influences, how these challenges could be met and dealt with by the training institutes. We organize training in many different and pragmatic ways. What EGATIN can continue to do is to inspire, help and acknowledge colleagues in other training institutions to develop good-enough training institutions to educate good-enough group analysts. But it is naïve to think that the education of psychotherapists is a

simple matter of setting up a curriculum and implementing it.

For me mutual excitement of knowing and understanding are essential in training. Having knowledge-hungry and eager candidates, is still what makes it all work and worth-it as a teacher.

'Education is not just the filling of a pail; it is the lightning of a fire'

(BF Skinner, in Klein et al., 2011)

Thanks for your attention!

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## **Report from the EGATIN Study Days, Vilnius April 2018**

By Angelika Golz

I attended the EGATIN Study Days in Vilnius, and as always it was very interesting and enjoyable to meet so many colleagues from different countries. The title was: “Small Group-Endless Space”  
Personal therapy in Group Analytic Training

Kristian Valbak gave a great talk on “The Making of a good enough Group Analyst”. Joanna Skowronska from Poland gave talk called, “Does it matter who is in the group?” Uri Levin from Israel talked about “Blurred boundaries and dual relationships on Group Analytic Training”.

As is the custom now, trainees offer presentations on the second day, and I always find them refreshing (except that it was after lunch, and we were tired). The trainees talked very personally about their background and experiences growing up and what group therapy had meant to them in that context. I did find it interesting how their openness was experienced as problematic for some, and there was a tendency to infantilise these young people, suggesting that they needed protection. Of course, this is how I experienced this!

We had 2 small discussion groups, and 3 large groups and Tija Despotovic did a great job co-conducting the large groups together with a lady from Vilnius.

Like I have experienced before, the large group seems to reflect, bring to light, or act out the issues, historical, political or institutional, of the place and country in which the conference is held. This I felt very strongly in this large group. The issue of a ‘stranger’ causing a threat to the boundaries of the group; the fear of losing identity if rules are not followed and the division between us and them is no longer clear. To me, what I would call a rising paranoia related well to the historical context of this country, and Tija did very well in containing this.

My suggestion for organizing committees is to try to think and reflect on potential institutional and political issues of the place and country where the conference is held. I think these preparations could help the dynamic of the large group.

Our hosts were very hospitable. We had delicious snacks and a great Gala dinner with a real-life string quartet!

The next EGATIN Study Day will be in Warsaw/Poland, 26-28 April 2019. It is always on the last weekend of April. The title is

still under discussion.

**Angelika Golz**

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## Reports from the 17<sup>th</sup> International GASi Symposium in Berlin, 2017

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## Reports from the Co-Chairs of the Berlin Symposium

### Kurt Husemann

I had multiple functions in the Symposium: Co-Chair of the Symposium, together with Gerda, member of the MSC, member of the SC, Chair of the LOC, member of the bursary committee.

The function of the chairs became visible through *the contract* drawn up between GASi and BIG. Later, this contract was extended by adding the signature and a special appendix for D3G.

The special role of Gerda as Chair of the Symposium and, together with Pieter, chair of the MSC, I reflect on in my LOC report, in which I say that it surely would have made sense, that the SC chairs should have taken part from the very beginning in the MSC.

The SC had a very good start as a group with the distribution of the abstracts to be edited. Unfortunately, the problem in the communication of the German SC chair was communicated particularly late to the outside. The change of the SC chair to Katrin Stumptner was successfully decided in Aarhus/Denmark by Robi, Gerda and myself on the day of the GASi general assembly. Katrin, together with Sue, made a great contribution to the success of our symposium.

Gerda and I reached an arrangement quite early concerning our roles which we carried through until the end. Being the German chair, it seemed reasonable that I kept the connection to the organisation office Geber and Reusch and to the hotel Maritim, the "Spreespeicher" - the venue for the Gala evening, the technicians in the hotel, the free accommodation. Gerda took over the international tasks through working for the bursary committee. This committee had an influence which should not be underestimated for its contribution to the success and the atmosphere of the symposium. Furthermore, Gerda, together with Sue, organized the supervision of the group conductors during the conference and the support for the keynote speakers.

A new informal sub-group was formed in Berlin consisting of Katrin, Pieter, Robert, Kurt and Barbara Scholz, the designer at the time, when the programme and abstract booklet had to be developed. All committees were represented in this group. With their high identification with their international committees of belonging, this became not a Berlin or German subgroup

With the beginning of the symposium it became clear, that all of us had done a good group-building job in the different committees. The coherence and the close contact with each other survived also the great load and tension during the Symposium. The roles which were discussed or had developed did not have to be changed during the symposium.

The communication between us and Geber and Reusch allowed us quickly to resolve quite fast some smaller breakdowns, e.g., that there had not been sufficient water on the first day. The quick decision to change the seating plan before the beginning of the plenum did not lead to tensions, since we had already thought of such a solution in the LOC. We had not decided to do this because of consideration for the financial situation. We unfortunately missed removing the now supernumerary chairs on the first night, because we did not need them anymore.

Critically to be seen is the expiry of the farewell session

– it was clear an actual structure was missing. An organizational problem also arose during the gala evening. Measured in terms of the number of the sold tickets everyone could have had a seat from the beginning. Door control of tickets was stopped with the opening of the buffet after only just three quarters of an hour. However, quite a number of participants arrived without a ticket through the now open entrance or via the terrace. The last third of the evening was a highlight for the ones who had held out for a long time and wanted to dance.

A new issue for a GASi symposium was that we had to deal with the question of *security*.

Already in the opening evening, Seyran Ates was accompanied by four bodyguards due to her being under heavy threat. In the days before, there had been detailed arrangements with the police, with me, Pieter and the security officer from the hotel. Since there had also been threatening letters to one of us, which already had years of past history and which had been taken very seriously by us, we very much paid attention to the aspect of security during the whole conference. The representative of the hotel, a former policeman, was present on several days. Pieter and I were present every morning in the hall. The students knew the photo of the person and asked for advice from me or Mrs Geber repeatedly if they were unsafe.

In addition, after initial resistance, participants could accept that we have more consistently than usual paid attention to the carrying of name-tags. Also, at the gala evening, security was initially present.

I would like to thank Pieter particularly. We had some intuitive cooperation in this matter.

When I was watching the plenum on one side, he was automatically, without having to arrange this, on the other side.

I would like to point also to the excellent work of our photographer whom we had to engage only a few days before, as the previous photographer had cancelled only some days before.

I would like to thank Kathrin Albert who has made an essential contribution to tie the orchestra into the symposium.

Much gratitude goes to Robi, who has stamped the atmosphere of our working groups from the first moment, beginning in in Lisbon, with his attention, his permanently present readiness for containment and his warm humanity.

## **Gerda Winther**

Kurt has written extensively about his experience as chair of the symposium and his different roles in different committees, MSC, LOC and SC. I don't want to repeat what he has said in his report as I agree with him and only want to add a few things.

The role I had was a new thing. It came about as has already been explained on the background of conflicts and it worked well. I never however saw myself as equal to Kurt. If one can express it in that way. I wouldn't have taken it on otherwise. I saw myself more as a senior adviser and support, that was why I several times insisted that Kurt's name (and also Pieter's) came before mine in the publicity. I didn't always succeed. It was important for me that the Symposium was German and appeared German (of course in cooperation with GASi, which was very well taken care of by Robi) as I had the feeling that there was some hesitation in taking it on. Maybe because of the past, maybe because of the conflicts that lay behind giving me the role of co-chair. When all this is said and done, I can only say that Kurt and I had a very good relationship and cooperation all the way.

My main task was as chair of the bursary committee. It was a very important task and it allowed almost 70 people to come to the symposium, who probably wouldn't have been able to come otherwise. The committee worked very well and we were always able to find a solution and were very much agreed on the criteria for giving bursaries. Birgitta Geber was a very big help in organizing the information about the bursary applicants.

Sue Einhorn and I were consultants to the group of conductors. It went well as Sue has also described, but I agree with her that it would be better to divide this rather big group into smaller groups. The place of it can also be discussed as it competed with lunch and 'Meet the Authors', which made it somewhat unstable as people had to leave for different reasons. Personally, I felt it hard not to have a break, so I would prefer to have this meeting at another time.

I think we can all agree that it would have been a very good thing to have the SC chairs as part of the MSC. But in spite of this, Sue and Katrin did a marvelous job.

I want to add some more on the gala dinner. I don't think it lived up to expectations. The food was not of a standard to be expected for the price we gave. Another thing was that the rooms didn't hang together which in a way split the party and it made it impossible for me to give the gifts to the lecturers and respondents as we had planned. Once again, the reservation of tables for committee

members didn't work, as people just sat down where they wanted. So, this is not to be recommended.

I could also have used another meeting face to face. I think it would have reduced the strain of the responsibility, but as we know the reality is it would have put more strain on the finances.

Finally, I want to thank everybody for the way you all took on this interesting, challenging, stimulating and hard work.

## **Post-Symposium Thoughts of the Co-Chair of the Management Sub-Committee**

By Pieter Hutz

First, I want to say that I agree with actually every sentence in the two reports Kurt and Gerda have written (the one as Co-chair of the symposium together with Gerda and the other Kurt alone as chair of the LOC). Both Gerda and Kurt mentioned actually all the important aspects of the symposium and I just want to add some remarks and additional aspects, some from the point of view of the D3G and some from a personal point of view.

The great development our symposium took can be valued on the background of the very difficult situation in the beginning, and for a better understanding I shortly want to outline it. There was a strong wish of Robi to have the symposium with the Berlin Institute of Group Analysis (BIG) and to have it in Berlin. The D3G as an organisation was not seriously involved in the early process. This surely has to do with different aspects and an important one was, that the D3G itself was ambivalent and did not seriously face this ambivalence for some time. We needed time to get clear whether we wanted to participate or not. When we became involved (and involved ourselves actively) it was not an easy situation for any of us! Not for the BIG, not for the society (mainly Robi) and not for the D3G. There were two red threads, the one was struggling about the title and the other one about the role of the D3G. Perhaps the struggling about the title also was a way of demanding a role as the national organisation of the German Institutes.

At the end of all this fighting D3G entered into the contract which already existed between BIG and the GASi and we all agreed to creating a situation of equal partnership (I wrote in my welcome speech about this). If one takes a look at this very difficult situation, which could have ended in a disaster, we altogether (in the beginning it was mainly Robi, Kurt, me and Thomas) did a wonderful job in preparing, organising and, last but not least, having this wonderful symposium.

