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Editorial

Paula Carvalho decided, earlier this year, not to stand for re-election to the GAS Management Committee, due to changes in her professional life and increased responsibilities and commitments in Portugal. She will therefore no longer be co-editor of *Contexts* and this will be her final issue as co-editor.

When we first took on this job we decided that it might make sense for Paula to take responsibility to make contacts and solicit contributions from the Mediterranean area and the South American continent, whilst I would focus on Europe, North America, and elsewhere. I'm not sure that we have strictly adhered to this initial plan, but one thing is certain: that Paula's help in firstly making contacts in South America and the Mediterranean and secondly in asking for reports from participants at GAS events has been invaluable in creating a publication that is hopefully interesting and dynamic and that serves the purpose of disseminating to a wider readership (including, these days, any interested internet browser) the thinking, dynamics, and information created and shared at GAS events. Long may this continue.

We have also, along the way, shared ideas and perspectives about the direction and development of *Contexts* and Paula's enthusiasm and ideas have always been fruitful. We have always, I think, agreed that we should focus on areas, if possible, that are critical to the future of Group Analysis, hence our focus on research, creating links with other organisations, and opening up our readership online as valuable advertising of our activities, preoccupations, and practices. We have always thought of you, the readers, as a community that have tried to engage to provide deep and insightful contribution to our publication. We have not been disappointed.

Paula, thank you for your support and help with *Contexts*. I will certainly miss your contributions greatly. Good luck and best wishes for the future.

This issue of *Contexts* has a number of papers "left over" from previous activities. There are two papers from the Malcolm Pines Special issue that we could not fit into that issue. We also have a paper from the Dublin Symposium, focusing on Shakespeare and Group Analysis. As our thinking turns towards the London Symposium next year this is a useful reminder of the creativity that is always

predominant at these events. We also have another report about the David Clark Memorial Event. The other papers continue to create an impression of the dynamic culture of Group Analysis.

Terry Birchmore

As group-analysts and psychotherapists we use emotions and words as major tools in our work. I think that one of the risks in our profession can be the suspicion of loss of truth, especially when we use them to talk about ourselves in relationships with our peers. Nevertheless, I will take the chance. I just want to say thank you to all of you, thank you to all of the people who have contributed with their articles to Contexts, thank you to all the people from the GAS Management Committee, and a very special thanks to Terry, for everything we have done together. I'm very proud to be a group-analyst, to be a GAS member and to have been co-editor of Contexts. It is great to belong to this GROUP. Thank you again. See you at future GA events.

Paula Carvalho

President's Page

The end of the year is approaching which makes one look back on the past year and onto the year to come. 2010 began with the Joint IGA/GAS Research Event in January, which has started off much activity - discussions on the Forum, comments in Contexts and an input too for this year's Foulkes lecturer Jane Campbell about the language of Group Analysis.

In May the Nordic Conference in Group Psychotherapy took place in Stavanger, Norway. This is a recurrent event every third year. Three years ago it took place in Sweden and the atmosphere then was very gloomy as the Swedish group analytic training and that of psychoanalysis too had been denied official recognition being judged as not living up to the academic standards required for a degree in psychotherapy, which in turn is necessary to become a licensed psychotherapist in Sweden. This year we felt somewhat better as a new group psychotherapy training based on Group Analysis, initiated by Christer Sandahl, has been approved under the auspices of a well recognised university college in Stockholm. But the seriousness of the situation was felt, especially as it was found difficult to get applicants because local authorities were hesitant to support applicants economically unless they applied for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy or a similar so called evidence based psychotherapy - so the rumour still persisted that the training was not recognised. One can say that when it goes downhill it goes very fast whereas uphill is quite another thing and much more laborious. Why do I relate this story from my part of the world? I do so because this could, as things stand, very well happen elsewhere. We group analysts and Group Analysis are in danger of being really marginalised if we don't find a way to solve this whole business of evidence, manuals, guidelines etc. In this connection I want to mention the 5 strategic points David Kennard put forward in the last issue of this newsletter (Contexts, issue No 49, September 2010) to cope with the present situation, where he combines a qualitative and quantitative approach. An approach that in some ways live up to what is demanded of us in terms of research but still allow us to keep our identity as group analysts.

In August the Autumn Workshop, "Mentalizing the Matrix" was repeated in Oslo, Norway as a joint venture between IGA, Oslo and GAS London with about 60 participants and with almost the same

staff. The participants were predominantly Norwegians with an International admixture. As the one in England it was very intense and instructive and very well organised.

Looking forward to 2011 I have the pleasure to announce that Sigmund Karterud, Norway will be the next Foulkes lecturer. Sigmund is a founding member of the Institute of Group Analysis, Oslo and is part of the very successful Norwegian Group who has really succeeded in bringing Group Analysis on the NHS map in Norway where it is highly respected. Norway is the Nordic country where the psychodynamic tradition has been the strongest and the Norwegian group has too from the start had people who are interested in research and Sigmund Karterud is one of them. He is professor of psychiatry and widely respected as a clinician and researcher and has written books and articles on groups and group phenomena and has had a special interest in Self-Psychology and lately in Mentalization and mentalization based treatment.

It seems the GAS forum has been consolidated and is on its way to be a useful communication channel for the membership. It looks or it behaves much like a large group a subject is taken up discussed or neglected depending what goes on in the matrix of this virtual group. Sometimes with long pauses with apparently no activity and suddenly a subject pops up is talked about and dies out.

Finally I want to draw attention to the most important event of next year the 15th European Symposium in Group Analysis, Cultures, conflict and Creativity taking place at Goldsmiths College, London, August 29th-2nd September. We are looking forward to receive proposals for papers, sub-plenaries, panel presentations and workshops. And we do hope that the theme and place will attract a lot of interested people group analysts and others to make this event unforgettable, interesting, thought provoking and inspirational for further work with groups. So encourage everyone to make an appointment with London 2011.

It now only rests for me to wish you all a happy new year and see you next year.

Gerda Winther
President, GAS

Be a Contexts Writer!

Contexts welcomes contributions from members on a variety of topics:

- Have you run or attended a group-analytic workshop?
- Are you involved in a group-analytic 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 2,500 words long, or between one and five 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, or stray thoughts that you have managed to capture on paper. Give it a go!

The deadline for each issue of Contexts is about three months before the publication of a specific issue. The deadline for publication in the June issue, for example, will therefore be early March.

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New Members

We welcome the following new members of the Society:

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Dr Peter Christian Endler | Student Member | Graz, Austria |
| Mr Malcolm Peterson | Full Member | London, UK |
| Dr Angela Ribeiro | Full Member | Carnaxide, Portugal |

Paper Presented at the Dublin Symposium GAS 2008

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GROUP

Or: William Shakespeare as Psychotherapist in Elizabethan and Jacobean Times and beyond.

Introduction

This paper is written to share some ideas and reflections in relation to William Shakespeare and his profound poetic works. These thoughts have been stimulated by discussions and studies that my wife, Rosemary, and I have engaged in over recent times.

This presentation is necessarily limited. It is limited by the space that such a presentation allows, by the sheer breadth and kaleidoscopic nature of the works and the impossibility of doing justice to them here and not the least by the fact that I am no Shakespeare scholar. Nevertheless, there are some things I can say about Shakespeare that may be of interest to this readership and that have relevance to a preoccupation with individuals and groups from a psychoanalytic perspective. I do not consider these ideas necessarily ground-breaking or even original but hopefully they will offer an opportunity to enlarge the awareness of others in some proportion to the belated development of my own awareness.

I will first deal with some of the basic biographic details of his life and secondly with the societal context of his life and literary works finally making some theoretical comments and observations.

In approaching Shakespeare it is helpful to be aware that there are numerous discourses through which one can apply a hermeneutical understanding. At the very least these discourses include: historical, literary, psychoanalytical, group analytical, artistic, religious, theatrical, cultural, linguistic, philosophical and so on.

At least in the Western world who could reasonably claim to not be familiar with some of Shakespeare's works either formally or casually without perhaps even being aware of such influence. Many will be familiar with some or all of these quotes: "to be or not to be; that is the question whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them"(Hamlet); "if music be the food of love, play on"(Twelfth Night); "he hath eaten me out of house and home"(Henry IV pt 2); "Get thee to a nunnery"(Hamlet); "Beware the ides of March"(Julius Caesar); "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears"(Julius Caesar); "For my own part, it was Greek to me"(Julius Caesar); "Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry. This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man" (Hamlet).

It is, nevertheless, important to remind ourselves that other cultures no doubt have their own William Shakespeare. For example, Voltaire for the French, Pushkin for the Russians, Goethe for the Germans (although each of these borrowed heavily from Shakespeare) and I am sure that you can offer others. It may be, however, that the English language has some advantages over others both in terms of the sheer volume of words and the capacity of the language for subtle description of human experience. According to Wikipedia and other sources the English language has more words than any other with reliable estimates up to one million compared with say German possessing some 200,000. It is also the case that English grows by the accretion of new words from other languages and by other means each year. Some other nations have Academies to control the growth of language quite severely. This, I think, arguably, gave Shakespeare a clear advantage over other national poets.

History

He was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, 93 miles north of London. His parents were yeoman who owned a small farm in the forest of Arden north of the River Avon and Stratford. He

was raised in a rural and town setting which is echoed clearly in so many of his poetic works. For example, while “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” is set in an Athenian forest its unique character is entirely English: “I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows...”

The forest of Arden and the market town Stratford would have been in the immediate background of his life. Stratford at the time had a population of about a thousand people. Stratford was home to a medieval church, Holy Trinity, which still stands today and was an important community institution.

Relatively very little is known of William’s life especially his early life. We are deprived of the material that is so important for a psychotherapist to develop an understanding of the personality development of an individual and to put their life into psychological context. We must content ourselves with the knowledge of certain facts and information recorded in public documents but even these largely attest to his later life. We, of course, have the wonderful treasure-trove of his works more of which will be said later.

It is of relevance that in the summer of 1564 the plague struck Stratford and was responsible for the death of 200 people including children, some of whom lived in Henley Street, where the family lived. William was the third of eight children the first two daughters dying a few months after birth. Of the next five children another died while young. We do not hear again of William until 1582 when he married!

In terms of William’s experiences of religion little is directly known. However, much is known in terms of what children and others experienced via Holy Trinity Church. It seems clear that religious doctrine and formality would have been very strongly in the background of his life. What is also known is that he was baptized, married and buried in Holy Trinity Church, as were his children.

In terms of his education other than spiritual or religious, again little is directly known. Nevertheless, it seems he attended the local Grammar school and would have been strongly educated in grammar, logic and rhetoric as well as Latin. The masters all held university degrees and were highly paid above even that of Eton masters. The students studied the Classics such as Cicero, Erasmus, Ovid, Virgil as well as already and continuing to be strongly schooled in the religious texts.

