

Group-Analytic Contexts

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Editorial

As we read this special issue of Contexts, many of us are preparing for our journey to Berlin and Germany. I am myself wondering whether the 4 years of German I studied between the ages of 12 and 16 will serve me at all. Or is my German, like Oskar, the protagonist of Günter Grass's work of genius *The Tin Drum*, stunted and stuck forever in its infancy. "Ich spreche kein Deutsch. Ich habe alles vergessen" being one of the few things I trained myself to remember. Actually, more to the point, without ever having been to Germany, how can my stereotypes and fantasies of Germany have grown at all from the stunted and endless crass and one-dimensional post WWII otherness within which I "grew up". The episode of Fawlty Towers in which Basil, when confronted by a small group of German visitors to his hotel, in his delirium endlessly obsesses about "the war", perfectly, painfully and hilariously captures the infantile obsession of the crowing victor and the chosen glory mentality so deeply embedded in the post-war British social unconscious and, of course, in me.

As a child, I carried a vague notion that Poland, the birthplace of my father was somewhere way beyond a great wall that divided a city named Berlin. And the existence of that wall, combined with a giant iron curtain, somehow meant, even though we couldn't have afforded it anyway, we couldn't go there to visit. The impossibility of going there in person meant I constructed ideas and images of those places beyond the wall instead. In me, East of the wall was usually drab and grey, cold and damp, black and white, like the movie version of John Le Carré's great spy thriller *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, a novel which was my first literary encounter with Berlin in my teens. The vision the story left me with was of the east as a place of death, division, duplicity, barbed-wire and danger. Around that time, fortunately, I also had my first ever visit to a country located ideologically east. I visited Pula in (Croatia) Yugoslavia in 1979, on the surface a place so unlike the east of my imagination, a beautiful exotic (for me then) coastal city awash with Roman ruins. Beneath the surface though, there were glimpses of a tired and weary drabness, alongside omnipresent photos of Tito, who stared ominously down at me in all the café's and currency exchange bureaus I frequented.

So, how do we cross the borders from the simple places over-determined by our infantile imagination to the complex and surprising places in which too much otherness gives way to just enough? As group analysts, we get together from time to time, in significant

enough numbers, to hang out in large, median and small groups, with a view to finding out whether we can still talk with each other, despite the walls and barriers which tend to impede our capacity to do so. While there is a strong theme in this issue of looking forward to reconnecting with the GA community, some of the contributions to this special issue, from Brazil, Israel, Mallorca and Greece, arise from thoughts of being in Berlin for the first time. Anticipating this journey is stirring up powerful feelings, stories and associations. Julie Howley tells us the deeply moving story of her encounter with Seamus, a returnee from the Irish diaspora. We hear the story of Carla Penna's "German" blonde hair, deeply rooted in her family history. While, Zoe Voyatzaki shares her thoughts on the EU, Brexit, Grexit and the divisions of the north and south of Europe, Anastassios Koukis takes us back to that photo of a "three-year-old boy from Iran, whose lifeless body was washed up on the shores of Alikarnassos".

From Germany, there's a conversation, that has much to teach us, between a group therapist and an anti-discrimination worker on the issues of power, privilege and discrimination. There's also Martina Stang, Berlin resident, who describes the economic and structural conditions for group analysts in Germany, as well as sharing with us some views from the street.

I am delighted to welcome back our regular columnist MYYWTI from his hiatus, seemingly refreshed and on fire, sharing his *BOB* passion with us as well as reminding us of some of Berlin's musical legends. I am also very grateful to Susanne Vosmer, our other regular Contexts' columnist, who enthusiastically took on the task of guest editing this issue and who deserves much of the credit for the variety and quality of the contributions here included.

Peter Zelaskowski

President's Foreword

Dear Members,

This is my last foreword for Contexts – our Newsletter, so well-edited by Peter Zelaskowski in recent years. I am grateful for his work and investment. Contexts has changed in the last year to be online, and while some of you will make this step only with difficulties, I hope we'll finally find the way to enjoy it. GASi membership will read and use Contexts as frequently as possible: it's interesting and being online makes it more up to date. There are also many layout and aesthetic advantages.