As a conclusion to the whole process one can say we all were very courageous in choosing a theme for our symposium with so many demanding historical, political and social implications. Especially given it was organised in Berlin, the capital of “several Germanys” which in fact is one Germany with a conflictual and contradictory history and presence. The different kinds of tensions in this process became part of the relationship between those who were organising

and holding the development of the symposium.

Some figures are moving me very much and they underline how good it was to take all these risks (which as Gerda wrote sometimes made us more careful than was necessary). The number of about 650 participants surely is great! But even more impressive was the following: half of the participants have never before been at a GASi event - and about 50% were not members of GASi. And, also, I was struck by the 250 German speaking participants – there was a long time when I was afraid it would not be more than 185.

### **Some details concerning the symposium**

- The structure of *equal partnership* between the three organisations was good for confidence building and for making clear that every partner is fully responsible for the common and shared success. I think this equal partnership also has strengthened and supported the effort of everybody. For the structure of our collaboration it also was important that GASi had a veto in cases of serious disagreement.

The status of equal rights supported the presence of the D3G and our feeling as a partner. This was important because of existing ambivalence also in the D3G (some powerful members said “it is too early”, the D3G is only six years old) and for taking an active part in providing (seed) money and taking action in being a part of the programme.

- I can say I liked the job as a co-chair of the MSC and I liked the job-sharing Gerda and I had. I always had a good feeling not being alone with any task and felt safe about being able to ask Gerda. You had a calming effect on me dear Gerda! I remember that sometimes when I felt exhausted I could be sure that you did send a first draft for our meeting.
- I think the MSC really was a very good working *management group* of this symposium. I always felt very comfortable with you all and see us as an *able-bodied team* (sailors language). I would miss everyone of you if you were not there. At the very beginning I was a representative of the D3G but the more our process of collaboration was proceeding I felt (only) as the member of a working group.

By the way, I also think that the scientific committee next time should have a constant place in the management committee of the symposium.

- I can remember how much I (and I think Kurt too) was relieved when you Gerda decided to become one of the chairs of the symposium. I (and we in the D3G) always were very clear in not wanting a double German chair-ship (Kurt and me). Two German chairs would not fit to a *German/International Symposium*. I think it was as necessary for GASi and for the international community as it was for us the Germans and the Berliners. And for Kurt and me it was very good, to have someone we can rely on beside ourselves. It was not only you Gerda but you were important because of being linked with both of us, as also was Robi. A special thank you to both of you!
- The following sentences a bit redundant but I don't want to throw them out: The *double chairs* from the very beginning were very important and became more and more so in the on-going symposium event. It was good (as Gerda wrote) to have chairs staffed by national organisers (Germans) and by international ones (GASi). The symposium took place in Germany/Berlin so it was good to have the country and the city well represented. And it definitely was (and became more and more) an international conference because we were not divided and less and less separated into Germans and internationals! It more and more became a collaboration with the diminishing importance of our origins (except with the language! ;-). In my opinion it could only become a German influenced symposium because of being an international one from the bottom to the top.
- Kurt is very right in mentioning that the BIG and D3G were not experienced with conferences of this size - and we were supported very well by GASi experience. Also important was, we were not experienced in collaborating to organize a conference, we had to learn it while we were doing it - and at the same time had to get along with our own ambivalences. Kurt did mention the ambivalence in BIG and I would add the ambivalence which also existed in the D3G at the beginning. In both organisations it was very important to get into the process of discussing these ambivalences. Probably hidden ambivalences of organisers are always an important topic that has to be reflected on.
- I think also for GASi it was a challenge to organize such a big conference with two independent partners not easily connected. Kurt

has written a bit more about this way of organizing and containing the conference. Thinking about it now and reading the posts in the three fora, for me we were a container which more and more became a *container contained* by those who were surrounding us. A little story about our feelings which I think Kurt will allow me to tell: When we were talking side by side to the first large group session we both had the same feeling and spoke: “now they will hang us!”

- To introduce and then to use the *liaison officers* was something very helpful! It was important that they were not members of one of the committees but related to both of them, always in relation to their present tasks.

Marita did a good job in bringing the German Institute's together, helping them to raise their voice and to become a group which was present at the symposium. I think this was one important part of German presence in the programme below the keynotes and the respondents. A remarkable thing was, and perhaps it also can happen in Barcelona, the regionally characterised part of the programme: In the workshop about the German institutes, only German participants showed up. The German-speaking institutes themselves were very happy about their performance.

Marina Mojovic, working in another way, perhaps provided the most addresses and internationally did a lot for reaching possible participants! She wrote the most letters to people, asking them to send the letters to colleagues (and the colleagues to other colleagues) and to put me in cc. I collected them and used them when we had to write a new letter. Writing letters, many letters probably was very important for the number of participants. Marina created a kind of snowball system and more and more we got a growing number of addresses. I think especially Marina did a very good job in distributing the program and encouraging participation. All the addresses are still on my PC.

*For Barcelona:* I think these two different ways of fulfilling the liaison job are both very important for participation and for contributing. Perhaps it will be possible to carry these two jobs on the shoulders of a group, a *liaison task force*.

- I think it was good to have a highly qualified professional graphic designer and I think we are still learning how to use such a

professional without spending too much money by making many many little steps in collaborating with her. We sometimes did not know how the money was running through our hands when we gave her new tiny jobs again and again.

- Yes, in the farewell we had lost our structure! Or better: I could not hold it, when I was moderating the farewell. It was strange for me, I hadn't formed a structure for this half-hour in my head and I think we should talk about "ending the symposium"
- After having closed this file, another idea came to my mind and I opened it again: Ending the symposium brings me closer to the difficult topic of ending my six years as president of the D3G.

**Pieter Hutz**

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## **Berlin GASi Symposium: Reflections of the Local Treasurer**

By Robert Ohlrich

### **The Start of the campaign: Not knowing and trust**

Apart from a training in business administration more than 30 years ago and the work as student helper at an oncology conference more than 20 years ago there was nothing similar I did before. I agreed to take the “job” as local treasurer being part of the Berlin enterprise 2017 in autumn 2014, very soon after the start of the Berlin campaign before and at the Lisbon GASi symposium. The work of building the structures to organize the symposium and to set up the initial contracts has been described by the chairs (Pieter, Gerda, Kurt) and Robi. I thought of the enterprise as an adventure I wanted to undertake. I trusted especially Kurt and Pieter in Berlin and learned to trust my international colleagues whom I got to know in the process. Kurt ensured me all the time that he knew “how to do it” and everything would work out fine. Robi ensured me that there had been previous GASi symposia and that they have a good basis in their membership and interested participants from very many countries that would carry us. Robi decided that I should be part of the Management Symposium Committee (MSC) which I surely did not expect in the beginning but was a very good thing. In the process I could really take on more or less the whole financial responsibility and felt increasingly that I could manage it. I did not expect in the beginning that international and German colleagues would trust me so much, but they did.

### **The process of setting up the budget: huge fixed amounts and rough estimations about the rest**

Pieter and Kurt have reported about the work on the first contract of cooperation between the ‘Berliner Institute for Gruppenanalyse’ (BIG), the ‘Deutsche Gesellschaft für Gruppenanalyse und Gruppenpsychotherapie’ (D3G) and GASi. This took quite some months, and symposium committees started – to my memory – to be complete around April 2015. I had a first contact with Frances Griffiths, GASi hon. Treasurer at the time. There were some figures and statistics about money, numbers of participants and bursaries at the Lisbon symposium but no budget structure and how the result was achieved. Frances and I started to discuss the budget and we had a good cooperation in putting up a budget structure and some

estimations for the budget until June 2015. So, the “budget” got ready in the last days before the first personal MSC meeting in Berlin in summer 2015.

### *Target and Risk Management: Breaking even*

Setting up the budget aimed at breaking even with the symposium. In the MSC, between all three organisations, it was clear, they were all charitable organisations and they should not be out to make a profit. From the beginning the risk of a loss was much to be avoided at any case so everybody acted on the basis of being on the “safe side”. In the budget we had a sum of 21.000€ for “contingencies” to account for unexpected expenses and risks. The main risk of course was the number of participants of the symposium. Knowing there had been about 420 in Lisbon we thought, because of the central situation in Europe, Berlin could attract some more people. After the decision for the hotel location and the congress organisation there was also a large total of fixed amounts to be covered (see below: “fixed amounts”). On the other hand, we did not want to put up an unreasonably high fee. We ended up with a budget breaking even for 470 participants with a budget sum of 321.000€. The fee started from 580€ for early bird booking GASi members and would end at 830€ for late coming non-members. There was also an element of flexible fees and fee waivers by the bursary system which I learned about later in the process.

There were **some fixed amounts** and decisions already at that time which helped a lot for the rest which was a big lake of uncertainty. We had decided to work with the congress organisation Geber & Reusch and signed the second contract. We had also decided on the symposium location under Kurt's guidance and signed the contract. It was good to know but also risky because now an expenditure of 195.000€ (for items 1 to 3 in the budget: Room Rental (fixed amount), Meeting package (amount depending on the number of participants) and very basic technical equipment) was almost fixed. There were very limited cancellation and reduction options but there were some. Compared to this financial risk the more “unknown rest” seemed not too important to me. I felt a bit crazy at the time to go on at this point of time. It was not really my personal decision, but I just followed and had to trust, mainly at the time Kurt, Pieter, Robi and Frances. I hoped it would not ruin the Berlin institute and was clearly thinking about exit options and strategies in case of failure. Nobody else seemed to think about that. I increasingly felt that much of the financial and organisational work would have to be done locally and felt increasingly responsible and anxious.

I talked about “rough” estimations when we put up “calculations” in the budget for the other budget items. The cost for the congress organisation was also fixed at 19.000€, total fixed 214.000€.

The complete budget sum for the symposium totalled up to 321.000€, leaving a “rest” of 107.000€.

### **The unknown “rest” of the budget and strict discipline in honorary work and paying keynote speakers only (and only moderately)**

We decided to calculate separate budgets for the **gala dinner/evening**, which was initially 40.000€. We had agreed that the gala evening was a local task and decisions could be fixed later. The target again was that the Gala Evening should have its own budget and also break even. Anyway, it was unrealistic to prepare such an event at a rented location with dinner and some music and dancing for the expected fee of 90€. We had decided to support a solidarity fee of 60€ for up to 100 participants from the symposium budget (this would cover a Gala deficit of 3000€) and also started a donation campaign to raise money for “partnerships”, allowing invitations to the evening for participants/bursary applicants who could not afford the price.

