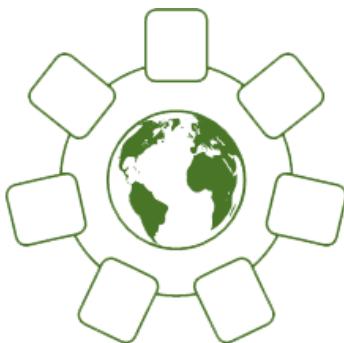


Group-Analytic Contexts

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**THE GROUP-ANALYTIC SOCIETY
International**

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Editorial

On the GASi forum recently there was a thread entitled ‘acronyms’, in particular the culturally coded acronyms inaccessible to the outsider. It got me thinking about our very own acronym ‘GASI’ and what it reveals about us. While any link between GAS and another important symbol of ours, the ‘ring of fire’ (actually, I much prefer gas to electric), is probably completely unintentional and incidental, it is, nonetheless, interesting how we operate under a name calling to mind a combustible power source which quietly facilitates and pollutes our everyday lives and comes from deep underground. The journey from GAS, through GAS (London) to GASi has been a long and complicated one. As an acronym we now sound less combustible and more....bubbly! But what is our acronym exactly? Are we GASI? Or are we GASi? In this very publication both versions appear. The question of whether the word ‘international’ is represented using upper case ‘I’ or lower case ‘i’ may seem a minor point, but we do need to ask ourselves why is there this confusion. Actually, I’ve been thinking about these issues recently while discussing the new designs for our Society’s website, currently being produced by the Brazilian, Barcelona based, designer Andre Pessoa. Andre’s view is that visually at least, GASI is too ‘shouty’ and unwelcoming and that GASi is just plain confused. He proposes ‘gasi’, both in line with the lower case used on the front page of the Journal and because it is friendlier and more welcoming, in particular to new visitors to the website who may be thinking of joining us. Our discussion made me think of Pat de Maré’s idea of talking ‘on the level’ as well as the key concept of the leaderless group, so central to group analysis. We are all lower case now!

Is our struggle to know what to do with the word ‘international’ communicating something important about the 2011 transition from GAS (London) to GAS International? This extremely rich issue of *Group Analytic Contexts*, which includes reports from a very diverse range of events in the group analytic world, addresses some of these concerns. Earl Hopper lets us in to some of his thinking, both about the Society and its history as well as the Foulkes Study Day large group which he conducted at the Royal College of Physicians in May this year. Sue Einhorn, Robi Friedman and David Glyn give us their responses to Earl’s ‘recollections’.

A very acrimonious acronym of sorts, Brexit, which has not long since entered our lexicon, is present here in three pieces, two from the UK and one from Israel. The UK referendum result reminds

us that while the group analytic society has become more of an outward looking international body, the UK itself as a whole seems to have moved to become more inward looking. I think there is a linked issue here, which is the absence (post GASi and post BAGP) of a British representative body within the field of group psychotherapy.

The very detailed and personal reports from the workshops in Gonen (Israel) and Kobarid (Slovenia) bring us very close to the experiences themselves. As does Susanne Vosmer's report on her attendance at a dream workshop conducted by Robi Friedman. This issue also includes a brief taste of the latest gathering of WPF trained group psychotherapists in a 'Wiltshire Wonderland'.

In addition, I'm very pleased to include two clinical papers. One is a fascinating report on a piece of research conducted in a North Glasgow NHS psychotherapy department, on the central concern, of importance to us all, of what do patients seek help (psychodynamic psychotherapy including GA) for. The other comes from Portugal and describes the evolution of an analytic group, set up in the mental health service of a general hospital, for people serving suspended sentences.

And finally, as if all the above wasn't enough, there's a first encounter with Mike Tait's 'psy-fi' tale, 'The Visitors'. It's a story of "indiscriminate compassion and relentless curiosity" and will be serialised over the next year, exclusively in *Contexts*.

Peter Zelaskowski

President's Foreword

I am writing to you at the end of a very busy period in which we have witnessed an increasingly frequent number of national and international disturbances. This is very worrying and upsetting and we think of our colleagues and members in France, USA, Turkey, UK, Germany, Israel and many other places where there is unrest, turmoil and uncertainty.

I wanted to convey that we are with you. I repeatedly hear and see a lot of shared concern in the Group Analytic Society for others. Can we stay together in the midst of this? We are united all over Europe and beyond in our interest in Group Analysis, in our will to exchange and learn from each other. We want to grow together, have the possibility to use our international connectedness to understand the progress others are making, to use Polyphony to be better conductors. The way I would like to think about it is that Group Analytic togetherness does not threaten the local Group Analysts and their Institutions but rather contributes to their potential enrichment. The internationality of the Group Analytic Society provides an opportunity to stand together against the threats of the future.

On a more positive note and as witness to our preparedness to meet and convene I can report on the success of many ventures over the past three months. The 40th Anniversary Foulkes Lecture in May was as always a very special occasion with our colleagues from around the world: from Japan to Australia and USA and many countries in-between. Thank you for your responses to the on-line Evaluation. Sue Einhorn, Chair of the Scientific Committee will be writing to you with a synopsis of your responses. We look forward to seeing you all next year at the 41st Foulkes Lecture in London.

We have many events in which group analysts interact and learn together. Only to mention the big ones: we held a Group Analytic meeting in Israel in May and I have just returned from the 3rd Summer School in Athens, where almost a hundred of mostly young colleagues were together for four full days. We have countless encounters all over and we are proud to go for more still.

The Quarterly Members Group met in London on 9th July and as always was well attended by our national and international members. This is proving to be a very valuable space for creative thought and reflection.

In a joint venture between GASI and the IGA UK, Sue Einhorn, Frances Griffiths, Peter Wilson and Sarah Tucker convened a Large Group on Friday 15th July to think about the impact on Brexit

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on the UK and beyond. This event was a part of the IGA “JOIN the DEBATE” series and attracted a large number of members and student members. We were also delighted to be joined by two GASi Honorary Members: Helena Klimova, from Prague and Liesel Hearst from London.

Our next international meeting of GASi from Thursday 10th November to Saturday 12th November 2016 will be held in Aarhus in Denmark and convened by Kristian Valbak and his colleagues. Our AGM will be held on the evening of Friday 11th November. We hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend. We will co-opt a co-chaired new Honorary Treasurer at this meeting to replace Frances Griffiths who is stepping down after almost four years to take over as Chair of the IGA, UK. We hope the co-chairs will be able to shadow Frances and learn the ropes between September and November 2016.

Last but not least, we have, after almost 10 years, finally accepted the need to raise our membership fees by 10%. We hope you can understand that at this point we need to keep up with prices in order to keep functioning.

I would like to wish you all a fruitful autumn and we hope that it might be peaceful too, although this is not how the world looks now.

Dr Robi Friedman
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****ANNOUNCEMENT****
GASi Annual General Meeting 2016
Friday 11th November, 7.15 – 8.45pm
Aarhus, Denmark
During the Autumn Workshop

Be a Contexts Writer!

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

Contexts welcomes contributions from GAS members and non-members on a variety of topics: Have you run or attended a group-analytic or group psychotherapy workshop? Are you involved in a group-analytic or group psychotherapy project that others might want to learn about? Would you like to share your ideas or professional concerns with a wide range of colleagues? If so, send us an article for publication by post, e-mail, or fax. Articles submitted for publication should be between 500 and 5,000 words long, or between one and ten A4 pages. Writing for Contexts is an ideal opportunity to begin your professional writing career with something that is informal, even witty or funny, a short piece that is a report of an event, a report about practice, a review of a book or film, a reply to an earlier article published here, or stray thoughts that you have managed to capture on paper. Give it a go!

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

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

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

Please don’t worry about language, grammar and the organisation of your piece. We, as editors, receive many pieces from non-English speaking countries and it is our job to work with you to create a piece of writing that is grammatical and reads well in English. This

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help also extends to English speakers who may need help and advice about the coherence and organisation of a piece of work.

Writing for Contexts is an ideal opportunity to begin your professional writing career with something that is informal, even witty or funny, a short piece that is a report of an event, a report about practice, a review of a book or film, or stray thoughts that you have managed to capture on paper. Give it a go!

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

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

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GASi New Members

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Ms Evelyn Body

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Lives in rural Somerset in SW England and is nearing the end of group analytic training with Group Analysis SW in Bristol. For over 10 years now has worked as a mental health occupational therapist for the NHS in Bath. Before that worked as a sculptor and raised her children. Is currently writing her clinical paper which concerns looking at the physical body in the group. Is interested in an embodied contemplative dynamic in the practise of group analysis. Believes she has the right surname for this.

Mr Cosmin Chita

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Born in Romania 1970. Studied Medicine in Klausenburg (Romania) and Homburg/Saar (Germany). Specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy since 2007. Senior psychiatrist at the Psychiatric Service Emmental since 2015, formerly in own practice in Saarbrücken (Germany). Working actually with inpatients groups and as Supervisor for care staff. Since 2013 student member of SGAZ (Seminar für Gruppenanalyse Zürich). Sometimes writes poetry and likes good books, good wine and fancy clothes.

Mrs Maria Tsimpinou

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Recently became a member of the Society. Born in Salonica but raised in Athens where she has lived since childhood. Graduated from the University of Derby (BSc Honours in Applied Psychology) with 1st and completed a course in Systemic Therapy at the Hellenic Kapodistrian University with a 1st. This year completed the third year as a trainee at the Hellenic Organisation of Psychotherapy and

Education in Group Analysis (HOPE IN GA), where she feels they give her the space and the cause to broaden her "Group Horizons". Graduate member of the BPS where granted Chartered membership. Working at the Social Psychiatry Foundation's Day Center where she supports cancer patients and their families.

Mrs Sharon Sagi-Berg

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Experienced psychotherapist and co-owner of 'Apriori Organizational Consultants'. Was accredited as advanced level Schema Therapist, supervisor and trainer with the ISST (International Society of Schema Therapy) and is a graduate and member of the Israeli Institute of Group Analysis. An individual and group therapist, Sharon has conducted a long term analytic group in a day care unit in Be'er yaacov mental hospital and has an analytic group in private practice. For five years Sharon was the head of the 'Dynamic Group conductors' Program in Telem Institute. As part of her social worldview Sharon was one of the founders of Public Trust NGO (established in 2006 to promote the norms of fairness in the Israeli market).

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Is a Group Psychotherapist and Organization Consultant M.Sc (Group Analytic Psychotherapy). Ph.D., IGAS., ICP. She runs a weekly therapy group in Willow Tree Child and Family Centre,

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Current posts include; NHS at Enfield Complex Care Team (Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust) as a Psychological Therapist with specialist responsibility for the group programme and group analytic psychotherapy; Manager of the Haringey Recovery Service part of the Haringey Drug and Alcohol Recovery Partnership

between BEH NHS Trust, St Mungo's and HAGA; Group Reflective Facilitator for Certificate and Diploma students on the Counselling and Psychotherapy Training at Enfield Counselling Service. Previous experience in the third sector and NHS with a special interest in staff reflective practice groups and clinical supervision.

Mrs Angeliki Passia

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Mr Marcus Price

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Has spent most of his career in nursing and psychotherapy. Currently runs reflective groups at an NHS medium secure hospital and has a private psychotherapy practice in Dartford, Kent, UK. A cricketing all-rounder - sees himself as a psychotherapy all-rounder too, valuing both individual and group analytic work. Interest in GASI has developed from attending shadow workshops and dream groups.

Dr Christopher John Holman

York, UK

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Trained as a Psychiatrist and as a Group Analyst. About 2 years ago retired from work as a Consultant Psychiatrist at the Retreat in York having worked there for over 20 years, where he was also Medical Director. Personal clinical commitment was mainly to a residential Therapeutic Community for women with Personality Disorder, which set up and ran for most of time at The Retreat. Was the Chair of the Association of Therapeutic Communities (ATC) and then the Consortium for Therapeutic Communities (TCTC). Remains Chair of the Therapeutic Communities Accreditation Panel at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Runs an out-patient Analytic Group. Continues to offer supervision to teams and individuals, working in various settings with both adults and adolescents, and does some teaching. Has given up Licence to Practice as a Doctor, but is still registered with the GMC, and also with the UKCP.

ASSOCIATE Members

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ANNOUNCEMENT

GASi Annual General Meeting 2016

Friday 11th November, 7.15 – 8.45pm

Aarhus, Denmark

The Autumn Workshop of
The Group Analytic Society International
in cooperation with
The Institute of Group Analysis in Aarhus

Group Analytic Psychotherapy in the Mental
Health Service and the Community.
Working with the Difficult Patient

&

GASI Annual General Meeting

11-12 November, 2016 in Aarhus, Denmark

Starts Friday 09.30, ends late Saturday with included Gala Dinner



Venue:

Auditorium & Vandrehallen

Aarhus University Hospital, Risskov

Skovagervej 2,

8240 Risskov



IGA-Aarhus

Recollections of the Large Group at the Foulkes Weekend in May 2016

By Earl Hopper

I would like to share some of my recollections of my experience of the Large Group at the Foulkes Weekend in May 2016, from my point of view as the convenor of it. Of course, I also have a point of view as a member of the audience at the Lecture, a participant in the Study Day, and as a member of the Group Analytic Society International. Inevitably, these points of view are intertwined, although I will try to keep them separate for this self-assigned task.

My purpose in writing is threefold: to provide a kind of report on the Large Group as such in the context of the Weekend in the context of GASI in the context of the Society, etc.; to suggest that the life of the Society needs more discussion and debate than is possible in our brief annual general meetings; and to suggest that the dynamic administration of this important annual event needs attention. I hope that the Management Committee takes notice of what was felt and said in our Large Group. I accept, of course, that the interpretation of all this is “negotiable”.

I- The dynamics of the Study Day and the Large Group were undoubtedly influenced by the Lecturer himself and by the contents of the Lecture. Therefore, I will start with a few thoughts about them.

Haim Weinberg is an Israeli group analyst who lives in California. He and our President Robi Friedman acknowledged their special friendship in Robi's Introduction to Haim's Lecture. Haim and I have collaborated in editing a series of books about the social unconscious. He has become prominent through his many publications and presentations, and as the Convenor or Moderator of his own GP-ListServe, which was one of the first – if not the first – such Forum. He qualified in Group Analysis through Block Training in Israel, helped found the IIGA, and has been especially active in the IAGP and in AGPA. In other words, he is both one of us and different from us, both an insider and an outsider. His location in our matrix is entirely unclear. I personally can identify with his somewhat marginal position, which carries both burdens and benefits.

With respect to the Lecture itself, the theme of groups as cracked or leaky containers is interesting, and the questions asked in the Lecture about such groups warrant our consideration. However, I would suggest that groups connote unconsciously the mind and body

of the Mother. The perfection of the maternal mind and body depends on its optimal leakage and leakiness, one element of which is tears and crying. Thus, it can be argued that all groups are cracked or leaky containers. The participants in them will always need holding and containing in order to manage their grief, which tends to be re-awakened in connection with personal and collective regression. This is one reason why we need strong as well as nurturing leadership.

In the study of groups, it is important to appreciate the concept of *open systems* (Hopper, 2003). The concept of an open system is at the core of the field theory of the social unconscious (Hopper & Weinberg, 2016). Persons, groups, organisations and societies are open social systems, in which persons and their groupings are in varying degrees interdependent and overlapping. Whereas it is helpful to discuss open social systems in terms of analogies, it is misleading to do so in terms of homologies: open social systems are *like* cracked containers, but they are not the same as cracked containers. For example, open social systems can be repaired and changed through continuing political process based on cooperation as well as conflict in the service of the ability and willingness to exercise the transcendent imagination.

There are many differences between group analysis as a clinical project, and group analysis as “group work”, which may or may not be applied group analysis. Most of the examples in the Lecture concerned group work in the broadest sense. However, it is hard enough to know if and when clinical group analysis “works” in alleviating emotional suffering, let alone if and when group work “works”, and why. This is a matter of the specification of therapeutic and developmental goals, which might be relevant in the administration of systems of health care, but which in analytical work is virtually an oxymoron.

Much else can be said about Haim’s Lecture. It is important to recognise that although she was tactful in the way that she expressed herself, Gerda Winther’s “Response” was in fact critical of the Lecture. Carla Penna’s and Marina Mojovic’s “Discussion(s)” were also critical of the Lecture, but in an implicit manner, not engaging with the material as much as adding to it. Clearly there is a degree of confusion in what the SPC asks from these contributions. During the past few years, many participants gossip that they are not helped to engage with the contents of the Lecture, and the Lecturers have complained informally that they feel that their work has not been “met”. Neither the Lecture, the Response, nor the Discussion(s) was addressed during the Median Groups. From what I experienced in the

Median Group in which I participated, and from what I heard about the other Median Groups, participants more less “ignored” all of the formal input.

The introduction of a brief Social Dreaming Event hosted by Gila Ofer was potentially very useful, but I would argue that it was too brief to be of much value in deepening our understanding of what we heard on Friday night. This Social Dreaming Event might even have limited our later intellectual and cognitive work, despite its intention to the contrary. Nonetheless, I would ask why we should have a Social Dreaming Event in addition to Median Groups and then a Large Group? What are the conscious and especially the unconscious intentions of the SPC in organising such a very brief event for participants who are still seated as an audience?

II. It is important to put on record some aspects of the dynamic administration of the event. The Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee omitted my name from the initial promotional material as the Convenor of the Large Group. She apologised to me for her oversight, which I accepted. In retrospect I can see that we should have discussed this further, because this oversight was followed by a much more serious one. Although the Large Group was originally scheduled from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., it was re-scheduled from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. This was not drawn formally to our attention, and not explicitly to mine. On the day, some bits of paper had one time, and other bits the other time. Some people assumed that if the Group were to end at 5:15 p.m., it must be scheduled to start at 3:45 p.m.; and if it were to start at 4:00 p.m., it must be scheduled to end at 5:30 p.m. (This oversight is sufficient to explain the fact that although hardly anyone was present at 3:45 p.m., almost everyone came into the room a few minutes before 4:00 p.m.) Moreover, while I was in the process of trying to formulate certain observations and interpretations of various emergent processes, the Group was ended by the Chair of the SPC’s standing up at 5:15 p.m. in order to make an announcement about various important events during the coming 15 months. Several participants came up to me afterwards and said that they thought that they had come into the room on time, and were surprised that the Group ended so precipitously at what they thought was fifteen minutes too soon. I would add that during the preceding break the Chair and I agreed that I would end the group at 5:30 p.m., in effect re-confirming the original time, but would ask people to stay for a few minutes in order to hear certain announcements.

If I carried a degree of hurt feelings into the Group, I certainly

carried a degree of anger when I left it. I struggled not to take all this personally, but to understand it systemically and group analytically. Although I may have misunderstood the arrangements, this “attack” from the Management Committee on the boundaries of the group was not an isolated incident. Something similar happened in the preceding Foulkes Lecture Study Day and in the one before that.

What dynamics of GASI and of the Management Committee are reflected in the dynamics of this insignia event? Are there problems in the Management Committee that need to be addressed by the Society as a whole? Was the Referendum in Britain casting its shadow? What aspects of the governance of our wider contextual societies are reflected in the governance of GASI? I very strongly suspect that some aspects of the answers to these questions can be found in our experience of the dynamics of the Large Group, which in part involved an unconscious attempt to answer such questions. I would like to stress here that I feel very well disposed towards the Committee and the individual members of it, some of whom I regard as personal friends.

III. (i) In general terms the main themes in our Large Group involved envy and its vicissitudes, as a defence against feelings of helplessness and shame, which could not be experienced consciously, and, therefore, discussed. This envy seemed to be free floating in search of an object who could be attacked and spoiled in an annihilating and shaming manner. This was not merely a matter of the envy of our officers. Other objects were involved, such as formal qualifications, amount of clinical experience, intellectual productivity, public recognition, being an insider, etc.

In my opinion, the underlying helplessness and shame against which such envy functions as a defence or protection stems from the differentiation of GASI from the IGA (London) and from EGATIN, the first of these having become an “interest” organisation, and the latter two, the “location” of training and certification in Group Analysis. The comparison between the value of block training with the value of continuous long term training remains an important determinant of professional self-esteem, especially among colleagues who have not also trained as psychoanalytical psychotherapists.

Another source of helplessness and shame is the unresolved conflicts associated with boundary breaking in clinical work and in training work by senior colleagues. Secrets and lies have impeded more public discussion of the consequences of these ethical violations. Such issues seep into the conferences and workshops sponsored by

our contextual organisations.

The main fissure or potential fissure between those in the UK who qualified at the IGA and those in the UK who did not is becoming crystallised in our organisational relations. However, the dynamics of this issue are displaced into the dynamics of the relations between colleagues from England and colleagues from other countries, perhaps especially from Israel. (It is worth noting that during the Group a woman from Israel moved from an outer circle to sit next to me in the inner circle). Tensions between Israeli colleagues and non-Israeli colleagues are often experienced as tensions between Jews and non-Jews, and sometimes vice versa.

The Group could not risk the violence that might follow from the exploration of aggressive and competitive feelings in general. Not only are such feelings perceived to be a threat to our cohesion, but they are also experienced in terms of the death of Foulkes within a group of senior colleagues under circumstances which are both romanticised and mystified. This scenic configuration is used by colleagues who were not actually present in this “primal group” but who have nonetheless become witnesses to it, as a collective screen memory against other traumatic events, both within GASI and in Europe at large. The fear of the consequences of murderous rage is hard to manage when a death in the context of such rage has actually happened, especially when it is the Father himself who was “murdered”.

This has been coloured by the more recent collapse of Kevin Power in a group in Belgrade, and his subsequent hospitalisation, in the context of a battle with Robi concerning boundary violations and matters of authority, power and privilege (in addition to matters which are, I presume, of a more personal nature). This particular battle may or may not have anything to do with the social identities of these two colleagues, but there is chronic gossip within GASI that this battle reflected relations between England and Israel, if not between Christians and Jews, as well as relations between those who have qualified at EGATIN organisations and those who have not, especially in England.

Kevin was not present in the Large Group. However, he may have been more socio-psychologically present in his absence than if he had been present in his corporality. Certainly Kevin was very active in the Forum during the days before the Event, objecting to many aspects of its administration, especially the selection of its “elitist” venue. Certainly GASI is still dealing with the aftermath of the struggles between Kevin, as the Chair of the LOC, and John

Schlapobersky, as the Chair of the SPC, in the organisation of the Symposium in London in 2011. Is it possible that Kevin's objections to the venue were heard as an objection to other aspects of the event?

It was likely that as the Convenor, I was being tested: would I collapse under this aggressive pressure? I would suggest that I was also being "tested" in terms of various aspects of my identity: American, Jew, an associate of Haim's and of Robi's, a psychoanalyst as well as a group analyst, active internationally, the Editor of NILGA, etc. Were more personal attributes also involved? It is hard for me to imagine otherwise.

During the Group it occurred to me that it is not only the Breast and the Mother who can be split. At the present time GASI has several Fathers. However, GASI would seem to have a far greater number of brothers than it does fathers. Under these circumstances the role of sisters is particularly important, especially in the absence of a Mother. It is possible that the Society has not yet come to terms with the rebellion against Luisa Brunori, and the eventual retirement of Gerda Winther preceding the election of Robi.

(ii) During the Large Group, I hesitated to offer a full observation and interpretation of these processes for several reasons. Many senior colleagues were present; they could have brought some of this to our attention. I did not want to be experienced as too "intellectual" and too "provocative". I was not clear in my own mind whether anti-Jewish and/or anti-Israeli sentiment had been reawakened, and how this might be connected with the feelings of participants from Ireland towards the English, and vice versa, which would be a kind of "parallel process" within the Group.

References to the bandstand in Regents Park and to the musicians from The Royal Green Jackets in it who were murdered in a terrorist attack by the IRA, "meant" that those of us who were in the central circle of the Large Group, or in other words in the Body and Mind of the Mother, if not in her Womb and Breast, were in danger of envious attacks from those who felt that they were not in the inner circle. Many participants in the Group knew that I (Hopper, 2003) had written about this terrorist attack in Regents Park. The Israelis who were present in the Group heard me speak about it when I (Hopper, 2015) was in Israel a year before in a provocative Lecture that focused on the Land of Israel as the maternal body. They also knew that in a controversial article about the social unconscious of Jews in Israel, Weinberg (2009) had referred to the female body of the Land of Israel.