So what can we conclude from these details? Of course it is important to remember that any opinion must be subjective as we don’t

have access to the facts of his early life such as the quality of his relationships. However, I will venture some ideas. He was born into a family that was relatively well off although certainly not of the nobility. While we know more of his father than his mother we do know she gave birth to two daughters who died soon after birth in quick succession and that William would have been conceived quite shortly after their death. We know that women who give birth to a child soon after the death of another are particularly at risk of depression and at the very least the newborn child will have to bear an extreme burden of projected hope and despair. Can we allow ourselves to imagine how the birth of a healthy boy after such grief and surrounded by the plague might have been? He was the first child of the couple to be born and survive beyond early infancy and also the first son.

I think we can suggest that he would have had particular significance for both his parents, a precious child. Clinical experience suggests that commonly in such circumstances the child is the focus of excessive concern and over-protection by especially the mother. Are these the seeds of an early marriage and subsequent flight to London away from his new and young family reflecting an ambivalent dependency? We can't say but again clinical experience would suggest this as not an uncommon outcome. His father was ambitious and successful in his early adult life during William's formative years although later fell on hard times. He had strong religious and classical educational experiences. I think there is something else in that his entire childhood was spent within a strong and cohesive English town where he would have been exposed to all manner of people. Nature, both flora and fauna abounded. While he would have experienced loss it seems he was spared the sort of deprivation that stunts psychological growth. There is every reason to suggest that he came from a very fertile ground intellectually and experientially.

By 1582 he has come to know Anne Hathaway who lived about a mile west over farm paddocks and down footpaths from his home. Having slept with the farmer's eldest daughter they married in November 1582, soon after it became clear she had become pregnant. Anne was 8 years older than William, 26 years at marriage and unusually old for the times to be unmarried it seems. On May 26, 1583 the first child and first grandchild was christened Susanna and on February 2, 1585 twins Hamnet and Judith were christened. Soon after William left alone for London! But he did return over the years.

From 1582 until 1592 there is virtually no known documentary record of Shakespeare and this decade has come to be known as the “Lost Years”. Before 1592, however, he would have had the opportunity to watch plays performed in Stratford or further afield in Coventry. In 1592, at 28 years of age one of his plays, *Henry VI Part I*, is playing in London at the Rose Theatre near what is now Southwark Cathedral on the south bank of the Thames.

The era in which Shakespeare was raised and lived is relevant to this paper. Mention has been made of the existence of traveling players and it seems plays were a very popular form of entertainment of the times. Classical plays were performed at schools and as part of religious festivals. There were so-called medieval “Miracle Plays” or “Mystery Plays” enacted on Holy Days amongst many others. (Kermode, 2004) It is known (Schoenbaum, 1975) that in 1587 five companies passed through Stratford and it has been speculated that William joined one of these. London at the time held a population of some 200,000. It was growing rapidly and plays were often performed in the fringe areas of the city where less control could be gained over the various activities of the citizens.

It is important to know something of the political and religious context of his life. These were extraordinary times and must have provoked a profound sense of uncertainty in the general population. A summary of events that is of particular relevance to Shakespeare follows (Kermode, 2004; Trevelyan, 1988). Henry VIII came to the throne of England in 1509 and initiated a profoundly tumultuous period. It is believed that some 80,000 people died on the gallows during his reign. Many of his difficulties had to do with his desire for a male heir and his seeking of a divorce from his first wife to whom he had a daughter. This precipitated a rift with the Pope in Rome. In 1558 Elizabeth became Queen and began a rich and influential reign that would last 45 years until her death in 1603 during which, however, she had neither children nor married.

This century saw the Reformation sweep through England and change dramatically the spiritual life of its inhabitants. Elizabeth was at first more liberal but soon hardened in her attitude to Catholicism. The Reformation, in a practical sense, meant that monasteries were closed across the country, that paintings and stained glass windows, considered the more idolatrous aspects of religion, were removed. Theology and liturgy were transformed. Major theological canons were changed. There was profound upheaval. But it was not just a political or ecclesiastical upheaval, it was reflected in the daily lives

of the subjects or members of the nation. More or less contemporaneously much more widespread publication of the written word occurred. Caxton's introduction of the printing press into England in the 1470's and its earlier invention in Germany in 1455 by Gutenberg were the beginnings of a revolution. So, in some ways books, came to replace the old images, stained glass, decorative altars and so on. Prior to the Reformation almost every aspect of daily life was related in some way to the liturgy of the church. So what was occurring was the rather rapid substitution of a secular form of dramatic entertainment and commentary on life, for the catholic or religious underpinnings. Elizabeth died in 1603 and James Stuart VI of Scotland became James I of England. James was a very different and more reclusive monarch but he did foster the dramatic arts and the Jacobean court witnessed many performances of Shakespeare's plays.

There are two events that mention must be made of in terms of the nature of the times relating to the Elizabethan period. The first is the defeat and routing of the Great Spanish Armada in 1588 despite its superiority in terms of numbers of ships. This was a significant victory for Elizabeth and began a long tradition of the Naval British Empire. In 1599 the English forces in Ireland led by the Earl of Essex were heavily defeated and this was a blow not only for Elizabeth but also for England.

The group of players Shakespeare came to be a member of was called the Chamberlains Men later becoming the Kings Men. This group of actors toured around the English country-side performing. Shakespeare came to be famous and popular in the 1590's and as a result became quite well-off purchasing property in London as well as Stratford. At least early on in his career he was an actor as well as playwright.

So this is the backdrop to his work, which was prodigious. He lived to be 52 years old, a short life by our standards and in this short time was extraordinarily creative.

Very little is known of his romantic life except by inference from his works including his sonnets. It seems more than reasonable to say that he was no stranger to love nor indeed the pain of loss of love amongst the other vicissitudes of love and life. For example there are some 154 Sonnets written between perhaps 1592 and 1606. These have stimulated a great deal of interest because they convey an uncommon depth of feeling and undoubted familiarity with love. Sonnet XVIII: "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate. Rough winds do shake the darling

buds of May, and summer's lease hath all too short a date: sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, and often is his gold complexion dimm'd; Every fair from fair sometime declines, by chance, or nature's course untrimm'd; but thy eternal summer shall not fade nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade, when in eternal lines to time thou grow'st. So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Traditionally we have become accustomed to Shakespeare's works being divided into Comedies, Histories and Tragedies with the important addition of the Sonnets. This has proven to be useful despite their being some overlap of the categories. Arguably though it is the group of tragedies for which he is best known and in particular *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth* although we may all have our own preferred selection.

Interpretations and Applications of the Works

A.C. Bradley was Professor of Poetry at Oxford University and his book "Shakespearean Tragedy" first published in 1904 is a classic and has been reprinted many times (Bradley, 1992). Bradley attempted to define what is specific about William Shakespeare tragedy? A condensation of Bradley's thesis is that the works essentially revolve around the calamity that befalls the "hero" who is special or famous. More than this is the role of "character": "The centre of the tragedy, therefore, may be said with equal truth to lie in action issuing from character, or in character issuing in action." The character, according to Bradley, has a flaw or vulnerability which is to move in one direction only: "a fatal tendency to identify the whole being with one interest, object, passion, or habit of mind". Bradley identifies a key aspect in the works as a development in the role of conflict with the earlier works identifying conflict between characters or groups and the later works where the fulcrum or tension is the internal conflict within the hero and others. Early works include *Richard II* and *III* for example as opposed to *Hamlet*, *Othello* etc. By the end of the play we are struck by the "waste" according to Bradley in the tragic losses that have unfolded because the hero has contributed profoundly to his own downfall. Now I think that what makes the works so important and gripping if we can penetrate the textual style of the times is the hero in all of us. We can all readily identify with this character, the secret desire to be a hero for our mother or father, a great person.

Further we can all identify in some smaller or larger measure how we can approach a pinnacle with all the attendant risks that WS depicts so clearly. Of course, this is the omnipotent infant and the oedipal child straining for entry into the adult world. Somewhere in all of us, some more than others, is the threat of being wrenched apart by our impossible desires: the inward struggle. Human vulnerability is front and centre in the works.

Bradley was, it seems, unaware of Freud's work although they were contemporaries with Bradley's death occurring in 1935 and Freud's in 1939. At least Bradley makes no reference to Freud in his book. But he is working right in the area of psychoanalysis when he examines from a literary viewpoint the role of conflict and the sabotaging aspect of human personality and what he refers to as "character".

Upon invitation I contributed a review of the book "Psychoanalytic Ideas and Shakespeare" ed. By Wise and Mills published in 2006 by Karnac (Wise and Mills, 2006) for the Australasian Journal of Psychotherapy (2007). The editors introduce the book by commenting on the familiar linking of Shakespeare's works with the field of psychoanalytic work and theory. Mills says in relation to the beginning of an analysis: It is "as if they are presenting their own play or opening up a new novel to be shared." Reference is also made to Joyce McDougal's classic work, "Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and Truth on the Analytic Stage" (McDougal, 1986) and quoted as I will again: In our psyche are "...parts of ourselves that frequently operate in complete contradiction to one another, causing conflict and mental pain...these hidden players and their roles. ...our inner characters are constantly seeking a stage on which to play out their tragedies and comedies...our secret theatre...it is this inner world with its repeating repertory that determines most of what happens to us in the external world." McDougal's ideas bring to mind WS's play "As You Like It": "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages. At first the infant mewling and puking in the nurse's arms...." and so it goes on. Finally, we hear: "Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history, is second childishness and mere oblivion sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." This book is of interest because it brings together the contributions of several authors to elucidate the hidden and unconscious meaning of several of WS's plays and in particular his tragedies but of course they are relevant to us all. It includes a fascinating chapter by Gerald

Wooster and Peter Buckroyd examining the potential development of creativity out of loss reflected in the works.

Through examination and reflection it is possible to see that he arrived on the scene as a genius at a particular time in history when profound changes were occurring in society. It was a time when a religious and arguably constrictive, if though securing, network was deconstructed through the Reformation. Perhaps an hiatus was left for the secular world to fill. Certainly it seems a great need for this particular form of entertainment and the vicarious examination of life's difficulties was uncovered.

My thesis is that as people, as humans, by our very nature we have a social need to congregate, to share experience, although sometimes, it is denied or recoiled from. The public that Shakespeare entertained must have known a great deal about suffering and, of course, about love and its loss. The death rate from plague and other infections, the threat of sentence of death or imprisonment, public executions, massive neonatal mortality rate, wars and so on, informed them that life was precarious. This was London before the Great Fire in 1666 that allowed a clearing of poor housing and slums and rebuilding.

Today, we still have formal drama but there are competing distractions: Films, TV, Sport, the Commonwealth and Olympic Games, Computers, Virtual experiences, Electronic Games, DVD's, Music on iPods and so on. But many of these are impersonal, solitary or narrow in one form or other. And of more relevance they generally do not help us solve our personal conflicts or difficulties although they can distract. So this is where the analytic psychotherapies enter the picture in my mind as a valuable therapeutic agency.