The “rest” of the symposium budget was in detail:

The variable sum for **printing** (later in addition: **graphic design**) and website totalled 26.000€ and I had no idea how this would work out. G+R always alerted us that this would not be enough.

There was a lot of attention and time spent on **Keynote Speaker's** travel cost and honorarium. I learned about the usual procedure about this at GASi even though to me I never had the impression it was really clear. We decided to have one keynote speaker for each day, i.e. 5 keynote speakers. Each would receive travel cost and one night of hotel accommodation and an honorarium of 1000€ for the lecture. The respondents would receive a 250€ honorarium for their work on the response but would have to pay everything else for their participation. Frances was very helpful in putting this out very clear and she also made clear that it would be an important and hard task to stand against any attempts of doing another way. She encouraged and urged me to be “strict” in this regard and I tried to be so. So, the total for budget item 9 was 13.400€. This seemed a core item for the symposium quality to me, but it was less than 4% of the budget put up in June 2015 which ran up to 321.000€.

It was also clear that all committee members, even the chairs,

would have to pay symposium fees and travel costs on their own. Only for 2 or 3 committee meetings of MSC (3 coming from abroad for 3 Berlin meetings) and Scientific Committee (SC) (8 coming from abroad for up to three Berlin meetings, two in the end) we set up a budget for travel costs. The basis of this were also very rough calculations thinking that for each international committee member and meeting we would need 500€. The national/local committee members would have no cost all of them living in Berlin. So, we had 4.500€ for the MSC and 12.000€ for the SC. We also had a small amount for the ongoing work of the local committee of 1000€ for organisation of the work and local meetings. Everybody worked on an honorary basis and could reckon on a partial reimbursement of travel expenses but nothing more. Of course, it turned out that some committee members and speakers (i.e. at subplenaries) had expected differently.

### **Controlling the budget**

One word about **financial liquidity**. This was an area I was most uncertain of. Robi told me to remain calm and he was right. He implanted the idea of seed money. Having three partners (GASi, D3G and BIG) each paying 5000€ for the initial seed-money and also after a campaign of D3G (mainly Pieter) we had additionally almost 10.000€ from other “German speaking institutes” (meaning some of them are not German, but Austrian or Suisse). The account was opened in January 2016 (a quite complicated and time-consuming procedure, lots of signatures and international bank regulations) and soon after that there were almost 25.000€ “in”. Until the huge wave of registration fees came in in January 2017 there were not very many and not very high expenses to be covered: 2 committee meetings and some flyer printing and copies, also the work on the website and a first payment for the hotel reservation. The account always had more than 10.000€ left and there were no worries about liquidity at any time.

Some thoughts about development of risks in the course of the **registration process**. Nobody knew about the number of participants. The future is always uncertain, and we did not even know about politics and economics and the years coming from 2015. In the planning period for example, the Brexit was decided and could have changed conditions and planning. The final surplus was not aimed for at any point of time. I consider it rather as “missing the target” of break even. Even if in the end a surplus is very welcome.

The whole campaign went very well. The registration process and the take-off of the website was in September 2016. Some

registrations until the early bird deadline in January 2017 went in dripping. Not too many, around new year 2016/17 there were less than 100 participants. We had calculated (also a very rough estimate, how could we know?) 100 early bird registrations for members and non-members of GASi each. The year 2017 started with a huge wave of registrations up to 320 registrations at the end of the early bird deadline. The worry now was whether we would have enough later registrations at the higher prices because the early bird fee would not cover all our cost. We again had a “dripping” period of registrations until the next fee increase at the end of April 2017. At that time, we had 530 registrations but 70 of them had in part high fee reductions by bursaries. They were decided by the bursary committee, a very good experience and reliable, I also think, fair procedure explained in the other reports especially by Gerda. From December 2016 I knew that we were expected to pay back the bursary support to GASi in the end which was guaranteed from donations to GASi of 15.000€. So, this made a different “break even” situation given that the budget had been planned for 470 fully paying registrants. So, 530 registrations by the end of April 2017 meant only 460 full paying registrants. Additional registrations would be needed to cover the bursary amount to be paid back to the GASi Fund. It is important for me to say that there still remained a risk to reach the target of breaking even in April and until July 2017. At the same time, we needed a budget addition because we also needed to take care for higher cost because of higher number of participants. As Sarah pointed out there were really some risks which turned to be real: cost for graphic design, printing of the program and the abstract booklet and the Gala Dinner. All the time we were controlling strictly income and expenses, sometimes postponing decisions which had to be taken in the later process especially in these fields.

### **Some discussion and reflections afterwards – finances as a “silent partner” and the missing spreadsheet**

Firstly, I need to say that it was very important to have a **fixed budget** in the beginning and to be explicit about who can be paid for work and to what extent and that most of group analyst's contributions and also cost will be honorary. The structure of these agreements was fixed in the budget and also the structure of the budget items which had only slightly to be corrected later. In general, they carried on and held until the final budget. I much recommend starting from this structure and only moderately think about modifications and corrections for differing situations. Most of this structure has been there implicitly

from previous symposia but it took me quite some time and effort to find out about them and have them explicit.

### **Thinking about how we ended up with a surplus**

This was not aimed for, but because we paid a lot of attention to not ending up with a loss there was a tendency for a surplus in the end. Later I would like to discuss that we could have come to different decisions in the management process in the last few weeks, thinking for example about the furniture for the large group. Looking at it from the end we might also have had reduced fees by almost 100€ per participant. But then it would have been a very close-run thing.

I agree with Sarah's comment that financial work became or remained a **“silent partner”**. When Frances and I started with the budget it was this way and I had the impression that nobody else seemed to want to know exactly what we had calculated. It stayed that way even though, as Sarah says, the chairs always had the agreements and principals of finances in mind and Pieter agreed to put it first on the agenda. Once having the budget, I was then asked whether we were on course and on budget. I always had the feeling that everybody, especially Pieter, Gerda and Kurt took it very *seriously* if I warned about something. This is true for the whole but in the field of keynote speakers and also of technical aspects it was partly different. Technical aspects became much more expensive than planned because there were very strong expectations towards the organisers to have microphones and laptop projections and screens.

The field of “content” and presenting the content which was more or less the result of the work of the scientific committee was another item where controlling the budget was a problem and sometimes hard. We had decided for a very limited congress organisation leaving a lot of tasks to us and not paying G+R for them. In the end this cost us a lot of additional money because we had to pay graphic design and others to help the chairs of the SC in their work overload.

My expectation that the committee chairs would work with their own budget items and take also financial responsibility for their part was hardly understood and was not met in these fields (SC meeting cost, keynote speaker's expenses, technique, work on presenting content for website and printing). I was always asked and felt that I had to take the responsibility for the “silent” part, which they (chairs of SC) did not want to take. The situation was helped but not completely relieved when the chairs of the SC were invited to video meetings and personal meetings of the MSC.

## **Finances**

With Sarah it was always a very good and trustful discussion. Having her thinking about finances helped me a lot to feel supported. I found her questions always very clear and helpful and felt appreciated when she gave me feedback that these questions were answered. In her period. I already felt very secure with my task which already had proceeded for quite a while. Indeed, I believed now we would “sail home safe” even if we had to keep on controlling and watching out.

**About controlling:** there were two others allowed as signatories but in the end, I had full control over the account all the time and I signed for each money transfer. It was important for me to know that there were no financial transfers I did not know of. The symposium kept a size that this was really possible.

For me one of the main points for the financial success was the engagement of the D3G and her institutes, the Germans outside of Berlin. In the end there were more than 200 German participants at the symposium and many of them became GASi member. This was mainly the result of Pieter's and Marita's work.

## **Bursaries**

The start of the campaign was also much helped by the **bursary process** which initiated a lot of international involvement and interest, also contributions from bursary applicants. So apart from seed money bursary money and the bursary process in my opinion do a lot to create the necessary “wave” of involvement ending up in registration numbers. Still I agree that also bursary work sometimes was sort of silent or not much mentioned even though I think it is very important to have something like that and more of it. Also, the support for candidates in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis and candidates in group analytic institutes is very important but could also be in a coordinated responsibility also by the group analytic institutes.

## **Congress organisation and spreadsheets**

I wonder if it is possible to have a spreadsheet with all finances. Mrs. Geber had something like that in EXCEL sheets. These was not very well worked out and presented. There could be some improvement in accounting and presenting figures even though I doubt whether it is worth much additional effort. (Of course, there is computer software for this but none of us had the knowledge to deal with it). I felt comfortable enough with what I got from them but was not able and willing to do the work to present it more easily as long as I trusted I knew about the situation. For future symposia I hope and advise that

finances are even better integrated, but I also think that technical means can help but cannot do the full job. One word about Mrs. Geber's work: she did a lot of administrative work in the context of bursaries and never complained about it. More than 70 individual agreements about the registration conditions had to be handled and the application process had to be dealt with!

### “Gala Dinner”??

The last comment on the **Gala Dinner**. It was a “problem child” and the first problem was the name of the child and expectations put on this name. We changed it to “Gala Evening” because it seemed more important to have time for an evening together. I think the word “Gala” maybe in the tradition of GASi but there is also a part of GASi members who expect it to be for free like it is possible simply to meet people and have fun for not much money. It was not possible to bridge these gaps in Berlin, but I think it is not possible elsewhere. The Gala Dinner was calculated for 400 participants and it reached the targeted number quite close. Mrs. Geber always pointed out that anything below 100 € per person will be hard to accomplish and I think this is actually the case. So, eating and dancing could be separated. Also, there were changes in the planning period going on in Berlin. The process was already going on, but the speed increased. Media and politic people coming to Berlin together with political and economic actions have led to increasing rents and prices. The market for houses, apartments and bureaus exploded. Berlin was used to have lots of cheap space which just needed to be taken or squatted but now privatisation and profit making of international actors in coordination with local corrupt policy was very successful. On the other hand, the local committee felt the pressure to welcome Berlin guests and – in addition to the symposium welcome – it wanted to express this welcome. That is why music and wine for the evening was sponsored by the Berlin Institute. Otherwise the deficit of the Gala would have been much higher. In the light of the success of the symposium and its surplus this could be compensated. The location we had decided for had a quick change in management structure. Formally they kept to the contracts but substantially they increased prices at a time we could not change our decision and also did not have a good alternative. So especially the dinner became more and more expensive and seeing only this detail it did not seem to be worth the price as some complain. But: it was not an alternative to decide for an outdoor event and the weather on that evening showed that it was wise to decide for an indoor location with staff and catering.