In effect, we were being warned to refrain from "making

music”, in the context of the mind and body of the mother, and from putting ourselves at the very centre of her vitality. We were being attacked as a creative ensemble of male musicians, perhaps as a band of brothers involved in the enactment of a homosexual primal scene from which the group sisters felt excluded.

We also experienced the “silent witness” phenomenon (which always reminds me of Agatha Christie’s *Silent Witness* and the TV series “Silent Witness” in which the witness is a corpse). The roles of Silent Passive Witness and Silent Active Witness are typical of large groups. The participants in the back row stood up in order to see and hear better. I thought to myself that we had a new kind of Greek chorus.

(iii) During the Group, I found myself thinking about Lionel Kreeger’s (1992) Foulkes Lecture on envy pre-emption. This was my way of seeking his help with my own anxieties about my experience of being envied in the Group, perhaps turning to a professional Father for help in my relations with the Mother Group and Sibling participants.

I also understood this to mean that the Group was trying in various ways to pre-empt their own envy, both as subjects and objects of it. One way of pre-empting envy was to project the “inside” into and onto the “outside”, which in this context included the surrounding walls of the room, the beautiful, strong and protected bookcases and their supporting shelves, the leather-bound books themselves, the portraits and sculptures of famous physicians who contributed so much to our wellbeing, despite their inevitable mistakes of the day, etc. This cracked or perhaps rent or ruptured container, to use an idea presented in the Lecture, could hardly be separated from the context of the history of England which includes its glories as well as its traumas, including those which it has inflicted on others, such as the Irish, the Israelis, the Americans, etc., who were represented in the key sub-groups within the Large Group. In fact, in the Forum preceding the Foulkes Lecture several colleagues gave these social trauma as one of the reasons why they had misgivings about using this venerable medical building as the venue for our event. They understood the choice of venue as a complex political gesture, albeit an unconscious one.

Projecting objects of envy into the environment of the Group, however, prevented attempts to acknowledge envious feelings within the Group, to understand them, and to work them through. These projections were based on splitting the “environmental mother” from the object mother, the former having been projected into the “physical”

surroundings, and the latter into the inner circle of the Group. These projections also involved a splitting of the father of science and books from the mother of music and more intimate forms of holding and containing. It is possible that as an expression of envy and splitting, the Group oscillated between idealisation and denigration. Moreover, as an object of splitting envy, it was difficult for me to stay in touch with both the more intellectual and interpretive functions of my role, and the more facilitating and protective functions of it, and with both sides of myself within the role.

(iv) Another way through which we tried to pre-empt envy was to enclose the primary objects of it, which included particular persons as well as sub-groups, in various kinds of envelopes. There was at least one reference to the leather covers of the books on the surrounding shelves.¹ In a way this involved the withdrawal of projections into the

¹ I would like to summarise the remarks of a colleague with whom I discussed these processes, mainly as a debriefing consultation, which is my habit after I convene a Large Group. He wrote that implicitly there is an association to my comment about 'leather-bound' books to leather binding or perhaps leather straps. What is lost but relevant here is that the *Akeda* is a reminder/remainder of the binding between father and son in the sense that although Abraham did not sacrifice Isaak, his hands were (and remained) 'bound' due to his binding to God. From this perspective there is a binding between father and son that runs parallel to maternal attachments. An appreciation of this binding and bonding is inherent in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, but neglected in that of Klein, Bowlby and Winnicott. 'The Father or worse' ('Le père ou pire') said Lacan. It was Peter Blos who acknowledged the existence of a pre-oedipal relation between father and son, centering around a longing which is neither homosexual nor murderously competitive, which Freud repeatedly acknowledged. Goethe captured this in his poem of the *Erlkönig*, at least the title of which you Earl must surely have heard. It seems that in our culture today we are no longer capable of acknowledging and valuing the special bond/binding between father and son. This has become an *anathema*, presumably either because it stirs so much female protest and envy of it, or because it is a form of protection against such protest and envy. Similar ideas are expressed by Friedman (In Press).

environment and turning them into the Group. These projected envelopes were like protective contraceptive devices, etc, which blocked authentic contact and conception. In terms of part-objects, such envelopes included foreskin associated with vaginal labia, femininity and protective maternity. In so far as the absence of something can also mean the simultaneous presence of it, a reference to a foreskin is also a reference to circumcision, and, thus, to a distinction between Jewish and Christian males. In this context it is relevant that recently Haim had co-authored (Weinberg & Raufman, 2016) a valuable article about skin in the *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*.

In terms of whole objects, many of the key players in the inner circle of the group were Jews, although some were Irishmen and Americans. We did not explore the unconscious meaning of the social identities of these objects/subjects. However, it is relevant that recently Haim had also co-authored (Weinberg & Raufman, 2016) an article on folklore and the so-called "Jewish mother" in *Group Analysis*. It was in this context that I referred to the usual coterie of "Jewish" mothers and sisters of GASI who were not only protective, holding and containing, but also castrating and controlling. After all, a long line of Honorary Treasurers in GASI and in the IGA have been Jewish women. Moreover, the Respondent, Discussants, Convenor of the social dreaming matrix, and the Chair of the Scientific Programme Committee who introduced them, were all women. In this context they prevented fathers and sons and brothers from debating with one another, not realising that this is also the way in which men make love to one another. (I gather that it was Haim who nominated these female colleagues, and not the SPC, but this raises further questions).

It was suggested that the previous references to contraceptive devices were really an acknowledgement that the arrangement of the programme was itself a *préservatif*. The more familiar *capote* would have reminded many in the Group of *kippah* the Hebrew word for skull cap. Did these references to condoms contain "thoughts" about the HIV virus and gay relations? Were we trying to prevent a conception? Is there a fear in GASI of a repetition of an unconscious contraception trauma?

(v) I was curious that there were no explicit references to recent terrorist attacks in Europe. However, the processes of societal equivalence were so obvious that they did not really need to be addressed by me as the Convenor. After all, when Pat de Maré insisted that large groups offered possibilities for exploring socio-centric

processes, he did not mean that we should focus only on such processes or that they were not deeply intertwined with familio-centric and personal processes. I chose to focus on those aspects of the dynamics of the Group which I thought others might ignore. Still, in retrospect I wonder if there were not terrorist “impulses” in the Group towards our Management Committee. I wonder, too, if these fantasies are not connected with the internationalisation of the Society and perhaps with the anticipation of the next Symposium in 2017 in Berlin.

IV. Surely, the arrangements made by the Scientific Programme Committee reflected their continuing fear of open competition and envy of the primary objects of our attentions, who I would suggest was the Foulkes Lecturer, his relations with others, and me as the Convenor of the Group. In so far as anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli sentiment has been expressed in almost every large group sponsored by GASI since the Survivor Syndrome Workshop in 1979, it is also hard to imagine that the SPC did not anticipate a repetition of this. After all, the last Large Group at the Foulkes Weekend in 2015 ended with a discussion of what was “Jewish” about John Schlapobersky’s Lecture.

If we had been able to go on for another fifteen minutes, as originally scheduled, these points might have been voiced more explicitly, clarified and developed. When the Group was stopped, I was in the process of trying to connect envy with anti-Semitic sentiment, and to ask whether this might apply to anti-Israeli sentiment as well. Most of us regard anti-Semitic sentiment and the expression of it to be an odious threat to our identity as civilised and enlightened colleagues in Group Analysis. I am painfully aware that we are entitled to explore our feelings and thoughts about the political policies and practices of Israel as well as those of any other country. However, in the context of a Large Group in a professional and scientific event, such exploration should also address the unconscious dynamics of these processes. What is not actually said aloud is likely to be as if not more relevant than what is suppressed and mumbled. Perhaps it is this “underground” quality of our work which makes it more of an art than a science.

V- I would like to remind readers of my comment to the Forum last June in reply to several comments about what was said during the Group (June 2016). I would repeat that “...the unconscious maternity of a group, especially a large one, does not guarantee the participants in it a Garden of Eden, a green and pleasant land or a quiet

and peaceful life”.

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Responses to Earl Hopper’s “Recollections of the Large Group at the Foulkes Weekend in May 2016”

By Sue Einhorn

I would like to respond to Dr Hopper’s very thoughtful writing about the Foulkes Lecture, Study Day and Large Group. Many of the issues he raises have preoccupied the Group Analytic Society since I have been a member and have an even more powerful resonance now that we are the Group Analytic Society International.

This year was the 40th anniversary of the Foulkes Lecture and we decided to celebrate a flourishing GASI with a party that also recognised and honoured Ms Liesel Hearst and Dr Malcolm Pines – elderly colleagues who have taught us so much and still remain connected to our work.

Haim Weinberg’s lecture could not have been more relevant to the struggles of GASI as we are a Society riven with class issues (perhaps a very British concern) as well as learning to understand each other internationally. We are a Society in a state of constant change and often use a history, carried by long standing and senior members, to give a sense of continuity and thus containment. However, the repetition of the history and the divisions expressed in them can also be experienced as a dance that can never change. It can also be experienced as excluding of others.

As Dr Hopper acknowledges, many of his thoughts were linked to his knowledge of GASI’s history but, as ever, are too difficult to be explored in depth or resolved within the Society by the Study Day Large Group. I think there is a real need for a place in which to explore these issues but perhaps we are too frightened to do so? He certainly seems to think so and experience suggests that whether we intend it or not, people do get very hurt because much of our self-esteem is invested in how we are perceived within this Society as well as elsewhere.

Leaks and cracks did appear before the event and during it as well. Those who spoke with me found the short social dreaming event useful and inclusive of people who may not have spoken in other settings. The conversations Dr Hopper had, were probably very different to the ones I had because of who we are. My conversations were about the interest people had in the parallel process introduced

by the Foulkes' Lecturer and Gerda Winter's very group analytic response. A good balance and a challenge to help us think.

It seemed very significant to me that Dr Weinberg crosses several modalities and Societies – Group Analysis has always tried to be inclusive of other ideas and academic disciplines. Dr Hopper notes that his respondents were all women but I have attended many events without women on the platform at all. Dr Weinberg's choice of respondents were people who helped us to think from their perspective but also through his work. Dr Carla Penna's response was academically very rich and invited insights that linked well with the unconventional groups introduced by Dr Weinberg – and, incidentally, experienced by us all. Dr Marina Mojovic's response called on our emotions as much as our minds. What a celebration of 40years from international presenters across the world!

I can only respect Dr Hopper's thoughts and interpretations about the Large Group which needs a much more complex response than I can offer now. His views of mother's bodies and the issues he raises about 'brothers' and fathers and the castrating women attacking our capacity to think is one side of the story. It is true that women are increasingly finding their own voice, their own potency in GASi. However, women increasing their potency does not mean castrating men. As we know from our work, all of us resist change but when it does occur, we move forward if the change helps us to grow. It may be hard for men to see women change the status quo by finding their own voice but that is for our own development. It is another discussion to regard that as a wish to castrate men. These changes are difficult. All I can say on a personal level is that during the Large Group I began to speak about some of the gender issues preoccupying me but found myself unable to think or to talk coherently. However frightening women and their bodies can be, my experience was that other things may have attacked my mind.

I would like to finish by thanking Dr Hopper for his perspectives as a psychoanalyst and member of our group analytic community. His thoughts on envy, on murder and on war, as he says, resonate only too well with our current social context. May our Large Groups continue to grapple with these human but frightening and difficult conversations and, as a Society can we find the courage and place to continue raising the issues however dangerous they may feel?

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By Robi Friedman

It is a pleasure and a challenge to be asked to respond to Earl Hopper's "Recollections of the Large Group", which he conducted in the Foulkes Lecture's Study Day 2016. I was asked to respond and relate to some processes as well as to the content of his article. Earl shares his thoughts, in the best group analytic fashion, not only on the Large Group (LG) but, about its context as well, which is the dynamic in the GASi Group Analytic Matrix. Reading the complexity and richness of what 'goes on in the conductor's mind' in Earl's 'recollections', I had to remind myself that the main tasks of the LG conductor may be first of all *holding the setting* during the session, including its timetable and its level of interaction, but also '*containing*' the Matrix and elaborating the conscious and unconscious dynamics. In Group Analysis, this is usually done by enabling free floating discussion and engaging participants, including the conductor(s), in an open exchange of thoughts and experiences on the emotions and relations in the Large Group. Hopper exposes how difficult it is to balance between basing one's assumptions on the here-and-now in the LG and on the matrix experienced by the conductor. In line with this thought, I believe that the innovative event of sharing the conductor's thoughts, even months after the event, certainly opens up many communicative possibilities and widens our potential to understand and develop.

If we agree to this new kind of post-LG session-sharing, it should not be restricted to the conductor(s). I could imagine there would be some profit from a general sharing. This may be particularly true in the case of a once-a-year large group, like the one which is part of the Foulkes Study Day, which necessarily leaves a lot unexpressed waiting to be verbalized. An imaginable disadvantage would be that such a potential polyphony could not only fill a book after each LG, but it could easily make it possible for participants to avoid the extra effort which is sometimes necessary to communicate in the LG. I consider an important use of the LG's unique space is the learning of "social communication" in order to develop personal and social resilience. I suggest that if we keep these disadvantages in mind, we might still profit from 'playing' with Earl Hopper's experiment in 'post-session sharing'. In addition, we know that for modern relational psychology the therapist's sharing may be one of the main developmental elements in relations, possibly repairing the parents' abstinence in sharing.

It may also be that Earl's sharing can be understood as a compensation for his missing intervention at the group's end, which

seemed to have surprised and frustrated him. Thus, 'recollections' have themselves survival functions, and Earl makes sure that he is heard and not 'finished off'. Further, I maintain that the kind of Hopper's "comments on the LG...." has both 'informative' as well as 'transformative' aspects (Friedman, 2007). The **informative** aspects of communication inform us of manifest as well as hidden, un-thought material which Hopper wants to makes us aware of. Earl mainly informs us about conflicts inside the LG, which surely represents GASi, inevitably representing also the international, European/Israeli Society. Specifically, Earl's message is about struggles between women and men, between representatives of the British and Israeli or Jewish society and unresolved violence against minorities, especially anti-Semitism. Furthermore, the Group Analytic conflictual approach to authority is also in line with positions, all of which seem to result from deep existential anxieties and envy.

From my view, Earl's comments have also possible **transformative** aspects of relations, which manifest themselves in two interactive potentials. The first is a **request for containment**, an invitation to the 'audience' to help in the elaboration of emotions too difficult to digest alone. Transformative aspects are also a **demand for influence** on the relationship with GASi. Some examples in his writings would be Earl's first request to contain attacks on the LG and voicing the concerns about its place in the Group Analytic Society. Hopper also believes that the insecurity over the schedule and the Social Dreaming session are attacks that can be contained together. For Earl, they are not directed at him personally but as a conductor who represents the Society, and the attacker, mainly the Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC), represents the Management Committee (MC).

Responding to this, I can see two sides to his appeal: one which has to be heard by the MC and should be discussed. As I understand it, he feels that the Social Dreaming session may also be an unconscious resistance (even aggression) against the LG, more than an assistance in the working-through of the unconscious. The possibility that Earl, as a LG conductor, represents the **transpersonal** in the Society's voices, gives his thoughts an even larger weight. Personally I want to acknowledge the LG's influence on the MC; we not only "listen" but we are "under the influence" of the LG, this being, in my view, one of its more important functions. Earl's "transformative" comments are also meant to change the relations between the GASi Management and the LG and its conductor, and as was said before, even to try to elaborate together undigested material. For me, Hopper's

communication is potentially creating an elaborative “partnership”. Trying to act as this ‘partner’, I will refer to some of these suggested and not-enough elaborated contents.

Comments on the nature of the contents

A main thread in Earl Hopper’s “recollections of the LG...” is about authority, starting with questions about the LG conductor’s authority. The choice of lecturers, the choice of the venue and the whole direction of the Foulkes’ weekend are also questioned. Questions of anti-Semitism seem to be a main thread. I understood from his article that in the LG three connected men were attacked: its conductor, the main lecturer and the President of GASi. Earl believes also that this array conflicted with the rest of the lecturers, the Social Dreaming conductors and the SC chair, who were all women. In addition, it also seems clear that Hopper possibly models the relational thinking between a LG conductor and the context, when he relates to many of the processes in the Group Analytic Matrix. He includes statements in the GASi Forum, historical conflicts, the absence of members, and even cites the ‘case’ of Luisa Brunori, a President who was dismissed a decade ago, a few months before the end of her term. By touching on unspoken issues, Hopper obviously tries to change what he believes to be a GASi tradition of avoidance of very difficult subjects. Like Lot’s wife escaping Sodom and Gomorrah, endangered by her wish to turn around and look, Earl dares to look back and obviously needs help, less he also becomes a pillar of salt.

Hopper’s pointing to murderous attacks on authorities in the Group Analytic world seems to concern many of us. Can it be the result of the unfinished business Foulkes had with the Fuehrer, which complicated the Group-Analytic relation to authority until now? I differentiate between the Group Analytic “patient-centered” way of conducting therapy and the ‘unfinished business’ with authority in other settings. Hating authoritarianism may have been one of the traces of Foulkes way of dealing with his traumatic past emigration - it also suggests that fear of totalitarianism, scapegoated minorities, anti-Semitism and refugees are all connected in Group Analysis. I use the LG as an instrument for social therapy, free communication and democratization. I would agree with Earl’s suggestion that attacking the LG goes together with non-elaborated anti-authoritarian traditions in Group Analysis, which, in addition to all these, are also connected to envy. Again, Earl’s suggestions, who may be articulating the ‘LG’s voice’, rather than some personal musings, may suggest a discussion of transpersonal emotional movements in our Society.

Earl's "rethinking" seems to me to exemplify Group Analysis' fascinating, complex and polyphonic approach to the LG. A multiple perspective approach allots a unique space to individuals and their roles, to leadership and to the (large) group-as-a-whole, without forgetting to develop any one of them. In order not to avoid the 'untouchable', I understand that anti-Semitism in this article appears as an Exclusion Relation Disorder (Friedman, 2013), which sometimes becomes a Rejection Relation Disorder. By this, I mean that a Jew or a sub-group is excluded (marginalized) or even worse, rejected (expelled or annihilated) as a pattern of dominance in a society struggles for centrality. The relations between the excluders and the excluded or even scapegoated are often unconscious and reciprocal emotional movements of power, hate, anxieties and needs to belong as well as to expel. While anti-Semitism may be ingrained in the Gentile-Jewish Social Unconscious, and potentially permanently present in the LG, I ask myself if Earl believes that GASi is "anti-Semitic", although it voted and even generally respected a Jewish President for 5 years. While this seems a courageous and difficult question, I think, anti-Semitic feelings may also represent exclusion and sometimes rejection threats of a symbolic nature of any minority, not only of those who had a traumatic past and a frightening present. We know that feelings of being victimized touch almost everyone, and are always expressed in LGs, especially in the beginning. Without wanting to escape the issue of anti-Semitism, this subject may also voice common "victimization anxieties" displaced onto the Jew-Gentile relation. In my opinion, they express the threatening unconscious relation between the individual and the mass and massive authority. The turmoil created by present Brexit policies, strengthened by PEGIDA anti-refugee policies all over Europe, may have played their part in opening these issues again.

During the years I have served GASi, the few attacks on myself felt as anti-Semitic were often mixed and maybe disguised as attacking an envied authority. Interestingly, while I had this painful re-introduction to some anti-Semitism, I have never felt attacked as an Israeli – not even in LGs, whose function may be to evoke stereotyped identities and attitudes. Earl's discussion is in my feeling both the need for containment as a Jew, who also functions as an authority in the LG and unconsciously represents the minorities' fears. The fantasy, that, under the threat from gentiles on Diaspora Jews, an Israeli President will be the protector, may refer unconsciously to every subgroup's fear in the LG feeling like a threatened minority.

Actually, in this last LG, when sayings like "the soldier can

do only one thing: kill” were heard, I imagined that for the first time I was addressed as an Israeli. This happened towards the end of the session, and in hindsight maybe it was not only an attack on warriors, but also a call for Earl and Haim to fight for their positions in their conflicts. I personally responded in the LG that I understood it as the possibility that by addressing the soldier a dialogue is opened up with the soldier who wants peace. I think, participants are confronted with their “not me”, with their power to fight and kill, but protect their “me” by displacing their violence onto ‘others’, the ‘bad’ ones. I think that really addressing the question of ‘leaking containers’ is impossible if dialogue with authority is feared. It conforms with Hopper’s opinion of an imperfect maternal mind and body maybe supported by a strong (not collapsing) and caring soldier-father.

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By David Glyn

The Editor of Contexts – an old and valued friend – asked me whether I would like to respond to an article, submitted by Earl Hopper. I read the article and found it a generous piece, containing issues to which I did have a response. It contained references to matters that interest me, such as the experience of marginality, with its connotation of inclusion and exclusion and to fissures – acknowledged and otherwise – within the body of GASI. Most significantly, I agreed strongly with Earl’s suggestion that ‘the life of GASI needs more discussion and debate’, whilst believing that there is enormous ambivalence when it comes to such discussion and great uncertainty about how to make provision for them. So, there was no problem about responding.

I was aware of the difficulty of ‘meeting’ Earl’s contribution, since his way of describing relationships and interpreting them is personal and different from mine. I found it impossible to respond on what seemed to be the same terrain. As I sought to clarify my response, I wondered whether it would even be recognisable as such? Somewhat anxious, I

asked the Editor what sort of response he was hoping for. He replied, ‘in all truth, I don’t know’ but said that Earl had suggested seeking willing respondents. Ironically, this seemed to be the sort of position in which, Earl suggests, Study Day respondents find themselves. However, the open and ill-defined nature of the invitation made it easier for me to accept, so here we are.

GASI is a group analytic organisation. This lends it some peculiar characteristics and makes it quite unusual; at the same time, in many respects, it’s like any other organisation. These two aspects of its nature, make GASI particularly valuable to its members – and sometimes very frustrating. What is so impressive about GASI is that, despite its fair share of troubles and conflicts, there has been little real threat of these being resolved schismatically. There are plenty of fissures but no splits.

This is not said in a complacent or self-congratulatory spirit; if it were not for its problems, which are real and worthy of attention, GASI would be far less valuable. It is said, rather, because in the midst of inevitable difficulties and disappointments with one another, it is easy to overlook the fact that GASI reflects for us some basic strengths of a group analytic philosophy; most importantly, the understanding that when conflicts and misunderstanding arise, it is vital to return and address these with the group in which they belong.

It is remarkable that Group Analysis can cross borders of language and culture, mutating and evolving as it does so and yet retain the degree of integrity that GASI gives evidence of. This may be because of the recurrent part given to the group, within GASI. In Zoe Voyatzakis’s history of the origins of EGATIN, she describes the mutual mistrust that surrounded its creation. She mentions how, in the context of these issues of trust, “the meetings of the working group, which produced the proposals for the emergent EGATIN, were preceded by a ‘leader-less sensitivity group in the form of an unstructured hour of free-floating discussion...I believe that one of the reasons accounting for the extremely rapid and stable development of...[EGATIN]...was the fact that group practices themselves were used to further our goals.”ⁱ

In the development of the GASI Summer Schools, over the last five years, we have had such an experience; at crucial moments, groups which included both staff and students played an important part in enabling crises to be survived and understood.

The Foulkes Lecture and Study Day has often been a contradictory affair and there have repeatedly been disagreements regarding the purposes of the small/median groups; I can remember

some heated discussions about this, in one or two such groups. When this arose, the heartfelt positions taken about this issue evidently derived from the group members' broader beliefs, possibly including their views about the proper purposes of the Society.

Those purposes are formally set out in the Society's constitution; they have not changed significantly, since its inception. Many members may not have read the constitution; their view about the Society's aims will have derived from being involved in its events and publications and from their relationships with other members. Over time, there is no reason to suppose that the founding objectives of the Society correspond with the conscious and unconscious wishes of the members. Whilst the Society has declared duties, constitutionally defined, there are no duties of membership, beyond those involved in maintaining professional standards.

In this context, the position of the MC is complicated, caught in a potential fissure between its own interpretation of the Society's objectives and the current demands of a complex, growing membership. Inevitably, the MC members will have different understandings of those objectives and these are often historically derived, influenced by 'senior members' and a sense of founding principles. The spirit of Foulkes and other figures haunts the MC, at times.