There is, of course, entertainment and distraction involved in the dramatic arts but there is much more. There is containment of a Bionian nature (1959). Most of us would have attended plays and become involved emotionally with, and in, the story. We know that we identify and projectively identify with certain characters or themes according to our own idiosyncratic life experience. Whilst containment can occur via other visual media there is something peculiar to the "in the flesh" play that arguably surpasses these others I think. The experience of almost being able to touch, to hear the breathing of actors, sometimes the smell and so on, all brings an immediacy to us of the experience. Even the mistakes that are sometimes made can enhance the real-life character of the performance for the observer. In Shakespeare's times the population must have been, as already mentioned in the biographical sketch and the account of

the times, subject to massive anxiety and uncertainty. Life must have seemed, and was, precarious for the masses perhaps as it must seem for the Zimbabweans, Sudanese or Iraqis nowadays and for certain sub-groups in our own societies. The ever-present risk of death or disease or loss must have been tangible. There were the profound changes to spiritual life, the other great container for many of us in one form or other, religion. The threat of war and invasion by the Spanish was present throughout Elizabeth's reign. The insecurities bred by the anxieties of succession especially as Elizabeth became an old lady and clearly more fractious and vulnerable would be a powerful source of anxiety. In relation to this she had great difficulty in allowing speculation about her successor and direct public comment was punishable by death. So in this setting Shakespeare begins to write and create dramas. Henry VI, Richard II, Henry V and Henry IV, Richard III and so on. Many of these portray, in historical form, matters to do with succession and the deposing of monarchs. These anxieties of the present were projected into the distant past. Henry V was written and performed in 1599 the year when England had sent forces to Ireland to quell rebellion, led by the flamboyant and unpredictable Earl of Essex (Shapiro, 2005). Unfortunately for England Essex failed but the play seems to have given expression to the public's anxiety about depletion of forces and the threat of being vanquished in one form or other but ultimately overcoming in triumph. Incidentally, Essex had at one time been a suitor of Elizabeth but was rejected and finally led an uprising against the Queen and was quickly beheaded in 1601.

Some of the plays are comedic in nature and the humorous aspect is often a means of dealing with the pain of certain aspects of life. Frequently the narcissistic or grandiose fellow is poked fun at as in "Twelfth Night" in the character of Malvolio or the character of Falstaff in some of the Royal history plays. There is a frequent theme of the arrival at a just and fair conclusion as a balancing point or a character receiving their comeuppance. There are countless such themes and sub-plots in his work expressed in a richly poetic form of English. These themes and sub-plots I think allow and allowed the audience, via dissemination throughout the English-speaking world, a level of vicarious experience: a form of containment.

Anyone who has visited a Florentine, Venetian, Roman, English or for that matter any gallery with a medieval collection of art will be struck by the overwhelming preoccupation with Christian religious themes: Nativity scenes, Madonna and Baby Jesus, Adoration

of the Magi and so on. True there are also frequently paintings and sculptures from early Greco-Roman times with images from these traditional myths. Shakespeare's works however, at least for the English public, introduced a more secular genre that was exploited by William Blake amongst many other artists and writers. But more importantly the general public, post-Reformation, found a new and rich vein of familiar myth to mine and recruit for their fantasies not unlike the Arthurian Legends of earlier times.

I want to take this opportunity to dwell a little upon what is, arguably, Shakespeare's greatest tragedy (and some would say history's greatest play!): Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. Shakespeare wrote this play in approximately 1601. It was Shakespeare who contributed some original aspects to the story and, in entirety, the Renaissance style and literary or poetic nature of the final play. The story is essentially a tale of familial murder, adultery, incest, suicide and, of course, madness. Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark, a young man whose father, King Hamlet, had died reportedly due to snake bite. Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, brother of the late king, assumes the throne and marries Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. All of this occurs within the unseemly time of less than one month. The ghost of the dead King appears on several occasions on the battlements of the Royal Castle, Elsinore, and tells Hamlet what has occurred and how his father died. This includes the revelation that Claudius poured poison into the sleeping King's ear which rapidly overpowered him and also that his mother had been seduced by Claudius. The ghost advises Hamlet to seek revenge and kill the new King but spare his mother. Hamlet swears to follow this course and tells his companions he intends to feign madness to achieve his ends. Woven into the story is the love between Hamlet and Ophelia but she falls into madness and suicides, adding to Hamlet's despair.

(In 1851 John Everett Millais, one of the "Pre-Raphaelites", produced a wonderful and iconic painting of Ophelia which is in the Tate Britain Gallery, London).

The crucial psychological fulcrum of the play would seem to be Hamlet's struggle to do what he conflictedly wants to do, indeed is destined to do, that is, to kill King Claudius. He cannot freely do this and instead falls into a series of tragic events but eventually kills the king and his mother dies poisoned as he finally perishes himself. Freud wrote about a number of Shakespeare's plays but Hamlet is referred to in some detail in his wonderful and original monograph: "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900). Ernest Jones (1948) also

elaborated on Freud's views. Freud compared the play Hamlet with Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. He pointed out Hamlet involved the same theme but was presented in a much more repressed form. In Oedipus Rex, of course, it is all played out without disguise: Oedipus kills his father and takes his mother as a wife although the play necessarily includes his lack of awareness of these facts at the time and he later learns of the horrifying reality. In Hamlet the repression is that it is not Hamlet who kills his father and marries his mother but the uncle. Further, Hamlet cannot, until the very end, kill Claudius. He struggles and is pained by what feels he needs to do but can't. Freud's suggestion was that it is his unconscious guilt that gets in the way of his revenge. Freud said: "Thus the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish." It is also reported by some sources that Hamlet was written immediately after Shakespeare's father's death.

It is of some interest that some writers consider that the Orestes myth or Oresteia, rather than the Oedipus myth, is a more accurate representation of what is within the play Hamlet. According to Homer Orestes was the son of Agamemnon, the father, and Clytemnestra, his mother. Agamemnon returned from the Trojan wars with a mistress and as a result his wife subsequently killed him and married her lover. Some years later Orestes sought revenge by killing his mother and her lover. Orestes has become a prototype for those committing a crime under mitigating circumstances. Shakespeare's works in general enable a more abstract representation than the Greek myths in terms of giving expression to the unconscious, I think.

Stephen Greenblatt, Professor of Humanities at Harvard University (Greenblatt, 2004), has written, as have others, of the play Hamlet, as marking a major turning point and having profound significance for Shakespeare. He links the death of Hamnet, his son, in 1596, with the development of the play. It is known that the play had its origins in an ancient Norse folk tale of Amleth written in Latin by Saxo Grammaticus a Danish historian circa 1200. Further that Shakespeare made nearly all of the adjustments, additions and embellishments turning a crude myth into an inwardly explorative, evocative and poetic drama (although a Frenchman, Belleforest, also wrote a version and there was another the "Ur-Hamlet" both written in the late 1500's). Shakespeare, for example, invented the ghost of Hamlet's father, and it is also relevant it is known that in some of the early performances William, himself, played the role of the ghost.

An interesting piece of data reported by Greenblatt is that in writing *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, used over 600 new words many of these not only the first time he had used such words in his plays but also new to the English language as recorded in writing. Some of these words include: fanged, besmirched, pander, unnerved, and so on.

Harold Bloom is Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University and it is his contention that Shakespeare “invented the human” (Bloom, 1999), a somewhat startling claim one would think at first hearing. Bloom spends nearly 800 pages arguing this case and unpacks all of the works. He is not a friend of Freud but he nonetheless demonstrates and possesses a love of the evocation of characters and the human condition in literature. In Shakespeare characters develop as Bloom says or individuate within a play whether this be by overhearing themselves or via relating and reflection. The dominant characters, for example, Falstaff, Hamlet, Iago, Rosalind (*As You Like It*), Lear, Macbeth, and so on, he says, are all examples of how character and consciousness and meaning are developed. He sees this as the first instance in Literature of such evocation and creativity compared with what went before. His argument, when first encountered, seems preposterous, at least it did to me but on closer examination and study seems to have more than a little merit. His further suggestions include that this creativity set standards and was a significant impetus in the development of Western literature and awareness of what it is to be human. He cites Dr. Samuel Johnson in the 1700’s as the first critic to claim Shakespeare was the first to create evocations of human change through will rather than, for example, via illness or decay.

Michael Jacobs (2008) quotes Ernst Kris as saying that: “...art moves two parts of us—the id and the ego”. The id is given expression via the dramatic components of any play such as passion, murder, envy and so on but the form that the play takes via its literary content and nature: its poetic character, allows a more pleasing expression for us of the id. The auditory and sensual pleasure the works bring forth can be seen as an appeal to the ego versus the id and also superego demands. In poetry and drama an important aspect is rhythm and rhyme. Indeed there are certain rules which classically some consider must be adhered to in some form or other. Rhythm is produced in different languages in different ways. It is said that in English an important way for rhythm to be expressed is via unstressed and stressed syllables. An iambic pentameter is a line of five successive pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables: da dum, da dum, da dum,

da dum, da dum. Such iambic pentameters are frequent in English poetry and were especially common in Shakespeare's works. Sometimes some variation is included so that a stressed syllable may occur before an unstressed one eg: "To BE/ or NOT/ to BE/ THAT is/ the QUES-tion. It is by these and other means that auditory beauty is woven through much of the works: It is pleasing to the ear.

Frank Kermode occupies three university chairs: He is Professor of Modern English at University College London, Professor of English Literature at Cambridge and Professor of Poetry at Harvard. Similarly to Harold Bloom and others Kermode has commented on how something very special was happening with WS's writing style within Hamlet. He comments that no one quite like Hamlet ever existed before him and: "To take him as the herald of a new age is neither idolatrous nor hyperbolic. In this new age we need not expect matters to be made easy for us." And in fact Kermode is using his terminology to claim, in synchrony with and at about the same time as Bloom, that a new era of the person or human was proclaimed with the writing of Hamlet. Kermode in his book "Shakespeare's Language" (2000) describes how Hamlet is dominated by a particular literary style, that of the frequent use of doubles. He describes, in particular, one form of double being "hendiadys" which is a technical grammatical term for "one through two" eg. the term "house and home" (from Henry IV, part 2). Other examples of hendiadys doubling include: "greetings and desires" and "safety and allowance". Further examples of doubling include the "play within the play" itself of Hamlet. There are the two characters of Cornelius and Voltermand and also Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in both cases neither seeming to serve any purpose other than being doubles. Kermode suggests that these forms of doubling and other literary tools introduce mystery and tension.