I would support Sarah's suggestion to separate different expectations: having a lunch together and also to want to meet, having music and dance. This would obviously reduce much of the price to be paid. But anyway: such a big party with 400 people on a planned evening has to be prepared and it will cost. And there is one more idea: what about the culture we share together: songs, singing, different forms of dancing. Some things got lost and some might be created again together at events like this. But this is also a high expectation ...

### **Transparency**

I propose we inform the GASi membership and/or GASi Forum about the main aspects of the symposium finances and publish this report, in part or in total.

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## **Berlin Symposium Report of the Scientific Committee (SC) Co-Chairs**

By Sue Einhorn & Katrin Stumtner

### **The tasks**

It was a great honour to co-chair this committee and we learnt a great deal. The tasks have not been written down before, so we would like to share our understanding of the job for the future.

### **Purpose**

- a. To select Keynote Speakers; Respondents and Chairs;
- b. Advertise for Colleagues to submit Abstracts of material they wish to present;
  - i. content should be in line with Symposium Theme;
  - ii. length and format should be described;
  - iii. language in which written be set by Symposium – usually English but may change if symposium bi-lingual;
- c. Select Social Dreaming, Small Group and Median Group Conductors - all should be experienced group analysts;
- d. Select special Sub-Plenary Themes and invite experienced colleagues to convene over 4/3/2 days. Most Sub-Plenary convenors felt that 4 days was too long so should be limited to 2 or 3 days;
- e. Select Chairs for each element of the programme.

### **Membership of the SC**

- a. Chairs - GASI Scientific Chair together with locally selected Chair. (Berlin 2017: Sue Einhorn, Katrin Stumtner);
- b. Plus 6 members representing other member countries of GASI. Berlin 2017: Italy - Marco Longo; Norway - Kjersti Solberg-Lyngstad; Denmark - Kristian Valbak; Ukraine -Jurko Prochasko; Germany - Angela Schmidt-Bernhard, Regine Scholz, Hanna Reinhardt-Bork; Kurt Husemann was on the SC as Chair of the Local Organising Committee and acted as a link between us. Robi Friedman was on the SC as President of GASi and was also a link with the LOC. Marina Mojovic as a link between the international GA-Institutes and Marita Barthel-Rösing as a link between the German speaking GA-Institutes and the SC.
- c. Members need to be given a clear brief about the amount of work it entails as it may be too much for some and they could suggest others from their country. It is about 10 hours over two years plus 2 visits to

the host country;

d. Robi was a link between the local MC and the SC. However, Kurt attended and was a link to both. Katrin, as co-chair, was a link between SC, MC, and LOC.

e. Two consultants - Elisabeth Rohr and Thomas Mies - these were not necessary and were both originally on the SC.

## **Operation**

We had two face-to-face meetings but needed a third despite the expense. The first meeting was Group Building plus explaining our purpose. At this meeting we also clarified the theme for each day in line with the Symposium title and gave each day its own title. We also selected the Keynote Speakers and Respondents with alternatives in mind in case the selected people were not available. The SC chairs then invited them in line with the finance agreed with the Treasurers of the MC.

The SC Chair wrote guidance notes for the keynotes (e.g., length of time for self and respondent; dates by when lectures needed) and later more detailed protocols for Chairs and for the Respondents. These can be forwarded to the next SC if wanted!

The second meeting was to organise the layout of the programme and begin to think about the Abstract Booklet. This meeting was also to set up members in pairs so that each pair would have responsibility for reading the abstracts sent to them and assessing whether they needed editing and whether they were suitable for the Symposium.

Sue did quite a lot of editing, as English was the Symposium language and some abstracts needed translating as well as editing.

Each pair of two SC members would be responsible for one of the days and later to select and brief chairs for the programme on their day. These chairs allocated abstracts through a Dropbox system and then retrieved the responses to guide them about the next step. SC needed teaching about how to use this. Not everyone was able to use the Dropbox system.

The SC agreed to meet every six weeks for 1 hour on Skype. This would improve contact during the whole process and keep the SC much better informed throughout the planning. Being in regular communication is very important in building up the Symposium programme. At certain times the SC needed more meetings - every 4 weeks perhaps - as the abstracts arrived and we needed discussion about them with the allocated pairs. The Chairs of the SC also met again separately to clarify the layout of the programme and look at the

abstracts - Katrin Stumptner came to London one weekend.

It is both difficult and advisable to have joint chairs. Difficult because a lot of the detailed administration fell to the local Chair and we needed much better administrative support. At the very first moment of entering the contract between the symposium administration (in Berlin 2017: Geber & Reusch) and organisation of LOC & GASI, the distribution of administrative responsibilities between SC and the symposium administration should be clarified. The SC needs support from the symposium administration (distribution of the abstracts, requiring of rooms, etc.)

Good to have joint Chairs as we could talk things through and tended to meet weekly on Skype. There were loads of detailed decisions that needed quick responses through shared information.

### **New Initiatives**

Meet the Authors: Set up to celebrate the number of books being published and launched since the last symposium. Great help from Kjersti Solberg-Lyngstad. We need to write to everyone to see how it went. Some people said they were a success but for others, not well attended. Needs a better time in the Programme or perhaps an evening when there could be a sort of book fair??? We really do need to celebrate our colleagues hard work and be aware of the many languages in which the books are written.

Scientific Programme (SP) themes for the four days:

- SP working with refugees (Regine Scholz, John Schlapobersky)
- SP working with children (Katrin Stumptner)
- SP working with violence (Pam Kleinot)

SP theme for three days:

- SP social unconscious (Earl Hopper, Haim Weinberg)

SP theme for two days:

- SP research (Kristian Valbak)

It was the first time there was a focus on group-analysis with children and this was a great success.

### **Leaderless Groups**

How did they go? Women's Leaderless Group - a real success. We had 25 women and began a very interesting process. (Sue Einhorn)

Feedback from other Leaderless Groups also very positive.

## **Orchestra**

A great success we thought. We loved listening to them rehearse!! Katrin Stumptner also loved the workshop with the orchestra (twice 90 min on two different days) which was a great success in supporting the group process between the musicians and in the connection between both group-processes: orchestra and the Symposium membership. They became well related. It was remarkable to hear it when they did their daily rehearsal after the workshop sessions and then the full programme at the concert. The concert was truly magical.

## **Experiential Groups**

The goodwill and skills of our colleagues ensured that all but one of the groups were a success. The problematic group was due to a poor choice of conductor. Conductors were chosen to represent as many of the countries participating as possible but perhaps we also need advice from those countries sometimes! However, the Small Groups were too large - 16-18 approx. and should really not exceed 14. Balcony Groups were intruded upon as we had anticipated and were not sufficiently private.

Median Groups seemed to work well but again were really the size of a large group. It meant that each group had a silent subgroup. I haven't had much feedback about them except through the conductor's group.

## **Conductors' Supervision Group**

Sue together with Gerda. We needed to eat first which gave 1 hour for reflection. It was fairly well attended although the 'meet the authors' events often disrupted conductors being able to stay. There was a potential membership of over 30 and, although it worked well for those that remained with it, we think we should consider returning to the pre-Lisbon format where there were  $\frac{3}{4}$  conductors' supervision groups. Conductors need their own group to which they can belong as well as feedback on the groups they are conducting. This would give the conductors a proper group space and more time for feedback. Conductors should still be given lunch before their own feedback group.

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## **Evaluation Report of the Local Organising Committee (LOC)**

By Kurt Husemann

The local organising committee for the Berlin symposium (LOC) began its work immediately on the last days of the Lisbon symposium. A group of five persons - all from the executive board of the Berlin Institute for Group Analysis (BIG). This nucleus of this group remained constant until end although the areas of responsibility changed. This group enlarged itself up to 26 participants, all from the Berlin Institute and with one participant from the Zurich institute, resident in Berlin.

### **The tasks of the LOC**

1. Preparations for a contract with GASi and, at a later time, with D3G.
2. The search for a congress venue and a venue for the gala evening.

A central task was finding an appropriately big and acoustically good room for the large group. The experiences with previous symposia had shown that the large group is the central critical element for the success of the conference. Furthermore, we had to look for premises where more than 24 parallel events would be possible during the day. The distances between the events should be short as possible for the participants. This search in the city of Berlin was hard work and took us more than a year.

### **Special feature**

For the first time GASi did not only cooperate with a national organisation (here D3G) but also with a local one (BIG). This was an unusual feature of the whole organisation. The two German institutions had no experience with the organisation of international events. The local committee wanted to start working as free as possible of influences within the D3G, so the Berlin committee decided against accepting members into the LOC who also have their place of residence in Berlin. The contract expansion between GASi, the LOC and D3G was carried out after approximately one year.

A further task was the search for a professional conference organisation. We made a good choice with the company Geber and Reusch. Last, but not least, a time schedule relevant to all committees was a central task.

## Critical aspects

1. The composition of the core group within the LOC was exclusively made up of members of the BIG executive board. It should be noted for future LOC work, that the whole institute supports the organisation of a such big event. The ambivalences and fears in the Institute could never been really completely dissolved. The problem was that in the executive board group this ambivalence internally could not be dissolved completely. With this, the Scientific Committee Chairs would also receive better support for their working group.

2. The committees (SC and MSC) should start their work as soon as possible. An example: The discussion about the title of the future symposium started already in autumn 2013. The temporary title which contained the idea of the "migration of people, Völkerwanderung" aroused a lot of fears, feelings not yet integrated in connection with the German history of National Socialism. At the time, no acceptable group had yet arisen to function as a container for this discussion.

Only with the establishment of Gerda Winter as the international representative of GASi as one the chairs of the symposium, together with myself, as the national chair and simultaneously the international Chair, as the couple of MSC chairs, did a frame become possible which integrated the discussions around the title. This was an essential contribution so that the three institutions could grow together. Pieter described this process very beautifully in his welcoming speech at the symposium.

It can be said in conclusion that the LOC made a large contribution to establishing a boundary in relation to the professional conference organisation, the local members and to the three other committees. It also should be emphasised that the two internet fora have made a large contribution to creating a good working atmosphere during the Symposium. It has been a great experience that a large group of almost 700 participants worked so well from the very beginning.

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## **A Third Way of Psychoanalysis: Individual and Group Therapy - Both for one Patient**

By Dorothe Türk

### **Main Idea**

The patient should NOT have to fit the treatment, but the treatment should be adapted to suit the patient's individual need. Hayne (1999) called it an "adaptive indication".