Earl refers to the ambiguous experience of marginality. The lecturer, or speaker, who feels unmet by the audience may feel that she has unexpectedly gravitated from a position at the centre to the margins of attention. The individual silent members of the audience may feel that they are marginal, failing to notice that there is a silence at the centre of which they are a part. Many members may picture the MC operating at the centre of the Society, but I doubt that this is how MC members experience their situation. It is not easy to conceptualise where the centre of the organisation may be.

Even though it may be the case that the Society doesn't have a well-defined centre, I suspect that many members would think of their position as marginal and would have fantasies about where the centre does lie. Discussion about GASI affairs might well include this matter, since it is where issues about how the Society's future is determined intersect with themes in the bigger world. In recent years, we have introduced the GASI forum into GASI. This has been difficult to integrate and has stirred strong feelings and doubts. It has confronted us with a reflection of many of the differences between members, which some have found disturbing to their picture of the Society.

We have also developed a Quarterly Members Group, in

London. This has established itself as a valuable resource for members who are able to come; issues that are worked on often reflect the business of the group analytic world and GASI in particular. I hope that this will be a precursor to more such groups, running simultaneously in different places where members can meet. We are able to learn about our organisation through continuing to create, and encouraging members to create, opportunities for us to communicate, without formally tying these into the system of governance.

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'No man is an island': conducting dialogue groups in post-Brexit Southern England

By Christine Thornton

I am an Irish citizen married to an Englishman, and have lived in England since I was 18. Each day since the vote to leave the EU, has realised again a profound bereavement; grief, powerlessness, anger, hope for the future lost or reduced to a very narrow thread. Many conversations made it clear these feelings were common, and so I sought to offer others what I need myself, a containing space in which to think about what has happened. The deep divide revealed within British society, in Europe, will not easily be repaired. None of us knows how, but group analysis offers a process: we have to learn to talk to one another.

Immediately post-Brexit I conducted two groups, one of around 40 NHS professionals, on 1 July 2016, a week after the vote, and the second of around 20 psychotherapists on 13 July, as it turned out the day Theresa May was appointed British prime minister. People travelled some distance to attend both these events.

Fear characterised the Brexit campaign, and fear has dominated since the referendum; post-Brexit is post-trauma. Following Foulkes' idea that anxiety must be reduced to a level that allows thought and engagement², and working with people to whom our large group methods are not familiar, I chose to be explicit in setting the groups up as 'dialogue' groups³, and explaining at the outset of each that the purpose of the group was two-fold: to speak our feelings and thoughts, and to listen to those of others. In working with traumatised people it is important to engage conscious as well as unconscious processes, and to conduct actively to limit excesses of split/ psychotic ramblings: to err on the side of keeping the group safe⁴.

Threats to identity⁵ can certainly be found in the present situation. The sense of loss of membership in the broader social and intellectual polity of Europe, and the unease of having the 'ethnic

² 2007 paper – find it

³ de Maré

⁴ Thornton 2014

⁵ Turquet

tent⁶ of ‘British/English’ identity drawn too close for comfort, was a strong theme in the groups: images of alienation, of displacement, of ‘moving to a strange street against your will’. In both groups those of other/ joint nationalities/ skin colours spoke of feeling more afraid, no longer feeling welcome; the upsurge of openly racist abuse in England was a preoccupation. In the first group, the fear that foreign nationals, essential to the functioning of the NHS, would simply down tools and leave, evoked a deep shame; in the second, guilt emerged, centred on the question ‘did we allow this to happen?’, that contempt for the mendacity and manipulation of the referendum campaign had led to the contemptuous defence of withdrawal ‘above the fight’. In the second group too, the notion ‘varnish or veneer’ represented a discussion about whether Britain had progressed from the ‘No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs’ landlord signs of the 1960s.

One of the most distressing aspects of the immediate aftermath of the referendum has been the utter absence of any political leadership in the UK,⁷ either from those whose actions led to the current predicament, or from those who might have been expected to oppose it. This was mirrored in explicit challenges to my leadership in both groups. The frustration and disappointment of ‘why did you do it? / don’t do it that way!’ needed to be enacted. Following the principle of keeping the group ‘safe enough’, I adopted an authoritative but engaged response in both.

Given the location of the groups, away from the economic devastation of the north of England, and their makeup primarily of educated people [the single strongest predictor of a ‘remain’ vote was a university degree⁸], it is unsurprising that the majority voice in both groups was ‘remain’. In the first group two people were able to acknowledge having voted ‘leave’ -- a woman who spoke of her pride in national identity [she later left the group early and rather ostentatiously], and a man who had served overseas, commenting that we have plenty in this country – ‘first world problems’. He and his wife had voted differently; he added ‘but we respect each other, that’s who we are’. Others spoke of family conflict. The second group was preoccupied with understanding ‘leave’ voters, represented by two empty chairs, one to either side of me. Members

⁶ Volkman

⁷ except from the Scottish premier, a leader of only part of the UK

⁸ The Guardian

with roots in the north and in impoverished rural regions spoke of the blame for economic blight falling on immigrant workers.

Voting ‘leave’ represented an opportunity to protest, rejecting alike the posh boys in Westminster and the economically privileged and apparently unconcerned ‘remain’ voters in southeastern and metropolitan areas. The group needed to be reminded that we were meeting in a southern county which had, in fact, voted ‘leave’; the fantasised geographical distance representing the emotional distance between ‘remain’ and ‘leave’ voters.

The ‘leave’ vote has communicated powerfully to ‘remain’ voters – the ‘haves’ -- the disenfranchisement, rage, powerlessness and hopelessness felt in ‘have-not’ communities where prosperity is long gone and survival now feels in the balance. Through a mass process akin to projective identification, what ‘remain’ voters feel at present mirrors what many of those voting ‘leave’ have felt for years. That itself mirrors the broader situation of global inequality, and our ultimately unsustainable Western wealth: for many ‘leave’ voters the campaign’s focus on immigration crystallised fear and the vain hope of standing somehow outside these questions, keeping our island lifeboat for ourselves. What is much harder to acknowledge and share is our sense of vulnerability. But an Englishman knew better, 400 years ago:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece
of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed
away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a
promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends
or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never
send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

John Donne, 1624, Meditation xvii

Compassion, nuance and complexity all disappear in the face of fear⁹. If we can find our way through this, it will only be by speaking to each other.

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⁹ Volkan, Hopper

Brexit Reflection Group 15/7/16 – An account

By Peter Wilson & Sarah Tucker

The Brexit Reflection Group attracted a good number of IGA & GASi members, including representation from our European colleagues. There were also long-standing and more recent members of the group analytic community. The majority of people in the room spoke, many with non-UK accents, and it appeared, perhaps unsurprisingly, that most would have preferred to remain in Europe. The atmosphere was, as you might expect when called to discuss a binary opposition, tense and occasionally febrile but overall the discourse was thoughtful and considered.

The content and process of the meeting was highly reflective of the fissiparous current social situation with the obvious split between ‘leavers’ and ‘remainders’ evolving into the exploration of further splits along the lines of age, race, class and culture.

The group was invited to consider both sides of the leave/remain argument but it was clear that anxieties about the outcome of the referendum predominated. An early lament for the loss of “British common sense” raised fearful premonitions of how the current economic and financial situation reflected 30’s Germany and the political legitimisation of racism that had led to the horrors of the war and holocaust.

Emotional accounts of recent personal experiences of racism from people with non-British backgrounds provoked consideration of the lack of racial diversity in the room and in group analysis and specifically the IGA. As one member put it, perhaps we can all now experience what ‘brown’ people have been experiencing. Painful expressions of solidarity with immigrants and a call to action were met with recognition that, in a precarious economic situation, we are caught up in the demands of maintaining our own financial security.

We were meeting the day of the horror in Nice and this led us to reflect that some of the desire to leave was, perhaps, a wish to distance ourselves from acts of terror.

The contemporary ambivalence towards authority was captured when the plea for a sagacious leader to emerge and lead us out of despair led to allegations that the IGA is a bastion of elitist, white, middle class values. Those representing the voice of the

working class and the ‘leave’ vote expressed feelings of marginalisation and it was undoubtedly true that they held the minority view. The emotional nature of the argument was reflected in one group member’s reflection that it felt right to vote for Brexit in a way that she understood inside but could not describe or explain to others. In other words, our Large Group began to live the inclusion/exclusion preoccupations of the Referendum itself.

It was interesting to reflect on why the meeting had been called only after the vote and there was some consideration of whether this was due to a cultural complacency that had affected both the group analytic and wider socio-political world and which perhaps required something as dramatic as Brexit to command our attention. In fact, several people asked us to follow this up with further Large Groups.

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26th July 2016

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Exchange, Brexit and the Invisible Refugee The Third International Workshop of the IIGA in Gonen, Israel

By Sharon Sagi Berg & Liat Warhaftig Aran

We would like to share with you our impressions, associations and thoughts regarding the third international workshop of the Israeli Institute of Group Analysis, titled: "Exchange and Growth in Groups", held in Gonen, Israel, in June 2016.

Zinkin (1994) says that one of the characteristics of exchange is a change in the emotional tone in the group towards vividness and liveliness. Keeping this in mind we would like to invite you to explore with us the development of tone and "music" as they evolved during the workshop. We will address two dimensions of exchange: 1. The group dimension - exchange between the keynote speaker, the respondents and the participants; 2. The organizational dimension - exchange between the conference and the outside world and between the IGA and other organizations that participated in the workshop.

Background: It was exciting to see about 150 participants gathering in the workshop, 30 of them came all the way from 14 countries all over the world. Dr Robi Friedman - co-chair of the workshop and the President of GASi - welcomed the gathering. Out of his warm and generous welcoming speech we chose to quote the following notion: 'Exchange has to do with the experience of capability of providing. One cannot take part in exchange if one doesn't feel able to provide, at the same time providing makes him feel he is somebody'. Friedman also mentioned the exchange between generations that is manifest in the unique ensemble of the management committee. Ms Marit Joffe Milstein, a co-chairman of the workshop and the Chair of the Israeli Institute of Group Analysis, read a moving poem titled "Revenge", by Taha Muhamad, a Palestinian poet. With this reference Joffe Milstein invited us to explore the exchange between the workshop's world and that of the outer world

Following Joffe Milstein's speech, Uri Levin, who co-chaired the scientific committee with Dr Ido Peleg, shared with us his ideas regarding exchange. He recalled his experience in individual therapy when there were times in which he was calculating the money he had paid per minute, especially in moments of silence. In contrary he had not calculated even once the fees for his participation in his group analytic therapy. He left us with a question regarding the reason for the difference between individual therapy and group analytic therapy.

Similarly, Zinkin (1994) was puzzled by the fact that exchanging members of the groups are not standing on guard to make sure they get exactly what they give. The answer might be found in Schlapobersky's (2015) idea, regarding exchange as reciprocity - a distinguished characteristic of exchange in a group as compared to individual therapy.

First day

Lecture and Response:

The opening keynote speaker was Dr Morris Nitsun who discussed the link between creativity and exchange in psychotherapy institutes. Nitsun opened his talk asking all of us to draw an image of our training institute. (These drawings were discussed in some of the small groups that followed the morning plenary on each day of the workshop). Following Bion (1970), Nitsun pointed out the inherited conflict in psychotherapy institutes between loyalty to the "fathers" and the drive for change. He claimed that the need to sanctify theories is a way of denying death, which at the same time might block the way to creativity. He suggested we should encourage opposing opinions in the institute, reflect on creativity and change organizational hierarchies to encourage exchange and creativity. One might say that soon enough his invitation to encourage opposing opinions was fully accepted with the challenging response of the discussant Joshua Lavie. In his response, Lavie brought up Winnicott's ideas regarding creativity and claimed that being creative in the sense of the potential space is a preliminary condition for exchange between the external world and inner reality. Lavie challenged the major part of Nitsun's basic assumptions and many participants experienced his response as a rude criticism of Nitsun's ideas and not as a fair exchange. The members splitting between the two rival parties made exchange hardly possible.

Large group- First session:

Nitsun said in his lecture: "the Institute is actually a container of what we choose to put into it". Keeping this in mind we encourage you to think of the Large group, conducted professionally and warmly by Dr Gila Ofer and Dr Thor-Kristian Island, as a container of the workshop. As such, it is interesting to focus attention on the contents that the participants chose - consciously and unconsciously - to put into this container and on the impression left by each lecture - a thread woven into the matrix - on the participants.

Considering Nitsun's lecture as the first thread coming into being in

the Matrix of the Large group, it was during the first LG session that emotions took the place of theory and a range of complex feeling came on stage. Emotions that have to do with competition between 'father' and 'son' could not be ignored once Nitsun commented on his reaction to Lavie's response. At sunset, we were sitting in the big hall and felt not only the heat of the blinding sunrays but also felt the heat of discussion. Soon enough it seemed that there was a wide gap not only between Nitsun and Lavie but also between the many talking men compared to the majority of silent women in the room and between participants from different organizations. In his lecture Nitsun brought Armstrong's words (2005) saying that we all have our own version of our Institutes. These are derived from our subjective experience, personal history, projections and so on. And indeed, on top of the presence of participants from different organizations in the workshop, one could also feel the presence of many "imagined", "subjectively perceived" organizations of the mind. These vague presences created an extra source of projections and of different feelings such as envy, rejection, exclusion, etc., that occupied part of the discourse. Dissatisfaction of unclear origin, which we all found difficult to express, dominated our space and we felt exchange was beyond our reach.

Second day

Lecture and Response:

The second day of the workshop opened with Dr Ido Peleg, a co-chair of the scientific committee, who invited Dr Linde Wotton for her talk and shared his vision regarding exchange in the group as an essential platform for creativity in the analytic group. Wotton's lecture titled: "What's in an Exchange? - Opera for Everyday", made reference to different operas to demonstrate her ideas. In Gluck's opera, *Orphée et Eurydice* (1774), Wotton claimed "the most powerful moment is the one in which Orpheus can no longer resist looking back in answer to Eurydice's questions, and thereby loses her for the second time". With this opera Wotton emphasized that exchange entails the necessity of taking risks. Wotton concluded that exchange can be identified in the group at moments of improvising as opposed to harmonious moments that in Wotton's view are linked to rigid redundant patterns.

Ms Tamar Einy-Lehman was the respondent to Wotton's lecture. Einy-Lehman invited us courageously to improvise during her talk and experience the adventure of using sounds instead of words and voicing our self freely in the absence of rules of conversation. Einy-Lehman also elucidated Wotton's idea of improvisation, giving

examples from her group. The discussion with the audience was very different from the experience of struggle that took place the previous morning, the dialogue between the lecturer and the speaker and the audience felt harmonious and warm. Nevertheless, it felt like we wished to improvise, but it was still impossible, maybe due to unconscious reluctance to break the harmony.

We asked ourselves whether we were still captured in stereotyped roles: the two men on the first morning as opposite and the women on the second day as similar. Since Exchange demands difference with similarity (Zinkin, 1994), it seemed that we were still in search of the turning point that would enable exchange in the workshop.

Large group- second session:

During the second LG session that took place that evening something began to change. Was it thanks to the cooler, more inviting atmosphere of the hall that gained improvised shades to protect us from the sunset? Was it due to the willingness of some participants to take risks and share their vulnerability? Maybe it had to do with the gentle thread that was woven in the morning and invited a warmer touch, or maybe it has to do with the intimate and professional processing that took place in the small and median groups that took place every day and were a safe place for all of us? One way or another, a moving exchange took place between Nitsun and Lavie, each taking responsibility for his own feelings and words, opened a space for other participants to be seen and heard. Suddenly it was possible to speak about those who receive credit for their work and seem to be recognized "in the front seats" and those who feel neglected and invisible, left on the periphery. As if in order to calm the hard feelings, a participant, who is not a member of the IGA that fell the evening before and broke her elbow, shared how meaningful and touching was the attention and treatment she received. Another participant shared her deep anxiety regarding the Brexit and its possible effect on the lives of so many. While the workshop began with the knowledge of this shadow of a potential split - in European Unity - hovering in the air, the fear and anxiety could be acknowledged only at this point of time. In a way, the emotional pendulum's movement - from inside to outside and from personal to public issues - was exhausting. It was thanks to the expertise of the co-conductors that interpreted and reflected on the 'here and now' that the participants could subtly start to acknowledge these connections.

Third day

Lecture and Response:

On the third and last morning Hanni Biran added the last thread with her lecture, "The Invisible Refugee", addressing a group of people that are invisible in their family of origin, in society and in the analytic group. Biran chose to focus on a special group of highly educated people, normative in many ways who find themselves unemployed, feeling that their way to economic security, prosperity and belonging to society is blocked. Biran dared to disclose two very painful issues that are rarely exposed onstage: the sudden and early departure of more than half of the members of her group in that summer; and how she agreed to charge almost half of the remaining participants of the group with reduced prices. While exploring her countertransference in retrospect Biran shared with us her personal history as a child of a father who suffered poverty and hunger during his own childhood and how it had influenced her willingness to give reductions without hesitation. The audience brought up the possibility that participants recognized her as a representative of wealthy society to which they themselves cannot belong. This discussion brought to awareness the economic and social gaps that had recently deepened in Israel and all over the world. Biran's candid, courageous self-disclosure seemed to open a space for self-reflection. Dr. Svein Tjelta, the respondent to Biran's lecture opened by acknowledging Biran's complex set of ideas in a lecture that helps us explore the issue of the invisible refugee in the context of health services in different countries. Tjelta described how Biran's ideas created a resonance that reminded him of the way patients, trainees and supervisees in his own groups need to deal with the inhuman demands of society that makes one feel not good enough. Tjelta pondered some of the main issues:

The distribution of wealth that leaves the middle class poorer, driven into a precarious existence, just the way Ms. Biran described her father in his time;

The demand of official rules regarding psychological treatment in today's society that is supposed to be faster, cheaper etc. He related to Biran's generosity toward her patients and encouraged her to keep on with this generosity, emphasizing it as an important therapeutic factor. As he was speaking, one could feel that by adding layers to the lecture and illuminating its richness, his words created an exchange with Biran's lecture.

Large group - last session:

In the LG final session, the group seemed to react to Tjelta's generosity

as well as to Biran's openness and readiness to share personal painful emotions and distressing contents. Silent participants from different circles and organizations added theirs voices. Now we were not dealing with refugees in Europe and their status in society, instead we were speaking about the invisible refugees in the room. From that point of view, it seemed possible for the group to relate not only to the visible wound of the participant with the broken elbow, but also to the different invisible wounds of many others. Dialogues regarding personal pain and fear took the place of accusing monologues. It was interesting to notice how, as if reacting to Wotton's words the day before: the group stretches and searches for more flexibility, for subtle adjustment of tempo that will enable improvisation and the reaching of vivid and respectful exchange, like the one that took place between Biran and Tjelta in the morning.

There are many more moments and memories to share from this successful workshop and we would like to mention the diverse workshops and panels we all enjoyed and the small groups and the median group that contributed to the richness and depth of the workshop. Finally, we will share here only one more thing - the poem that Joffe Milstein read during the opening session, which opened our hearts and minds, signalling that with compassion, an exchange might take place even when conditions are complex.

Revenge by Taha Muhammad Ali

Translated by Peter Cole, Yahya Hijazi and Gabriel Levin

21 December 2006

At times ... I wish
I could meet in a duel
the man who killed my father
and razed our home,
expelling me
into
a narrow country.
And if he killed me,
I'd rest at last,
and if I were ready—
I would take my revenge!

But if it came to light,
when my rival appeared,
that he had a mother

waiting for him,
or a father who'd put
his right hand over
the heart's place in his chest
whenever his son was late
even by just a quarter-hour
for a meeting they'd set—
then I would not kill him,
even if I could.

Likewise ... I
would not murder him
if it were soon made clear
that he had a brother or sisters
who loved him and constantly longed to see him.
Or if he had a wife to greet him
and children who
couldn't bear his absence
and whom his gifts would thrill.
Or if he had
friends or companions,
neighbors he knew
or allies from prison
or a hospital room,
or classmates from his school ...
asking about him
and sending him regards.

But if he turned
out to be on his own—
cut off like a branch from a tree—
without a mother or father,
with neither a brother nor sister,
wifeless, without a child,
and without kin or neighbors or friends,
colleagues or companions,
then I'd add not a thing to his pain
within that aloneness—
not the torment of death,
and not the sorrow of passing away.
Instead I'd be content
to ignore him when I passed him by

on the street—as I
convinced myself
that paying him no attention
in itself was a kind of revenge.

Nazareth
April 15, 2006

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ⁱ 'On the History of EGATIN', by Zoe Voyatzakis.
<http://www.egatin.net/index.php?id=261,0,0,1,0,0>

Reflections on the 10th International Workshop in Group Analytic Psychotherapy: Peace and War

Kobarid, 2-4. October 2015, organised by The Group Analytic Society of Slovenia and The Walk of Peace Foundation

By Evgen Kajin

The Group Analytic Society of Slovenia is a non-profit, voluntary, independent society, established in 1998. Its mission is the development and recognition of group analysis. The society organises and realises expert meetings and educational experiences.

The “Walks of Peace in the Soča Region Foundation” was established in 2000. The basic activities of the Foundation are: study/research work; the restoration and presentation of historical and cultural heritage of the Great War; publication; development of history tourism; and others.

On a biennial basis, every other autumn, the Group Analytic Society of Slovenia organises an International Workshop of Analytical Group Psychotherapy, the scope being “group analytical exploration in small groups and median/large group” with interesting themes with Slovenian and foreign group analysts and guests.

The last one was organised on the hundredth anniversary of the Isonzo front, one of the more horrific happenings of the WWI. Some words from the letter of invitation: “The front on the river Isonzo (Soča) killed more than five hundred thousand lives on both sides. There were soldiers of around twenty nations... Only now, a hundred years later, can we talk openly about the experiences of our grandparents and great-grandparents. Some say war is unavoidable, at least occasionally. However, it may well depend on what we, as individuals and members of social groups, do with our personal and collective aggression. Here, we are putting ‘peace’ first, reversing Tolstoy’s original order. In the intrauterine beginning of our lives, we were at peace. Our great struggles, inner and outer, developed only later.”

What follows is a personal description of the workshop.

Soča (Isonzo in Italian) is a river that runs from the foot of the Slovenian Alps to the Adriatic Sea on Italian territory. There are many

villages and little towns on its banks or in the valleys nearby, surrounded by high mountains. One of the settlements is the small town of Kobarid with a rather short hill that steeps up just behind the town and turns into a low ridge, parallel to nearby valleys. A construction rises on it; a couple of high arches dwell one over the other, while on top of them there is a church. Just by watching it from a distance I felt weight. I was approaching this site from south, against the flow of the river.

I arrived just at the beginning of the workshop. Immediately after the welcoming speech and some beautiful musical pieces, the groups began in rooms of the hotel Hvala. I entered in the one I was assigned to about two minutes after it started. Some of the participants I knew already. The group leader explained the programme of the workshop and rules of the group and that there will be five small groups in three days and that all members should be present in all of them. No late comers. Even with just that number of groups, it is enough for the process of group work to evolve. Missing from the group would interfere with this process both on the level of the person who is not present and also on the level of the group. One of the possible interventions is expelling the group member who distracts from the group process. Such a decision is to be made by the group leader who takes responsibility for it, regardless of what group members think. Clear rules and limits are the baseline of security and enable members to open-up, offering the possibility of a change in attitude towards them. The breaking of rules and boundaries, on the contrary, lowers the feeling of security and is an obstacle to change, while making the defensive attitude of group members stronger. We experienced this intensively during the session and we actually lost one of our members, so the group ended with an atmosphere of tension.

It was a relief to walk to the other site of the workshop, to the Foundation of Peace where we got to eat sandwiches. Two presentations followed.

Matjaž Lunaček described drives as the driving force of psychosexual development. Peace is static, it gives security, as the environment of the womb does for the foetus. War is dramatic, it leads to changes. Such is also the psychological development of a child, which cannot go on without tension, as libido and aggression are intertwined during development. To determine which drive is libidinal and which is aggressive, which is constructive and which destructive, is very difficult. “The only way out of this eternal dilemma is to ensure the greatest possible awareness of instinctive drives, of the forms they assume and where they can manifest themselves. If we follow these

impulses or are willing to face them at all, for example in our dreams, we will have to deal with the disturbing fact of how aggressive we really are.” And more: “It is vital to endure the conflicts, to expand the mental space to the degree where it can allow for the coexistence of contrasts.”