It is important to consider what it is about Shakespeare's works that has made them so popular and a reservoir for other artists to draw from. Apart from the pure beauty and skill of the writer there are other factors. The works draw on human experience sometimes of a tragic nature and sometimes of a sweet and pleasing nature but at all times the essence of what it is to be human. He demonstrates a profound capacity for insight into the human condition and personality. The works draw heavily upon conscious and unconscious wells. More importantly, though, they allow exploration of unconscious themes with repression only lightly lifted as in the example of Hamlet. Others have pointed out that it is this partial lifting of repression that

makes art so attractive to those of us who can enter such a world. We are not required to understand this to enjoy the experience.

The release from repression of the unconscious is an important aspect of the appeal of artistic processes. Freud wrote of the various ways that the unconscious can find expression or come to be liberated or known to a greater or lesser degree in his early works whether it be dreaming(1900), jokes(1905) or parapraxes or relief from neurosis via the psychoanalytic process(1916/17: *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*).

Jacques Derrida (1993), in a series of interviews with Derek Attridge (editor), described how literature necessarily involves a “lifting of repression”. He says in reference to literature: “...there is not efficient deconstruction without the greatest possible pleasure.” And: “...no deconstruction without pleasure and no pleasure without deconstruction.”

I think that what is achieved via the literary experience is some move toward integration: an integration of the unconscious with the conscious, the past into the present, with an eye to the future.

I want to say something about Symbolization in relation to these matters. Freud early on emphasized how sublimation allowed biological instincts to be expressed via socially acceptable modes and in dreams, that is, something standing for something else or representation and also how words were verbal symbols. Inherent in Klein's early work was demonstrating the importance of play and how a child's deepest concerns were revealed in the play symbolically and provided RELIEF for the child as opposed to the real experience with, for example, the parents. These matters are clearly of relevance in considering the significance of certain dramatic works to human societies.

In his paper *Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena* (1951) Winnicott spoke of the arrival at a theoretical understanding of the individual in health as having a limiting membrane and hence an inside and outside. Therefore there is an inner reality and an inner world as well as an outer reality and world. Winnicott wrote: “My claim is that if there is a need for this double statement, there is need for a triple one; there is the third part of the life of a human being, a part that we cannot ignore, an intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute.” We know that he gave the name transitional objects and phenomena to the articles and experiences that are recruited by the infant to negotiate the path from a purely inner reality to relating to the external world: the path

from “me to not-me”. He suggested: “it shall exist as a resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated.” The term potential space was later used and includes the area of experience in which illusion, omnipotence and play occupy. He spoke of how in later development the arts, religion and culture occupy this area of experience for us. So when we look at a painting in a gallery if we are free enough and have reached a certain level of development, we can fantasize into the painting, we can wonder and dream in a sense. We can also, hopefully, walk away and reclaim ourselves. In the book “Playing and Reality” by Winnicott (1971), he described how it is in the area of overlap of potential spaces between individuals that creative play can occur. He is referring to therapist and child, mother and child and so on but it links his ideas with the relevance of Shakespeare’s works to us all.

The “Social Unconscious” is a term that Hopper (2006), Dalal (2001), Brown (2001), Volkan (2001) amongst others, have developed that has value. It is useful to consider how the works tapped into the contemporary social unconscious of the times. Areas here include the survival of the parental couple as represented by the King and/or the Queen, and deconstruction of Catholicism during the Reformation as well as romantic and rustic or rural ideals in the face of sometimes grinding poverty and deprivation and basic concerns related to survival. The earlier historical account in this paper can be interpreted as a reservoir of unconscious and conscious anxieties harboured by a society.

Concluding Thoughts

I want to finish by making some further comments about groups from this perspective. When I was working at the Cassel Hospital in London nearly 20 years ago I became acutely aware of how the groups and structures constituted by the psychoanalytic therapeutic community contained and allowed the development and freeing up of quite severely disturbed individuals from the constraints of their psychopathology over time. I have written of this in particular in relation to the intensive psychoanalytic psychotherapy of a mother who presented with Munchausen’s Syndrome by proxy at the Cassel: essentially the application of forms of group and individual therapy. She had narrowly missed killing her two young children by

salt poisoning and ultimately lost care of them. An important part of her rehabilitation was the prolonged experience of despair as she increasingly came to understand the destruction and permanent loss she had wrought within her family and in particular the lives of her children and herself. She seemed to need to inhabit a space in which her inner life could be experienced “outwardly” within the wider hospital community, objectified and re-interpreted. This work was included in a book published by Karnac in London edited by Day and Flynn (2004). Shakespearean tragedies, of course, can be played out in our patients’ lives and in our own lives in reality and in all our lives at an unconscious level. Dramatic works, and in particular the works of William Shakespeare, through various means as described above, can allow an audience to work through some aspects of their inner conflicted self and offer some containment. These means include personification, and the representation of parts of us all in a projected form as well as relatedness with some relief, resolution or integration. Perhaps we could call this a form of “play”. Analytic therapy potentially can provide a sophisticated psychological space for the careful exposure and examination of unconscious processes and the re-working of them not entirely dissimilar to the less intimate opportunities offered medieval audiences four hundred years ago. Just as the mother and her mind may provide a space in which the infant’s experience can inhabit and evolve so did Shakespeare’s works and their performance allow the audience containment of their experience. So also does group-analytic and individual analytic therapy allow containment of our patients’ experience and new possibilities.

Finally I want to quote the words of William Shakespeare’s friend and contemporary, Ben Jonson, who contributed a poem entitled “To The Memory of My Beloved, The Author, William Shakespeare”, introducing the first folio of 1623, which included much praise. Jonson is recorded as writing in admiration and some jealousy that Shakespeare never needed to blot his words, that is, erase or review his lines. Jonson wrote in his poem: “He was not of an age but for all time.” And concluded with: “The Sweet Swan of Avon.”

Note: On hearing a shorter version of this presentation in Dublin Kevin Power recommended I read the book “The Lodger” by Charles Nicholl. I am grateful for this recommendation as it is a fascinating and incontrovertible account of an aspect of Shakespeare’s life in London.

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Myths in Group Analysis

Myth and Theory in Psycho-Analysis

Psycho-analysis has used, from its very beginnings, several myths as a fundamental part of its theory. This has been sternly criticised by people coming from the ‘hard’ sciences and analytical philosophy, who claim that scientific thinking can, and should, only be based on the positive observation of facts, formal logic, and unambiguous theory. This may be an extreme position, but it certainly does feel strange, for common-sense thinking, that some psychoanalytic writers have criticised, modified or amplified Freud’s theory of the Oedipus complex, for instance, on the basis of various details of the Oedipus myth that he did not take into account. It even seems that they are treating the story of the Theban royal family as if it were a real clinical case, so that a psychodynamic theory of what happened to them should include every detail.

How are we to understand this most peculiar procedure? In order to answer this question, we should consider the nature and function of myths. In Greek, mythos is a tale, as the stories that are told to children. This is the narrative function of words, as opposed to logos, which is the word, as used for meditation, reflection or reasoning: i.e., argumentation. Both Mythos and Logos derive from the encounter of the human being and his or her world, and are used as instruments to understand and account for the experiences derived from such encounter, through the development of complex symbolic systems, such as religion, philosophy, art, and science.

Such symbolic systems, which try to make sense of our experience of life, are always created in the attempt to account for a specific state of affairs or answer a specific question. Hence, none of them may be generally applied to all contexts, since their usefulness depends on the type of problem they were trying to solve or the question they intended to answer. These systems may take one of two forms: a narrative form, in the case of myths, and a deductive form, in that of theories.

Theories are deductive systems. Therefore, they are logical, rational, unambiguous, and rigorous. Their terms should be straightforward and clear-cut. There is no place for polysemy in theory. In the case of scientific theories, there is an additional condition, which is not required in the case of philosophy: any proposition should be validated by putting it to the test of observational experience, which should be publicly shared with other adequately trained observers. The result is that a theory explains a certain state of affairs in a logical and rational way.

In narrative systems, on the other hand, there is no attempt to steer by the rules of formal logic and reason, or to make a precise and strict definition of their terms. These are always polysemic and ambiguous, thus allowing multiple forms and levels of interpretation. What they actually do is to present a tale or story, whose structure may clarify, by analogy, some aspect of reality. Their function is to offer us some complex patterns that may be incorporated by learning the story, and later recognised, when facing an analogous situation. Some instances of this practice are myths, the traditional ‘teaching stories’ (such as Zen, Sufi or Hasidic tales), and a large part of religion and art. Lacking a better name for this whole set of narrative systems: which, to my mind, include a major and most valuable part of psychoanalytic writings: I shall group them under the name of ‘myths’.

Hence, a myth is a narrative symbolic system, which purports to describe a complex system of inter-relations, which cannot be represented in terms of formal logic and linear reasoning. This is due to the fact that logic always follows a linear course, and on a single level, while highly complex and multiform reality follows a circular or spiral course, and develops on multiple interrelated levels. Therefore, the multiplicity of possible readings, which would certainly be a defect in the case of deductive systems, becomes a virtue in that of myths, since it is the main source of their richness and power to orient us vis-à-vis the bafflingly complex reality of our existence.

Psychoanalytic discourse has oscillated, since its beginning, between theory and myth. Freud dreamt of a positive, unambiguous, univocal theory, such as those in the natural sciences, and tried, with less than satisfactory results, to realise it in his metapsychology. But he also developed a narrative approach, with his case histories and vignettes, and his frequent references to jokes, literary works, traditions, religions, and myths (Tubert-Oklander and Beuchot Puente, 2008). His use of myths, in the more restricted and specific sense of the term, included those of Chronos, Narcissus, and Oedipus, among others, as analogues of the complex dynamics he was discovering and trying to describe.

A Group-Analytic Myth

Group analysis, unlike psychoanalysis, has not made an extensive use of myths in its theory-making, although it does recur to analogy and narrative, when trying to illuminate its concepts. Foulkes (1957) used Sophocles's play *Oedipus Tyrannus* as a representation of the human condition and group life: 'The conflict within the audience, within any human being, is given expression by the conflict between Oedipus and the Chorus' (p. 113). But what he used was the play, and not the myth in its multiple details.

I have been trying, for some time, to find a myth that might be suitable to depict the spirit of group analysis and its conception of human existence. I first looked for it in Greek myths, but to no avail; I even asked some philologist friends if they could think of some such myth, but neither could they. Then, quite unexpectedly, as usual, a memory came to me of a Persian Muslim story that fitted my intent like a glove. It was Farid ud-Din Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*.

Abū Hamīd bin Abū Bakr Ibrāhīm was a Persian Muslim poet and one of the great masters of Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, which has been as much persecuted and maligned by Orthodox Islamism, as have been the mystics in every other religion. Born in the town of Nishapur: in Khorasan, now north-eastern Iran, in 1145-46, and died there circa 1221, he was much better known by his pen-names Farīd ud-Dīn and 'Attār' ("the chemist" or "the pharmacist"), since he was the son of a prosperous chemist and worked as a pharmacist (Reynert, 1987).