I want to explore the idea that combined therapy is very helpful and successful, not only for patients with personality disorders, but also for other patients. Many patients can benefit from concurrent treatment especially those who are in psychoanalytic therapy for the first time and for those who are very afraid of joining a group. In my opinion, in many cases, concurrent treatment is superior to only individual or group therapy (Türk 2016). I want to distinguish different ways to practice combined, concurrent and conjoint treatment:

1. Combined: One individual session is added to one group session per week; for example, often a few single sessions are necessary during the first experience of group therapy;
2. Concurrent: Group treatment is added to individual psychoanalytic treatment (for instance, two individual sessions per week and one group session). Individual treatment is added to group therapy (for instance, one individual session plus a group session twice a week);
3. Conjoint: Therapy with two psychotherapists working together with one patient, group therapy with one therapist and individual sessions with the other therapist;
4. Other: Group therapy is started after a completed shorter or longer time of individual therapy; or individual therapy begins **after** finishing group therapy.

### **Introduction**

I have been working in private practice for nearly 20 years. During the first ten years I only practiced individual psychoanalytic treatment, patients having normally about 2 to 4 sessions per week. Sometimes psychoanalytic therapy requires a lot of patience because of the slowness of the process. I have to admit, sometimes I was bored and

desired the help of a group. I thought that group therapy could accelerate the process and the success of therapy. I decided to test my hypothesis. Since 2008 I have practiced combined therapy.

In my private practice many patients now ask for combined treatment. They are often curious to step into group therapy but also want to feel safe and have single sessions too. However, most of my group patients are not in combined treatment. I have five psychoanalytic groups and only eighteen individual sessions. Why is this? I have found that the longer patients are in combined or concurrent treatment the more likely they are to choose to move to solely group treatment. Often individual treatment isn't necessary any longer.

I have never felt this is a dilution of the group process but rather a condensation, a strengthening. Colleagues who fear dilution never have worked with combined treatment. Or maybe, they are not experienced in using both modalities. It is possible of course that the strength of the transference is sometimes weakened by combined therapy, but this can be very helpful and necessary for the mental defence of the patient.

As far as I know only a few colleagues practice outpatient combined therapy in Germany, although combined therapy is very common with inpatients in Germany. Outpatient combined therapy seems more common in the USA. In 2009 a whole issue of the "International Journal of Group Psychotherapy" was dedicated to this theme. I want to quote Priscilla Kauff (2009) three times:

"...the two modalities can reinforce and accelerate the often painfully slow and difficult task of helping to make the transference process accessible to analysis and ultimately to work through and relieve its grip on the functioning of the patient."

"The more familiar the patient becomes with the existence of the transference process...the better able he or she will be to alter that input and the more likely positive change will occur."

"Any window that allows access to the transference process will clearly contribute to the overall success of treatment."

## **Main topics with case reports**

### **The importance of bonding**

In my opinion developing a good relationship during individual therapy is a necessary and unavoidable preparation for joining group

therapy. The more severe the structural deficiencies are, the more important it is to create a strong bonding in individual therapy before the patient enters the group (Türk 2017). The therapeutic alliance unavoidably often gets a rupture, especially working with patients with attachment disorders. And when this rupture gets noticed by the therapist it depends on his ability to repair it and to restore the good relation (Wöller 2016).

I want to share one of my images with you: Spiderman, the superhero hanging between skyscrapers in New York City. I use individual therapy to create more and more threads between psychoanalyst and patient, threads so strong, that they become ropes. These ropes will hold the patient when he may fall into a deep dark hole during group therapy and will help him to climb out of it.

**Case report:** This case report shows that only a few additional individual sessions had been necessary. The good relationship protected her from leaving the group. It is an example of combined therapy.

A woman with a severe hysterical disorder, 46 years old, had been in my individual treatment for several years. At the beginning of the therapy she could hardly walk and was twisted in herself and the physicians and the physiotherapists were desperate. She used to faint in various situations. She could not say: “I do not want this” or “I cannot do that”. Instead she reacted by fainting and falling onto the floor. This symptom has existed since she was 17 and I do not think that she will ever be completely rid of it. This symptom is clearly incompatible with her job as a headmistress of a school. She had individual therapy for four years and she improved significantly. Over a period of one to two years we talked about joining a group. When she was finally convinced that it would help her to further improve, she joined my Tuesday evening group. All group members are female and have been or still are in my individual treatment. After the first participation she came furiously to the following individual session. “How could you do this to me? It was like sitting with my family in former times. I am so angry.” Our good and trustful relationship made it possible to work through what had happened in her first group session. Her spontaneous regression was severe. We worked successfully, and she decided to remain in the group.

What had happened? I had made a mistake. Usually, new patients do not join the first group session after a holiday break, but step into the second group session one week later. For no good reason I had neglected this rule this time after my Easter holidays. It did have

a direct impact on the way the group acted on this Tuesday, even before the group session started. Nearly every group member entering the room asked me to have an individual session if possible. I thought: What is going on here? And during the session the theme was whether there would be enough time and space for all. One group member was very angry. She attacked another group member, who stayed very calm indeed and rejected the accusations, that actually, I think, were intended for me. Entering the room, every group member was a bit upset about this session because seven group members wanted to talk about the way they had got along during the break and they wanted to introduce themselves to the new group member. The angry group member expressed the rage of all the group members. For the new group member, what was happening was very strange and she left the first group session upset. I think the “temperature” was a bit too ‘hot’ for her first participation. Her family situation: Her mother died when she was about eleven years old after long years of suffering (cancer). Her father never spoke to her or her younger sister about their mother’s death, but quickly married again, to a widow with three daughters. The stepmother was similar to those in fairy tales and her father didn’t protect her.

### **Condensation of the group process and increase in the possibilities of working through the transference**

Group therapy expands not only the number of available objects but also of opportunities for transference. The group forces each member to recognize the uniqueness of their own way of seeing and interpreting the world, his relations, all issues. In concurrent or combined therapy, the possibility to have shared experience because therapist and patient are in the same group is a real treasure. It is really interesting to talk about events that happened in the group.

Every member becomes aware of the fact that their own view of the world is massively influenced by their own biography. I call it “biographically coloured glasses”. A repetitive theme in all groups is: “Will I get enough space and attention...?” In a family, every member wants to get a piece of the cake.

I want to quote the Rolling Stones: “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try some time, you find, you get what you need.” The early wishes can neither be fulfilled by the psychoanalyst nor by the group. This is a weighty insight and grief is necessary to get over it. Then, patients learn to share time and space and the group leader. When the group process develops well they recognize that they do not need as much as they thought they would need in the beginning

and they come to accept modest expectations and not to act in a depressive way. They do not wait but try – as the Stones say. By the way, self-efficacy is an important issue in every treatment whether individual or group.

**Case report:** The following case report shows that group therapy added to individual psychoanalytic treatment. Two individual sessions and one group session per week. It is an example of concurrent therapy.

A woman with a recurrent depressive disorder, 57 years old, working in her own company as architect. When we started treatment, she had one son with an Asperger Syndrome and a husband with pancreatic cancer. She grew up with four siblings, with a mother who never wanted children at all, a father who drunk and acted violently, sometimes with nothing to eat, sometimes with no heating in winter. “I am a bad human” is her certainty. Her only authorization is to live to be useful and capable and work hard. The main issues in the individual treatment were superego and shame problems. She came three times a week to individual therapy and after one year we decided to replace the third session by participation the Tuesday evening group. The increase of possibilities of transference helped her to get access to her negative transference and to work on it in both therapeutic settings. When her husband died in February this year, after three years of suffering, she was sad and in grief but in no way depressive. She had a good farewell with her husband although he died. This was a very, very great success for her.

An example of her negative transference: the group discussed the importance of being on time. She was very strict during this discussion and actually had never been late. The following Tuesday evening the traffic in Cologne was as terrible as it sometimes is in the evening rush hour and she was late. She stood in front of the door and didn't ring the bell but turned to her car and drove home. She did not dare to enter the group session late because she was frightened. We met in the individual session after this incident and decided to figure out what had happened in the next group session – feeling this belonged to the group. In the next group session, group members were astonished and shocked that she had not dared to enter the group. They were able to work out that it was not the group or the group leader that she was afraid of, but her inner objects – her parents, who both acted violently in her childhood. In the individual sessions we spoke about her extreme courtesy. After every session she very politely thanked me for the session. Her deep gratitude seemed a bit exaggerated –

another way for the expression of her negative transference. She made me into an object that only tolerated her, almost believing that I could hardly stand her. Before the summer break we decided to stop individual treatment. She felt safe and didn't want to wait any longer to see if a depression would occur. She felt that she would miss an opportunity in her therapy if she didn't experience only group treatment. She no longer needed individual sessions as a safety bell.

### **Reduction of anxiety and decrease of resistance**

When added to individual treatment being in group therapy may reduce the feeling of dependency on the psychoanalyst. Some patients can't bear that feeling of dependency because of their former bad experiences. The more severe the structural deficiencies are, the more often the ability to bond is disturbed. When these patients feel safe and protected by their fellow group members they become able to attack the group leader and to work on their negative transference. On the other hand, the group leader may help a group member in the individual sessions to get along with the sometimes, complicated feelings that can be triggered by the group. Often anxiety and resistance are means to avoid development of close relations. For example, here are two frequently appearing fears: On the one hand the fear to be overwhelmed by the group, "being destroyed"; on the other hand, to be overwhelmed by own regressive feelings, to lose identity and melt together with the group.

Some patients have problems in creating close and tender relations. It is very important in life to be able to have close relationships. I am a great Harry Potter fan and I think J.K.Rowling's books are a real treasure of intelligent psychological images. To be able to develop really good relationships that can protect oneself against depression I want to present Harry Potter as an image: He has to learn to create a Patronus. A Patronus is a charm. The Patronus helps to protect oneself against the dementors – they are personified depressions. You need an emotionally strong memory of a good relationship to create a Patronus. It means to be aware that you are alone at this moment but that you are at the same time also in a relationship. It is what we call a good inner object. An only narcissistic memory like riding happily for the first time on a broomstick isn't enough!

**Case report 1:** This case report demonstrates treatment combining one individual session and one group session per week. It is another example of combined therapy.

A 36 year-old woman, in temporary retirement for two years because of her borderline personality disorder. Self-injuries, suicidal thoughts, drugs and alcohol caused many hospital-stays in her past. She had had several psychotherapeutic treatments. I got to know her at a time when she was ready to join a first outpatient group therapy. She was lucky to experience the process of forming a new group. She called her mother “simple” and had to face the fact, and her concerns, there could be “simple” patients in the group. At first, she was full of contempt towards the other group members, a projection of her self-contempt, which we could work on in individual sessions. She was very quickly offended and wanted to leave the group several times in the first months. After one year in this group she developed individual relations with each of the other group members, although there was still contempt. For her, the group had become the most important thing. She is very intelligent and curious and develops well. She feels that she belongs to this group.