Our next (and my last) endeavor is the Berlin Symposium in August. It is a huge gathering with enormous potential for growth and productivity for the group analytic approach to therapy and groups in general. If we want to be more than 600 registrants, we need your help. For four and a half days we will have a space where we can communicate knowledge, thoughts, doubts and dreams and where we can re-experience groups of all kinds. During this Symposium GASi will have an AGM where new members of the management committee will be elected, including the next president. I sincerely invite you to nominate capable and willing colleagues to serve the Group Analytic Society. It is a challenge and a developmental opportunity. And we need many international members to join in our Society.

I wish to communicate our gratitude to many, in the MC especially to those very active in different roles: Sue Einhorn who is doing an enormous effort in the Scientific program; Sarah Tyerman who is in different committees; Angelika Golz who is in the Symposium MC; Regine Scholz, Kristian Valbak and others who organise days and panels. I want also to mention our German and European partners – they are over and above all expectations. Kurt Husemann, Katrin Stumpfner, Pieter Hutz and Kirsti Lyngard are some of the collaborators. One of our achievements is the provision of about 60 bursaries, paid for by our newly founded GASIF – an initiative of Frances Griffith. With Gerda Winther chairing a bursary committee, we succeeded in establishing rules and measures for the almost 20000 Euros we collected.

My last foreword may also be an opportunity for me to describe how the whole Society has changed during my two terms – six years in total.

We have grown from about 380 to more than 700 members. More than a hundred are students and I believe many will stay in our Society after they finish their studies. The Honorary Secretary,

Carmen O'Leary, together with many others have accomplished this change. Maybe it is also important to acknowledge that GASi is appealing to group analytic colleagues and our growth has not happened by chance.

Accordingly, many more readers use our Journal and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole editorial committee, chaired by Dieter Nitzgen. They do the professional work and enjoy complete independence in the process of judging and administrating the publication of articles.

During these last years the structure of the management committee has changed. Many of the MC members are actually also chairing sub-committees, which make proposals for the MC to discuss and decide upon. This has made the growth of activity possible.

We have many activities: The Scientific committee, chaired by Sue Einhorn organizes the academic programs, especially the annual Foulkes Lecture and Study Day as well as the Winter Workshop. Every two years the Winter Workshop is organized by an Institute in Europe – e.g. the last one was organized in co-operation with Kristian Valbak and the Aarhus Institute of Group Analysis.

So far GASi has organised 3 Summer Schools, chaired by Regine Scholz and David Glyn with the cooperation of many local colleagues in the different countries hosting these events. A Summer School is really a small congress with group work at its centre. A mix of students and colleagues who feel young get together for some days to experience small and large groups, lectures, supervision and fun.

The Group Analytic Dictionary (GAD) is another project which was started during my period of office. GAD is a genuinely international project, as no group analytic institute nor any country alone can cover the whole world's conceptualization of even one single item. I personally hope we'll be able not only to have viable article(s) on any concept, but in the end also an entry in Wikipedia. Managing Editors Svein Tjelta, Marina Mojovic and Carmen O'Leary are committed to this huge enterprise.

In these 6 years GASi has also opened a Quarterly Members Group in London. We also have a Forum in which all our members can participate in many highly exciting discussions. I was blessed in these years with a management committee which really supported GASi activities. It is my pleasure to thank our Honorary Secretary, Angelika Golz, our Honorary Treasurer, Sarah Tyerman and Linde Wotton, our administration manager. They, together with Julia Porturas, our office manager and others, have helped me every time a new plan, project or congress had to be made a reality.

Finally, there are projects which I wanted to accomplish and didn't. I wanted to do more about research and it didn't work. My wish was to organize an international GASi "research forum" for colleagues interested in this topic, but I must admit that we have not really made progress.

I had also the wish to organize virtual discussion groups (VDG). I have written about this in a former Contexts – my own experience of a pilot VDG was interesting. Learning in the VDG was possible and not only because of a facilitator. We met for 90 minutes every month, to discuss an article and any other field experience. I believe this will be for many a future opportunity for post-graduate and continuing learning.

Both projects should be promoted by future contributors. The Jewish tradition tries to comfort you by saying: "It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task" (Pirkei Avot 2) but then obliges you to pursue the task by saying: "but neither are you free to absolve yourself from it". I certainly don't feel 'absolved'!