Bogdan Lešnik was searching the etymology of the words war, fight and peace (in the Slovene language). He made explicit how intricate aggression (and war as one of the acts of aggression) is in everyday life. “From a Freudian perspective, we can see the aim of the death drive in peace and the aims of the life drives in war”. Beside this, it must not be assumed that those who follow orders to plan or execute acts of war have high aggressive impulses. They wish to complete the work, and want to do it properly. In this way, procedures, which from one side seem to be banal administration, on the other side become the materialisation of pure evil. The execution of orders is supported even by non-aggressive components that act behind atrocities, for example erotic categories such as narcissism, friendship forming, and ego-drives like self-preservation. “Care for the self performs as certain social function...which is closely related to feelings of guilt.” Maybe, regardless of the slightly ambiguous context, “the fundamental question that marks care for the self, we gather from Foucault, is *have I done the right thing*”.

How is this connected with psychotherapy? Lunaček proposed a practical example of how to deal with aggressive contents. For this, insight is needed. Through free association in the awakened state or in dreams, we can recognise that we are worse than we thought we were. With this recognition and acceptance, we lower the probability of the uncontrolled expression of such impulses.

Lešnik explained that the essence of any quarrel has to be connected with the history of the drives of the subjects involved. “Or in other words, with the history of their object relationships.” The therapist learns about his actions – if they were right for the client – from the response of the patient. That is another reason why the atmosphere of safety, which enables the client to react to the therapist’s interventions, is so important. Only after such a reaction is it possible to work on the contents revealed in the process.

After a lively discussion and a short break, a second small group followed. I experienced it as a quest for security, as if group members were striving to find suitable stories to equip them for this, and at the same time checking the reactions of other members. From which work environments did we come and what have we brought with us? Will others show understanding, will they reveal their own

issues, their sensitivity and weak spots? Is it safe to talk? Is it worth opening up personal experiences?

We had some time for coffee or tea to stir our thoughts and feelings. The first large group followed in the presentation room of the Foundation of peace, where chairs were placed in the shape of a square circle. In fact, it was very large, as we were pressed against walls and in corners. There were at least fifty members. Beside psychotherapists, there were also some guests present, coming from Slovenia and abroad, some of them from Israel, Austria, and Serbia. The large group was led by a group analyst from another country. He greeted all of the present and then explained, in a few sentences, the basic rules of the large group and its timeline: the duration of a large group session is an hour and a half and there will be three such groups during three days of the workshop. It was not one whole minute after the leader had finished, when one member asked why therapists do not offer median groups to patients, while they enjoy them themselves. Some of us who participated in the following dynamics reported that we know leaders of groups and programmes of various types who lead median and large groups, whose members are patients or otherwise people in need.

Some participants were trying to understand why such dilemmas were opened up in the large group and proposed some hypotheses. Is this a message of the group? Is there a doubt about the competence of the leading experts of this event? This was dismissed after a short discussion. The leader of the large group rarely intervened and each time he did it was in a calming manner. Some members asked how to measure the success of such a workshop? Is it successful when participants come from far away showing interest in the event?

The curator of Kobarid Museum, who was among the members of the large group, associated the issue with the dilemma they had when trying to measure the success of the museum. The concept of what is the successful operation of the museum was changing through history. The present opinion, shared by most museums, is that success is not when people come to listen to the curator and to see the exhibited materials, but in the direct communication between visitors and presenters. For the Kobarid Museum of the WWI, the success is when visitors who came to see the place where their father or grandfather died, themselves tell the story of their family to the curator. Indeed, these visitors would be the ones to forever remember what they have seen and heard here, as they have, in simultaneous stories of the region, history and their own family, recaptured all these levels intertwined in a new experience.

A short silence followed. In it, I was wandering about the

similarity of what the curator told us to the process in psychotherapy. Suddenly a guest member asked if it would be of help for ministerial employees and politicians to have to participate in small groups for a period of time, with the goal being to boost their sensitivity to people's needs. The group members were sceptical to such an idea - the purpose of psychotherapy is not to influence politicians, but to offer people in distress a means to address painful issues.

The leader of the large group shared the opinion that this place of the meeting, terrifying and wonderful at the same time, is evoking such themes in the group. He wished us a peaceful evening.

After the break there was a formal event where certain awards were made. Two psychotherapists were proclaimed honorary members of the Slovenian Association for Group Analysis (Miloš Kobal and Malcolm Pines). An award was given to students who had just finished the first part of their study in group analysis. All students wore the same T-shirts with logo and a script; there was an atmosphere of support and connection. The youth choir of the region's elementary school nicely blended with what was happening. I felt it was a precious event, witnessing the formation of a new generation of group therapists.

Saturday morning, I came through light rain to the hotel Hvala for breakfast. The leader of the large group sat down at the same table. I greeted him and continued to spread butter and honey on my slice of bread, suddenly performing it in a clumsy way. "Groups are always fascinating to me," the leader said. He was talking calmly, with the certainty of someone with much experience; he was one of the oldest of the group therapists at the workshop. Around him other group therapists sat down. The leader continued: "The group has at all times found a way to come out of the dynamics of tension among members. Each one that I've been in found a way." While he was speaking, I remembered his name; Ivo Urlić. Meanwhile, the honey dripped from the bread to the plate. The leader rose up, thanked me for the company, mentioning something about the time which runs at its own pace - others quickly followed suit. I put in my mouth what was left in my hands, hurrying into the small group.

This was the third small group. Group members started to ask questions to each other. I experienced a mixture of support and pressure towards trusting the group. We confronted one another with observations about who talks in the group and with what expectations, what should be the benefit of withholding issues and what it means for the work of the group if a member doesn't explain the circumstances needed for the understanding of his or hers theme. What is our

responsibility in the group, towards others and to ourselves? We talked also about the responsibility of the therapists and the standards that have to be met to become a group analyst. Through associations, we came to musical instruments that we learned, or played, about the music that we listen to or the one that we are making in any way we can, want or choose. We found essential differences in this field: some of us had no sense for tones, others were learning music by themselves, yet others had academic education in instruments. The leader asked if we were testing our tones? The question made group members laughing at first, but than it was as if it hanged in mid-air. Would we ever tune up?

A cup of tea for some and coffee for others, followed by the rainy walk back to the next scene of the meeting helped to calm me down. In the Foundation of each a lecture was given by Vlasta Meden Klavora and Roman Korenjak. They shared some thoughts about wars in the twentieth century, not just the two world wars, but also about those in our neighbourhood. They cited some parts of the correspondence between Einstein and Freud, beginning with a thought of the latter, claiming that “humans do not differ from animals and that the conflicts of interests in the animal kingdom are based on the use of violence”, and afterwards they asked if it is possible to follow the thinking of Pines, who summed up the content of Freud’s answer in four major points:

- Men have no business to exclude themselves from the animal kingdom;
- Conflicts of interests in the animal kingdom are settled by the use of violence;
- The path from violence to law is by the union of the weak against the strong. Right is the might of the community, with violence, ready to be directed at any who resist it;
- To guarantee the security of communal life each must surrender his personal liberty to turn strength to violent use.

They presented some verbalised accounts of war terror from the First World War and later explained that traumatic experiences encompass not only the time of war, but also the period after it. Foulkes, who developed group analysis, gained experience from treating veterans of WWII who had psychological disorders.

The lecturers also presented the devastating consequences of (war) traumas. Many traumatised people “refuse help, and even if they accept it, they can be mistrustful of the therapists”. Traumatic

experience “in itself causes unpredictability, a lack of control and confusion in relationships”. That is precisely the reason why “rules of group behaviour, rules with regard to absence, holidays, and socialising outside of the group must be clear and well defined.” They described basic elements of the complex therapeutic process of group therapy and counted many tasks and responsibilities of the therapist, among others “to take into account the resistance of group members” and to recognise and “endure the negative transference”.

The process is “not merely an intellectual exercise but the bonding together of meaning and emotion”. “What cannot be put into words cannot be put to rest”, they cited Ivo Urlić (who summed up the thought of Bettelheim) who described his experiences with psychotherapy of victims of war trauma. “With verbalisation – by finding the right words – the group members liberate themselves from being confined to the wordless world of trauma.” And further on: “If hatred and the thirst for vengeance are initially present when such losses are experienced, thanks to grieving people can refrain from retaliation. Urlić stated that during the process of handling trauma in a group, there is another way that opens up with the help of a culture of forgiving and the psychoanalytic culture in general, the way of reconciliation with oneself and with the present, in order to open up possibilities for a more humane future to be created for us and for those that will follow us.”

During the discussion, some of the participants responded personally to the theme of the transgenerational transmission of war trauma, which was also presented in the lecture. They described a suffering atmosphere in the family, which came from parents or grandparents, carrying devastating experiences from war periods, either from the first or second world war. Some participants recognised only then and there the existence of such a transgenerational transmission in their families, of which they were not aware before.

There were some thoughts about verses, cited in the lecture, from Sophocles' Antigone: “It is my nature to join in love, not hate!” One of several interpretations of this play is the following: Creon (Antigone's uncle through her mother) and Antigone hold opposing positions. Creon, as a good landlord, wants to attend to the polis, giving priority to the benefit of the state. Opposing this, Antigone insists on her brother's burial, disregarding the common good and orders from Creon - she follows only her own consciousness.

Therapists from other countries reported their own experiences in work with people, victims of war or who still are

involved in war activities. A psychotherapist from Serbia described a supervision process, himself in the role of a supervisor. It was of a therapy where a psychotherapist, working with psychodrama, conducts therapeutic meetings among people who were actively involved in battles in regions of ex-Yugoslavia. In one group, there are participants from all three parties. He described how, with the help of a humanitarian organisation from abroad and a personal approach, they overcame resistance, fears and doubts. Therapist from Israel described the different reactions of young men, still boys, who return from battlefields. Some of them wanted to talk about their experiences and formed the internet site “breakingthesilence”. Others do not want to talk about war and their relatives do not want to ask - the therapist is searching for modes to help them.

A clear message from the organisers was needed to end the discussion. Lunch followed, with the desert being “kobariški štruklji”, a regional (of Kobarid) variant of dumplings. The lunch took longer than planned, and toward its end we were informed that the beginning of the large group will be postponed. Nonetheless, the break was (too) short. With precisely this issue, the large group began: one of the participants loudly protested against pressure because of such a shortfall. Others responded with associations of integration of the individual into the majority, which has not lowered the tension. Such an atmosphere continued even after the explanation of the leader about reasons for the change in the timeline.

Members from other countries were again enquiring if the dramatic comment and what followed was connected to dilemmas regarding the allocation of positions of leadership in the group and workshop. Among domestic members, this triggered a search for the guilty one. The leader of the large group shared his opinion that the site of the meeting (Kobarid was during Soška fronta – Isonzo Front - a place of sacrifice of many young lives) was having an influence on issues that were emerging in the group. Questions were asked about circumstances (or decisions?) when we are victims and, on the other side, when we decide to sacrifice ourselves. A group member translating to foreigners suddenly spoke of the stalemate: In the Slovenian language, there is the same word for victim and sacrifice (written: “žrtev”). There were some associations about the theme, but the leader reminded us of the time to end the large group.

Two small groups followed with a break of 15 minutes. We spoke about musical instruments which wait for us at home - what made us learn to play them or, even before that, to want to. What were the obstacles (and still are) against using them or practicing less than

we wished - what do we need to return to them? A sense of connection among us developed, about which it was not clear if the feeling of security enabled those members who before refused to open-up, now could do so. Or, was it the latter that brought about the experience of safety? The group farewell message was that we will take care of our needs, one of them being to return to our instruments.

We left the small group and went out to the street, where we enjoyed the food, tastes, domestic products and interesting items from the region, all of which was on display at individual booths of the "Jestival – Food and Art Festival", held by the regional organisations.

The next morning was foggy and wet. During my walk through Kobarid, I slowed down my steps on the main square and looked towards the hill rising over the town. At its end was a building of three stories I saw two days earlier. The higher two levels were positioned on the arches rising from the lower. Under the arches were green marble plates with inscriptions of the fallen soldier or with remnants of 500 unknown soldiers. This charnel house, built in 1938, has more than 7000 Italian soldiers, lost in WWI.

With that image in mind I continued my way to the Foundation of Peace, where organisers informed us that the visit of Walk of Peace would be cancelled because of the rain.

The beginning of the group was dramatic again. After a couple of minutes of silence, one of the members suddenly leaned forward and said he was at the charnel house yesterday evening. In front of the green marble plates, he was overwhelmed by the vision of thousands of young men lying there in peace after losing their life in war. The question had arisen under the arches of charnel house, and he repeated it in the group: How much time and space is given to a human being? To those young men little was given. How much of each was given to members to experience the group? He pointed to the floor and proposed representing space we've received in this group with tiles, while time would be counted with minutes for each member of this last large group. If the member wouldn't use them, he or she would lose them and another member could take that time, or else a void of silence would commence.

Having explained all that, the member continued, saying he will talk until someone stops him, but that would not happen without a fight, which means a declaration of war.

Immediately another member said that he felt offended by the allegory of tiles. Those are cold things and he didn't like them being compared to life. The first member nonetheless continued, explaining the importance of borders that have to be kept against other people -

the second one opposed again.

In this way the two male members continued to react one to the other, the rest of us remaining in silence. The tension in the group started to rise as their voices became louder, culminating with the second member singing loudly, after which the first member went silent.

Immediately after the second member stopped singing, a female member, sitting next to him, started to talk about her morning encounter that she enjoyed. He responded with a sudden smile and continued with his own sweet memories of their meeting. Another female member, sitting next to the member presenting the impressions of the ossuary, reported her feelings during the exchange between both male members - to her it seemed like a battle between two cocks.

This is how all the large groups of this workshop began, was the insight of the group. Was that also how all wars start? With battles between roosters, who then sent young males to death? Members started to talk about these dynamics, summarising and commenting. It was a woman who diverted attention from the tension between two males to an almost erotic connection between herself and him.

One female member of the group told a story of Festival from the previous day. A group of younger female members of the workshop mingled with a group of the same age from the region. They chatted lightly about various things. Suddenly the atmosphere changed after one man arrived - he wasn't part of the local group, but a well-known personality. Few moments after his arrival other men from the region started to talk about the hunt. First one mentioned the hunt, the next one wild boars, the third explained that there is one particular part of the animal especially delicious, the fourth continued with the procedure of chopping the part off the boar and the fifth named that part the penis, but using a vulgar expression. Girls of the region became upset and one of them, as if speaking for all of them, asked aloud, why boys have "to rooster"? (There is a saying in informal Slovenian and some other Slavic languages about males that show themselves off. In informal English, a similar saying is used for other meanings, as stated on the web page of Oxford Learners Dictionary). The members of the workshop suggested to the girls to leave the boys to handle it themselves, while they would go chatting at another booth. The girls agreed and members of the workshop said to them as follows: "Participants of the workshop that we attend are educated people. Not only have they studied at university, they are also trained to work as psychotherapists. Notwithstanding, among male participants emerged such 'roostering', just as happened here a

minute ago. It seems that girls have to take it for granted that men have their need to show off among themselves.”

What followed in the group was a few minutes of an abundant and juicy use of vulgar expressions related to the other word for rooster, in the meaning of male reproductive organ. The leader of the large group made himself heard and when other voices calmed down, he explained that all these expressions came from a Slavic root “kur” (which would be like “cock” in English), a name for certain species of poultry. There was a sudden silence of the group. Confronted with “roostering” on many levels and meanings, we all became aware of something that one group member spoke with a clear voice - males of that animal species behave as cocks, while deprived of the very organ holding their name.

Women gave voice to their anger. What can women do when men behave like cocks? What do women do during the war, left to themselves, alone to care for children, home, and property? They find their ways. Older female member of the group said that women do not need men, they can arrange by themselves and help one another. But how can women withstand a time of shortage? A member from another country, psychotherapist with many years of practice, observed that women in the group were silent for a long time, as they are also in real life while men on higher positions run their battles that lead to war. That in turn has some consequences for women: left alone to take care of the family, holdings and survival, many times this can be effected only by attending to the needs of other men.

We were asking and answering many other issues that our associations brought in the group. Time, which ran at its own pace, counted minutes of this last large group to its very end.

The leader of the large group gently said aloud that the workshop had come to the closure. His closing words were a wish that the event would have helped us recognise impulses that lead to violence, “roostering”, and to understand such mechanisms within ourselves and in others. He hoped that aggressive impulses would not lead us anymore.

We rose from chairs, went slowly out and walked through the rain to the main square, saying our good-byes.

I started my driving in light rain. I met Soča again. Slowly the mountains around me drifted apart and lowered. I asked myself, what can I do with the issues that I recognised and learned about in the workshop. I could not grasp a definitive answer, as I understood that it is a process. The warmth of the car was slowly spreading. I breathed deeply and sighed with relief. In the direction of the flow of

the river I was returning to my family.

With the collaboration of: Vlasta Meden Klavora, Željko Cimprič & Branko Brinšek

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What do dreams reveal about ourselves and ‘the other’?

By Susanne Vosmer

Reflections on: “*Dreams and Relations: Dream-telling as a request for containment and influence*” (a 1-day workshop with Robi Friedman, convened by John Schlapobersky, London, 2016)

Dreams have fascinated human mankind since ancient times and have had a dramatic impact on almost every aspect of our culture and history. Dream images have expanded literary, artistic and musical horizons. They have led to inventions and industrial procedures that have revolutionized science and society. Dreams have provided the basis for beliefs that there is a nonmaterial aspect and continuity to our existence, which is not disrupted by our physical death (Van de Castle, 1994). But dreams have also been feared because they were viewed as communications from demon-spirits. Underlying this fear is a belief that dreams can predict the future, which we find throughout history in all cultures (McNamara, 2008).

My own views of dreams have been more influenced by ‘science’ than mythology. Namely that dreams occur as a result of the brain being active while our sense organs and muscle groups are switched off. When working with traumatized children and adults, their biggest concern were nightmares - intensely disturbing and frightening dreams. In childhood, dreaming often takes the form of nightmares (McNamara, 2008). Even non-traumatized children often dream about monsters or supernatural agents. Admittedly, prior to reading the announcement of Robi Friedman’s workshop, I had not considered their dream-telling to be a request for containment. However, in the context of working with traumata, this idea immediately made sense to me.

Before attending this workshop, I had little knowledge about dream-work in group analysis. Like most of you, I was aware of the long history dreams have in psychotherapy. Dating back to Freud (1900/1996), who referred to dreams as the ‘via regia’, the ‘royal road’ to the unconscious. But Freud used dreams as means to become aware of repressed sexual strivings. He thought that their repression determined the nature of all neurotic disturbances. Dreams contained allusions to instinctual desires, albeit in concealed form, which might as well have been conscious. Freud thought, of course, that he had explained it all.

During my own therapy, my dreams had been interpreted similarly. I am a sentient human being, so I was pleased that my dreams intimated other planes of reality. But as a so-called ‘scientist-practitioner’, the world I belong to as clinical psychologist, I had always felt that dreams left something to be desired. From a neurological perspective, dreams leave no trace and have no materiality beyond electrical impulses in the brain. Yet they are not reducible to these impulses. On the contrary, dreams are irreducible to what they are made of. And it would be absurd, as Lucy (2001) highlighted, to assume that an EEG print-out of a dream was actually a record of the dream itself. Can you imagine people in the group bringing neurological print-outs of their dreams and expect you to analyze these for their symbolic contents? You probably resort to more traditional ways of working with dreams, if you work with dreams. If you do not, Robi’s workshop might just provide the impetus to do so, because working with dreams opens up new possibilities for understanding cultural phenomena.

But what are dreams? Are they ‘predictors’ of future, cultural achievements, cultural objects, or events? Lucy (2001), who discusses dreams from a semiological (study of signs and symbols and their use and interpretation) perspective, views them as semiotic because they are carriers of meaning. So they can be viewed as a cultural achievement. But dreams are also like events, since they can be turned into text through inscription, and therefore be analyzed. The dream describes a cultural object that requires to be interpreted (or read) through narrating it. And it can circulate, precisely as a cultural object, independent of its producer (the dreamer). Viewing dreams as cultural objects and events is in line with Robi’s conceptualization of dream-telling in therapeutic settings.

The socio-cultural nature of dreaming and their exploration has become increasingly popular over the past three decades (see Hoggett, 2016). We can thank Freud and Jung for that. Jung viewed dreams as something essentially unknown, which emerges creatively from the unconscious background. He thought that dreams: represent unconscious reactions to conscious situations; describe situations which have arisen out of unconscious and conscious conflict; represent unconscious processes, which have no relation to consciousness and a tendency in the unconscious to bring about change in conscious attitude. Jung viewed dreams as expressions of inner dramas, in which we take up all the roles, e.g. actor, director, screen-writer, and should be examined without preconceptions (Jaffé, 1983).

This is where Robi Friedman's (2002; 2008; 2015) work is useful, because Freud's and Jung's understanding of the connection between dreams and society was limited. Robi offered an additional interpersonal perspective, which goes beyond the traditional, intrapersonal way of working with dreams. Dream-telling in a therapeutic setting can be challenging, because of the often overwhelming implication for people's relationships. He suggested that dreams can be difficult to hear, understand, conceptualize and work with. Hence, his workshop was invaluable, because it helped to understand dreams not only from a personal but also a social perspective, offering ample opportunities to put the presented theoretical conceptualizations into practice.

Robi proposed that dreams can be used informatively, formatively and transformatively. The aforementioned, classical approach, where we analyze dreams to diagnose a person or group, is an *informative* use of dreams. The *formative* use is aimed at strengthening the dreamer's ego, or structure of the self, or in a group setting, to enhance the group's working capacities. The *transformative* use understands dream-telling as powerful interpersonal communication that changes relationships with the person(s), to whom the dream is being told.

Since I like theory, which is easily understandable, I found his work refreshing. It aims to offer us a coherent, unified and consistent conceptualization of dreaming and dream-telling in clinical settings. Differentiating the two, he proposed that dreaming has an intrapsychic and autonomous function. Dream-telling, on the other hand, is always an interpersonal event, resulting from an unconscious choice to share disguised or vague information. Whereas emotional tensions are elaborated in dreaming, dream-telling constitutes a complimentary interpersonal phase - although it serves the same function as dreaming, that is, to process or digest what has not been digested during dreaming. Hence, dream-telling is regarded as a "request for containment". So this explains *why* we narrate certain dreams.

But to *whom* do we tell a dream? What do we want, consciously and unconsciously, from the other/others, when we tell a dream in a group setting? What does the dream teller expect the other/others to do?

Robi's work points to containment, the notion that we ask the other/others to contain something. As group psychotherapists, this will make sense to us. We find support for this idea in history. In premodern tribal groups, for example, individuals shared their

frightening dreams with others. Group dream sharing had a central function during this epoch (McNamara, 2008). Whilst telling dreams in a group analytic setting differs insofar as the group ‘owns’ the dream and later knows what it may mean, we can easily grasp that both are requests for containment. The telling of frightening dreams even more so. We can easily understand this narrating as continuation of an attempt to mentally digest hitherto undigested material. During this process, which serves a *transformative function*, the relationship between the listener(s) of the dream (the audience – tribal groups) changes because of its ‘transpersonal’ nature, that is, a communication between and ‘through’ people. It is possible because of the heightened permeability between people in groups, which enables the use of each other’s psyche, and, thus, enabling a move in the relationship with the dreamer and dream hearer.

Robi also suggested that dream-telling is an unconscious demand for influence and change. This is the most interesting aspect of his conceptualizations, and I will come back to it later on in this article, when discussing a dream, I told on the day.

First, let me do a cultural detour through history, to demonstrate an uncanny centrality of this aspect. Ethnographic evidence of dream sharing suggests that early human groups took the dream contents, particularly nightmares, very seriously, often viewing them as warnings or prophecies (McNamara, 2008). It is also customary amongst the Cuna Indians, a matriarchal society on the San Blas Islands off the Atlantic coast of Panama, to report a bad dream at a town council meeting, because it would be considered at high risk of becoming true. Dreaming and dream-telling is taken extremely seriously amongst the Cunas, who have medicine men (‘neles’), who interpret and cure bad dreams (Van De Castle, 1994).

In her landmark study of the dreamlife of ordinary Germans between 1933 and after the Nazis came to power, Beradt (1985) provides evidence that her dreamers could ‘foresee’ in their dreams what was to become reality years later, namely, the Kristallnacht, mass internal deportations of Jewish people, restrictions on their travel etc. It was through their dreams that her dreamers ‘spoke’ about things which could neither be thought nor talked about. These dreams could be viewed as collective working through of what was unimaginable for German citizens (Hoggett, 2016).