Apparently he personally attended to a very large number of customers, and the people he helped in the pharmacy used to confide their troubles to him, impressing him with their sufferings. This

experience, together with the deep study of Sufi literature, which his father had fostered in him since his childhood, sensitised him to the spiritual dimension. Eventually, he closed his pharmacy and travelled widely in search for knowledge: to Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Khwarizm, Turkistan, and India, where he studied under the guidance of Sufi Sheikhs. Later he returned to Nishapur, resumed his pharmacy, and spent the rest of his life attending it, teaching, and writing (Bashiri, 2002).

His book *Manteq al-ṭayr: The Conference of the Birds* (Attar, 2003), which Edward FitzGerald partially translated as *Bird Parliament* (Attar, 1889), is a vast allegory of the human being's quest for development and knowledge. It tells us how all the birds assembled to choose their king; then came the hoopoe, that very special bird who appears in the Koran as King Solomon's messenger, and told them that they should look for the Simurgh, the mystical, magical, benevolent bird of Persian lore, who represents everything that is good and wise, to name her (for the Simurgh is definitely feminine) their sovereign. Then, guided by the hoopoe, they set on their trip to the far-away mountains of Kaf, where the Simurgh lives. Many died or deserted on the way, so that finally only thirty birds completed the journey.

As they went on, several birds told the others their thoughts, experiences, and stories. To all of them the hoopoe replied, showing them their failures and weaknesses. On the whole, twenty-two birds had their say. They travelled through the Seven Valleys, whose names are: 1) Aban (Flash) (or 'Talab' which means 'Quest'), 2) Ishq (Love), 3) Marifat (Gnosis or Knowledge), 4) Istighnah (Independence or Detachment), 5) Tawheed (Unity), 6) Hayrat (Bewilderment), and 7) Fuqur o Fana (Selflessness and Oblivion). In each of these stages, they learned different lessons from their experience in that Valley, both about the nature of the mental processes they found there (trials, love, knowledge, and so on) and about themselves. This was difficult and painful, so that many birds gave up the journey, because they were not able to endure it.

When they finally arrived at their destiny, there was no Simurgh to be found, but only a lake, and when they saw their own reflection in it, they suddenly realised that 'sī morḡ' in Persian means 'thirty birds'. In other words, they themselves were that ideal object they sought, from whom they expected guidance, wisdom, and protection. But it was themselves, as transformed by the experience of their

journey, which required resolution, constancy, patience, courage, and endurance of the anxiety of no longer knowing what they believed to know, not even themselves. In this, the hoopoe was a leader who did not provide answers, but only her company, encouragement and some comments on their discourse.

This highly complex allegory expresses Attar's cherished belief that the human being will find the Deity, that ideal figure that is sought and strived for, within him- or herself, but only after a protracted search for experience and the effort to work it through, and that this is the task for a community, not an individual, albeit not all who begin this search will carry it to its end. But this may also be a fitting metaphor for group analysis. Patients come to our groups expecting answers from a wise and enlightened being —namely, the therapist— and they have to learn, as they go through several most difficult stages, that the wisdom they seek is to be found in themselves as a group: as Foulkes (1948) said in his 'Basic Law of Group Dynamics', 'The deepest reason why these patients [...] can reinforce each other's normal reactions and wear down and correct each other's neurotic reactions is that collectively they constitute the very Norm, from which, individually, they deviate' (p. 29). The group analyst, on his part, is pretty much like the hoopoe, a messenger of wisdom, not a sage, who proposes, accompanies, and guides the journey, but provides no answers, only questions, comments, and encouragement; a good listener and a thrifty talker, who aids the travellers in coming to their goal. Many leave the quest on the way, but those who finish it have been transformed by the experience, and know for sure that the answers are not to be sought in far-away lands, but within themselves.

Is this all there is to it? A good metaphor for our practice? Or can we find a finer understanding of our discipline through the detailed study of this myth? What were the aspirations, limitations, and foibles of each of the twenty-two birds who spoke? And what did the hoopoe tell them? And what is it that they learned in each of the Seven Valleys? These are questions worth exploring.

Note for the readers: This brief text is part of an ongoing hermetic research on the relation of myths to psycho-analysis and group analysis. I shall welcome any comments you may offer, either through the pages of Contexts or directly to me, by e-mail sent to JTubertOklander@gmail.com.

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Juan Tubert-Oklander

Verbal Interactions and Acting-in in Analytic Groups

With Malcolm Pines (2002) we can say that whenever we function as group moderator “we need to balance both the mythic and the analytic modes of understanding.” I can only add that in group analysis the participating individuals associate not only with their individual conscious and unconscious thoughts, but also with what I call their “archaic group memory,” which is also mobilized in actual group situations. Especially in emotionally laden conditions people may regress even in analytic groups to a narcissistic-fusional level of expectations toward others and seek in others their equals. When they recognize that these people fail to correspond to their wishes, they may erupt in a state of rage against the others and not only in psychodrama (Blatner, 1973), but also in group analysis tend toward acting-in and to see in them adversaries (projective identification, Melanie

Klein, 1946). In wall drawings from the Stone Age humans are mostly depicted in simple profile, each one of them being totally equal to the others. Their mouth usually goes unrepresented, in other words, the people depicted are not yet individuals, but rather group participants. We have, therefore, to consider the fact that, even in modern analytic groups, such regressions on an archaic fusional-level and following that a projective identification may appear especially in frustrating situations. It seems to me important that within the group such acting-in similarly represents a matter for analysis much as any verbally formulated statement. Even Freud (1941) differentiated acting-in, that is, done within the (individual) psychoanalytic situation, which he accepted, from acting-out, that is, done outside the ongoing psychoanalysis, which he considered inopportune.

In an experiential group of 7 students (three women, four men) the members spoke first of the female and then of the male role in society and afterwards of their own expectations linked with these roles. The women spoke above all about the insecurity they felt when they met a male for the first time. For this reason, they said they were forced to take ovulation inhibitors. They succumbed more and more to their emotions and felt themselves in a worse situation than men. All of a sudden one female participant seemed totally absent-minded and clearly depressive. The group moderator asked her what she was thinking about. She was now crying and told the group that her younger brother had committed suicide two years ago at the age of 22 and was found dead in a river. He had twice failed the final examination in school. This woman could no longer control her emotions and was not able to hold back her grief, which was relived in this situation through the amplifying affect of the group on emotions (Battegay, 1961). The acting-in of this student interrupted the discussion of the others about the role of women in society, but brought the whole group to participate in her suffering. The other participants and the moderator now took part in her grief and in this way showed her that they fully understood and accepted her. In other words, even in group analysis – and not only in psychodrama - acting-in not only should be tolerated in particular situations, but also positively evaluated, for example, when it contributes to a better working-through of human or other losses or other heavy burdens hampering life.

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R. Battegay

Malcolm Pines – A Personal Note

When I was asked to contribute to this special journal issue and discuss Dr. Pines' work in the field of Group Analysis in England, as compared to that conducted in the United States. I was both thrilled and appalled.

How could I do this? Separated by the Atlantic Ocean, I have never worked with him, studied with him, been treated by him, nor observed him in practice, except at conferences. Seeing a therapist at work professionally only in this way, even reading much of his written work, can give a flavour of a man, but in no way offers grounds for comparative study.

But an ambivalent feeling persisted. How could I not? Here was a man I enjoyed, admired and valued for all he is; a Renaissance figure of wit, learning and creativity, in our profession and in our time. He is a good friend, a charming dinner companion, a jousting debater, an enchanting story-teller and a fount of esoteric knowledge in music, culture, mythology and humour. Knowing him in all these ways is what I can offer as my personal contribution.

We met in 1994 in Athens. It was my first venture speaking at an overseas meeting. Feeling a bit anxious I sought a refuge and came upon a small, little known museum dedicated to the Coruscation culture. As I stood in front of a case of those remarkable flat women about whom I knew nothing, I evidently muttered, "Aren't they wonderful." Standing next to me was a scholarly-looking man who smiled, asked modestly if I knew anything about them, and when I said 'no', in just a few sentences told me what I was looking at. Later, we found ourselves on another floor, and to my delight my history

lesson continued. Not until I got back to the Greek Psychoanalytic Institute did I learn that my professor had been the eminent Malcolm Pines.

There is a story that Malcolm tells about his family. His sister would relate how once when she had asked if they could have an encyclopedia, their father responded. “You do not need one. All you have to do is to ask me!” Despite his modesty, I have always had somewhat the same feeling about Malcolm.

We have had some of our best conversations in the oddest places; in a horse cart on the pampas of Hungary, in a boat on the Danube, in a ferry off the coast of Norway, and in numerous restaurants in London, Copenhagen and Bologna. The range of conversation as my husband has noted with great enthusiasm, was likely to range from Shakespeare to Bach, from philosophy to neuroscience, from Greek gods to current politicians. Malcolm’s knowledge and curiosity are boundless; his generosity in sharing what he learns, equally so.

Professionally, he has known, spoken with, studied with, worked with and written with a pantheon of the leading contributors in the group psychoanalytic world from its very inception. Names were often quietly mentioned, such as H.S. Foulkes, Anna Freud, Anthony and Patrick de Mare, Robin Skynner, Michael Balint, Paula Heimann, Martin Grotjahn, Jacob Moreno and so many others. In casual conversation, these mythical creatures were made into lively and warm flesh and blood people. For me, these stories were drama in real time. It was a flow of gifts to be relished.

I shall leave it to others to document the course of Malcolm’s distinguished career. There were the hospitals at which he served, the books and article he wrote, the lectures delivered at memorable conferences, the years as a clinical and academic trainer reflected in numerous acts of selfless professional assistance. All these will be presented, I am sure, in other pages of this journal. For me, the essence of the man has been his optimism, his deep commitment to mentoring his students and colleagues and his generous appreciation of the ‘brilliance of the other man’.

Yes, we occasionally have spoken professionally; of groups, of analysis, of theoretical concerns, even at times of the differences or similarities in being a Contemporary Freudian or a Modern Analyst. The incredible factor of Malcolm is that he always generates surprise. I think of him as one who can adapt in the here-and-now, the wisdom of the once-was and the possible will-be. But most of all he is welcomed as someone who knows how to be a very good friend.

In his article on “Changing Times, Changing Realities: A Group-Analytic Perspective”, Malcolm noted that “In group analysis there is a multitude of voices, the therapist’s voice is one amongst many”. For me, the voice of Malcolm Pines embodies the voices of many; past and present, artists and practitioners, friends and loved ones, all in one as he speaks. He represents the remarkable capacity of the human spirit to reflect, to create, to respond, to educate and to love, and to do so with effervescing wit and scholarly modesty. I welcome this opportunity to share those parts of him that I so treasure.