**Case report 2:** This case report is an example for conjoint therapy. A 54 year-old man, unemployed because he lost his job after six months of being unable to work because he was a depressive. He tried again and again each Monday to drive to his job, but always turned the car in the wrong direction and drove to his family doctor, who recorded him ill again and again. He stayed in bed or in the house while his wife went to work. He could not explain why he wasn't able to drive to work. During the preliminary individual sessions, it was his wish to have group therapy. He wanted to understand why he had always had problems with his colleagues and bosses for so many years and why he wasn't able to drive to work. As he had never been in any psychotherapy before we decided that he could join one of my groups and at the same time have individual sessions. Because I could not offer him individual treatment at this time, he went to a colleague and friend of mine. We worked together. While working in the dyad wasn't complicated with him, it was quickly obvious why he always got into trouble in groups. He annoyed the leader very quickly, as well as the group. He made us feel stupid and slow on the uptake and made us feel inferior, helpless and angry. The group members chose a friendly way to show him what he was doing to us and why there was a lot of anger in the room. They could point out how he treated the conductor in an insulting and subtly aggressive way - his problem was with authority figures. He grew up in a family with three sisters all more than ten years older than him and with parents who both worked hard in alternating shifts to run a sausage and chips stand. During

conjoint therapy he had the opportunity to split the good and the bad transference. Sometimes the conductor, sometimes the group and sometimes the individual therapist were the bad ones or the good ones. It changed and helped him to access his own behaviour. The therapy is still going on.

## Conclusion

In my opinion a patient's fear of becoming part of an unknown group is often the fear of an existential threat or danger to the security of his identity. Many patients are less anxious and therefore benefit more when treated in individual and group therapy. Some patients only can decide to step into a group therapy because they are offered individual sessions too.

A psychoanalytic group needs a good temperature to work together – not too hot and not too cold. It is important that each group member takes an active part in every single group session. The fear to speak spontaneously should be low in order to achieve a lived process and to have fun working together. Every patient should get the individual support that he needs to start the therapy which will help him and to get support to develop well during therapy. To be treated equally it is necessary to treat every patient in the way he needs, and this might be very different for each patient.

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## Dorothe Türk

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## **BOOK CORNER**

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### **Request for Foulkes Letters and Documents for Society Archives**

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

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

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

## EVENTS

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### Group Analytic Society International Quarterly Members Group

Current members of the Society are eligible and invited to attend this group. Interested non-members may attend once.

**The next QMG will take place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

at the Guild of Psychotherapists, 47 Nelson Square, London SE1

There will be three 90-minute sessions with a 90-minute break for lunch; the day will run from 9.30am - 4.30pm with the first group starting at 10.00

**The conductor for the group is Ian Simpson.**

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 will be 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 preferably by BACS to GASI  
(tel. +44 20 7435 6611)

Account name: **GASI** Sort code: **40-03-02**

Account no: **11100408**

If BACS, ref 'QMG April 18' and notify transfer by email

to: [office@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk](mailto:office@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk)

**2018 remaining dates: 20 October**

We look forward to seeing you.

**QMG Organisers: Joan Fogel, Derek Love, Jud Stone**

# Between Generations gasi Summer School

4th Group Analytic Society International Summer School in Group Analysis

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18-22 July 2018 | Ljubljana

Generations are certain kinds of groups with certain kinds of cultures and logic of succession: the boundaries between them, however, are fluid. There's always room for uncertainty about which generation we belong to: one looks forward and backwards for clues to his role in life, as if caught between generations.



Let's try to see where we're at -  
between generations.

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Summer School is organized by

**GASI** Group Analytic Society International and **SDSA** Group Analytic Society of Slovenia.

For registrations and more information please visit [www.ljubljanasummerschool.si](http://www.ljubljanasummerschool.si)

You can reach us at [summerschool.ljubljana@gmail.com](mailto:summerschool.ljubljana@gmail.com) for further questions.

See you soon!

# **XX IAGP Congress Malmö, Sweden**

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**RISING TIDES OF CHALLENGE AND HOPE:  
HEALING IDENTITY, IN SOCIETY, GROUPS AND  
INDIVIDUALS**

**PRE-CONGRESS 31 JULY 2018  
CONGRESS 1-4 AUGUST 2018**



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The Congress is planned at a time when we hear almost daily about a suicide attack or an act of violence somewhere around the world. Wars and warlike situations are ongoing and recurrent. There are now more refugees than ever before. In 2015 the UN estimated 65 million displaced people in the world. The world we grew up in – post WW II - is changing dramatically and often violently. We as group psychotherapists and group processors are being called to bring our expertise to help us all cope with these Rising Tides and to instill ‘realistic hope’.

**<http://www.iagpcongress.org/>**



**IAGP**

International Association for Group  
Psychotherapy and Group Processes

**2<sup>nd</sup>** IAGP International  
Research Congress on:

**TRAUMA & CRISIS**



**Save the Dates:**

**14-17 June 2019 | Thessaloniki Greece**

## Sulzburger Dialoge: Sulzburg Dialogues

In association with the Group Analytic Society International

14 to 16 September 2018



### The Uncanny in the Neighbourhood Das Unheimliche in der Nachbarschaft

In his essay *The Uncanny* Freud ruminates about the meaning of this word, *Das Unheimliche*, in the original German. He plays with the derivation of *Heimlich* and *Unheimlich* and decides that *Unheimlich* or 'Uncanny' is something that is both familiar associated with 'feeling at home', and unfamiliar or frightening associated with 'not feeling at home'. In the process he discovers a more subtle and important meaning for *Unheimlich*. It is the name given to everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light.

Encountering the Uncanny has the effect of making Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway always feel "that something awful was about to happen". Increasingly we are confronted with similar feelings that something awful is about to happen both close to home and not so close to home. The uncanny in our neighbourhood and in the world. Refugees fleeing from violence, oppression and poverty are arriving in unprecedented numbers. Our neighbourhoods that once felt familiar and safe now feel strange and unsafe while we are also being subjected to many forms of external terror. We are at once suffering externally and internally from feelings of dread and persecution.

How can we cope with these new emotional challenges? One way to cope is the tendency to think about the unbearable present as an aberration – a 'momentary disturbance' that will eventually return 'normal'. But, will it? What if this is the new normal?

In and through the Sulzburg Dialogues we would like to explore the emotional impact of the current situation on each of us, individually and collectively. We would also like to address the historical influences shaping our actual thinking and feeling, investigating together how these might motivate our attitudes and actions.

#### Convenors

Teresa von Sonnaruga Howard, UK and Dieter Nitzgen, Germany

#### Who for?

This workshop is for anybody who would like to explore these issues.

#### Cost

Early Bird until 15 June: €220, 00 for GASI Members, €240, 00 for non-Members.  
After 15 June: €260, 00 for GASI Members, €280, 00 for non-Members.  
Non-returnable cancellation fees: €50.00.

To pay fees click on the link below:

<http://subscriberscm.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/Event/Search/Event-Booking/EventId/13>

#### The Place

Sulzburg is a village south of Freiburg in Breisgau, half-way to Basel in Switzerland. Beautifully located on the foothills of the Black Forest, it can easily be reached from central Europe by direct flights to Euro Airport Basel/Mulhouse), by train and by car (A5 exit Heitersheim). The village offers a variety of accommodation and restaurants, from local to high class. The workshop is located in the former synagogue of Sulzburg, which is now a cultural centre.

#### Language

Primarily English and German but we are willing to work with any of the languages that participants bring to the group.

#### Working Method

Inspired by its location, the former synagogue of Sulzburg, the workshop makes use of the so-called 'group analytic' method of free-floating group dialogue. In addition to verbal exchange, a space will be provided for Social Dreaming and exploration through drawing.

#### Maximum Number

18 – 20 Participants

#### Accommodation

<http://www.sulzburg.de/Willkommen-in-Sulzburg/Ihre-Gastgeber-in-Sulzburg-freuen-sich-auf-Ihren-Besuch>

#### Further Information

Please contact Teresa on:  
Teresa@justdialogue.com

## **OBITUARY**

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### **Herzel Yogev, 1964-2018**

We members of the Israeli Institute of Group Analysis are mourning deeply the loss of our beloved friend Dr. Herzel Yogev.

Herzel fought against lung cancer for the past year. He faced this violent attack on his life with unbelievable courage, nobility, and dignity. We, a close group of friends with whom he chose to share this terrible news, joined with his family members in praying for a cure. The truth is however, that he was really the one who gave us the strength to strengthen him. He let us into his personal struggle with an openness and kindness that enabled us to participate in his fight from close up. His warmth, vitality and resourcefulness were catching: it led us to believe with him and with his family, that he would survive against all the odds.

Herzel was a loving father to his 2 grown-up children, a devoted husband to Anat and a rock of support for his 5 brothers and sister. He was an esteemed member of the institute and a creative thinker in the field of psychology, in general, and group analysis in particular.

He published numerous papers in the *Journal of Group Analysis* and in other prestigious professional journals. The issues he explored in our field dealt with the urgent necessity to constitute a culture of mutual understanding and mutual concern between individuals, groups and nations. A quick glance through the keywords and abstracts of Herzel's papers published in the *Journal of Group Analysis*, in which he served as a reviewer, reveals the broad scope of his thinking; we find notions like holding, empathy, potential space, talking peace, emotional availability, coexistence, "to be with", alongside systems theories, chaos, mathematics and neurology. They signify the humane essence of his vision and represent his desire to harness theoretical concepts for the healing of relationships between people.

Herzel practiced what he preached: The many patients he saw in his private practice (in individual group and family settings) are grieving the loss of a dedicated, warm and wise therapist who made a difference in their lives.

The divide between the living and the dead is an ultimate brutal demarcation. Herzel's loss is uniquely personal for his family, for each one of us who knew him as friend and colleague, for us

collectively as an institute, and for the larger community of group analysis to which he could have continued to contribute his unique understanding about the values inherent in human connectedness.

**Miriam Berger**

## **Forum Fragment**

An occasional feature, highlighting an extract from the GASi Forum

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Response to the poem 'Bombs' by Elizabeta Marcos (see page 74 of this issue).