The visceral quality of dreams can result in frightening emotions. Cognizant of this fact, Robi taught us how to work with dreams and dream-telling. Using a fishbowl setting, we had the opportunity to apply what we had learnt. Within the inner circle, one

person told a dream, and the remaining members worked with this dream. The outer circle ('audience') were not allowed to speak for the first part of this demonstration but were invited into the discussion at a later stage. The atmosphere in the group was emotional because our dreams made present our own fears, guilt, anxiety, love, hope and shame, and that of others. And I would like to express my appreciation here to both Robi Friedman and John Schlapobersky, for presenting and facilitating this workshop in such warm, empathic, compassionate and thoughtful manner. John had offered a very helpful response to Robi's introductory talk at the beginning of the workshop, and facilitated a dialogue, summarized and helped to critically reflect on the content and process of the material.

As you know, what comes up in the room is confidential. Therefore, I cannot describe how we worked with dreams in the group, other than sharing a dream I told at the workshop. I will describe some of Robi's conceptualizations and techniques, and discuss emerging themes and their social nature, as well as offering reflections of the following dream:

We were sitting outside a pub on a wooden bench at a table, surrounded by nature. A man was sitting opposite me, and a young boy was sitting to my left. I was feeling angry with the man when I suddenly realized that I also had behaved in a hurtful way. "I'm sorry", I said. Silence. He did not say anything. The boy looked at both of us, eventually turning towards the man: "Are you going to say sorry to her, too?", he asked him. He didn't reply. The man remained silent.

Before describing the application of *informative* and *transformative uses* of this dream, I'd like to mention that I had to repeat and/or clarify aspects of the content of this dream several times, which I consider to be of significance. Some of the men did not understand. They got confused and it took considerable effort for all parties to grasp it. All of the women understood the dream immediately.

Let us start with the *informative use* of the dream and what to look for when using informative aspects. We are interested in the content, structure and level of symbols. The first step in the informative use of dreams is to assess whether there are counter-indications to informative dream work. The first function of informative use is to evaluate and alert us, if the person's (or group's) mind lacks containing ability. People rather than objects, and movement (people or the dreamer her/himself moving), as well as some coherent structure indicate that we can work at this level. Since

my dream had a sufficient narrative, people and movement, there was no need to build a ‘dream skin’ first. Had this not been the case, it would have indicated that my mind was still too fragile and would not have lent itself to working with fully. If this happened in a group, the dream is best repeated over time and worked with at a later stage.

We are also looking for emotions and relations in the group around dream-telling when approaching dreams from this perspective when working in a group. We assess whether the group is a mature enough container and ascertain whether the narrative information of the dream indicates the use of informative or formative work. For example, is there a reciprocal elaboration of the dream content in the group, i.e., do resonance (primitive communication that is experienced instinctively and simultaneously by the group as a whole and at an individual level) and mirroring occur?

There was certainly resonance in the group when we worked with my dream. One of the most striking emerging themes was a gender difference in communication and social interaction, and the time period, when discussing developmental periods in childhood, in relation to the young boy at the table. From Robi’s perspective, we approach dream images as expressions of affective reactions or thematic experiences, rather than as the products of disguise, as we would do in classical dream analysis. The affective reaction in the group was one of helplessness. The young boy in the dream was still able to emphasize with me, trying to mediate between the male and female. The adult man was not. At a thematic level, a difference in social interaction between women and men emerged. How men and women understand each other’s perspective – or not.

When does the boy stop to understand the perspective of the female and splits off his ‘softer’ emotional aspects? When does the boy turn into a man, leaving the non-verbal matriarchal realm of the mother, entering into the patriarchal world, of ‘logos’, the rationality principle, which is an archetype of the Father? One of the oldest meanings of the word ‘logos’ is ‘that by which inward thought is expressed’ (see Marlowe, 2001-12). Words form the basis of all organized thought, all self-examination, all science and civilization. As the child becomes more proficient in the use of words, he gradually moves away from the feminine Eros and the realm of primitive magic into the civilized world of masculine order and ‘logos’ (Nichols, 1980).

According to Kristeva, (2004), the symbolic order, which has developed in our global culture, is an acculturated language. It often simply acts as substitution for bodily instincts. The semiotic relationship to the mother begins to be lost as the child enters the

symbolic. Much of the language we use has the effect of establishing and maintaining us in a relationship with the ‘non-mother’, and we inhabit a world too radically external to the mother.

Is it at this stage of the socialization process that the journey for the boy becomes particularly arduous? Kraemer (2000) found that boys are more fragile than girls, which is not widely known. He found that males are more vulnerable than females, partially due to the biological fragility of the male foetus. However, in Western society, it is typically expected of boys to be, or if they are not, they must be made, more resilient than girls, which adds “*social insult to biological injury*” (p. 321).

Kraemer also showed that culture and class can make a difference to the health and survival of boys, which has implications for the upbringing of boys and the clinical management of male patients.

Returning to the young boy in my dream, could his fragility, which was not immediately picked up by female participants, including myself, be masked by words, but found its expression in and through the ‘silence’ of the man? Silence is also a social process (Stacey, 2001) and, as such, subject to the same societal discourse and ideologies like any other social phenomena and silence has different cultural meanings around the world.

At a phonological level, silence is the absence of a sound. But the non-sound signifies something, which escapes the phonetic. The lyrics of *The Sound of Silence*, Simon and Garfunkel’s (1964) well-known song, highlight the inherent difficulties in expressing emotionality:

“Fools,” said I, “you do not know
Silence, like a cancer grows.
Hear my words that I might teach you.
Take my arms that I might reach you.”
But my words like silent raindrops fell
And echoed in the well of silence.”

The meaning of the song was once summed up as “*the inability of people to communicate with each other, not particularly internationally but especially emotionally, so what you see around you are people unable to love each other*” (Eliot, 2010, p. 40).

In our digital, verbalised computer culture, there seems to be little space for emotionality, the feminine, ‘The Otherness’, the mystical, divination, the world of dreams, where we attend to symbols

and words, whose reverberations always include nuances that transcend their overt meaning. Interestingly, we encounter an association between sounds, females and witches, throughout history across cultures (Sooke, 2014). Circe, best known from Homer's *Odyssey*, the enchantress from Greek mythology, was able through incantation (sound) to transform her enemies into non-human form. Motivated by jealousy, Circe had enchanted the waters where Scylla was swimming after Glaucus had refused to love anyone else but Scylla. The ancient world is responsible for establishing a number of tropes which in later centuries became associated with witches (*Ibid.*). Do we therefore associate anything 'mystical' with witches and the female? In myths and ancient traditions, the female domain is one of hidden mysteries, the esoteric dimension of our personalities. It is she who knows the path through the dark forest and guides the traveller from ignorance to mysterious wisdom. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether we are open to the subtle mysterious that come from the unseen world, the realm of the female, the 'dark continent', instead of automatically discounting the possibility that dreams could 'predict' or 'foresee' something, which has not yet happened.

Ironically, we readily accept 'forecasting' when it comes to the weather and the stock exchange, but dismiss predictions in the form of 'dream-telling'. It is not simply a matter of figure-ground (what comes to the fore and what goes into the back), but one of exclusion, I suggest. We are preoccupied with rationality and logical thought, insisting on classical logic (α and non- α cannot be true at the same time), and in so doing sub-ordinate exclusion of the incompatible 'Other', the feminine part without even noticing it (the feminine - Jung's Anima, the archetype rules over the relationship between men and women). Is this not the work of the social unconscious par excellence?

'Predictions' of future events also may make us feel uneasy, because we are so fixated in the Western world on our arbitrarily defined clock-time and certainties, although quantum physics challenges our concept of space and time, and points to time being an illusion or even delusion. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, a key tenet of quantum mechanics, states that it is impossible to determine, for certain pairs of quantities, such as position and velocity, exact values for a system at the same time. If we were to measure, alternatively, a given system only for a fixed finite time interval, we cannot determine its total energy exactly. This implies that quantum physics allows for a short time that these particles act as if they are moving faster than light, which following Einstein, must then mean

that they are moving backward in time (Krauss, 2012).

The history of science is littered with moments of conflict, debate and passionate disagreement about the relation between time and space. Einstein's equations deal with the shape of 'spacetime', not just space (Cox & Cohen, 2014). Our psychoanalytic heritage tells us that the unconscious is 'timeless'. In dreams the time experience differs from that of waking life. We encounter this subjective sense of time also in clinical hypnosis where we frequently find an altered perception of time. In the Buddhist perspective, time is the substance *I am made of*. All phenomena exist only in the present moment. Past and future are nothing but simply constructs.

In *Africa Dances*, the anthropologist Gorer (1935), who conducted field work with West African natives concludes:

"Their idea of time is extremely peculiar. The present, the past, and the future are inextricably mingled ... Most dream experiences are believed as implicitly physical ones ... It is my belief that natives, without the inhibitions which our view of time and a causal universe impose upon us, regularly dream the future as much as the past, and as vividly with the result that the ideas 'present', 'past', and 'future' have no meaning as they have to us." (p. 237)

So what is time and where is silence situated in relation to time? Their connection finds expression, for example, in the phrase "dead time" (a period without any sound at all), which has significance for the exploration of 'silence' in my dream. You encounter these ideas and arguments in their silent forms throughout this article, but more so in what will follow.

Looking at silence through the *transformative* use of dreams, which I have found one of the most useful components of Robi's approach, the signification of 'speaking silence through dreams', can be explored more fully in a group setting. Robi proposed that dream-telling is an unconscious demand for influence and change. At first glance, it seems obvious that one of my expectations ('demands'?) towards the other/others was to speak, because I found it difficult to bear the silences in the dream, as silence often makes heard the cry of psychic pain (Green, 1972).

Foulkes (1948) viewed silences as an important communication. By feeling what these silence may mean and letting them 'speak' through the voices of the participants, including the conveners, I started to 'feel' rather than 'think' silence. Silence is essentially visceral. In the world of 'logos' we try to think too much instead of being in our bodies and letting our bodies speak to us, through us, what we commonly refer to as 'intuition' or 'gut' feeling.

So Foulkes makes a very pertinent observation and statement. Hence, do we need to pay further attention to the inextricably linked body/mind connection, and attempt to fully integrate it into our theory and practice (e.g. integration of mindfulness, which is still in its infancy in group analysis)?

Returning to the silence felt during this group session, I started to also think about silence differently, which was enabled through listening both at a feeling and cognitive level, to diverse perspectives offered in the group. Some views differed from the traditionally held one, namely that silence is ‘resistance’ and ‘angry withdrawal’, therefore, problematic. I had not problematized the concept of perceived silence and, therefore, somewhat ‘blindly’ accepted the traditional, psychoanalytic meaning of silence and, inhabiting the world of ‘logos’ myself, perceived the silence in my dream in this way, instead of considering it to be first and foremost a ‘speaking silence’ (see Barnes, 2015), a fundamentally social process (see Stacey, 2001), signifying historic, socio-economic and political events.

Both quantum physics, through quantum entanglement, and group analysis, through the corresponding concept of the matrix, hold that we all are inextricably linked. So the idea, that we do not only dream for ourselves but *dream for the Other/others*, offers new possibilities in our exploration of dreams and is more akin to the group analytic approach than classical, intrapersonal conceptualizations of dreams. Hence, from a *transformative perspective*, the silences in my dream can also be understood as an unconscious demand for influence and change *on behalf of the Other/others* – the silent male in my dream. But what were his ‘demands’ for influence and change?

Linking this with Beradt’s (1985) and other aforementioned themes and findings, our dreams do not only consist of past traumatic events, manifesting as nightmares, but may also ‘predict’ future events, which can be conceptualized, if we abandon traditional conceptualizations of time and space. Sadly, as we have seen above, dreaming the future was associated with ‘evil’ and atrocities. This theme has found its expression in/through dreams throughout history (time) and culture (space). Something so unspeakable that could only find its expression in a dream.

Interestingly, the etymology of the word ‘dream’, in Middle English is of Germanic origin, related to the Dutch ‘droom’ and the German “Traum”, which was derived from Middle/Old High German ‘Trouw’. However, we also use the word “Trauma”, derived from the Greek ‘τραυμα’ (hurt, wound) to refer to trauma in German. Whilst in

English we also use the word ‘trauma’, there is no obvious phonological connection as there is in German (Traum – Trauma).

I cannot help but wonder what the phonological similarity between these two words signifies in terms of its connection and relationship with each other and why there is a differentiation in the English language. It is noteworthy that in Old English, *drēam* meant ‘joy’ and ‘music’. During World War I, we find this association between dream, joy, music, and war reflected in songs and hymns sang by soldiers. The Incidental music to Edward Locke’s *The Dream Song* was performed by the Irish born musician and composer Victor August Herbert and was performed in 1919 during World War I at the Central Music Hall, Chicago, for the first time. Subsequently, in *Zeigfeld Follies of 1920/21*, we find *The Princess of my Dreams* and *Weaving my dreams*. To deal with the horrors of the war, ‘dreaming’ started to become associated with hopeful notions, such as, ‘dreams of the future’ and ‘dreamland’.

I am struck by the different German-English trajectory of the word ‘dream’. What are the implications in relation to dreaming (at night), dream-telling and trauma? And how may they be connected to the ‘silence’, ‘speaking silence’ and ‘dead silence’ in my dream? Did ‘dead silence’ try to keep alive Remembrance, Armistice and Memorial Days because it was too unbearable to come to terms with death, and it was a demand (‘cry’) to let the past rest peacefully and begin a process of mourning, forgiveness and permission to move on but doing so was too shameful because it could be perceived as a betrayal to lost ancestors? And was the ‘demand’ also an expression of more feminine aspects, hidden vulnerabilities, asking for permission to ‘feel the feared deadness’ and an accompanying ‘demand’ to end the war and make peace?

It is a very sad reality that violence is more associated with males and history attests to the many atrocities and wars, which have been instigated by males. Whether we look at Germany, Israel, where Robi originates from, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, or other Commonwealth Countries, we find similar patterns of male instigated violence. I am by no means suggesting that females do not instigate atrocities, I am simply alluding to the preponderance of male instigated and committed violence, which often has been associated with ‘shame’ (Gillian, 2009).

What is shame and how is it temporally and spatially related to silence? If we understand them as inextricably linked, it becomes clear that shame is not only a sentiment or emotion, but also a complex psycho-sociopolitical phenomenon, which, finds its expression

through silence. The silence that does not speak but is being silenced. The ‘dead time’. The ‘dead silence’.

Returning to the man in relation to the young boy in my dream, what are the crimes we have committed, and are committing, towards the boy, during and through the socialization, civilization, and acculturualization process, that only finds expression in adulthood through ‘speaking silence’- or is it ‘dead silence’?

Letting the man’s ‘silences speak’ in the group, the ‘dead silence’ between us - the Other (the man)/others and me - was broken, because everything of the Other/others in the dream also belongs to me - the Other/me.

“Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity... By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself The foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigner.” (Kristeva, 1991, p. 1)

This is too difficult to tolerate and digest, hence, we are looking for forms of escape. But we cannot find a temporal anchorage point. Dreaming resolves this difficulty elegantly due to its timeless nature. In dreams, as in our lives, we are the actors in our tragedies, comedies, and dramas. But dreaming has more and more taken on the form of ‘day dreaming’, an escape into positivity, a projection into our clock-time future.

At no other time in history were we so globally connected through digital media than today. Is it really surprising that we try to escape this ‘reality’ through ‘positive psychology’ by dreaming of the future, which is accompanied by up-beat songs and lyrics, which we hum to just as the soldier at war? However, in contrast to him, our ‘battlefield’ is our living room, the bus, the underground, our office, because we are continuously connected to social media, which brings us face-to-face with human misery and human perpetrated atrocities 24/7?. Forgetting has become increasingly more difficult because this has become our ‘normal’ (the norm) lived-experience in our technological world. But our knowledge and experience about the other/others’ cruel realities have become amplified through gruesome images in social media. Famines, war zones, bombings, shootings, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters.

Where does it start, where does it end? However, survivors of genocide, or war have to go on their journey of recovery instead of becoming fixated on the traumata of the past. Time and Space, Space and Time ...

Wohin aber gehen wir

ohne sorge sei ohne sorge

wenn es dunkel und wenn es kalt wird

sei ohne sorge

aber

mit musik

was sollen wir tun

heiter und mit musik

und denken

heiter

angesichts eines Endes

mit musik

und wohin tragen wir

am besten

unsre Fragen und den Schauer aller Jahre

Traumwäscherie ohne sorge sei ohne sorge

was aber geschieht

am besten

wenn Totenstille

eintritt

But where are we going

carefree be carefree

when it grows dark and when it grows cold

carefree be carefree

but

with music

what should we do

cheerful and with music

and think

cheerful

in facing the end

with music

and to where do we carry

best of all

our questions and dread of all the years

to the dream laundry carefree be carefree

but what happens

best of all

when dead silence

sets in

Reklame by Ingeborg Bachman (1956). Translated by Peter Filkins

Speaking the unspeakable. Through telling the dream, I had a dialogue with myself. What belongs to the other, also belongs to me. The silence, the silencing, the aggression and will to hurt, my cultural heritage, the shame and guilt associated with the committed atrocities, are difficult, if not impossible, to fully digest. However, in the current political climate, I am also painfully aware of the Brexit. It divided the nation(s), leading to fall-outs amongst family members, relatives and friends. Reject – rejected. Which part do I, do we, ‘play’? I am starting to wonder, was I unconsciously ‘selected’ by the group to narrate this dream? What function did my dream-telling serve? What projections did I identify with and what remained unsaid?

We all project the Other/others (cultures, societies, countries, counties, continents) vertically above or below us, but are, at the same time, confronted with horizontal projections of other cultures and societies into us. In this way, we create territories and borders: symbols of exclusion, separation, demarcation, and isolation. What the hated and admired Other/others have in common is that both appear as the inverted mirror image of our own: despised cannibals and noble savages. In both cases the boundary is important because there is no *we* when there is no *they* (Lotman, 1990).

“I Have a Dream that one day”

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963)

By telling the dream in the group, a transcendental third space was created. In this space ‘deadly silence’ could be digested and transformed into a transpersonal, international dialogue. ‘Speaking silence’ has spoken in the group through a dream. Robi Friedman’s pioneering approach to dream-telling in group analysis: informative, formative and transformative. **תְּמִזְדָּח אַנְי**, Robi, John, and all of you, it was transformative.

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Wiltshire Wonderland

By Pam Blakelock, Jean Byrne, Jennifer Clegg, Di King, Jacqueline Fogden, Joan Fogel, Kathy Smith.

A pity beyond all telling
Is hid in the heart of love:
The folk who are buying and selling,
The clouds on their journey above,
The cold, wet winds ever blowing,
And the shadowy hazel grove
Where mouse-grey waters are flowing
Threaten the head that I love.

This poem by Yeats came to the mind of one of our participants after our FPC Group Section weekend in a beautiful, comfortable farmhouse in the heart of the Wiltshire countryside at the end of April 2016. The poem evokes something of the social unconscious of our wider context as well our own individual and group resonance.

After our rich experience in Kenmare (Contexts March 2015), seven women graduates of the Group-Analytic Training at WPF decided to extend one of our regular Group Section meetings over a weekend at the Wiltshire home, offered hospitably by one of our members.

In addition to fitting in a long languorous walk to the picturesque nearby village of Castle Combe and a hugely enjoyable evening meal in the local village pub in Grittleton, we met in conductor-less, timed experiential groups. We had discussed and planned our programme beforehand and had mutually agreed to read two papers on shame: ~ Malcolm Pines (1995) *The Universality of Shame: A Psychoanalytic Approach* (Brit. J. Psychother., 11: 346-357) and Sara Scott (2011) *Uncovering Shame in Groups: An Exploration of Unconscious Shame Manifest as a Disturbance in Communication within the Early Stages of an Analytic Group* (Group Analysis 44(1): 83-96). Wide discussion of professional and personal issues ensued.

In retrospect, there seems to be a link between the notion of the “half-covered creatures” evoked by Pines in his paper, as we open and close in our shame, and the idea raised by Carla Penna in the recent Foulkes’ Study Day of the group as an imaginary envelope, opening and closing but with the possibility of a flexible boundary ever opening wider and stretching its capacity...

One member talked about her experience of using ACT

(Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) at her place of work. Another spoke movingly of her experience of extended mothering.

The group touched upon the many challenges presented by the current social context, for ourselves and for the patients and organisations with which we are involved.

We completed our group weekend on Sunday morning with an approach some of us had experienced on the GASi Shadow Workshops. One of us was the timer and we allocated 10 minutes to each member to speak about whatever she wanted/ was most foremost in her mind. When the speaker was finished or ready to hear, the group responded.

As one of our members summarised afterwards, paraphrasing a recent quotation from the actress Kim Cattrall on sleep, the group had the power “to wash away the debris that collects in any given day”. Another member reflected, “When you have had enough of something, you don’t need any more.”

Pam Blakelock, Jean Byrne, Jennifer Clegg, Di King, Jacqueline Fogden, Joan Fogel, Kathy Smith.

“What do psychotherapy patients seek help for?”: A thematic analysis of the written responses of sixty patients “opting-in” to NHS psychodynamic psychotherapy

By Dr Elizabeth Ogston & Dr Beth McHugh

Introduction

What is it that attracts patients to pursue psychodynamic psychotherapy in the NHS? Our research project aimed to explore what patients opting-in for psychotherapy assessment were seeking help for, in their own words.

We aimed to study in depth the patients written descriptions of their problems to see if any common themes arose, and to consider whether themes link to the theory underpinning the therapies offered in the department. This research was based at the North Glasgow NHS psychotherapy department (where EO was employed at the time of the study, and BM was gaining research experience) which offers a range of psychodynamic orientated psychotherapies including group analysis.

Ethics Approval: Obtained - study categorised as service evaluation. Consent given to use quotations.

Method

Data collection:

In North Glasgow psychotherapy department, all patients referred to the department are sent an opt-in questionnaire on which is written: *‘It would be helpful if you could let us know something about yourself and the problems you are looking for help with.’*

Patients may return the opt-in blank, or they may telephone instead of returning the questionnaire. 60 returned opt-in questionnaires were chosen at random from notes in the department.

Data analysis:

Firstly, we took one half of the study group each, whereby the opt-in questionnaires were transcribed anonymously to text and numbered, this provided an opportunity for the researchers to familiarise themselves with the data.

The researchers then met to discuss their views and to develop a coding scheme. Thematic analysis, as described by Howitt and Crammer (2007), was employed by both researchers as follows.

Each researcher then independently “coded” the combined textual data. That is, we applied brief verbal descriptions to small chunks of data, aiming to get as close a fit of the codings to the data as possible. The experience was of asking what is the essence of what is being communicated in this writing, and in doing so, we wrote these briefer coding descriptions on papers separate from the patients’ piece of writing. We both continued to work separately to then identify themes which integrated substantial sets of the codings they had generated.

Then we added together both sets of themes, and met together to go through these written down codings again together, by reading them out. We would then work to agree which theme that code could be placed under. This way, we generated frequencies under each theme. In doing so, we discovered that some themes could be amalgamated, such as “difficulty interacting with others” and “Difficulty communicating with others”. This way, we worked collaboratively to agree a final set of themes which we felt best represented data from the written contributions from patients.

The next stage, was to work separately again to read through all the data sets a third time, and ensure that all pieces of written communication could be placed under one of the themes we had drawn up. This way, separate frequencies were generated for each theme: those from EO and those from BM. This we compared with a Spearman Rank correlation, as a measure of how similarly we coded the data having generated themes, and by proxy how well the themes then fit the data.

The combined textual data from the written opt-in questionnaires was also put into the computer programme ‘wordle’ to generate word clouds, where greater prominence is given to words that appear more frequently, in order to provide a visual summary of the content of the written statements (Figure 1).