Phyllis F. Cohen

Group Analysis: a first choice treatment!

**(Presentation at the EGATIN 2010 Study
Days in Vienna, Austria)**

Introduction

I have chosen my theme, Group Analysis as a first choice treatment, because I wanted an opportunity to think about the importance of group analysis as a treatment of choice, a topic which is significant for experienced practitioners as well as trainees.

When conducting assessments, we often hear that people would prefer individual therapy to group therapy. I want to look at this issue, because it seems a strange declaration, given that most of our human activities occur in groups, and not surprisingly, many of the emotional problems people experience stem from disturbed relationships within these groups. There is an increasing recognition of the interpersonal factor in psychotherapy, and it is becoming increasingly clearer that the problems, people are having, are problems in-between-people rather than in the individual alone. It is therefore even more astonishing that group therapy would be something that people try to avoid and not seek, as a treatment of choice. What are the reasons for preference for individual treatment and how can we address the reasons behind it, when assessing for therapy?

Frequently friends or colleagues, especially those individually trained, have confessed ignorance about group treatment and have

asked me, when it would be appropriate to refer a client or a patient for group therapy. This is an important question, which somewhat goes against what our founding father Foulkes supposedly has said, which is, that every patient on a waiting list is eligible as a group patient. Is this really the case or do we need to differentiate more in this respect? What do we as practitioners, and especially as group analysts, need to be aware of when suggesting, advocating or prescribing group analysis as a treatment of choice? When and why do we recommend group therapy rather than individual therapy to a patient, and when and why is a referral for group psychotherapy feasible and appropriate?

When I trained as a group analyst, I was introduced to the idea that one way of thinking about this issue was that following individual therapy people will be less neurotic, but not necessarily more mature; while after group analysis, people end up more mature, but not necessarily less neurotic. I wonder how this statement can be substantiated. In order to do so, I want to look at the developmental process of a human being in relation to groups, and I will draw in that respect on Winnicott. Winnicott talks explicitly about groups, as far as I know, only in two of his papers, which are:

1. Group Influences and the maladjusted Child, written in 1955, and
2. Theoretical Statement of the Field of Child Psychiatry, written in 1958.

Human beings are social beings

Human beings live, work and play in groups. When you consider, for instance, the movement from family to kindergarten, school and university, I could say that, in fact, human beings also grow up in groups. As a child, each human being has to learn at first to find a place in his or her family group, which is the setting in which the child learns to negotiate triangular relationships. Only when there are at least three people do we speak of a group, and the original grouping of three, that is, father, mother and child, can be seen as the basis of all group phenomena.

According to Winnicott (1955), we have - roughly from age two onwards - within the child's psyche the mother as a subjective and an objective object, the father possibly reduplicating the mother as carer, but also taking over her role as the person setting firm and

strict limitations, and also, if things go well, as a man who turns out to be a human being. In this way the model of a group develops in the child's mind, depending on the child's personality structure, that is, his or her inherited tendencies, and on growth processes. Other contributing factors to the group in the child's mind are, who the mother is and how she relates to this particular child, who the father is and how he relates to this child, and then there are others, other mother-figures, and relatives, sibling, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, and finally the social context of the locality. No child is the same and no child is related to in the same way, which explains why for instance five children in the same family have five slightly different family groups in their minds, which are not identical or may not even resemble each other.

Speaking psychologically and in developmental terms, in Winnicott's view, groups do not exist before the age of two, because groups become only meaningful for the individual who has reached unit status. Unit status is the major achievement of earliest infancy, and is concerned with 1) the integration of the personality into one unit, 2) the indwelling of the psyche in the body, and 3) the differentiation between internal and external reality. Based on this achievement of unit status, the child can begin to sort out the relationship to one object only, and his contradictory feelings of love and hate for his mother or mother-replacement.

The child's developing capacity to negotiate triangular relationships in the family grouping, from age two onwards constitutes, as I said earlier, the basis for a complex group of inner objects formed by early experience. It is here where we find the foundation for the capacity for group membership, which lies in this stage of first maturity in childhood, when internal object relations are somewhat fixed for the first time. Winnicott compares the capacity for group membership with the infant's achievement of unit status, when he states that 'The newly integrated infant is in the first group' (1955: 193).

Fear of groups – fear of wholeness

When becoming a unit, in the 'I AM' moment of integration, this experience of wholeness is not necessarily an experience of pleasure, as we simply might assume. On the contrary, at this moment of integration, the infant experiences high anxiety, because now the external world - and I quote Winnicott:

‘...comes back at the new ‘I am’ or ‘Me’ phenomenon of the self, which we perceive as a baby, and attacks it from all quarters and in all conceivable ways’ (1955: 149).

This experience can only be tolerated, if the mother has her arms around her baby. It is this experience of anxiety due to an expectation of ‘attacks from all quarters and in all conceivable ways’, which is akin to the anxiety we all know from joining a group which is new to us.

Before developing a sense of belonging to a group, every newcomer has to face this state of paranoid anxiety, full of fears and expectations of ‘attacks from all quarters and in all conceivable ways’. In order to negotiate this frightening situation, I believe, every newcomer to a therapy group needs a firm connection with the group conductor. In traditional psychoanalytic terms this is called the working alliance. As group analysts, we think about this aspect as part of the overall term of dynamic administration. It seems important for group analysts to acknowledge this bond or alliance to enable people to overcome their fear of joining a group. Indeed, I believe, we need to spend more thought and energy on developing this connection with a prospective newcomer to a group.

Fear of groups - fear of family

In addition to the fear of wholeness, a fear of groups - in contrast to individual therapy - may well be based on a fearful experience of the early family group. The great number of people who express fear or hesitation in regard to joining a therapy group, may well be by implication an indication for the number of people, who had fearful experiences in their early family life. As I said earlier, we all carry around in our minds the very complex model of a group, which was formed by our early experiences in our first family group. This internal model is activated and will colour the expectations and experiences in regard to any group, we will find ourselves in later in life. This internal model of a group is what all transferences in groups are based on and part of the work of group analysis is to recognise these transferences and work them through.

Social difficulties originating in the family group are not necessarily given due consideration in individual therapy, which by definition puts emphasis on the mother-infant dyad and not necessarily on the family group or group dynamics as such. In addition, individual therapy often is confined to internal psychic dynamics and neglects external events and influences. In contrast, external social dynamics

and influences are part and parcel of the working model of group analysis. Group analysis by definition takes the public, social and political environment and its impact into account. As group analysts, we consider for instance the importance of sibling dynamics, a topic which individual analysis has started to discover only relatively recently (Mitchel, 2003).

Clinical example:

To give you an example, I want to tell you about my patient Ben, who in his first interview with me said that he felt he needed to join a group, because all his life he had been frightened of groups. I was intrigued and impressed by this contradictory statement, also because it does not happen often that a patient arrives with the expressed wish for group therapy. Ben told me that he had had a difficult relationship with his mother and always had felt rejected by her. In addition, he was a younger sibling to a group of siblings much older, who all resented to have to look after this baby brother. They let him know how they felt, by avoiding him and making him feel small and unacceptable. When his father died, Ben was 11 years old. He felt totally abandoned, left to fight for himself and usually felt that he failed. As a result of this family life, Ben experienced any new group he encountered, may it be at school, work or privately, as a threat and tried to avoid it, because he assumed he would be treated similarly again.

He had noticed at school and later also in his work life, that he eventually found himself again and again in a group setting, where he felt excluded. Sooner or later this would become so intolerable that he felt forced to leave. While he had been lucky in one job, where he stayed for some years, he had been unable to tolerate the feelings of not belonging in any job since. At the latest workplace, after he thought one day that people had laughed about something he had not understood, he just walked out. The next day he did not feel able to go back, and so the next day after that, until in the end he did not return at all. He felt unable to face his colleagues and had never worked since. He said, he now needed a group to look at all of this, wishing to understand himself better.

I very much liked this man, who was so thoughtful and had such insights, but who also came across as very sad and certainly as lonely. I invited him to join my group and he did after three sessions with me. He benefited greatly from being in the group, where he found a place of rest and an emotional home for the first time in his life. The

group became an alternative family, that is, a new family for him, where he felt wanted and accepted and where he could ask for understanding and support. In turn, his capacity for thought and insight served his group siblings well. They appreciated his experience of life and his thoughtful way of dealing with his own and with their pain and suffering.

Group Analysis: its potency and strength

Group therapy can address similar issues as individual therapy, like relationship problems, depression or anxiety, however, the group situation is an excellent therapeutic medium for difficulties relating to social situations. In a group, the projection and transference scenario is wider and richer than in the individual setting, because there are more people available to use for that purpose. Transferences are distributed amongst many and they appear not only in relation to the therapist. The group conductor may well be a parental figure or acting as the super-ego, which arouses particular expectations, fears and wishes, but they are not the same for everybody in the group. The working through of projections and transferences, which are much more visible in the group setting, helps patients to understand better their internal object relations and current relationships. In the group the position or view of the therapist can be questioned and relativised by others, something that can never happen in individual therapy. For instance group members may support a fellow patient's opinion and challenge the thinking of the therapist. An event like this has enormous potential.

I still remember a situation, when my group supported me in challenging my group analyst. I was immensely surprised when I heard they also felt like I did and it was such a relief. It was a new experience for me that they spoke up on my behalf. Something like this is only possible in a group, because in contrast to individual work in a group others are present, and this brings sibling relationships and their power into view.

Now, sitting on the other side of the fence as a group analyst, I still find it striking, how much easier patients can take challenges or criticism from their fellow patients rather than from me as the conductor. Peer insights can be questioned or accepted with less difficulty that way and new ways of behaviour can be tried out amongst equals. This is, I believe, one of the reasons why in group analysis the conductor needs to learn to increasingly sit back and let the group do the

work. The conductor only needs to become active, when the group has got stuck in some way.

There is an additional area where groups appear to have an advantage. With its variety of personal backgrounds, including class, sexual orientation, ethnicity or culture, the group setting provides a rich tapestry of experience akin to that found in the wider social environment today. The encounter with diversity of this kind is especially important, if not essential, for the societies we live in, where multi-cultural groupings are becoming more and more prevalent. Our current multi-cultural groupings and societies come with a high potential for insecurity, because they share a smaller common ground due to the underlying differences and cultural variations, which generate a greater general base of anxiety and aggression (Scholz, 2004). However, all these differences need to be recognised, addressed and thought about in a given society, and certainly in any therapy group. Deep and often unconscious mutual cultural deprecations will have to be acknowledged to foster mutual understanding and acceptance. The necessary process of recognition and acceptance in a group can throw light on the difficulties that are part and parcel of therapeutic work and the developmental process in general, and promotes a value system that embraces diversity and invites otherness.