Dear Elizabeta,

Reading about your painful raw experience of the vicious and criminal NATO bombings of Serbia has caused all sorts of mixed memories related to bombs and bombings to tumble into my head, over the past day or two, some of which I'd like to bring here.

As you know, I grew up in a Birmingham council house which had a garden, a small green space with a few trees and some grass. In the garden, next to an apple tree, there was a shed made of corrugated iron. Many of the surrounding gardens also had the same shed. At some point I learnt that this shed was in fact a bomb shelter (An Anderson shelter) from the second world war. We stored coal and all manner of junk in the shed, so it was virtually impossible to enter, however, I would spend hours on top imagining if and how and whether the shed had ever been used for the purpose for which it was built. I learned later that 2 million of such sheds were issued or sold during the war...they were given free to those who could not afford to pay for them ('means-tested' bomb shelters!!!). I didn't have to go far to know that the area had in fact been bombed during the war. The park near to where we lived had two huge bomb-craters from the war - known locally as the 'bomb holes', they were fantastic places to play and we would spend hours down inside, fighting wars of our own and risking our lives on our bikes and scooters. The nearby Castle Bromwich Spitfire aircraft factory would have been the local target. Heavily industrialised Birmingham had been an obvious target. A few years ago, I went back to the park and discovered the bomb-holes had been filled-in.

Some time ago in the 90s, I watched a movie (can't remember which) set in Ireland during the second world war in which at one point a huge number of Luftwaffe bombers were seen supposedly heading for Belfast to do what bombers do. Having grown up in Birmingham I was more than aware of the 'Blitz' in London and that places like Liverpool and Coventry had also been badly hit...but Belfast?...the place where my mother was from? I'd no idea. So I

asked her. And yes, she confirmed that Belfast had been bombed by 200 or so planes in 1941. She had been there also, age 17 at the time. Above all she described the massive terrifying world vibrating sound of 200 bombers passing overhead (the scene in the film) and of course the subsequent devastation: 50,000 houses damaged or destroyed. Nearly 1000 people were killed, many thousands more injured. Her home escaped relatively untouched. I was astonished that she'd never mentioned this before...not once!! I suppose the trauma and on-going consequences of such unimaginable events find all sorts of ways of expressing themselves, in many of the ways you describe Elizabeta, even more terrifying when the bombs carry the slow-killing poison of uranium!! In the case of my mum it was silence. In the case of the history I learned at school...about Belfast, also silence!!

**Peter Zelaskowski**

## **Free Associative Gifts**

Edited by Marcus Price

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There are some voracious readers in our society. We are taught early on to skim read in columns and reference essays from a plethora of sources. Sometimes this resembles a competitive production line, one professor even described his PhD as a degree in photo copying. Poetry however requires that rare commodity, space.

For this edition of Free Associative Gifts, I invite you to find space for single poems, 'If Only' by Angelika Goltz; 'Bombs' by Elizabetha Marcos; 'My Dragon,' by Josephine Canty; 'Jonathan Oedipus James' by Nick Barwick and 'Hypno Biker' by Marcus Price.

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*By Angelika Goltz*

### **If only**

The sigh of regret is endless  
With no hope for changing anything.  
Do you remember?

When you were ill and pleading with me  
To talk to you and I couldn't,  
With my eyes heavy laden with anger and sleep.

And coming home from far travels  
Sitting in our midst full of adventurous words  
From your last day  
And the bell ringing with guests I let in from outside.

And you dropped  
And you stopped.  
Now I still wait for that day.

And do you remember when your life broke  
And your heart stopped singing  
And I followed my passion?

Now you are all here in my mind

Connected with love and regret.  
And at moments I know  
That you are there and I am here

And that all is well  
And all is well  
And all manner of things are well

*By Elizabeta Marcos*

## **Bombs**

See the bombs.  
All exploding.  
Abruptly.  
In my heart.  
Like falling stars  
thru peaceful city night.  
I'm in a mess, "Where is my dress?! Good. Here is my knee."  
- "Ask.RAF" where your knickers might be.  
Why do you ask me?!"

"Then where are my sneakers?! My yellow sweater?" - "Why?!" - "Oh,  
for nothing...how's the weather...just to have reason to cry. For... - "  
What?" - "Some got shot" - "No, it's just hot. Take off your dress"-  
"Yes..."

- "And, come on, don't get so alert, you won't get hurt. And you haven't  
met Englishmen. Yet.  
Only air raid siren fairy.  
Is that death? No.  
So, what makes it scary?

.. that might dissolve all my faith, love and trust...into  
dry sand...ashes...and dust...

*By Josephine Canty*

## **My dragon**

I search my mind, what's wrong?  
Where comes this welling sense of doom?

Inside the cavity the pain churned.  
The fear, the hurt lunged and sunk  
deep in that space.  
Then anger, like bile, up, up, exploded on the tongue.  
In rage,  
Huge grew the dragon, without.  
As I within shrunk to a nonentity.  
Tell me. Teach me. Can I learn?  
to tether the rage and face the pain.  
Sitting with you.  
I spoke in tones too loud, too soft.  
spoke too much with words too few  
reflected then, I saw myself in you.

I miss you.  
I want you still.  
I'm glad you've gone  
mostly my dragon's now securely chained,  
in links of lace.

*By Nick Barwick*

## **Jonathan Oedipus James**

Jonathan Oedipus James loved his mother.  
His mother loved him.  
Like the twinkle stones she hung round her neck  
In the evening when, Laius -  
The man with the black black suit and the frilly shirt  
And the smell of something sickly sweet  
As his grin bent down with its stubbly chin to kiss him -  
Came to take her away and leave him there  
With the telly and crisps and his dog called Dill

Who was soft and warm and good  
For keeping pyjamas in.

Jonathan Oedipus James loved his mother.  
His mother loved him.  
So he hadn't wanted to tell a lie  
When she came downstairs from the bedroom where  
She'd tied her hair in a knot and hung  
The twinkle stones about her neck  
And asked "Where's Laius?"  
He hadn't wanted to tell a lie  
To tell her how he didn't know  
How Laius had said he'd had to go  
How probably he'd come back soon  
Like he always came  
Late at night, to take her away  
With her all done up in her twinkle stones  
And her hair in a knot and her giggly giggly way.

Jonathan Oedipus James loved his mother.  
His mother loved him.  
Yet easy-peasy it had been -  
When he'd seen the cellar door swing wide  
And spied the crumbly steps behind  
The man with the smell of something sickly sweet  
As his grin bent down with its stubbly chin to kiss him -  
To push  
To watch with his head on one side  
As the big polished shoes with the slippery soles  
And the black black suit and the frilly shirt  
Went tumbling rumbling down down down  
To the spidery eerie ever-so shivery oh so black below.

Jonathan Oedipus James loved his mother.  
His mother loved him.  
And so he could not bear to see  
Her sitting alone  
All done up in her twinkle stones and her hair in a knot  
To see her, sobbing, slip to the floor  
And her face slip too to a blackish blue  
For he was Jonathan Oedipus James who  
Loved his mother.

And thus it was he took great care  
To untie the knot that tied her hair  
To wipe the tears of blackish-blue  
And to say in a once-uponish voice of strangely older hue:  
“Oh Jonathan Oedipus James does so love you!”

*By Marcus Price*

### **Hypno Biker**

You're feeling sleepy,  
Look deep into the past,  
Little green stamps licked into your co-op book,  
Deeper  
Deeper,  
A kick-started motorbike gurgles in winters frost,  
Deeper  
Engines strain  
Deeper,  
Engines roar,  
Deeper  
Distant voices,  
Deeper  
Deeper,  
A winding river full of reeds,  
Deeper still,  
The blinking eye of a puffed up sparrow,  
Awkwardly now,  
Trousers split, to the crowd of retribution,  
In the road, you awake.  
I notice the many directions of your broken fingers,  
And the huge frantic man  
Pumping  
Pumping  
Helpless, on your corpse.

Further down,  
The road

of oil and blood  
Your girlfriend was turned to reveal a trendy logo on her top  
Flimsy and ripped,  
She began to howl.  
Further still,  
I met the stranger  
And lost from the paramedics trembling hand  
A bloodied rubber glove rolled past us,  
Like a leaf in the breeze,  
“ I just kept walking “ he said,  
“I’m a nurse” I replied,  
Doubting my words,  
There was nothing I could do.

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Please send your poems for publication in future Contexts’  
issues to **Marcus Price** e-mail: [lbwplumb@gmail.com](mailto:lbwplumb@gmail.com)

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## **The Visitors**

A Psy-Fi Tale

By Mike Tait

### **Part VIII**

#### **End Chapter VI / I**

The politician wondered whether the nurse would have come alongside him so quickly if he'd taken charge of the situation. He could feel the urge to punish the terrorist returning. He'd been an impotent bystander – as he felt by living with anyone for too long. Bootlaces, a random thought; incongruous images of a hillside he'd never been on. The image hovered. What was it that Jason had said about that therapeutic community? The warm emptiness of the criminal sitting alongside permeated him.

#### **Chapter VI / II**

##### **Boundaries**

**'Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offense.'  
['Mending Wall', Robert Frost.] [13]**

'Group selection made a working group possible.' The therapist decided not to point out this obvious fact to the Visitors as she could imagine the course of the ensuing dialogue. They would ask whether this was a working group. She wasn't sure whether she could answer. They would ask her whether she took responsibility for the people she excluded. She didn't want to answer. They would ask about the relationship between safety and emotional development within alternative social and international provisions. The high ground would have quickly receded. Her selection criteria would have seemed mean and small minded.

Had her selection criteria been as damaging as the over-valuation of safety, justice, empirical evidence and business models which, outside this mad environment, appeared to have exacerbated the lonely misery of the woman she had thought of as a patient and the bubbling rage of the man she had identified initially only as a murderer? Was she looking at the limits of her own self-exploration? The Visitors'

questions concerning the nature of resilience lingered in her mind. But how much therapy would it take?

Did infantile disappointments still influence her selections - despite justifications which she could easily produce if she was questioned? Or, had she refused to conduct this group because she was disappointed that the Visitors' had seemed to understand her philosophy but not her practice - at a time when her profession was already beleaguered? Her disappointment was irrational; the Visitors didn't overtly support anyone; but it was unusual for successful professionals to be under as much scrutiny as more problematic individuals.

She revisited familiar scripts. Boundaries protected vulnerable people. Agreement about the rules helped participants feel safe. The therapist had made clear that, in her profession, boundaries were necessary - both within and around the group. Too much damage had been done when they became blurred. Boundary violations were understood in relation to such concepts as omnipotence, abuse, acting out, power differentials and familial re-enactments. The Visitors had asked how often these concepts became vents for disapproval and curtailed conversation - rather than exploring interactions in all their complexity.