Personally, I have served with a conviction of the significance of group analysis and our Society. After more than 40 years of clinical work in individual and group therapy and about 20 years of experience in conducting large groups and working in conflict resolution, I am convinced that group analysis is a must for the growth and cure of individuals, groups and the societies. Group analysis has a unique contribution to make, and its absence in therapy and group work seems to me unthinkable.

Dr Robi Friedman

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Be a Contexts Writer!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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I live and work in Potsdam, Germany. I am married and have two adult children. I have a medical practise as a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst (IAAP-DGAP Jungian Tradition and Organisation) and Group Analyst (GASi, D3G, and Berlin Institute of Group Analysis). In the Berliner Institute for Group Analysis (BIG) I lead the Training committee and work as lecturer and training Group Analyst. I am the organizer of a group analytic training program in Moscow in Connection with the BIG. My current project is the Psycho historical Trialog-conference in Potsdam, which is planned for the second time in October 2017 (www.trialog-conference.org).

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GROUP ANALYTIC DICTIONARY (GAD) ANNUAL REPORT

June 2017

Report on the second phase of GAD, written for the GASi AGM 2017 by the GAD Managing Editorial Group: Carmen O’Leary and Marina Mojović (MC members) and Svein Tjelta, Principal Editor.

Introduction

The first report, written by Carmen, appeared in Contexts in June 2016. It described the first phase of establishing the ad. hoc organisation and the putting in place of preliminary structures, establishing the blog for collecting articles, and developing a strategy and tactics for starting up. Since then we have had a full days meeting at the IGA London with MEG, CEG and members of DAG (see below for abbreviations). Workshops have been held in Gonen, Israel (Lars, Rachel & Svein), Helsinki, Finland, (Lars, Hanne, Paul & Svein) and Belgrade (Marina & Svein). An oral report was presented at the GASi winter-workshop in Aarhus, Denmark (Carmen & Marina).

It has become clear that this project is imagined as being of titanic proportions by many. Titanic means gigantic, but also bears strong connotations to a boat that could not sink but did just that. If overtaken by hubris there is this possibility. We will get nowhere, however, without a lot of help and support in creating the GAD.

The ad hoc organisation

Formally our ad. hoc organisation consists of the writers of this report who manage the project and also represent the GASi MC with Carmen and Marina (MEG = Managing Editorial Group, including Svein). The CEG is the Central Editorial Group led by Svein as the Principal Editor. Svein was the second Managing Editor of the Nordic journal ‘Matrix’ for many years. The CEG will have one Central Editor from each of the countries who decide to contribute to GAD. This Central Editor will act as link for all the activities taking place in his/her country, in a growing large group matrix. We named these local groups local editorial groups (LEG). LEG is meant to be a local forum for stimulating discussion among group analysts and writing of definitions of terms enlisted from GA. We are working with a

production list, where terms are collected and it shows terms that are taken and/or open for definition.

There are also guidelines advising the structure and format of article writing in the blog (set up and administered by Peter Zelaskowski). It is our database where we assemble all the articles defining terms that are sent to us. Our final aim is a paper printed book.

We have now confirmed working groups in seven countries: England (Carmen), Israel (Rachel), Serbia (Sanja), Germany (Ulrich), Denmark (Lars), France (Edith), and one in South America (Mexico and Brazil, with Carla as CE). There are several on the way to joining in Portugal, Ireland, Greece and hopefully Norway, and others.

We have established a growing group of esteemed colleges who have volunteered to be advisors (DAG), reviewing articles and other matters. We also have various other external consultants (VOC), such as David Armstrong and Dieter Nitzgen, who have been helpful in discussing the general challenges we face. The advisors will help with reviews and concept content.

Roles and functions

We are working with a role definition model that hopefully will make different roles and functions clearer. This is also a topic for our workshop in the Berlin Symposium.

Activity

Our approach to generating GAD activity:

- Asking people who have made contributions to GA, as well as other respected colleagues, to write articles for the dictionary. We had very positive responses to this, and thus far we have eight sizeable articles on the blog, in addition to all the articles written on the Danish blog. Several articles are in the process of being written. An important issue here is to prevent too much overlapping, a problem we are already having to cope with;
- We have two groups working with the taxonomy of central concepts, chaired by Carmen, Carla, Lars and Rachel;
- Stimulating the creation of LEG in different countries to study and define terms that are translated, if not originally written in English, and sent to the blog by the CEG representative there. Marina will introduce the GAD to the St. Petersburg IGA in May.