Adult group membership

According to Winnicott (1958), there are family-groups for 2 to 5 year olds, gangs for latency children, agglomerates for adolescents, and in a somewhat provoking way, he says, that groups proper exist only in adult maturity. In his view, only as mature adults have we the capacity to participate in wider group activity and to engage freely with our environment, maintaining, shaping and modifying this environment itself through group membership. Winnicott says:

The adult who is mature is able to identify with the environment, and to take part in the establishment, and to make this identification without serious sacrifice of personal impulse. (1958: 102)

Most adults, he says, can achieve health only in a limited group, that is in their family or their immediate community, because those adults striving for the wider group may suffer ill health. The group analytic concepts of the foundation matrix, which varies from culture to culture and also contains deprecations of other cultures, as well as the international history and power relations (Scholz, 2003), offers an

explanation to understand this effect of joining the wider group. Every immigrant knows the experience of joining a new cultural environment, feeling a foreigner and having to adjust. I myself experienced this, and it took me a number of years to process and to recover from the experience of loss and alienation when moving from Berlin to London. In order to feel secure, we all need to belong to groups familiar to us, which separate us from, but also connect us with the wider community and society as a whole.

Adult group membership concerns our contribution to the environment in the widest sense and is strongly aligned with the notion of responsibility, a responsibility not necessarily in the sense of ‘duty’, but as an ‘ability to respond’. This links with the fact that adult maturity is also about the awareness of human destructiveness and suffering, and about the awareness of our capacity for reparation. It comprises the complex notion of ‘world citizenship’.

World citizenship represents an immense and rare achievement in the development of the individual, scarcely compatible with personal health or with freedom from the depressed mood. (Winnicott, 1958: 102)

The Green Movement and the numerous world-wide groups dealing with political and environmental concerns today embody this idea of ‘world citizenship’. ‘World citizenship’ has become a much more realistic possibility than 40 years ago, when Winnicott first wrote about it. Given the new communication systems, ‘world citizenship’ must be, I believe, a necessary objective for living in the twenty-first century. It includes, as Winnicott says, the ability to embrace more fully the depressed mood, something which is hardly avoidable, given the various man-made and natural disasters we experience or hear about daily on the news, like wars, flooding, earthquakes and so on..., and like the ash cloud which has hindered quite a number of delegates to attend these Study Days.

If groups are for adults only, it is no wonder that most people are frightened of them, because most people are not fully grown up, but stuck in the developmental process somewhere before adulthood.

Conclusion

I want to come back to the statement I made at the beginning, that following group analysis, people end up more mature, but not necessarily less neurotic. I certainly felt more mature when I left my analytical therapy group. One reason for this, I believe, is the fact that the

issues of authenticity and authority are so clearly stated in group analysis. If you cannot be authentic and learn to take possession of your own personal authority in a group, the other group members will sense this and challenge you. Later, as a group analyst, your patients also will sense this and challenge you, and if you do not stand firm, they will tear you to pieces. I believe, it takes more confidence to work with a group of eight patients, where you might for one or several sessions not know what is going on, than it takes working with one patient only, and quite a number of my colleagues have said they could not imagine working with a group. Patients in a group are not lying on the couch unable to see you, but sitting in a circle on a chair like you yourself and are constantly scrutinising you, your responses and your actions. It is not only frightening to be a patient in a group, it is also frightening to be the group's conductor.

To conclude, I want to pull the ideas together, which I have presented to you:

- groups are the natural environment for human beings
- groups are necessary for the development of human beings
- groups are frightening
- joining a group is experienced like 'attacks from all quarters and in all conceivable ways'
- a newcomer to a group needs a bond or alliance with the conductor
- fear of groups comes from a fear of early family experience
- groups address social difficulties
- in groups projections and transferences are visible and shared out
- in groups the therapist can be questioned and challenged by others
- groups emphasize sibling relationships
- groups provide diversity and differences
- groups can make you mature
- groups mean awareness of human destructiveness and suffering
- groups come with a depressed mood - or in other terms: the depressive position
- groups are 'for adults only'
- groups force you to be authentic and develop authority

It seems to me that this is an important and interesting collection of points. All these points underline my basic position that groups have enormous potential, which has not only therapeutic significance, but also social, political and environmental relevance. And it is my personal view that it is exactly this potential and the connotations and implications connected with it, which make group analytic treatment

a treatment of choice not only at the present point in time, but even more so also for the future of humanity.

Ó Amélie Noack
London, 6 May 2010

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Egatin Report

Report on the small group during the EGATIN Study Days in Vienna 16–17 April 2010

We had a truly European group composed of Portuguese, Russian, Croatian, Serbian, German, Greek, Dutch and Austrian members (I do hope I did not forget a nationality).

The two sessions were quite different from each other.

In the first session the group was looking for its topic and purpose. Some agreement could be reached to discuss mainly the presentations of the day, an agreement that was strikingly abandoned in the second session. The group agreed that the presentations and the general climate of the conference reflected a certain degree of uncertainty about our group-analytic position at the moment: How much change is needed, how are we to preserve our group-analytic identity while adapting to changing needs without giving up our essentials?

What are our essentials? To which degree can and should we accommodate to technical innovations like Mentalization-based Treatment? How far can new techniques be integrated? Is there a change in society and culture that endangers the way we can practice group-analysis? How can we achieve a better public appearance and regain lost territory in our diverse national health systems? We discussed these topics in some depth while staying quite impersonal towards each other. Personal experience was only fleetingly mentioned, often not taken up by other members of the group, and we kept groping for ideas without a great deal of interconnection.

The second session seemed less structured, but in a way more “group-analytic” as openness and confusion reigned but resulted in the fostering of improved connections within the group. We seemed to focus more on narcissistic and relational issues. We discussed our position in society and our felt lack of recognition by society. Did we need that? Is that inevitable in times of change? Can Psychoanalysis and Group-analysis expect much recognition or do we always “swim against the current?” One participant complained about the lack of getting to know each other as she was used to in other international contexts. After this, things got more personal, one colleague spoke about his experience with a group of psychotic patients, another colleague reported experience with a very difficult patient who managed to move from a long and painstaking individual therapy into the group to widen her experience with other people. The group became a bit confused but more thoughtful and self-reflective. We wondered whether we had bypassed a stage of getting to know each other before discussing more “objective” items and what was the purpose of these groups: to be a working group or more of an experiential group, if such a differentiation is possible at all?

Personal comments/reflections: to me the purpose of the group seemed somewhat unclear, this being also greatly caused by the very short duration of the group. The huge potential of members from different countries and group-analytic cultures was not used to the full – can it be used in such a setting? A personal experience from a congress about Object Relations came to my mind. We had so-called “affective learning groups” after each presentation. It was left to the group to choose their topic which varied finally from discussion of the presentations to very personal matters. Maybe to leave the frame open to whatever course the group might take as an explicit attitude could open up many different ways of development. In the last event it would be more “group-analytic” than to set up some working-group

objective. At the same time we could use the enormous potential of these albeit short meetings to get to know each other, explore common points and differences and reach new levels of connectedness.

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GAS/IGA Library Report

The IGA/GAS King's Fund Library Database went live in June, 2010, and in September the system suppliers, Softlink, upgraded our hosted database to a new, and better, server. Alert members may have noticed that the link url has changed: the GAS and IGA members' areas references have been updated.

I had thought to run a small competition, offering the first database user to find, and report to me, a typo, a small prize. But there are too many! Typos, I mean. This is regrettable, but I am afraid typos will occur, as I am amending and inputting a lot of data, notably into the abstract field. So – the prize would have been won by – the Librarian ! As I carry out literature searches on the database, I identify and correct the typos I find, so there will be progressively fewer. However if you do find typos, or anomalies, when using the database, please let me know, including the [see below] unique numerical ID of the record, so I can attend to it.

I reiterate the new importance of unique identifier – the ID number of the record / holding – this uniquely identifies this specific copy of the book. Where there is one copy the record and holding number are the same – where there is more than one copy, they have sequential numbers, or numbers with the addition of a letter. This number is important. It enables me to identify, amend the record, and loan, this specific copy of the title, this specific book. It is the basis of how the system works. I am working to add this number to the books: it will

be large and clear, in red, immediately inside the front cover. If you borrow a book, please look for the number: if it is there, please write it on the orange loan card. Not all books yet have these ID numbers, but eventually all will.

Please do visit the database, and have a look at the home page, which is not static: the basic library information remains the same [but if I needed, for instance, to vary opening hours, or to indicate an extended holiday closure, I would amend the ‘Opening Hours’ text], but the ‘Book of the Week’ section is changed regularly [if not every week], to highlight new items added to the Library.

I hope members will use the database, but I remain happy to conduct searches on it for library content on your behalf.

Elizabeth Nokes, IGA/GAS King’s Fund Librarian

David Clark Memorial Meeting

On Friday 21st May over a hundred people gathered at the Friends Meeting House in Cambridge to remember Dr David Clark, who died of pneumonia on 29th March 2010 at the age of 89. In keeping with David’s wishes, the meeting was a bit like a Quaker meeting, but was also a bit like a Large Group, or a Community Meeting. No music, but well-wishers gathered for an hour and three quarters to remember David and all that he achieved through a deeply and diversely creative life. Such was the breadth of contributions to the meeting that there was little time for quiet reflection, although we did manage to squeeze in two minutes of scheduled silence in the middle.

Reflections on David’s life were offered by family and friends, with some read out on behalf of people who could not be there. We started with some memories of his childhood and his love of the outdoors, which would continue all his life. We moved on to the influence of his time as an Army doctor during the Second World War (which he wrote about in “Descent into Conflict”), and how these difficult experiences contributed to his ethical principles and his understanding of human nature which he carried so effectively into his work as a psychiatrist. We heard about his early work as a doctor, including being asked to “look after” Dr Foulkes at the Maudsley,

and, how Foulkes' style of strong, but permissive and enquiring leadership, was to be another important influence on David. He applied for the job as Medical Superintendent at Fulbourn Hospital in Cambridge simply to get some interview experience, but was offered the job, accepted it, and made his life in Cambridge ever after.

We heard about what an inspirational figure David was as Medical Superintendent of Fulbourn Hospital, riding with the changing times to develop humane principles of social psychiatry, and writing about them. We heard about the atmosphere of courage and excitement from staff working with David as the doors of the asylum were unlocked and therapeutic communities established. We heard how David acted as an "umbrella", protecting and supporting staff as these radical changes were implemented. David's attitude seemed to be: "Go ahead and try it, and I'll support you." We heard how significant he was on the national scene, and how very involved he was with the development of the Association of Therapeutic Communities; he was its first Chairman when it emerged from some chaotic beginnings and became a Charity. He was active in the Group Analytic Society, and was Foulkes Lecturer in 1986.