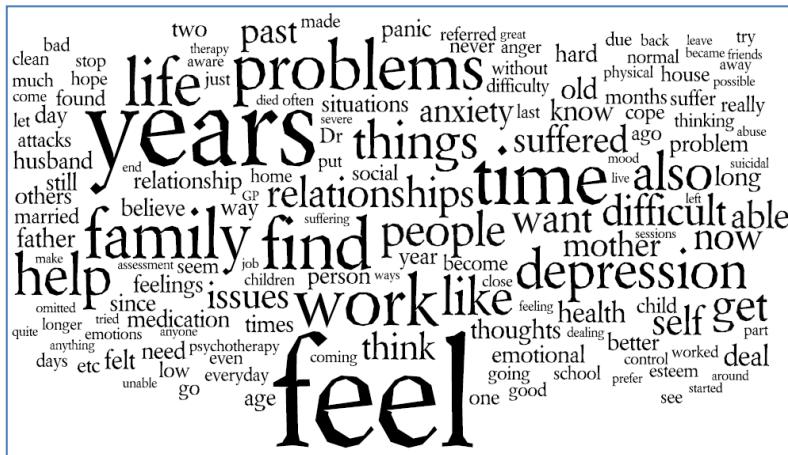


Figure 1: Word Cloud

Reflexivity

The researchers have a shared background of medical degrees and higher psychiatric training but have different psychotherapy trainings. At the time of the study, EO was a qualifying course trainee in group analysis and student of cognitive analytic therapy, BM was ST6 in general adult psychiatry with special interest sessions in psychodynamic psychotherapy, predominantly individual, and qualified in psychodynamic counselling. The researchers worked in different Psychotherapy departments, although the data was all from the Stobhill site. Throughout the process, there were regular meetings between the researchers, during which they discussed the data and emerging themes, and reflected on how their own professional backgrounds might impact on their interpretation of data.

Results

Analysis of the questionnaires generated nine themes which seemed relevant to the problems patients were seeking help for.

The themes, and the number of codings relating to each theme found by each researcher are shown in Table 1. Spearman rank correlation between the researchers' frequencies was over 0.8 which was accepted as indicating significant inter-rater reliability.

Table 1: Themes arising from data analysis	Frequencies of codings relating to each theme found by individual researcher	
	EO	BM
Difficulty relating to others	48	39
Depression and other ‘psychiatric’ symptoms	35	33
Unmanageable feelings	26	24
Hopes and Aspirations for therapy	25	23
Problems relating to the self	13	19
Traumatic events in the past	13	13
Experience of loss	6	8
Previous experience of therapy	9	11
Activities of daily living	11	10

Discussion: Linking to a Group analytic way of working?

“To ask who needs to be cured, what it means to be cured, who can cure, and why, is to ask about the values, beliefs, and the structure of the society in whom these questions are being posed.” (Pouillon, 1972).

We selected 60 opt-in questionnaires at random from files in the North Glasgow psychotherapy department. Identifying details were not kept in the dataset. On average around 60% of patients return an opt-in by writing a response, others telephone.

Reading through the opt-in questionnaires was a powerful experience. On typing them out, one expresses the patient’s words in the first person, and feels invited in to the patient’s inner emotional world, as though the relational context to future work is already beginning.

One perhaps might think that the therapeutic relationship begins at the point the patient attends their first appointment, however the experience of close study of these documents, appeared to show that many patients receive this question from the institution and respond in vivid language. The construction and delivery of such questionnaires, group analysts would recognise as part of the dynamic

administration of the therapeutic setting, which for some patients, will include group analysis. The descriptions the patients wrote back to us, we felt needed to be considered the start of a therapeutic relationship, certainly including the potential for the beginnings of an institutional transference. At times, these included direct appeals to the reader's mind:

“Whoever reads this- lucky you!”

These serve as an invitation to the assessor to pick this up for further discussion at assessment.

Difficulty relating to others was the most frequent theme generated from the data. Frequently, people described difficulties in current relationships. Many people described a sense of loneliness or appeared very isolated. Some spoke of a wish to have close relationships which were currently missing. Finding it difficult to trust people was commonly described. Some people expressed a sense that their emotions were damaging their relationships, or worried about the effect they were having on those around them.

“I find relationships/friendships very difficult in general and lead a fairly solitary life.”

“I feel isolated, alone and the only one with baggage.”

“I don’t trust people with anything to do with myself and to the point where I seldom talk, which has pushed people away and meant that I have very little to do with the outside world.”

One cannot, of course, assume from an opt-in response that a patient will be able to use a relational form of psychodynamic work. The point here is that the first communication with the department, in the patient's own words, so often conveys the theme of *relatedness* as central to their difficulties and distress.

The relational context is common to many forms of psychotherapy (including other methods offered at the department at the time, e.g., individual psychodynamic psychotherapy and cognitive analytic therapy (Kerr and Ryle, 2001), but is absolutely fundamental to group analysis (Foulkes and Anthony, 1957a).

Our finding that the most common theme was '*difficulty relating to others*', before the patients have even begun work at a department providing relational psychotherapies, we hope suggests a good fit between our prospective patients and our theoretical

grounding.

The second commonest theme was that of '*depression and other psychiatric symptoms*'. At times, these two most frequent themes were intertwined such as in this example:

"I have suffered from depression for as long as I can remember, mostly from family problems. I also suffer from panic attacks, insomnia, and have trouble being outside on my own."

This appears to reflect Foulkes' (1957b) central thesis regarding the patients presenting psychological complaints: "*Even to describe the simplest case, even a single symptom, we have to refer to an interacting human network from which it grows*".

Foulkes was a psychiatrist, but since the time of his practice nearly 70 years ago, there has been divergence between biological psychiatry and psychodynamically orientated psychotherapy. The concurrent emergence of our two most frequent themes is a contemporary reminder that the divergence of brain/mind concepts may well appear in psychiatric services, but may not be so separate in these patients' reflections.

Part of the usefulness of psychiatric terminology in society is to articulate a meaningful construct around what can be initially felt as overwhelming experience in the internal world. In this sense, the theme of psychiatric symptomatology relates closely to the '*unmanageable feelings*' theme, but perhaps indicates the individual has started to understand something of their experience through direct or indirect contact with psychiatry in contemporary society.

Again, we noted that the communications about unmanageable feelings were at times conveyed alongside information about social connections. The quote below followed a few lines describing the patient retreating from a recent family gathering:

"I could not control my feelings – I cried almost continuously."

Still within a relational context, some people spoke of low self-esteem and low self-worth. While we recognise the importance of internalisation of healthy relationships in the development of adequate self-esteem, in the absence of specific information about the formative relationships for these patients, these we coded separately, as problems relating to the self. Some people were critical of themselves,

or appeared to blame themselves. Another reoccurring theme was feeling split; having the appearance of being okay, but feeling unable to communicate their internal distress.

"I am a perfectionist and so continually see myself as a failure."

"Most of the time I feel I am two totally diverse people...inside I am frightened most of the time and feel socially inept."

"I'm back to the face on the surface and the dark hole underneath."

The themes of our study seem in keeping with other published qualitative work and opinion. For example, Fonagy (2010) described that '*a wish to target treatment beyond symptom removal*', '*a concern with antecedents*' and '*the relational context of the presenting problem*', are characteristics which make someone suited to psychodynamic psychotherapy. Two of our themes certainly appear to be consistent with Fonagy's thoughts.

The NICE depression guidelines (2009) have used a variety of qualitative research methods to examine patients' experience of care in depression. The themes they identified regarding people's experience of depression and its possible causes, appeared to be consistent with the theme of "traumatic events in the past" expressed in our study:

The majority of the personal accounts also reported childhood events such as trauma, abuse or conflict of one form or another and many of them linked this directly with the onset of their depression. For many people, complex problems in childhood were compounded by multiple difficulties in adulthood. (NICE, 2009)

Trauma or conflict in childhood as a perceived cause of presenting problems was a common theme ("traumatic events of the past") throughout the opt-in statements. Several patients described difficult early experiences involving emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

"I think my problems come from childhood problems."

“I have been aware for many years that experiences in my family as I was growing up may be responsible for some of these emotional difficulties.”

One patient sent back a painstakingly detailed account of personal trauma recounted chronologically which spanned several pages.

It is likely however, that traumatic events in the past are not all reported at the time of the opt-in. For example, one patient wrote:

“I would prefer to just tell you once I meet you.”

This study, in sourcing information only from the opt-in, may underreport the frequency of past trauma, compared to a structured interview.

Loss and bereavement featured in several of the opt-in statements, often as a perceived precipitant of mental health symptoms, and we wondered, at first, if this should be conflated under the heading of past traumatic events. However, these writings were often about a particular loss or bereavement and while they were traumatic, we felt they were different from the trauma of childhood abuse, for example, and that loss specifically should have its own theme.

It was not unusual for people to describe multiple losses. Again, the theme of loss, and the relational context of the loss, were often intertwined:

“(My) mother died 2 years ago and the year before her death was horrendous...Has brought all sorts of issues, and I have become more and more ill and out of control.”

Some people spoke about what they had lost as a result of their mental health problems.

“I lost my job a few years ago through ill health.”

Loss and trauma in the past may trigger deterioration in mental health, so called vertical causation recognised in traditional psychoanalytic approaches including both group and individual psychodynamic work. Systems theory’s contribution to group analytic theory recognises the importance of horizontal causation of the influence of social and family relationships on a person. Chaznan describes how the analytic group, through transference phenomenon

can offer a therapeutic space particularly suited to work through the horizontal causation from social networks (Chaznan, 2001).

Deep, internalised relationships established in formative years are made known through transference interpretations in both individual and psychodynamic work. Foulkes discusses how the group offers a wider spectrum of human relationships to be observed and analysed around each individual member, whilst believing that the transference to the analyst is never as fully developed as in individual work (Foulkes, 1957c). From the most prevalent themes in these opt-ins, it seems one could find support for a service providing either group or individual work around a relational context, and of course this is something which will ultimately be decided by a much more detailed assessment and taking into account patient preference.

Interestingly, several people mentioned previous experience of therapy as a reason for opting-in. The majority seemed to have had a positive experience of therapy in the past, but to be left with a sense of needing something more. A couple of people appeared to be opting-in for this kind of therapy because what they had previously did not work:

“Have lots of councillors(sic) over the years and have found that they didn’t work for me. I feel I need a more intense treatment.”

The majority of people were looking to build on their previous therapeutic work, such as:

“Psychology recommended psychotherapy. Have found aspects of psychology changed how I think and behave but not how I feel.”

It seems perhaps patients do not see different modalities in the binary “either/ or” way which they are presented in services, and may be able to use elements of different modalities in sequence through time.

The theme that we struggled to name the most, ended up labelled as “activities of daily living”. Firstly, both of us agreed these particular comments conveyed at a manifest level, a sense of a practical struggle.

“My short term goal is to be able to get out of bed, get washed and dressed every day and be able to do normal everyday things.”

“I don’t cook, clean, I don’t go out unless its appointments for hospitals or doctors, don’t wash or tidy myself up or get dressed.”

Right away, it seemed, we faced a practical struggle to name this without resorting to language redolent of psychiatric institutions: “activities of daily living”. Could this phrase really be part of a study that aimed to think about the complexities of the patient’s inner emotional worlds? Our arrival at this phrase may reflect one limitation of our study - our shared psychiatric backgrounds were similar and we did not have a researcher from a different discipline. And yet “activities of daily living” conveyed a struggle to complete basic tasks of getting up, getting dressed, feeding oneself. From this point, emerged an idea that these comments convey the tasks a care giver helps an infant with until they are able to start to care for and about the self. Perhaps indication of very early disturbance in attachment is relayed in such comments.

Finally, some people described a wish to explore their feelings or seemed to be searching for some kind of understanding of how they feel as part of their aspirations for therapy. Some people spoke of a wish to change feelings, move on or put something behind them. A couple of people mentioned a wish for normality.

“I would like to find out why I become ill.”

“I would appreciate some help in finding out who I truly am and not what I think I’d like to be.”

“I would like to learn some coping strategies to help me deal with things better.”

“I would like to learn how to deal with my feelings and emotions so that they don’t have an impact on my life in a negative way.”

As described in the quotation from Pouillon at the start of this section, we recognise our interest in this research cannot only be a logical conscious enquiry. We are ourselves, as researchers, embedded in a society where many influences, conscious and unconscious are exerted on us and the work we do with patients. There is pressure nowadays more than ever in the NHS to use quantitative research tools and statistical methods to “evidence” the usefulness of

psychotherapies in the NHS, with psychodynamic psychotherapy often accused of being unable or unwilling to apply quantitative research techniques in the way that biological psychiatry has.

We found qualitative research allowed us to acknowledge our influences and trainings as potential sources of influence, rather than barriers. After all, it is natural to wonder and hope that the therapies we have invested in training in, including group analysis, can meet the patients' needs in NHS psychotherapy. We suggest that such elements of reflexivity in qualitative research are analogous to the group analytic conductor's consideration of their own personal contribution to the group matrix.

We hope that our study of patients' first communications to a psychotherapy department, and our findings with regard to the most frequent theme, "Difficulty relating to others", may be of interest to other group analysts and psychotherapists working in other relational psychotherapies in the NHS.

A further study will follow with regard to thematic analysis of patients written feedback after completion of therapy.

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Within the Limit: A report about the formation of a psychotherapeutic group for patients with injunctions (suspended sentences)¹⁰

By Mafalda Guedes Silva

Abstract

The author describes the genesis of an analytic psychotherapeutic group, which took place on an outpatient basis in the Mental Health Service of a local General Hospital. The group is conducted by three therapists with different professional backgrounds on a co-therapy basis. The patients are referred by the institution responsible for the reintegration and prison services in Portugal (DGRSP – Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais) or by the court directly for psychiatric treatment as an injunction measure, that is, a suspended sentence. The evaluation methodology, the clinical supervision process, the dynamics of interaction with the DGRSP, and a consideration of the main difficulties encountered are presented in this report. The intervention, with its necessary differences and particularities, is based on the theoretical work of Otto Kernberg, Nancy Mcwilliams and Glen Gabbard, and the clinical work of Murray Cox and Gwen Adshead using analytical psychotherapy groups for psychiatric patients who committed several types of offence.

Keywords– Group Analytic Psychotherapy; Group Analysis; Intervention with Offenders; Injunctions; Psychological Evaluation; Differential Diagnosis.

¹⁰ This report is an adaptation from a discussion presented in the Seminar Eduardo Luís Cortesão (SELC), during March and June 2015, at the Doctor's Boarding (Ordem dos Médicos) and the Portuguese Society of Group Analysis and Group Analytic Psychotherapy (Sociedade Portuguesa de Grupanálise e Psicoterapia Analítica de Grupo), in Lisbon. The group members' characterization and their clinical history were eliminated in order to assure confidentiality.

Introduction

Interventions with offenders have not been well-accepted over the years, neither at a national nor international level (Manita, 2008). The primary argument is that offenders should be punished and not helped, and that the human and economic resources used in intervening will be unsupportive to their victims. Furthermore, it is also believed that by treating these subjects their behaviours are being excused and the criminal aspect is being diminished (Manita, 2008).

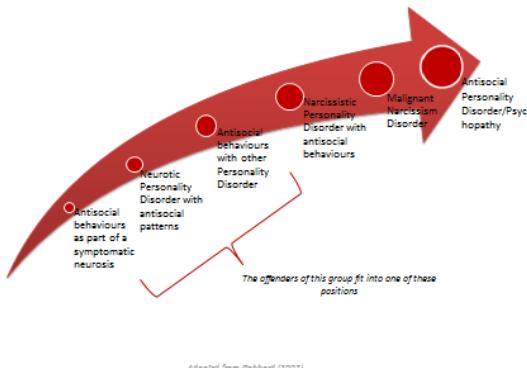
However, our Courts continue to apply sentences in which psychiatric and/or psychological treatment is an imposition to the offenders' reintegration and to the implementation of a suspended sentence. Having in mind the question of what can public Health Services do, the author of the present report describes the genesis of a psychotherapeutic group within an analytical framework. The group took place at the Psychiatric and Mental Health Service of a local Hospital, working on an outpatient basis with individuals who were referred either by the institution responsible for the reintegration and prison services in Portugal (DGRSP – Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais) or directly by the Court as an injunction measure.

Psychodynamic Understanding of the Offender

The importance of a careful differential diagnosis between psychopathy, antisocial pathology and narcissism, in order to evaluate if the patient is treatable and to work out the conditions for an effective treatment, were highlighted by Glen Gabbard (2007) and by Nancy McWilliams (2005). These authors also emphasize the importance of understanding dynamically an antisocial pathology as a continuum with various degrees of antisocial behaviour that the patients can exhibit, at the opposite end of which stands psychopathology – an untreatable condition due to the absence of superego (*see figure 1*).

Concerning differential diagnosis, Gabbard (2007) stresses that it is important to distinguish between antisocial behaviour and the true antisocial personality. The nature of the antisocial behaviour can emerge through peer pressure, neurotic conflict or psychotic thoughts which, in these situations, is not related to an antisocial personality disorder.

Figure 1. Continuum of antisocial and psychopathic tendencies (Kernberg, 1998)



The offenders of this group fit into one of these positions

Adapted from Gabbard (2007)

Nancy Mcwilliams (2005) and Glen Gabbard (2007) specify some genetic, environmental and educational/relationship factors relevant to understanding psychopathy, namely that it is more frequent in men and it has a strong genetic component as suggested by studies with monozygotic twins (e.g., Foley et.al., 2004; Hodgins et al., 2001; as cited in Gabbard, 2007).

The same authors emphasize the importance of early relationships. Abused, humiliated and battered children have been reared by parents with psychopathology and with inconsistent behavioural and educational patterns. These children lived in chaos amid insecure atmospheres, experiencing severe discipline or excessive indulgence, with mothers perceived as weak, depressed and masochistic, and fathers with explosive, inconsistent or sadistic traits. Alcoholism and other substance abuses are common in these families, as are patterns of frequent home moving and family loss and rupture (McWilliams, 2005; Gabbard, 2007).

Regarding the psychopath's self, Gabbard (2007) states that the level of aggressive behaviour makes these children difficult to calm down and to comfort, as well as to mirror their emotional feelings. Being considered a problematic child makes it hard for the potential psychopath to find self-esteem through the normal path of feeling his parents' love and pride. According to the same author, the external

objects fail and the only object to invest in is his own self and the feeling that he can only rely on himself. The primitive envy, the desire to destroy what another most wants is strongly embed in these personalities. Active contempt and depreciation of all the delicate aspects of human life is at the core of the psychopath's personality, regardless of the level of severity they are at (Gabbard, 2007).

In consonance with this, two lines of psychodynamic research can be drawn on the genesis of psychopathy. One holds the perspective that the psychopath has a character organized around omnipotent fantasies and antisocial behaviour. The absence of power in key moments of his emotional development is clear, leaving the subject to search for the confirmation of its omnipotence throughout his life and taking advantage of language to manipulate, instead of using it to express his feelings (Adler & Shapiro, 1969).

On the other hand, the psychopath's character can be viewed as one based on a personal history where parents or important figures have valued the child's demonstrations of power and repeatedly pass on messages that life should not have any limits (Gabbard, 2007). For example, parents who react aggressively when teachers or authority figures try to establish limits to his child are acting out their own rage towards authority figures. In what he regards as prognostic, Gabbard (2007) acknowledges that there is a lack of research about this but it is considered a better prognosis when the main sources of psychopathy are modelling and the parental reinforcement of manipulative behaviour, than when the condition is deeply rooted in chaotic or abusive situations. A child whose parents are indulgent and unscrupulous at least has related to someone and so is not completely devoid of the capacity to connect with others.

Regarding treatment, Gabbard (2007) analyses two types: admission in a hospital or mental institution and individual psychotherapy. In both, the therapeutic goal should be helping the patients insert thoughts between their impulse and action (the mentalization referred to by Bateman & Fonagy, 2013). Aiyegbusi (2005, as cited in Ashead et al., 2005) also considers that one of the aims of treatment is to create a secure base for the patient in order to develop his capacity to manage distress without becoming psychotic or aggressive.

In addition, Gabbard (2007) suggests that the hospital's psychiatrist should determine which antisocial patients deserve a psychiatric admission, as it is recognized that "real" psychopaths do not have a place in the psychiatric ward as they will not benefit from the treatment, taking advantage of the situation instead. Even though,

the therapist should accept that the behavioural changes during hospitalization usually do not remain in these patients. Meloy (1988; 1995), who has done extensive work in the treatment of antisocial patients, has identified clinical patterns that invalidate any type of psychotherapy:

- (1) a history of sadistic or violent behaviour, resulting in the impairment or death of someone;
- (2) a total absence of regret or rationalization of that behaviour;
- (3) intelligence in the superior or inferior limits;
- (4) intense countertransference fear of attack from clinicians, even without any triggering behaviour from the patient.

The patient's recovery will be determined mainly by his ability to bond emotionally with others and exercise some primitive functions of the superego. The treatment of antisocial patients by a group of peers seems to be a valid therapeutic strategy as the experience with patients in mental health institutions, such as the Patuxent Institute (Maryland) and the Herstedverster Institute (Denmark), suggest (Gabbard, 2007).

Several authors (e.g., Adler & Shapiro, 1969; and Kernberg, 1988, 1998) have discussed the application of psychoanalysis in the psychopath's treatment. There are seven principles of the psychoanalytic technique (summarized in figure 2) which are considered as guidelines to the psychotherapeutic treatment of antisocial patients: Adler & Shapiro, (1969); Kernberg, (1988, 1998); Meloy (1988, 1995).

McWilliams (2005) and Gabbard (2007) have compiled some characteristics of the psychotherapist working with offenders:

- a) be genuine in the relation, meaning that the therapist should acknowledge and express their feelings of disturbance to the patient;
- b) be capable, that is, be able to avoid being destroyed by the patient and try not to arouse intense jealousy, which can appear as anger towards the beloved or idealised object, leading to an untreatable negative therapeutic reaction;
- c) do not let the therapeutic success of your patients influence your self-esteem as with this kind of patient you will feel incompetent and frustrated.

Figure 2. Guidelines to the psychotherapeutic treatment of antisocial behaviour

1. The therapist should be stable, persistent and totally incorrupt.

(Rigorous about the maintenance of the normal procedures of therapy.)

2. The therapist should systematically confront the patient's negation and minimization of his antisocial behaviour.

(Help patients recognise and accept the responsibility for their antisocial behaviours.)

3. The therapist should help the patient doing the association between actions and internal states.

(Support the development of mentalization and encourage insight skills.)

4. Confrontations in the here and now are more effective than psychoanalytic interpretations of unconscious material from the past

5. Countertransference should be actively monitored to avoid acting out by the therapist.

6. The therapist should avoid high expectations of recovery.

(These patients will take great pleasure in resisting the therapist's wish to change them.)

7. Psychiatric conditions should be identified and properly handled.

(For example, conditions that may fit in the DSM 5 Axis I.)

Adapted from Mcwilliams (2005) and Gabbard (2007)

Group Analytic Psychotherapy with Offenders

Group Analytic Psychotherapy was first suggested by Foulkes (1948) as therapeutic for people with antisocial behaviours. The research in this area has grown and Murray Cox (1978) outlined three types of

communication that emerge in groups and that is related to high anxiety among its members. First, there is a superficial type of communication that does not reflect anxiety. However, with time, the patient starts to use a more personal and meaningful communication that can be related to anxiety. Then, the last type emerges as a deep communication, related to the revelation of subconscious material that is accompanied by a profound anxiety and even surprise (by the patient). This disclosed material has strong affective components and can be inaccessible to introspection before being revealed. However, these are not necessarily guilt revelations and can even be good experiences that have been concealed until then. In what concerns the manifestations of anxiety in the group, they can be considered conscious or unconscious (Adshead, 2005). In the early phases of a new group, it is normal to be afraid of disclosure and to feel ashamed and so consciously expressing anxieties is not so common. These fears are highlighted in forensic groups and they are not easily dissipated or related to unconscious anxiety fantasies. Patients who have committed crimes deal with feelings of guilt that make the commitment to psychotherapy and the establishment of the therapeutic alliance more difficult, both for the patient and the therapist. On the other hand, in groups of institutionalised offenders, unconscious anxiety is frequent and often manifested through actings out, such as leaving the group to smoke a cigarette, sleeping during the session or even missing the session (Adshead, 2005). In general, according to the same author, group members are available to listen to alternative interpretations of their experiences, nevertheless the interpretations about anxiety and anger must be carefully managed in order to avoid violent situations.

Another type of acting out is the psychotic defence, such as disorganised psychotic thinking which, Adshead (2005) argues, can be viewed as a way to escape the group process. Nonetheless, the psychotic material that emerges can be an important source of metaphors and eventually can promote discussions in the group (Adshead, 2005) although, according to personal experience, it should be handled carefully in order to avoid being considered sarcasm. In addition, Adshead (2011b) considers it important to encourage thinking about the future and working in the here and now.