- The creation of workshops in conferences to inform and generate interest, critical responses and new knowledge and generate more goodwill for the project.
- MEG will meet in London before the Foulkes Lecture and if possible extend the meeting to other people within our ad hoc organisation.
- We'll have our first scheduled meeting with CEG, MEG and secretary on Doodle the 9th of June.

Administrative and electronic competence

We are fortunate to have Bojana Mitrovic as our secretary. Posts for the blog can be sent to her for registration. Questions and information concerning the work can be addressed to all above mentioned. The CEG, with Bojana's help, post definitions on the blog, under the edit heading and after some screening we send them out for proof reading, reviews or return, when the required standard is not met

It is important to write in accordance with the guidelines found in the blog (please note that the upper limit should be 2000 words, based on the average of already written articles, and no less than 200 words. The LEG group needs to ensure that the post they post on the blog is in English.

Evaluation and conclusion

We hope that more people with special interests in theories and terms will come forward and join us.

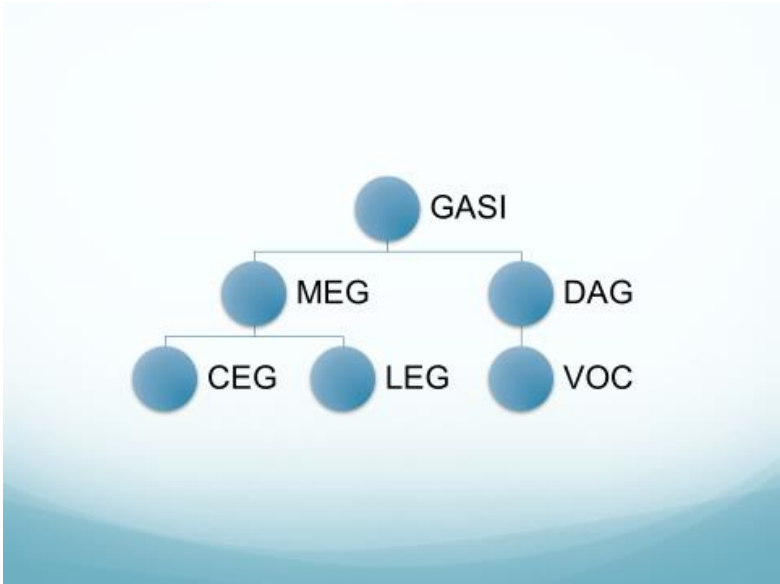
Berlin in August 2017 will mark the official presentation of what, whom, and where we are in the process. We decided in July 2016 to send an abstract for a 2 x 90-minute workshop, and we are now finalising a three-day (90 minute) workshop. We have a well worked out program on the way. This the result of good work but also a sign of recognition and goodwill by many. The workshop will mirror the conference title of Crossing Borders and work with borders and crossing concerning the development of GA and its concepts.

In Berlin, we will also hold the first non-virtual (CEG) editorial meeting before the conference and one after to get to know one another better and plan-ahead, if we can make it. We think that the way we carry out this task is as important as the end-result. We are committed to using a collaborative, group analytic approach.

We strongly encourage you to join our workshop in Berlin and also write posts for the blog. We also encourage other contributions, and invite GASI members to get involved in whatever

form you think would be of help.

Organizational Chart



GASI = Group Analytic Society International

MEG = Managing Editorial Group

DAG = Dictionary Advisory Group

CEG = Central Editorial Group

LEG = Local Editorial Group

VOC = Various Other Consultants

Crossing Borders: From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to the New Migration Phenomena and Totalitarian Tendencies in the Post-Modern World