There were other significant professional projects that David helped establish. We heard from staff of Glebe House, a Therapeutic Community for troubled young men, and from Winston House, a "half-way" house for psychiatric patients leaving the hospital - neither of these flourishing projects would have happened without David Clark. We also heard about other interests that David was busy with at the same time as all these professional developments. We heard about his experiences on Buddhist meditation retreats and his interest in yoga. He had a keen interest in spirituality, and whilst this had Buddhist and Quaker strands to it, he was also staunchly rationalist. We heard about his involvement with the University of the Third Age, where he ran groups with characteristically strong voice and clear opinions. We heard about his interest in gardening and wildlife, and, in particular, how he threw himself, physically and organisationally, into the conservation of Fleam Dyke, a four-mile long Anglo-Saxon earthwork near Fulbourn; it was the scene of many family picnics and David was given the particular responsibility of monitoring the rare junipers there.

We heard about many other aspects of David's busy life. He was involved in very many local committees. He was part of the "Creative Therapists Group", exploring and playing therapeutically until near his death. He was one of the main founders of Cambridge

Group Work, running an Introductory Course recognised by the Institute of Group Analysis, as well as many other workshops and group activities; he was also, however, quite prepared with Cambridge Group Work to stand up to the Institute of Group Analysis in London when he felt they were trying to control too much the way group work was developing locally in Cambridge.

There were also many hopes expressed that David's work should continue to be carried forward in some form - not necessarily by trying to recreate psychiatric experiments of the past, but in the spirit of humane and thoughtful endeavours to help people in these changed times. There has also been an annual lecture in Cambridge established in David's name for the past six years.

All these memories and tributes flowed through the meeting and helped to weave a very rich tapestry of one man's particularly varied and creative life. David's wife, Margaret Farrell, thanked people and said how there were things that even she had learnt about David from the huge variety of contributions. And, as a summary of the sense of loss felt by so many people connected with David from so many different directions, a long-time friend and colleague of David's from many committees and sociable evenings quoted a poem by the ancient Greek poet Callimachus (translated by William Johnson Cory) written about the death of his friend, the poet Heraclitus:

“They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead;
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed;
I wept, as I remembered, how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.”

Dan Jones

The Group-Analytic Society (London)

The Jane Abercrombie Prize 2011

This award was established in 1984 following Jane Abercrombie's death. At that time donations were made to establish a fund to award a monetary prize every three years at the Triennial European Symposium of the Group Analytic Society to an individual or a number of individuals who had undertaken noteworthy work in applying group-analysis in education, which was Jane Abercrombie's special interest. For the purposes of the award the term "education" is broadly applied.

All Society members and others who work in group-analysis are encouraged to submit details of work which they consider suitable for the award of the prize. It may be presented on paper, video, DVD, art form or a combination of these media. Interested persons should apply directly to the President at the Society address. Entries for consideration should be with the President by 16th May 2011. The Prize will be a cheque to the value of £1,000 Sterling. It will be announced and awarded at the London Symposium, August 2011.

Please contact **Gerda Winther**, President of GAS, if you wish to discuss a potential entry, or to recommend that the work of another person should be considered.

Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

May I take a few lines of this edition to apologise to Dr Hernandez-Tubert for incorrectly stating her name in my letter to you both, this in reply to her letter (see Contexts, June and December, 2009 editions), having confused it with that of her husband's? It was not as she had suggested a 'trick' on my part but an error: the names of her and her husband stand one above the other at the end of her letter as printed, announcing them joint authors of a book; they share half of their names. I stated in my letter that I wrote it "rushed and almost

unedited” (*Contexts*, Dec 2009). That her husband acted as translator for her also perhaps impressed my unconscious. My apologies are certainly due to her and are thus delivered. “To err is human; to forgive, divine” (Alexander Pope). Alternatively, “To err is human but to really foul things up you need a computer” (Farmers’ Almanac, 1978).

This single error brings forth a disproportionate reaction from the Doctor. Is it likely that she will receive solely academic responses to her piece when it is sent to the “International Newsletter” of the GAS, a publication that is non-academic in tone and intention? My own response was not only to her piece to the editors but also an expression of my own reaction to the series of four large groups in the Dublin symposium. I stated this clearly in my first paragraph. Are we to assume that her ideology is more “fit for purpose” while any other ideologies just don’t fit the bill?

If the Doctor endorses M. Pines’ view “to let the conference speak for itself” then is it not necessary to refrain from interventions that are in any way lengthy, with 90 minutes per session and 500+ voices seeking expression? I certainly do not expect it to speak for my self alone as she impertinently asserts –is this not a charge that can be made against all? I have as much right as her to influence and say things in such a group as any other member. That I am also accused of “feeling...manipulation and violence are legitimate” (*Contexts*, June 2010, p 55) is absurd given the circumstances; it is also an accusation that is close to libellous. And anyway how does she know what I or anyone else is feeling?

This leaves the question of how to respond to what the doctor herself explains was a prepared intervention at the second group? Would the word “manipulation” describe what Dr Hernandez-Tubert set about achieving in this conscious way? After the first session she tells us;

“As I planned it, I thought: ‘They can only cut down someone’s head if she allows it, and it shall not be mine, though they will certainly try’”. (*Contexts*, June 2009, p 28).

This quotation contains (1) the expectation of violence, then (2) the avoiding of that violence and (3) a hint of the likelihood of someone else receiving it. This was enacted as a melo-dramatic, centre-stage, upstanding performance in the second session. Then, following her planned act, she assumes the full mantle of judge to the group’s apparent reaction, as though she had no part in rousing it. It is disingenuous at the least and cynical at worst to act in such a way, to

establish circumstances she plans will achieve a certain reaction and then, in print, exclaiming the equivalent of “Ah-ha! So you react just as I thought!” Isn’t it more likely that the group sensed the trick involved and was outraged at an action it didn’t fully understand but knew to be lacking in authenticity? What is the academic line on entrapment?

How is it that Dr Hernandez-Tubert believes that she may assert her ideology in such a gathering yet when another and urgent voice (for a very short amount of time) interrupts to suggest that something else was seeking expression at that particular moment - that ending and departure were being avoided - that interruption is labelled by the doctor as a reprehensible action commensurate with “manipulation and violence”? Perhaps she had not planned for any interruptions, was not aware that such things can happen in groups?

Kevin Power

IGA/GAS Film Group

All films are shown at The Institute of Group Analysis, 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY (020 7431 2693).

Friday evenings monthly 7.30pm – 10.30pm (except 15th July 2011, which has a 7pm start).

Everyone welcome.

10th December 2010. Looking for Eric. Directed by Ken Loach (UK 2009). Set in Manchester, this is a film about a man in crisis, who turns for help to his football hero – the iconic Cantona, who luckily, also specialises in philosophy. Discussion led by Jeremy Vincent, humanistic counsellor and therapist, training at the London Centre for Psychotherapy.

14th January 2011. Precious. Directed by Lee Daniels (US 2009). A story of multiple abuse and a kind of redemption, from the book, Push by Sapphire. The film is set amongst the downside of the American dream. It has won Oscars for Mo’Nique and for the screenplay. Discussion led by Dreda Say Mitchell, crime writer, broadcaster and

education consultant, winner of the CWA John Creasey Dagger award and author of the recent ‘Gangster Girl’, the fourth in her quartet of thrillers.

18th February 2011. Live Flesh. Directed by Pedro Almodovar (Spain 1997). Freely adapted from the book by Ruth Rendell, the film takes us into a world of hatred, obsessive jealousy and revenge. A psychological thriller from the Spanish auteur. Discussion led by Dr Maria-Jose Blanco , lecturer in 20th Century Spanish Literature at Kings College, London. She uses film in her teaching and has a particular interest in the films of Almodovar.

18th March 2011. My Father My Lord. Directed by David Volach (Israel 2007). A prize winning chamber piece about family life and challenges to faith within an orthodox community in Jerusalem. Discussion led by Dr Morris Nitsun , clinical psychologist, organisational consultant, training group analyst and author of ‘The Group As Object of Desire’ and ‘The Anti-group’.

Request for Foulkes Letters and Documents for Society Archives

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

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

Group_Analytic Society
102 Belsize Road
London NW3 5BB
Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6611
Fax: +44 (0)20 7443 9576
e-mail: admin@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk

Events

Announcing

THE FIFTEENTH G.A.S. TRIENNIAL EUROPEAN

GROUP-ANALYTIC SYMPOSIUM

CULTURES, CONFLICT AND CREATIVITY...

which will take place at

**GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE, in
NEW CROSS, LONDON, UK
AUGUST 29TH – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2011**

*The event is being organised by
THE GROUP-ANALYTIC SOCIETY (LONDON).
Symposium Sub-Committee Chairman: Kevin Power*

Group-analysis seeks to understand the many facets of culture. An analytic group has a culture, and so does a family, an organisation, a community and a society. We live in a time when cultures are increasingly interconnected while also striving for separateness to preserve identity. Most cultures are anxious about the global economy, climate change, and how to live together in the context of continuing wars, genocide and terrorism. Not only must we work with our personal conflicts but also with those that arise in interpersonal relationships, in organisations, and within and between societies and nations. How can the creativity of group-analysis respond to and work with this complex matrix of cultures and conflict?

16th Triennial European Symposium in Group Analysis 2014

Invitation to Tender for this prestigious event in Group Analysis and central event in the Calendar of the Group Analytic Society (London)

*This is an invitation for Group Analytic Societies/ Institutes from
all over Europe to tender for the 16th European Symposium in
Group Analysis to take place in 2014.*

*Soon the 15th European Group Analytic Symposium will be held in
London August 29th-September 2nd, 2011. It is the central event of
the Group Analytic Society (London). The Dublin event in 2008
drew over 550 participants and London is planning for 600 group
analysts and other professionals interested in group psychotherapy.
It is intended to provide an extended period of time in order to meet
and share theory, practice and experiential components, as well as
to meet and socialise with old friends and colleagues, to make new
acquaintances and to be inspired in one's work with groups.*

*The European Symposium has been held every third year since
1970, where the first took place in Estoril, Portugal. The tradition is
to hold it in a different part of Europe each time. Among other
places it has been held are Oxford (UK), Heidelberg (Germany),
Copenhagen (Denmark), Budapest (Hungary), Bologna (Italy),
Molde (Norway) and lately Dublin (Ireland). It is a joint
venture between the local Society/Institute and the Group
Analytic Society, London.*

The application should give information about:

- Responsible chairperson*
 - Responsible local organisation*
 - Venue description*
 - Accommodation*
 - Travel information and access*
 - Preliminary working title*
 - Preliminary realistic budget*
-

*For further information and guidelines about the organisation,
economics and responsibilities*

Please contact the Society's e-mail address:

groupanalytic.society@virgin.net

*Applications should be addressed to the President of GAS
(London) either by post or e-mail*

and be at the Society Office by Thursday 17th March 2011

Gerda Winther, President

Information about Conference Accommodation in London and Donations to the Society

Please see the GAS Website at:

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