Regarding the personality, McAdams (a sociologist cited in Adshead, 2011b) suggests that our personality has different levels of organisation and complexity, involving different types of psychological activity: genetics, cognitions and personal narrative.

Adshead (2011b) considers that it is at the level of personal narratives that the change stimulated by psychotherapy can happen,

especially through the re-telling of the narrative. All of us have an integrating narrative that allows us to have an identity based on the several different roles we have and our experience in those roles. In McAdams' words (as cited in Adshead, 2011b), they are the narrative level of personality. Adshead (2011b) adds that the narratives of offenders usually have a lack of coherence and one of the reasons group analytic process is effective, according to Garland (as cited in Adshead, 2011b), is because the other group members can see beyond the cover story and learn about the real story or at least a different one. In this way, the cover story can be disassembled and reorganized into a different interpretation.

In line with this, one of the main questions for the therapist when working with offenders is to understand the extension of the deficits in mentalizing and empathy and to assess if they can be repaired (Adshead, 2011b). The therapist should be aware of small and subtle speech shifts. Accordingly, Cox (as cited in Adshead, 2011b) has noticed, in his psychodynamic psychotherapy with offenders, that shame, distress and embarrassment can block patients from talking about their crimes as much as pride, duplicity and antisociality.

Adhead (2011a) highlights three main reasons to justify why Group Analytic Psychotherapy should be the therapeutic proposal more suitable for offenders:

- 1) shame and guilt are probably better addressed in group as they are self-evaluated emotions that imply an audience that judges;
- 2) the attachment process to a group as well as the sense of belonging to a group are considered pro-social activities that defy the antisocial and anti-group itself;
- 3) some patients, within secure settings, do not have a feeling of security and well-being when alone with a therapist and so they might need some time in small groups to develop a sense of themselves that can be used to be able to think and rationalize.

Regarding the structure of Group Analytic Psychotherapy with offenders, it is usual to have a hierarchy, mainly from top to bottom, in which the power of the technicians is intensified so they appear as idealised figures with a perfect life (Adshead, 2011a).

Also, it is important to address the silent members, unlike in other groups, in groups with offenders. The silent must be perceived as a manifestation of aggressive speech and less as sadness or fear (Adshead, 2005). At the beginning, group members also seem to be just worried about themselves, ignoring other new members.

Moreover, they seem to be unable to express an opinion about others or they do not want to be compromised. Usually, speech is scarce and does not encourage reflection or answers, which results in a long wait for more evolved communication levels and experiences (Adshead, 2005).

Special countertransference awareness is also elementary to the therapeutic process and so, it is extremely important that the therapist considers and writes about what happened and what he felt in the group, after each session (Adshead, 2005).

Adshead (2005, 2011a, 2011b) underlines several tasks for the psychotherapist:

- 1) help patients think about, nominate and attribute a name for what they did;
- 2) create a safe and stable environment where everyone can express freely, particularly for those who are afraid to remember what they did;
- 3) help the patient to transforming an incoherent personal narrative (with its fragments and gaps) into a more coherent one, changing the negative into positive;
- 4) facilitate the patient's deconstruction of the initial narrative that resembles a shell;
- 5) assist the patient to view the treatment as a discovery of the self instead of a recovery.

When conducting a group, the therapist always assumes risks. In group therapy with offenders, Cox (1978) considers that the major risk is emotional aggression. The therapist takes a risk whenever he asks the patients to speak freely, as this invitation might cause a diversion from reality, which is not useful with these patients and emphasises the importance of conducting the group on a here and now basis, focused in the present reality.

Regarding the timing of interventions, the same author suggests that it is extremely important to understand both the right time to intervene and also the way you do it. When dealing with psychotic patients the therapist should not make any interpretations of their defences. On the other hand, with psychopathic patients the therapist can interpret their defences and in doing so, the patient may benefit from a better self-knowledge to achieve more profound levels of personality. In relation to this, the psychopaths mentioned in Cox (1978) are the ones that Gabbard (2007) names as treatable antisocial patients; on the less disturbed extreme of Kernberg's continuum of psychopathy (1998).

In what concerns the group conducting modality, several

authors (e.g., Cox, 1978; Adshead, 2005, 2011a) describe their experience conducting groups for offenders in co-therapy with therapists from different backgrounds. Adshead (2005, 2011a) highlights the importance of conducting these groups with three therapists so that safety conditions be assured and to keep the session going even when there is an absence by a therapist.

In Portugal

The group psychotherapy literature (from an analytic perspective) with offenders, in Portugal, is sparse. In prisons, the work developed by Domingos Carreto Silva (a well-known psychiatrist and group therapist) has been published and presented in national and international conferences.

The link between group analysis and the prison services is deep and the responsible for the articulation between Psychiatry and the prison services was Eduardo Luís Cortesão (2008). He put together a team who produced the main guidelines for the cooperation agreement between the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Prison Services' Direction. From this agreement emerged the organization of Psychiatry and Mental Health care in the prison facilities from the North to the South of the country.

Within the Limit – The group

The group itself was named “Within the Limit” (actual translation) in an attempt to refer to its border situation regarding justice and the community to which the patients belong.

1. Patients' referral and main goals

According to protocol, the order for psychiatric/psychological treatment is medical and so the doctor is the person responsible for recommending it after the first screening. The request is received in the Psychiatric and Mental Health Service and referred for evaluation by the team of psychotherapists.

With this group, the therapists set as main goals for the intervention: to improve the patients' mental health; to encourage relational, affective, cognitive and behavioural skills; and to evaluate this type of therapeutic intervention.

2. Selection Protocol

The selection criteria were the following: the patient must be positioned in the less serious extreme of the psychopathic continuum described by Kernberg (1998); patients cannot know any other group member and psychotherapists or any of their relatives or acquaintances.

The selection process to integrate the group follows the sequence:

1st phase – Individual clinical interview conducted by the mental health nurse.

2nd phase – Psychosocial assessment conducted individually by the psychologists:

Personality assessment; Psychopathology symptomatology inventory; Impulsivity Questionnaire; Decision-making/risk; Divided and sustained attention; Mental flexibility; Planning capacity; Lexical and semantic fluency.

3rd phase – Case discussion with the supervisor – decision about patient admission or refusal.

Admission/ Group attendance.

Discharge – Post intervention assessment to determine changes and administration of a patient satisfaction questionnaire.

The contact with these patients terminates with the conclusion of the injunction. No follow-up after the group sessions was established but it would be interesting to do post-intervention interviews to understand if the patient has had any relapse/setback and to evaluate the quality of present interpersonal relationships.

3. Group Members

The group members are individuals referred by the institution responsible for the reintegration and prison services in Portugal (DGRSP – Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais) or by the court directly as an injunction measure¹¹ of the sentence execution.

¹¹ Injunctions are obligations defined by the Public Ministry (Ministério Público) that propose the suspension of the process. If they are not obeyed, the Public Ministry can send the process to a trial. In the provisional measure of suspension of the process, the victim has to agree with the proposed injunction.

It is worth mentioning that in general these individuals do not have motivation for treatment and do not have psychiatric symptomatology.

At present the group has 4 males¹².

4. Typology and length of the group therapy

This psychotherapeutic group can be considered a small semi-closed group, conducted using an analytic perspective and conceived for up to 10 patients. The group meets in the Psychiatry and Mental Health Service facilities in a General Hospital, in a prearranged room. The sessions happen weekly and each takes about 1 hour and 20 minutes. There is one break in August.

The advised duration of the program is 12 months though this is not always doable due to the time-consuming nature of the judicial processes and consequently this leads to the non-referral to treatment of some patients as soon as they commence the sentence.

Non-adherence is another disturbing factor. Until January¹³, 3 patients have dropped-out of the group after initiating the group sessions; 4 patients have left the treatment in the diagnosis/ evaluation phase and 2 patients have been left out due to severe personality disorder - their results positioned near the extreme pole of psychopathy, using Kernberg's psychopathic continuum (see figure 1).

5. Group Rules

The following operating rules are presented to the patient and everyone in the group should comply with them:

- 1) Confidentiality - nothing referred to inside the group should be discussed outside;
- 2) Punctuality - the group session starts and finishes at the scheduled time;
- 3) Assiduity - it is important to take part in every session;
- 4) When someone fails to show up, the mental health nurse contacts the missing attendee via telephone call to understand the motive of the absence and to emphasize that the Psychiatry and Mental Health Service will notify the absences to the DGRSP;
- 5) Physical contact is not allowed between participants during the sessions;

¹² See footnote 1.

¹³ Year 2015. The group had had sessions for nine months at that date.

- 6) Any contact between participants are not allowed outside the group sessions;
- 7) Group members cannot have met each other previously.

6. Therapists

The group is conducted by therapists with different backgrounds, using a co-therapy modality. The leading therapist was a clinical psychologist and member of the Portuguese Group Analytic Society (SPGPAG) and the co-therapists were a mental health nurse and the author of this report, also a clinical psychologist and student-member of the SPGPAG.

The co-therapy model implies that the leading therapist develops the interpretative functions and disentanglement between manifest and latent communication contents. The co-therapists are responsible for encouraging and clarifying communication. If necessary, the co-therapist nurse also makes the phone calls to the missing members.

Following the co-therapy model, the group meetings happen with at least two therapists, with the presence of the leading therapist not mandatory. However, in my opinion, there was no consensus regarding the question of having two instead of three therapists. In a group of patients with such characteristics, it is recommended that there should be more than one therapist. For example, Adshead (2005) conducts her groups at the Broadmoor Hospital with three therapists, all graduates in group analytic psychotherapy. She states as advantages: the possibility of having a session without any break for the patients; and the opportunity of establishing alliances and of electing different reference therapists in different moments of the group therapy.

In this group in particular, the co-therapy option was made by the Service Direction. Having a nurse in psychotherapy groups was already a policy of the Service. The psychologist who had the availability to conduct the group didn't have, at the beginning of it, the clearance to practice clinical group analysis and so another psychologist was invited to be the leading one.

7. Supervision

In what concerns this group, the clinical supervision was external and conducted by Domingos Carreto Silva, a psychiatrist and group analyst with experience with psychodynamic groups of patients with judicial problems.

In addition, the supervisor was involved in the group formation, overseeing the members' admission to the group, besides attending to meetings with technicians of the reintegration and prison services (DGRSP – Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais).

The meetings with other departments, namely the service mentioned above, have as a main goal the investigation of the treatment fulfilment. Confidentiality is always assured and the information exchange is no more than the meetings attendance, motivation and commitment in the treatment process. In these meetings, the technicians also discuss new patient referrals.

The participants are informed about the service's meetings and their goals, from the first evaluation interview.

Difficulties conducting the group

The main difficulties when conducting sessions with this group were the following:

- a) the technicians' condescendence towards the group members;
- b) the devaluation of the psychotherapy group as treatment by the technicians and participants;
- c) the non-commitment of group members to the weekly session;
- d) the misunderstanding (by the participants) of the group weekly meetings as treatment, perceiving it as one more punishment to comply with, to avoid serving the sentence;
- e) the lack of understanding between the commitment to the group and the fulfilment of the injunction;
- f) the misconception between the technicians' functions and the therapists' functions;
- g) assuring confidentiality due to the meetings between DGRSP technicians, the group's therapists and the external supervisor;
- h) acting out from group members (e.g., arriving before the scheduled session and meeting in the waiting room to "talk"; meeting outside the sessions to pass personal information or making "business" arrangements);
- i) the co-therapy management (especially when the number of therapists is larger than the group members) and the management of the interventions and synchrony between the therapists, graduates of group analysis, and the co-therapist without any experience of being in an analytic group.

Conclusions

After taking into consideration the whole conception and development of this psychotherapeutic group with an analytic background, the author considers that this experience with a group of offenders has potential as a valid treatment (as injunction of the sentence suspension) for the patients referred by the Services or directly by the Court.

With this in mind, there are, however, some practical demands which would assure the quality of this clinical intervention:

- Expanding the literature review, boosting the therapists' wider psychodynamic understanding of offenders, with emphasis on: the psychodynamic case formulation; the conception of a theoretical framework; and creating a common technical language. A sound knowledge of group analytic theory and technique is regarded as the foundation to any analytic intervention and even more to one within an institutional setting with patients with numerous resistances to psychotherapeutic treatment (reinforced by the mandatory condition of a judicial therapeutic request).

- Restructuring the group conducting modality, in particular the co-therapy modality due to the number of therapists. In a small group, such as the one mentioned in this report, I personally believe that having three therapists is excessive and adds difficulties when conducting the group, rather than being an advantage to group therapy. More than having benefits from getting together therapists from different backgrounds, as far as I am concerned, it is important to have therapists that share the same theoretical knowledge and that have experience in group psychotherapy (and if possible to have been under psychoanalysis themselves) and to perceive clinical supervision as a keystone to the therapist's experience.

- Revising the evaluation protocol, as it is currently too long, both in the questionnaires' administration but also the time that the data interpretation takes. As a suggestion, cognitive and executive function tests should be excluded from the protocol, and attention should be brought upon the tests aimed at personality diagnosis (regarded as the touchstone of this evaluation).

Finally, the considerations stated above mean to highlight the aspects that ought to be considered the cornerstones of the framework of this type of intervention, namely to distinguish between antisocial behaviours and the real antisocial personality.

Consequently, creating a differential diagnosis between psychopathy, antisocial personality and narcissism as a support for the clinical decision about the treatability of a patient (that is, if he is treatable or not) and in which conditions, should be the first steps of

the assessment. The psychodynamic understanding of the antisocial disorder here explained supports itself in the idea that psychopathy can be better understood as a continuum with several grades of antisocial behaviours.

With regard to the role of the therapist leading the group at any one time, the interventions and interpretations should always be held with caution, specifically the ones related to defences. In line with this, the therapist should have some characteristics, such as: being stable, persistent and totally incorrupt; and being rigorous about all the normal therapy phases. Moreover, the therapist should repeatedly confront the patient with the negation and minimization of his antisocial behaviours, having always in mind that here and now confrontations are much more effective than interpretations of unconscious material from the past. The therapist who leads the group should as well facilitate the patients making associations between actions and internal states, boosting their ability to mentalize and have emotional insight.

Lastly, I would like to stress the importance of the active use of countertransference feelings by the therapist leading the group, in line with what Cortesão (2008) has suggested for psychotherapeutic work in general.

A special thanks to Patrícia Gamboa for the precious help in writing this paper in English.

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BOOK CORNER

BOOK REVIEW

***From the Couch to the Circle; Group-Analytic Psychotherapy in Practice.* John Schlapobersky, Routledge, 2016**

It is uncommon to come across a book that can truly be said to be a life-work, a thought which made me consider that concept a bit further. As a ‘gathering in’, a life-work is outcome of many discernments upon one’s professional experience. By discernments I mean reflections, born often of struggle, around ideas and practice that are close to one’s heart and identity- in this case, a group-analytic practice. The term ‘working- through’ of ideas seems too bland a description and what I am reaching for is something akin to ‘practical wisdom’, that quality Aristotle called *phronesis*. John’s book is undoubtedly a *tour de force*, but is more than this, insofar as it does indeed express these wise, lived aspects.

It is good and timely to have some of John’s many noted contributions, from previous publications, brought together and amended. Two examples are Chapter 4, *The language of the Group-monologue, dialogue and discourse in group analysis*, and, Chapter 16, *Metaphors and metamorphosis- symbols, transition and transformation*. In the first, John elucidates the different forms of speech that arise and circulate within the matrix of the group, ranging from relatively isolated individual self-reflection to that of full immersion within undetermined free-dialogue- the “work of the chorus” (p. 113) as he describes the latter. The group is, after all, a multi-lateral reality. Usefully, he draws attention to a somewhat overlooked phrase of Foulkes, that of the ‘common zone’, as the field within which group discourse unfolds. (Elsewhere he refers to the notion of ‘outsight’, an equally neglected term, contrasting to the traditional analytic emphasis on ‘insight’). In the second, we are treated to a moving, part-cultural, part-clinical exploration concerning the nature of human suffering. The vignettes in this chapter are particularly moving. This brings me to the wider point that the entire book celebrates the power that is unleashed when we open ourselves to truly ‘learning from the group’, to paraphrase Patrick Casement’s

phrase. John refers to the importance of ‘heuristic learning’ as a form of apprenticeship to one’s practice as it develops over time, which he defines as, “experienced-based techniques for learning, discovery and problem solving that rely on our natural affinity to talk and work together in groups” (p. 3). The sequencing of concepts, illustrations by vignette, commentary and then returning to concepts, is an impressive feature of the entire book. His skill at writing no doubt stems from more than his practice as therapist, but also as teacher. And since the psychodynamics of writing is an area that interests me, one thought is that he has written in the very style of a ‘conductor’, as he orchestrates the ideas, experiences and sources that have led him to where he now is. His encouraging tone is reflected in the way he acknowledges those whom he has taught as well as helped.

There is far too much in the content of the book that can possibly be explored in a review of this nature. But at any point, one could dip into it and find clinically useful formulations; as Frosh comments in his Foreword, “he understands the importance of frames and contexts, differences and similarities, connections and disjunctions of all kinds” (p. xxiv). Both beginners and the experienced can be helped by consulting it.

As a source book, a text-book, John’s is a faultless delivery. In places the cross-referencing and linking are over-detailed, and some of the classifications could be contested; but these do not take away from the spirit in which it offered. It is notoriously hard to portray group life in lines on piece of paper, but the vignettes seem to succeed in doing so. As a Foulksean perspective it is clear and passionate, although stops short of exploring some of the limitations of this approach. So that one question might be, have we exhausted the original, founding paradigm of group analysis and does our discipline require paradigm shift in order to remain relevant in today’s world? Passion alone cannot secure our position, which, it could be argued, is one of decline, and John himself notes in his conclusion that illustrations are not the same as evidence. However, all that would be the start of another type of project. It will be interesting to see in which direction John now takes his writing. After a well-earned rest, I do hope there will be more....

Martin Weegmann

Clinical psychologist, group analyst and author, London.

***From the Couch to the Circle: Group-Analytic Psychotherapy in Practice.* John Schlapobersky, Routledge, 2016**

All real living is meeting (Buber, 1958; *ibid*, p.1)

From the Couch to the Circle is a book of multiple meeting places. Therapists, patients and theories intersect in a multiplicity of ways. The book is, straightforwardly, a good read and unusually for a book of this type, manages to not only to be extremely useful, but also entertaining, moving and inspiring at the same time.

'Human suffering creates its own areas of silence...the shadows of hidden injury...Our task is to gain access to these areas...and allow people to find their own voices' (*p.144*). In typical fashion, whilst writing on speech and silence in psychotherapy, John talks of 'our task', in the inclusive language of a guide who accompanies us. The book is infused with the personality of one who meets us in a *shared endeavour*, in order to navigate *with* us, from silence to discourse, from disturbance to resolution.

One of the difficulties of any text on Group Analysis is the problem of confining an experience which extends over time and place, within and between people, into words on a page. Where one might fear to find a sprawling tome in its efforts at inclusiveness, there is instead, a masterpiece of concision. Just like the street urchin in Camille Claudelle who wonders how the sculptor Camille, finds the woman 'inside the stone' (Nuytten, 1988; *ibid*, p.145), we might marvel at how John finds gems that illustrate the *essence* of Group Analysis with the sure hand of a poet-teacher.

Having been taught and supervised by John and worked in close cooperation, during my time as the London Course Convenor, I know him to be supremely generous with his time, energies and insights in communicating knowledge and passion for Group Analysis. His long experience as therapist, teacher and tutor, makes John uniquely placed to know which papers, ideas and concepts best convey the field in the most salient way. The resulting book is accessible and user-friendly. It has an abundance of tables, charts, diagrams and vignettes, and is easy to navigate. It sets out the current state of Group Analysis, with a comprehensive explanation of what works, how and why, and the outcomes which can be anticipated. Like John's teaching style, each section is amply descriptive, with plenty of illuminating comments and a marvellously detailed bibliography at the end of each chapter. It is as much a library, as a handbook; a commentary on Group Analysis, as a reference text and condenses a

whole body of relevant works into something thought provoking, useful and educative.

The Kingdom of the Word (Braithwaite 1988, *ibid*, p. 278)

Therapy is necessarily the servant of language and an extended consideration of this underpins the early parts of the book. John presents an overview of how Freud's 'talking cure' becomes Foulke's free-floating discussion and leads to the emergence of increasingly group analytic terms: from Lewin, Bennis and Shepard, to Schlapobersky's monologue, dialogue, discourse (p. 33). The *geography* of group development is considered alongside its *history*- what is going on, where, in the group?

The book is divided into three parts: foundations, the group-analytic model and dynamics of change. Within this are other useful triads (e.g. relation, reflection, repair; structure, process, content). Aspects of individual development (von Fraunhofer's qualities of dependency and Millard's key agencies in groups, *ibid*, p63) are considered alongside the development of the group as a whole (Yalom's therapeutic factors, p.64) and reconsidered in relation to themes of group-related development (engagement, authority, intimacy, differentiation, termination, p. 100) and an important consideration of destructive forces, in which Nitsun's Anti-group is discussed (p.94). Clinical practice is also situated within ethical considerations. Group Analysis has at its core an implicit commitment to the self as a social being, which necessarily has both ethical and political dimensions (see Tucker, p.455).

Topics are presented in various ways, both in extended version (e.g., six questions about the language of the group and Tyreman's table of non-verbal communication, p.281) and then condensed into the voice of John's policeman from the radio, who asks 'now what's going on here?' (p440). Themes are returned to iteratively, and expanded with each layer of new information (eg. role of the conductor as mapped against the group's three dimensions and four domains, p.320). There are numerous illustrations of not only what to do and when to do it (e.g. the table on interpretation, p. 448) but also what *not to do*. For example, the table on interpretation (p 448) brings forward and organises Foulkes's original guidance against the over-ready use of interpretation. It is a measure of the quality of the book that there is an extended consideration of the figuration of silence in groups, drawing from sources as diverse as Haddock (p. 146) Winnicott (p.150) a clinical vignette (p.151) and a poem (Matthew Arnold, p.155).

Rationale, Recognition, Renewal

The book is aimed at patients and practitioners, both those new to Group Analysis and the more experienced reader who wishes to explore the field in more depth. For patients, the book gives an excellent introduction to the rationale of Group Analysis, from an experiential point of view. The many clinical vignettes and vivid explanations are bound to produce that ‘aha’ of recognition, which leads to illumination. The book sets out in the clearest terms possible, that whilst group therapy is grounded in the challenge of ‘dealing with difference’, the ‘universality’ of finding one’s problems in the lives of others, is the very source of hope (p.159).

For practitioners, all the basic building blocks of therapeutic technique are there. Someone new to the field will find a clear description of dynamic administration (structure and process in groups) as distinct from therapeutic content (metaphor, symbol and analogue). Ideas are set out clearly and economically, for example, there is a series of tables and figures which give an extended comparative analysis of various types of transference (e.g., Table 14.1, and 14.2; figures 14.1 and 14.2). Similarly, the ‘conductor’s map’ on p.222 is an excellent way to set the function of the conductor alongside the functioning of the group, condensing what would otherwise be many lines of text, into a comprehensive and accessible table.

For the experienced practitioner, there is the opportunity for renewal of acquaintance with old texts reconsidered in the light of emerging ideas, which push the field forward in new and exciting ways. The book is a rich tapestry of interweaving classic and contemporary works (including many excellent works, hot off the Qualifying Course ‘dissertation press’). Themes are explored by chains of association. For example, a straight forward exposition of the ‘T and t’ of transference in groups, is elaborated into the vertical, horizontal, simple, complex, positive or negative aspects of transference. This is then explored in terms of location, translation and interpretation, and admirably ‘topped off’ with the clinical vignette of the ‘crumpled heap’ group member, who becomes ‘the man with the poem’ to ‘tuck you up’ (Mitchell, *This Be the Worst*, p.389)

Where students will find the exposition of simple vs. complex resonance illuminating, the more experienced practitioner will find interest in the extended consideration on resonance, including emerging work around limbic resonance (p. 253). A series of linked metaphors take us from the man helped by angels in a torture chamber (p.425), to limbic resonance in a group setting (p. 433).

Vignettes call up images from the social unconscious, to lead us from ‘a band of angels’ to a biblical ‘ladder of angels’ (p. 431-4).