By Anastassios Koukis

In recent years hundreds of little children of refugees and migrants from the Middle East have tragically drowned when their boats and rafts sank during their families' effort to cross the Aegean Sea from Turkey and to find a solution in Greece. From here, many of them go on to other parts of Europe, leaving behind the desolation and deprivation of war in their homeland. Hundreds of images of these dead children have gone viral through the internet and the mass media. But the image that shocked all of humankind was the drowning of a three-year-old boy from Iran, whose lifeless body was washed up on the shores of Alikarnassos (near Bodrum, Turkey), in September of 2015, after the boat sank in which he was travelling to Kos with his parents and other refugees. The child's tiny body did not look dead, but more like he had fallen asleep on his stomach, still wearing his clothes and shoes, with his face washed by the sea and his arms relaxed on the soft mattress that was fashioned especially for him by the waves and sand of Alikarnassos. The tears shed over this image by people the world over were undoubtedly many. And many voices were raised in protest, directed mainly to the leaders and politicians of the European Union. The newspaper *The Independent* (2 Sept. 2015) raised its voice in protest much more strongly and to the point: "*If these extraordinarily powerful images of a dead child washed up on beach don't change Europe's attitude to refugees, what will?*" This view certainly expressed the crowning moment of humanitarianism required, even though questions of this kind, in face of the wall of silence that characterizes policies of all shades in world history, are essentially rhetorical.

The photograph remained in the news for a few days and was then forgotten. Deep down in their collective unconscious, people came to terms with it, arguing the "inevitable", in the sense of submission to the dire need imposed by the collective driving forces of the historical process mainly conceived as either an absolute Spirit that leads to the sovereignty of Reason in the end of the history (Hegel, 1977) or the forces of production leading to relations of exploitation of the poor by the rich (Marx, 1906). This idea of the collective forces

underlying history, that was cultivated in the era of Enlightenment, modernity and industrialized capitalism, perceived the individual human as being of minor importance. That's life. The great powers, war, political strategies and – especially today in the era of globalized capitalism – the market economy (Jameson, 1991; Žižek, 2006, 2015; Sloterdijk, 2006), express the collective power of history which, even though we don't know what it is, must in the end go forward – always in the sense of progress – even if most of the price that must be paid for it is counted in human lives, whether of adults or children is of no particular significance. From this viewpoint, one could easily be led astray, as frequently happens in world history, and argue that even extreme phenomena of political and military totalitarianism, such as Fascism, Nazism and Stalinism, can only contribute in the long run, even through the greatest disasters and crimes, to gaining a more functional and efficient “collectivity” for the good of all. The very nature of the mass media contributed to the rapid repression of the pictures of drowned migrant and refugee children, and promoted the view of a fated “collective” force in the sense of a pseudo-collectivity based on the illusion of immediate globalised communication. The pictorial representation of reality, as projected in a two-dimensional form and at a speed that competes with that of light, can never acquire ontological substance, much less a genuine collective nature (Snyder, 2017). Despite its universality, the image is doomed to remain individual and to be repressed at the very moment it appears. It might even be said that there is a “totalitarianism” of the image that goes together with the “totalitarianism” of repression.

But, what is it that drives people to abandon their homeland and cross their country's borders in search of a new destiny in a new and unknown country, even if they are aware that this might cost the life of their child? This is the crucial question raised by the above events.

The first reply looks simple: absolute desperation and an absolute dead end to the vicious circle created when one's homeland can no longer offer any hope of a dignified life or if it is attacked and devastated by constant wars (in this case, wars fomented by the interests of the today's great powers), bringing the subject face to face with the possible loss of life or, in the best case, facing the threat of psychological, financial and social decline. However, this reply is not convincing. On the one hand, it would be the same small likelihood of avoiding death and decline even by remaining in one's own country. Thus, we have only to ask the previous question again, leaving aside the case in which migration is a direct result of war. What is it that

obliges hundreds of thousands of people, who in other respects live peacefully and with good prospects of survival – according to the assurances that their state provides them – to cross their country’s borders en masse and settle in another country whose borders may be no farther than one street over, as was the case with the migrants from East to West Germany in the era of “Really Existing Socialism”, in particular the mass migrations from East to West Berlin? And what was it that drove hundreds of people, mainly young people, to sacrifice their lives in an effort to cross these borders after the Berlin wall was built, by devising various ways to get over it? These people did not care one bit that the world was haunted by the spectre of the cold war, which in fact the building of the wall served well, and for this reason its retention was fostered, or at least not disputed, even by the then dominant forces of Russia, the U.S., Britain and France (Taylor, 2008).