She worried that engaging with the Visitors questions concerning historical and cultural variations, or the unique trajectories of the evolution of individuals - whether in relation to greed, sex or violence - risked colluding with self-gratifying rationalizations. It was inevitable that professional boundaries excluded unacceptable behaviour, unwanted experience and extremes of all kinds, even if the unwanted then remained located in current social receptacles for badness and madness. She had felt her shoulders tense and her boundaries sharpen during these enquiries.

When the Visitors were more active, they seemed to notice each time this happened and respond to the line of her shoulders rather than to her words. They had asked about the derivations of words like: boundary, inclusion, exclusion, impingement, infringement and transgression - asking questions which left the communicants thinking more about their own derivations - about the link between the mind that expressed with the expression chosen. They enquired how 'bound' [which also meant 'to tie tightly'] had become, in 'boundary', used to denote exclusion. They became puzzled that the evolution of words no longer appeared part of everyday thinking - as if current usage was meaningful without historical perspective.

Was it possible to imagine a boundary? Was it a line or an area? National borders gave shape to a group identity. Who was in and who was out. The exclusion of some people – and the experiences they embodied – was inevitable. That fitted in with the therapist’s idea of group therapy, but it didn’t seem to stack up when the Visitors asked questions about the nature of an inclusive therapeutic culture. The group composition had ensured that it had been plunged into global issues – torn out of any possibility of exclusive suburbs. Did they not consider risk? This group was dangerous. An attack had been narrowly prevented – by a terrorist! Everyone had been stirred up. They were unsettled - but they were connected! And - most people had tried to support someone - although no one else had intervened as dramatically as the terrorist and the nurse.

She revisited earlier conversations. What did it mean if internal boundaries were established in relation to a resilient mother: a human presence that could ‘stand the strain’? Surely that was infinitely variable. And some strains were unbearable. How could such an experience be re-created in a professional setting with unwilling or impossible clients? It would make professional guidelines impractical. Could she stand the strain of working with a violent criminal? She looked at the nurse. Her respect for this brave woman continued to grow although she doubted whether it was mutual.

She enjoyed the nurse’s spontaneity. There was hardly an evidence base, or professional guidelines, for intuitive interventions in chaotic situations. She couldn’t imagine being that unplanned. Even in the therapy group in which she’d been a patient, she’d been in training – and was always aware that she wanted to qualify - which circumscribed her contributions. Had her training institution echoed her judgemental mother to whom she had ‘bound’ herself despite her assertions of intellectual independence? Were the ‘boundaries’ she advocated primarily boundaries in her own mind against her own more chaotic thoughts and impulses? This was uncomfortable. She steadied herself - and thereby reorganized her defences, allied with the manager and distanced herself from the nurse. She doubted whether the nurse had even had therapy.

Did those who lived near the boundary, on both sides, have as much in common as those who lived on the same side? Where did that thought come from? She looked towards the Visitors. When she looked around, the therapist realized that several group members were similarly perplexed as to where the random questions that occurred in their minds were coming from.

Was it the nurse’s deficient grasp of reality that made her

oblivious to the dangers? The therapist recognized her tendency to diagnose behaviour that made her feel uncomfortable – or of which she felt a little envious - and attempted to quieten that reflex. But, she had always liked categories. When she was much younger, she remembered teaching her siblings the names of things. When she didn't know the name of a plant or animal, the child who would later become a therapist, had investigated meticulously until the name was uncovered. In adult life this took her to long forgotten articles. Her siblings had been willing listeners. Was this what she looked for in her selection of clientele?

She had grown up quickly: the intelligent child of busy parents. Her parents could never understand why she felt she needed therapy – which they clearly regarded as self-indulgent. Under questioning by her 40 year-old daughter, training to be a therapist, her mother had told her that she'd been a happy child. That grated. Milestones had been normal – as had the family. No traumas. Her mother couldn't understand why she would ask such questions. Her teachers would have said that she was the perfect pupil: quiet and studious. In therapy, she'd spent hours talking about the anger she felt in relation to her mother's emotional insensitivity and self-absorption. Her husband was more sensitive but often pre-occupied by his writing. Now that their youngest daughter had left home, the home they had made together felt empty. Were the boundaries that she eloquently advocated a way of fending off a deepening sense of invisibility? Would she disappear without a frame around her?

The Visitors had remained silent. She wasn't clear why she had grown fonder of the Visitors as they were, as far as she could see, practicing the worst kind of therapy – doing nothing. They had set up the group so she held them responsible if anything went wrong – not the randomly appointed conductor – although it was hard to know whether any of the Visitors' behaviour was random. After all, the fraudster had been the first to share what was on his mind when he'd talked about Christmas. He'd set the ball rolling. The little he said had seemed just as helpful as her theoretically informed interventions. It was his initiative that had humanized the politician.

Might individuality be discovered as much in the understanding of similarities as in the affirmation of the boundaries between people? Did identities flow separately or within a river whose waters were continuously intermingling? How would social practices change if the focus was on the understanding of the nature of those intermingling waters? These were not new thoughts but - each time she looked out at her companions they felt new. Was individuality a

defensive construction?

She had no formal role; she had experienced herself as both destructive and helpful; if she was valued, it was in the moment and as much for the things that she didn't know as for her knowledge. She felt part of a community with a disturbingly wide array of disparate elements. They had asked whether the horizon was a boundary. How could it be when its location moved with the traveller? Was this what they expected her to do?

**Part IX will be in the September 2018 issue**

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## CONTEXTS' COLUMNISTS

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### 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!**

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### Designing Your Research Study

Making lists isn't everybody's cup of tea but quite useful when it comes to research. Let's assume that you'll have nothing better to do on a rainy Sunday morning than thinking about the design of a study. You'll grab a piece of paper and a pen - or your gadget if you prefer to type. Then you'll jot down all the research 'issues' ('problems') that interest you.

Next, you'll look at your list and ... no, you won't sigh! You'll glance at your favourite toy, which will come in handy now. You can use your tablet, smart phone iPad or your laptop to conduct a 'review of the literature'. Sounds grand? No, it isn't. It simply means that you'll find out what others have written about your issues of interest. And by 'issues' I don't mean whether you still resent your parents' lack of originality.

If your internet is working and you have access to databases, fantastic. Then you can search journals, periodicals and registered trials by typing in relevant search terms. This enables you to identify papers that have been published on your topic of interest. If you don't have access to journals or databases, use 'Google Scholar' or go into a library. Or even better, use them all. That isn't greed, it's necessity.

When reviewing the literature, you've several options. If you've identified a gap (or void) in your area of interest (your 'research problems'), you generate a list of 'research questions' (potentially suitable questions that you'd like to research). Or, if you've seen that someone else has already researched your 'favourite issues' - forget work, lovers, parents... we are talking research now - but not in their totality, you can extend a previously conducted study and include particular aspects of interest to you. Again, make a list and write down what these are. Or, if you've detected flaws in the studies you've come across and think that you're smarter, because you're a group analyst and can iron out their flaws, jot them down.

And if it's still raining and if you're not a fan of 'singing and dancing in the rain' but a (potentially) diligent researcher, you'll look at your list again and continue. Now you'll have to identify your specific research question(s). You'll state these unambiguously, as clearly as possible. Bear in mind when formulating your own hypotheses that your questions need to be potentially answerable. Measurable hypotheses are a good starting point. The statement (hypothesis) "group analytic groups are boring" is not a great hypothesis. Whilst it's potentially answerable, it's not specific enough. Moreover, it would assume that all analytic groups are the same. And the concept 'boredom' is relative. What's boring for one person, might be of interest to another. "A 20-week group which uses mentalisation techniques will achieve a reduction in depression scores by 5 points", would be a better hypothesis.

Once you'll have narrowed down your research area and formulated your hypothesis - what next? You'll check for feasibility. Not whether you'd rather dance in wellies or trainers while singing in the rain ... but whether your search problems and questions are feasible. What does this mean? *Examine your list of problems critically* while sipping another cup of tea. You can skip the latter but the former mandatory.

Consider your resources, time and the availability of data (or their absence). Are your questions researchable? If they aren't, go back to bed and start again. Think about your topic and be honest. Will you be motivated enough to carry it through? Will you be able to sustain your attention and continue with your research even on days when the sun will be shining, or a tempting cricket or football game will be on TV, or you can think of better things to do? If you answered 'yes' to the former, continue. If your answer is "no" and you'd rather watch the footie, you know the drill.

Finally, will your results be of interest to others? What interests you might be a waste of time or resources in the eyes of others. People who matter, like the ethics committee. You'll need their approval. And now is not the time to say "I've overcome my 'parental issues', I'm not trying to gain their approval anymore, 'cause it doesn't matter ..."

Approval does matter. If the research/ethics panel says "no" to your research proposal and rejects it (not you, it's not personal but professional), you'll have to revise, or even scrap it. So, think critically about all the above issues beforehand to avoid disappointment. If you are unsure, phone a trusted friend (if s/he knows something about research). Or ask the GASi or IGA audience. Don't go 50:50. The

chances (probability) that it'll be rejected are too high.

Another aspect that you'll have to consider is 'data'. How easily will they be available? I'm not thinking about Facebook here. Does the data of your research area already exist (e. g. official statistics, NHS data)? If they do, then you would simply need to think about analyses.

If not (and that is more likely), then you'll have to collect the data yourself. You'll have to consider what kind of methods you'll be using to collect your data, and you'll have to think about access to participants (the 'subjects of your 'sample'). With regard to methods, there are several options. Would you like to use questionnaires? Then you'll either use existing questionnaires or design your own. You'll have to know a thing or two about questionnaire design and pilot newly devised questionnaires if you choose to create new questionnaires. If questionnaires aren't suitable, you could use interviews. If you do, think about your interviewing skills. And if they aren't up to scratch, practise.

Finally, you'll have to concern yourself with the data analyses - unless you've research assistants, who'll do them for you, but if that is the case then this column won't tell you anything new. However, if you are like many group analysts and your research skills aren't that great, find a statistician. S/he can help with the design and analyses of your study. Statisticians are valuable when it comes to identifying and illuminating potential problems. Consult them during the early stages of the research process.

Didn't I start the previous paragraph with 'finally'? Well ... I lied. There is more to do, like writing your research proposal and getting it published. But it's time to get out of bed now, so this will have to wait until another rainy day makes its appearance.

Until then, cheerio, I'm wishing you a sunny summer or rain if you prefer.

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