There is a whole chapter dedicated to outcome research (Dick’s 10 year outcome study; Lorentzen’s SALT-GAP studies, pp.164f) and specialist applications of Group Analysis to specific homogeneous groups. Some of this work is grounded in John’s direct clinical experience, for example, the study of trauma in groups run for refugees. This is described first on page 68, returned to throughout the book and then studied systematically on pp 178 – 180. Where he does not have the experience John calls on the writing of colleagues including former students now making important contributions in the field, whose writing includes Adshead pp 173 – 175; Doran p 180 – 182; and Hayes p 182 - 184. The book also looks across, to other related areas. Chapter 7 for example is an extended consideration of the differences in leadership role and focus in other models, such as the Tavistock, Interpersonal or System Centred approaches, and also the differences of emphasis in the United States.

‘Paying love forwards’ (Arlo, p67)

From the Couch to the Circle, unmistakably has ‘the voice of John’ running through it, with his love for the field, his wisdom and experience as a teacher, supervisor and academic and also, the compassion and humour of the man. Although clearly a reference and resource text for anyone seeking to understand Group Analysis, unlike many books of its type, the humanity of John’s endeavour shines through at every turn.

John quotes Arlo, that reparation in Group Analysis enables a generous gratitude, from which, ‘you don’t pay love back. You pay it forward’ (Arlo, p.67). This book is John’s gift to ‘pay love forward’ to the field of Group Analysis. His final words are given to patients. We end with them, on a note of hope and optimism, because, as John quotes, patients are ‘the ones who get better and go away’ (p.465). Drawing on the image of the conductor’s missing baton (clinical vignette, p.442), if you were to hold something that conveys the heart of Group Analysis, I suggest that you consider holding this book.

The Revd. Dr Nicky von Fraunhofer

London Course Convenor, IGA Qualifying Course/MSc Group Analysis (2007-2011), Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Assistant Curate, St Paul’s Church, Wimbledon.

IGA/GASI Library Report

Further to my last report, mentioning the pending publication by Gyles Glover, recording the venue and those present at Linnell Close in the summer of 1980, I am pleased to report that we now [June 2016] have details of the publication [a copy is in the IGA/IGAS Library, courtesy of Gyles Glover]:

Gyles advises: The book is now finished and available for sale on Blurb at <http://www.blurb.com/b/7130779-7-linnell-close>

The photos (with a couple of extras) can also be seen on my Flickr page at <https://www.flickr.com/glyesglover/c0AA91>

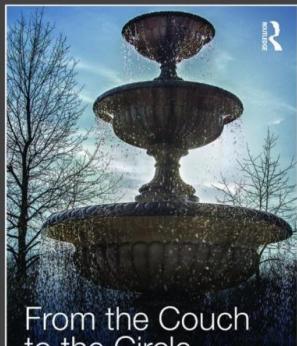
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We are appealing for letters, notes, and correspondence from Foulkes that Society members may possess. This will add to our already valuable society archive that contains much interesting material, papers and minutes and that is a significant source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

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From the Couch to the Circle

Group-Analytic Psychotherapy in Practice

John R. Schlapobersky

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John Schlapobersky, Training Analyst, Supervisor and Teacher at the Institute of Group Analysis London and Research Fellow, Birkbeck, University of London. He is in private practice at the Bloomsbury Psychotherapy Practice.

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EVENTS

GAS International Quarterly Members Group (QMG)

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Saturday 23rd April

Saturday 9th July

Saturday 22nd October

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

Conductor: Ian Simpson.

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47 Nelson Square, London SE1

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

The fee for the group is £25 per day or £80 for the year.

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All GASI members are welcome to the QMG.

Crossing Borders: Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges



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- first announcement -

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Welcoming Letter

Crossing Borders Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges

Berlin
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Maritim Hotel

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairs:

Kurt Husemann and Gerda Winther

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EL GRUPO,
 tierra de acogida.
 Integrando la diferencia

ROBI FRIEDMAN

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PONENTES



Saturday 8th October 2016

9.30 am – 5.00 pm

Venue: Tavistock Clinic

120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA

LIFE and DEATH in GROUP ANALYSIS, BION, EUROPE and BEYOND

A Commemorative Conference on Foulkes 40th Anniversary, as well as Cervantes and Shakespeare's 400th

Speakers*: Prof Michael Bell, Dr Arturo Ezquerro, Prof Bob Hinchliffe and Dr Morris Nitsun

Death is ubiquitous and, ultimately, a traumatic rupture of attachments – as Bowby put it. Europe is going through its deepest crises since WWII. Hundreds of people have been killed in recent years by atrocious terrorist slaughter and by murderous, suicidal plane crashing. And, in the last year alone, more than six thousand people have drowned while desperately trying to reach the shores of Southern Europe in their fight for survival. Does Europe need to become an island and Brexit an isle within an island?

Foulkes suddenly died on 8th July 1976; he was running a group for IGA colleagues. A couple of weeks earlier he had written about death for the first time. Before WWII, he fled from death in Europe to the relatively safety of Great Britain. In WWI, Bion was the only survivor of his regiment; death stayed present in the back of his mind for the rest of his life. Bion and Foulkes created leading schools of psychoanalytic group work: the Tavistock and group-analytic models.

Why has group analysis often turned a blind eye to death? Is death not a group concept? Different members die at different times; but the group goes on, or does it? According to Freud personal death cannot be present in the Unconscious because we have never experienced our own death: it is always the death of the other!

The sense of death is not separable from, or comprehensible apart from, the sense of life. We shall explore life and death focusing on Bion, Foulkes and the current landscapes in Europe, as well as the wider world views represented by Shakespeare and Cervantes who died within a glimpse of one another: Cervantes on 22nd and Shakespeare on 23rd April 1616. The hybrid nature of the conference is a challenge; but the experience should be well worth it.

09.30 - 09.50	Registration
09.50 - 10.00	Introduction: Dr Arturo Ezquerro
10.00 - 10.40	<i>Life and Death in the Worlds of Cervantes and Shakespeare – Prof Michael Bell</i>
10.40 - 11.20	<i>S. H. Foulkes: Silence on Death and its Resonance in Europe Today? – Dr Arturo Ezquerro</i>
11.20 - 11.35	Coffee break
11.35 - 13.00	Small groups (IGA and Tavistock)
13.00 - 14.10	Lunch
14.10 - 14.50	<i>Bion: With Death in Mind – Prof Bob Hinchliffe</i>
14.50 - 15.30	<i>Between Life and Death: Dialectical Tension in Group Analysis – Dr Morris Nitsun</i>
15.30 - 15.45	Coffee break
15.45 - 17.00	Large group

*Speaker biographies can be found overleaf

Ticket prices (Early Bird / Full Fee):

Please note that the Early Bird deadline is 31st July 2016.

Public	£125 / £139
IGA Members /Tavistock staff	£109 / £125
IGA/Tavistock Students	£95 / £109

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www.groupanalysis.org 02074312693



We, the members of IRENE, z.s., request the pleasure of your attendance at the
PRIX IRENE 2016
and the launch of a new book:
SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS Vol.2 in Czech

Schedule:

9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 9:40	Welcome and book launching
9:40 - 10:50	Panel moderated by Haim Weinberg
10:50 - 11:00	Short break
11:00 - 11:10	Laudatio
11:10 - 11:20	PI awarding + toast
11:20 - 12:30	Lecture by Earl Hopper

Opportunity to buy books SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS vol.1 and 2 and other books published by the IRENE PRESS will be available during the whole conference.

TIME: Friday October 21, 9 -12:30

VENUE: New York University of Prague

Earl Hopper, PhD (Honorary Member of the Institute of Group Analysis, Member of the Group Analytic Society International, Fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society) **has been elected the 2016 Prix Irene Laureate**. The Prix Irene is awarded each year by the Prix Irene Committee in appreciation of work that promotes peaceful coexistence between human social groups, including

contributions to journalism, literature, art and music, theology, or science. Prix Irene takes its name from Dr Irene Bloomfield, a prominent British group analyst, who led the development of group analysis in Prague, uniting people of different ethnic origins, and who promoted psychotherapy for refugees, victims of social violence, Shoah survivors, and political prisoners. For many years, Irene worked in Prague with Dr Helena Klimova and her colleagues. Dr Klimova is an Honorary Member of the Group Analytic Society, and the founder of the Rafael Institute. Earl Hopper is the first scientist to be honoured with this award. He has lectured, conducted small groups, and convened large groups for students and colleagues in Prague. Dr Hopper is the Editor of the New International Library of Group Analysis, which includes two volumes about the social unconscious that have been translated into Czech. He is the only Laureate who knew and worked with Irene. They were in group supervision with S.H. Foulkes and continued to discuss with each other their work with elderly survivors of the Shoah.

Conference: Prague, 21 – 23 October 2016

Organised by: Rafael Institut z.s. www.rafaelinstitut.cz, Tel Aviv Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis www.taicp.org.il & Israeli Institute of Group Analysis www.iiga.org.il

Civilians at War: Losses, Recovery and the Experience of the Helpers

The international conference will deal with the lot of the civil population that is caught up in the many wars, terror attacks, and armed conflicts that are taking place all over the world nowadays. It will explore the ways this situation affects everyday life of people who are subjected to such continuous threatening reality as well as that of mental health professionals and para-professionals who are struggling to help them.

<http://www.civiliansatwar2016.com/en/>

The Visitors

A Psy-Fi Tale

By Mike Tait

Part I

If they'd had heads they would have scratched them. How much would the selection of participants distort communication? Might knowledge be best acquired by conversing with random people on the street or by organizing meetings with representatives? Were all people allowed on the street? Did all people feel represented? How possible was it to represent the views of another? Did politicians articulate a particular ideology which narrowed thinking? Were successful citizens validated within thoughtful and inclusive social and commercial structures? Were academics organized in 'disciplines' shaped by exploratory impulses or by academic politics and funding priorities? Would a prison location offer the best possibility of a connected-up conversation? This question was quickly answered in the negative by local people who were otherwise intrigued by the prospect of meeting the Visitors. A prison setting would give undeserved status to criminals and highlight the least pleasant aspects of humanity. The Visitor's response which asked questions about the links between teeth, stomachs, eyes and ears of a creature created confusion and raised anxieties. Why turn a sensible explanation into a series of questions? As guests, might they not respect the customs of their hosts? Curiosity and fear vied for ascendancy: the latter dominated the headlines.

Strenuous efforts were made to persuade them to meet in a University, where they might be studied scientifically, or a military establishment where security measures would make more likely the containment of any unforeseen dangers. Plans to empty a suggested prison of its criminal population were pre-empted by another question which enquired as to whether it would make sense to begin conversations at the place that the most intransigent criminals were moved to. Their questions did not feel like questions. Once the turmoil had settled, curiosity only narrowly out-weighed fear. The Visitors could not be found for negotiation let alone surveillance. They didn't seem to have any obvious means of transport which could be monitored. An initial impulse by those charged with security was to flood potential locations with military personnel but other voices pointed out that this was humanity's first contact with an apparently more advanced life form and such a course of action might be seen as

provocative. Whilst the Visitors had no obvious weapons, their very arrival in such a mysterious manner suggested an inconceivable level of scientific development. Caution was advised.

Part II will be in the December issue

The poster features a large, stylized white word 'Creativity' against a dark blue background. Below it, a landscape photograph of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff is visible. On the left side, there are two portrait photographs: one of a man (Morris Nitsun) and one of a woman (Sasha Roseneil). To the right of the portraits, text details the event: 'An exciting study day organised by Midlands Group Analysis and CentralMatrix'. The event details are listed as follows:

**Saturday
5th November
2016
9.30 -4.30
The Studio
Birmingham
£85**

Includes 2 course lunch and refreshments

**Are you interested in individuals and groups,
psychotherapy, training and personal growth?**

**... Where groups
facilitate growth
Morris Nitsun**

**... A Psychosocial
Perspective
Sasha Roseneil**

contact: events@centralmatrix.org
More info: www.centralmatrix.org

CentralMatrix

CONTEXTS' COLUMNIST

Quantitative Unease

By Susanne Vosmer

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

Power and Rejection

I don't know what you associate with power and rejection, but I'd say that the probability of you having encountered some kind of power struggles and rejection at one point in your life is 0.999999. (Probability is expressed by a number between 0 and 1; if the event is almost certain to occur it is near 1). And you will probably have rejected something or someone in your lifetime and wondered whether you did the right thing. You hypothesize that it wasn't the right thing, otherwise you wouldn't agonise over it. Well, I'd say you think like this because you are having a bit of a confidence crisis at the moment (my hypothesis). Wouldn't it be great if you and I knew the probability that your or my hypothesis was true? Yes, indeed, it would. You think about using a statistical test, because anything that sounds remotely scientific must be able to help you out here, right? Sorry to break it to you, unfortunately, statistical tests do not provide us with this information. And this is a very crucial point that many get wrong.

Let's unpick this a bit more by looking at a research question: "Do aliens make group psychotherapists nervous?" Since you have always been wary of aliens, you do believe this to be a true hypothesis (a statement about the world that can be tested to see whether it is true or false). But your training analyst, yes, the one with all the power, rejects this statement, and has an alternative hypothesis, namely that you are hallucinating as result of your nicotine withdrawal. However, you know what your training analyst does not know: you have not stopped smoking so you cannot be hallucinating because of low nicotine levels, but you don't want to tell her that because she might question your commitment to beat addiction or your ego strength in general.

You want to avoid that by all means. So you are left with a conundrum. How can you convince your very critical training analyst that aliens (yes, they exist, you are sure) make group psychotherapists

nervous? You think of designing a RCT (randomised controlled trial) because of their status in the research hierarchy. After a meta-analysis they are at top of the pyramid.

You define ‘nervous’ and thinking about it, it’s a bit like feeling butterflies in your tummy and you are really anxious just thinking about aliens. So you substitute ‘anxious’ with ‘nervous’ upon reflection and find a questionnaire with good psychometric properties that measures ‘anxious’ (e.g. Beck questionnaires tend to be valid, reliable). Then you find your subjects (aliens and non-aliens) and decide a method of randomization (e.g. you flip a coin or use a list with random numbers), and randomize your sample into groups and start.

Stop! Not so fast. How do you know how many subjects (participants) you need to recruit for your trial so you can be sure that the null hypothesis can be rejected? Rejection, there is this word again, which brings back memories but not the right ones and you don’t like rejecting something because the last time you did, you got it wrong. Sad but I suggest you do some exposure therapy so you get desensitised to the term because for research purposes, rejection is pretty crucial, particularly, when it comes to the null hypothesis (a statement that suggests that nothing interesting is going on when it comes to aliens). For example, a null hypothesis would indicate that ‘there is no difference between the observed data and what you expected’, or ‘there is no difference between aliens and non-aliens (two groups)’. If you wanted to reframe your hypothesis with regard to the null hypothesis, you could say that “There is no difference between aliens and non-aliens with regard to making group psychotherapists nervous”. That would be an example of a null hypothesis of your hypothesis.

Returning to power, now that you are more comfortable with the concept of ‘rejecting-rejected’, if the main purpose of your study is hypothesis testing, then the sample size (number of subjects/people) you will need, depends on power. In other words, you need to do a power calculation. And power here is the probability, if there is truly an effect of a given size, then you will reject the null hypothesis (but not your training analyst or group members). And as a general rule, the more participants you have in a study, the more the power of your data is increased. There is a fabulous formula to calculate this, but we won’t go there here, because you have this mate, a statistician, who does this for a living and can help you with that. And if you ask her/him to explain to you the Bayesian approach, you will, in all likelihood, have made a friend for life (Thomas Bayes 1702-1761 was

a nonconformist minister who studied the probability of hypotheses given some data and came up with a formula, the Bayes' theorem, namely the likelihood tells you everything you need to know about the data).

But for our purpose, let's do simple. All you need to know is that if the main purpose of your study is estimation (you want to estimate how many group psychotherapists are anxious compared to non-therapists), your sample size depends on how precise you would like your estimate to be. Precision is key here. You can think about precision in terms of the width of your 'confidence interval'. A 'confidence interval' has nothing to do with your fluctuating confidence levels, but is a statistical term. It is useful when it comes to thinking about the results of your study and, in particular, if you were to repeat (replicate) your study whether you would get similar results. We will come back to this later on.

Let's stick with graphs for a moment because you find them often presented in various forms. Don't worry about graphs, the basis thing you need to know about most graphs is this: you have an x-axis and a y-axis. When you draw a line, you state the value of y in terms of x. For example, $Y=5x-4$. When you put in other powers of x, for example, $Y=1.4x^2 - 5x - 4$, you can get a curve instead of a straight line. This is called a 'non-linear' relationship. Now this curve can change direction. And the number of times it can do so is related to the number of different x terms you have. You don't get too bogged down into mathematics. The important thing you need to remember is that both x- and y-axis represent something (see Vickers, 2010 for more detailed information if you want).

Take your weight and height, for example. If you weigh 80kg and your height is 190cm, you draw a line up from the x-axis (the bottom line) until 80kg and a line across from your y-axis (horizontal line on the left side) at 190cm. A typical graph in research papers often is presented as a scatterplot (you see lots of dots scattered around), or a bar chart. Graphs show you the data of the trial.

Let's say you asked your colleagues and training analysts what their weight and height is (careful with reporting weight data, you still would like to be invited to the annual Foulkes lecture). If you are interested in the 'mean' (average), you add up all the values for weight and height (separately of course) and then divide each (weight and height that is) by the number of people you have included.

When planning and making decisions, the mean is better than the median (half way point of your weight numbers: half of your sample have values higher and half have lower values than the

median).

However, when you have a very skinny analyst, who weighs 20kg, and a few male training analysts towards the fuller size with 200kg, your data has so-called ‘outliers’. When you have many outliers, the median reflects the data fairer than the mean. And that’s an important point to remember. If you do a trial with 200 people and 150 improved but 50 got worse (outliers), the mean would not give you a clear idea of what is really going on. The median would give you much better insight into the data and whatever conclusion has been drawn.

Together with the mean and median (so-called ‘measures of spread’), standard deviations (for mean) and interquartile ranges (for medians) are reported. You might have seen the ‘bell-curve’, which is reported when you have a ‘normal distribution’ of your data. (If not, google it.)

Take the data set of the height of all of female training analysts, for example. A well-known rule of the thumb is that 95% of observations are within two standard deviations of the mean (these data deviated from the mean). The mean and the standard deviation, which are commonly reported in research papers are handy figures to know. (But please note that for medians, only interquartile ranges are reported and not standard deviations.)

What you can do with is this very handy information (and we stick to the height here for obvious reasons) is this: You can answer questions like ‘what height is exceeded by only 5% of female training analysts’ and ‘what proportion is taller than 150cm’. ‘What are the heights between which 50% of female analysts’ heights can be found?’ So even if the paper does not report this information but you want to know it, you can calculate it by using the reported figures for the mean and standard deviation (commonly abbreviated as SD, or with the letter σ or s ; the SD gives you the variation ‘dispersion’ of your data). You can also test hypotheses (e.g. if you have the mean and SD of training analysts who are whiskey drinkers, and you have similar data from the general population (your control group), you can statistically work out whether not drinking whiskey can affect weight. Clever, hey? How does this work? We already talked above about where 95% of data falls. About two-thirds of observations are within one SD of the mean and 90% of observations are therefore greater than the mean (expressed as $x\bar{}$; you often find μ , which is the population mean, that is all analysts not just your sample) minus 1.28 SD. It’s also the case that 86.4% of observations are less than the mean plus 1.1 SD (see Vickers, 2010). By the way, if you ever want to invest in a book that helps you understand statistics, that’s *the one*.

Coming back to the ‘confidence interval’, you know now that

if you investigated a sample of aliens versus non-aliens, 95% will have values within 2 SDs of the mean (we assume that your data is ‘normally distributed’). We call this the ‘reference range’.

Now you are particularly interested in aliens and therefore would like to repeat this study many, many times. 95% of estimates (the mean of your data), or the difference between the two types of anxiety that’s expressed, would fall within two ‘standard errors’ of the true mean, that’s the ‘confidence interval’ (CI). And 95% of 95% confidence intervals will include the true value of an estimate. So in other words, lots of alien studies, if you like to get the true value.

If aliens confuse you, think about intelligence tests (IQ tests), you might have heard about them. When I administer intelligence (or neuropsychological tests), the confidence interval (CI) is pretty important. Let’s say your training analyst received an IQ score of 115. You look up this score in a table and see that the confidence interval at 95%, (the usually selected percentage), his score falls between 104 -121. This means that his true IQ lies somewhere between 104 and 121.

So far so good? I mentioned standard error above, without explaining it. It’s a measure of our certainty about the value of some ‘parameter’ (= the true value of an estimate). You don’t need to worry about standard errors, they are simply equivalent to the standard deviations of your estimate of the parameter and you can calculate them if you are keen. If not, what you do need to bear in mind is that the larger the standard error, the more *uncertain* we are about the true value of the parameter. So a large standard error is bad news.

Well done, if you are still with me by now. The other thing to say about confidence intervals is that in research papers, the authors often give you the CI together with a value. Let’s say if you found that the mean weight of trainings analysts is 180kg, and, for argument’s sake, your CI is small (178-182kg as you can see it’s a small difference between 178 and 182). This is good news because the true value lies somewhere between 178 -184; in other words, large differences are not good news. Of course, more can be said about CIs but let’s leave it there for our purpose and move on to one of the most important and talked about values, the one you do need to get your head around when appraising research papers:

Yes, you might have guessed, the all so important p -value. P -values are used to test hypotheses, nothing else. Don’t let anybody tell you otherwise. Convention says that values at 0.05 (5 out of 100) or below ($p = 0.01$; 1 in 100; $p = 0.001$ 1 in 1000) are ‘statistically significant’. The smaller the value, the better. If you have a value of p

= 0.499999, sorry, but that's not statistically significant. Doesn't make sense, I know, it has been arbitrarily defined, but that's just how it is, so don't sweat the small stuff and practise acceptance.

However, when you come across research papers where authors enthusiastically report many, many p-values, let your frustration be heard, because someone in the research team got carried away trying out SPSS probably to test what it can do or if they are mean, just to confuse you. The thing with SPSS, as impressive as it is, it is software and as such does whatever you tell it to do. You are the brain behind it so impressive SPSS analyses are not correct if you told that programme to do something which does not make sense. Vickers will tell you that all lots of p-values tell us is that the research team has tested many, many hypotheses. If they haven't, well, then you might start wondering what they were doing other than trying to express readers with lots of Greek symbols.

Don't worry too much about intimidating Greek and mathematical symbols. The bottom line is this: if you come across a psychotherapy trial which reports $p \geq 0.05$ for shouting at your group members as intervention, don't do it! When $p \leq 0.05$, trust the group or whatever the researcher was using as an intervention, well you could try it.

However, bear in mind that a more significant result does not mean a more important result, or a larger effect size, it just means that a result was detected, which is considered to be statistically significant. All good? So if your group asks you what a p-value is, you can now confidently tell them that it is the probability that your data (or any data) would be at least as extreme as those observed, if the null hypothesis were true.

They may have started to dissociate when you were telling them this but nothing works as well as the smell of freshly brewed coffee to get dissociated adults back into the here-and-now, trust me. You may wish to try it to understand 'at least as extreme....' Gibberish. Imagine this scenario:

You sit in your group, one member comes in with a full cup of coffee, puts the coffee cup on the floor - because you don't like your members drinking coffee in your group. But by the end of the group, you notice that the coffee cup is empty! It wasn't just your group who was dissociating then, hmm? The weird thing is, there is no wet stain on the carpet, so where did the coffee go?

When you confront your group member, he gives you a big smile, stating that he has not drunk the coffee. You sit there, thinking, hmm, coffee cup is empty, it's unlikely that the coffee cup is empty,

if he had not drunk his coffee. Hence, you reason that he is lying but you give him the benefit of the doubt. You look at the data (empty coffee cup) and consider the hypothesis (he has not drunk the coffee). You reason that the empty coffee cup (your data) would be unusual, if the hypothesis were true (that he has not drunk the coffee - after all where did the coffee go?). So you reject the hypothesis but, please, do not reject your group member, because there is an alternative hypothesis: The group member next to him drunk it..... but that is a completely different scenario, and we won't have time to go into this now.

In the winter issue, we will return to RTCs and what else there is to know about them, other than power and rejection. Until then, enjoy the last autumn weeks. Cheerio.

References

Vickers, A. (2010). *What is a p-value anyway? 34 stories to help you actually understand statistics*. Boston: Addison-Wesley.

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