There are many differences between the two types of migration, one to another country such as the migrations from the East in our days, and the other internally, in the case of migrants from one of the main countries of what was then “Really Existing Socialism” (and of course from other such countries). But, it seems that there is a common reason in all forms of migration, mainly in Europe and above all in south-eastern Europe, especially after the collapse of the great empires and before the eventual establishment of the nation states. According to Arendt (1951) the deeper cause that determines a person’s decision to migrate lies essentially in the desire to avoid the danger she called the “nakedness” of being human, i.e. the condition to which a person is driven when a state or national authority obliges him to “shed” any political, social and especially national “dress” that is a fundamental feature of his identity, obliging him to be no more than a human being, from which alone a person cannot possibly acquire ontological substance in the sense of subjectivity, and why he is always deemed to be expendable. Thus, a vicious circle of persecutions and migratory flows is created. The fact that people lose all their distinguishing features and become “human” and nothing else, even though this should be a top moment validating their human rights, leads to the loss of humanness because it is inscribed as an ordinary natural differentiation, which being rather primitive, is found outside the common civilized world and contravenes equality and the balance of differences ordained by the political life of the community. Arendt (1951) concludes that “denuding” processes of this kind are not simply interwoven with strong crises of liberalism and imperialism, they also spawn and to some degree explain the rise of totalitarian regimes.

However, the concept of human “nakedness” does not seem

to explore in depth the main reason why subjects shoulder the risk of migration in any form. This view can explain the migratory phenomenon along very broad lines and to the degree that it is interconnected with the processes of de-structuring the fabric that embodies the principle of nationalities, which has been happening for a long time now in contemporary societies due to globalization. But under no circumstances can it explain migrations in the forms they once took, for example, on the borders of “Really Existing Socialism”. It would therefore be more consistent to combine Arendt’s view with one inspired by Lacan (1994, 1998) according to which it could be argued that a person is driven to migration by the hope that he will cease to be merely a subject of need, i.e. a subject that risks losing the ability to receive and give love (demand for love) based on mutual benign mirroring between two or more people (Imaginary) and being both object and subject of desire conceived as a process of producing communication and meaning (Symbolic), which is beyond need, i.e. the ability to be a neurotic subject, and moves essentially on the regressive level of a psychotic situation within the context of which he is called upon solely to survive and to cover his own daily vital needs (Real). Combining the views of Lacan with those of Marx (1906) on the fetishism of the object/product, it could be said that subjects acquire authentic value not when they see the object/product as a useful means of survival/consumption, a process that lacks any mirroring of the subject in the object (real level), but when they reach the level of being mirrored in it, regarding it as a means of trading or exchanging value, and therefore as a means of trading communication at the level of the demand for love (imaginary level), and eventually as a means and symbol of their ability to desire (symbolic level).

Taking Lacan’s view a little further and following the related views of Žižek (2006), the subject could be said to have migrated to avoid the unspeakable terror created by an excessive predominance of the Real, i.e. a reality stripped of any imaginary or symbolic feature, such as war, hunger, death, concentration camps, political persecution, deprivation of liberty, gagging of free speech etc., to which the mind is unable to lend the necessary investment of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In Freud’s (1920) terms, the mind refuses to accept the drives of death and absolute inertia inherent in the Real. This is not just because one ordinarily chooses life over death, but because one also chooses the possibility of being able to select one’s own death. Escape, even if it leads to death, is closer to the drives of life than to the drives of death. It is worth trying, to the degree that it includes the freedom to choose the manner of one’s death, to refuse an imposed

death, whether it is death in war or death dictated under different forms by totalitarian regimes of any kind. This attitude, we must admit, is the only one that can lead a subject to flee from any form of totalitarianism that tends to render him “naked”, or a subject of need. As Arendt (1943) pointed out referring to the suicides of certain Jewish refugees, we may not be free to create our own lives or the world in which we live, we are, however, free to lose our life and to abandon the world. Selecting the manner of one’s own death then becomes emblematic of the highest form of desire and freedom as well as of resisting any kind of totalitarianism.

After which, the following question is legitimately raised: Are we today, as human beings living in an age of globalization and even, to use Havel’s term (Havel & Keane, 1985) in a period of post-totalitarianism, threatened by the rise of new forms of totalitarianism? Is globalization lying in wait today? Is totalitarianism threatening a return in one way or another, and raising new walls between peoples? Theoretically, the question of whether a globalized society is in danger of hatching future forms of totalitarianism appears to contain an oxymoron. The very concept of globalization and globalized capitalism and culture (the fourth phase of which began with the fall of the Berlin wall) is based on the idea of open borders, free markets and automatic global communication through the use of the electronic network and is thus by nature opposed to the idea of any form of totalitarianism. The idea of a society in the sense of a “global village” – even though it appears to “accommodate” not only openly totalitarian regimes, such as those in Venezuela, Cuba or North Korea, but also latent and diffused tendencies to “totalitarianism” on the political level, as in Russia, Turkey and the United States today – “blocks” to a significant degree processes of a “state of exception” which are linked to the “nakedness” of being only human (Arendt, 1951) or the *nuda vita* (Agamben, 1998) and have often been used in the context of the Western system of natural justice in the nation-state as a means of justifying and imposing totalitarian regimes (Agamben, 2005).

However, the idea of globalization, even if there is no danger of its leading to forms of institutionalized totalitarianism, is by nature interrelated with a “totalitarian” character in the sense that the absolute freedom it presupposes leads to a state of self-closure and self-limitation. If people are free to go everywhere, they can’t go anywhere. In Freud’s (1923) terms, if a person is not limited to a rational degree by her Superego, then she must develop a Superego by herself, which in the end may prove much stricter and more domineering than what

one would expect from an average healthy Superego. The rise of such forms of Superego (Hitler, Stalin etc.) has always been linked, albeit under different circumstances, with the development of totalitarian regimes. In this regard, the oxymoron and simultaneously dangerous element lies today in the fact that the post-modern globalized status has circumvented the classical concept of the Superego, and has replaced it with a perverted caricature of a Superego (Žižek, 2006). The post-modern subject is called upon to over-consume freely, based on false needs, as though driven by a command in the opposite direction from that of the classical Superego – which functioned as symbolic castration of the imaginary pleasure on the level of the Symbolic – towards an inflated fantasy (pseudo-Imaginary) of over-consumption and a devaluated Symbolic and Imaginary. Over-consumption seems to favour a richer mirroring (Imaginary) of the subject in the object/product and, by extension, in the others but in fact circumvents it by amplifying and dispersing it. At the same time, over-consumption, since it is linked with an immediate satisfaction of the desired object, leads to the “deadening” of desire and, thus, of the capacity to form the idea of the object on the ideational level, which suspends the ability to generate ideas (Symbolic). In Agamben’s (2005) terms, globalization urges an inner “state of exception” (everything is forbidden) due to the fact that – in a contradictory way – it excludes nothing (everything is permitted).

On the level of the economy, we could say that an economy that is free to move in any direction suggests ever higher profit, as is the case with the economy under post-capitalism, it simply cannot move in any direction that would render it efficient, in the sense that the accumulated wealth would at the same time find parallel outlets for re-investment, but also the re-distribution of this wealth on a truly global level in a fair and equal way, which would in turn benefit the same processes of accumulation and reinvestment, leading to new redistributions and so on, as used to happen – not without conflicts and contradictions, and not absolutely justly – under industrial capitalism. Post-capitalist economy is obliged to become entrenched at focal points on the planet, despite its globalised nature, creating centres of static and stagnant over-accumulation of capital and wealth on the part of very few individuals at the expense of the greater part of the global population (analogous with over-enjoyment on the psychoanalytic level). Capitalist globalization is not based solely on an opening to the world, but also on a closing to itself. The Inside (the global area of capital that has now become internal and has drawn into itself everything that had been until now outside of it) and the Outside

(those who are excluded from and limited by the Inside) constitute two separate and different worlds (Sloterdijk, 2006).

This process creates a pyramidal structure at the top of which is an unspecified super-upper class of the very few, very wealthy (a class that surely goes beyond and simultaneously circumvents the standard conception of the bourgeoisie). At the base of the pyramid are crowded the members of what until now had been the (upper or lower) middle class which – owing to the policies of austerity imposed by the global recession to which the over-accumulation of money has led – have now become “proletarianized”, together with the low-salaried classes (the former working class and lower middle class) and a number of very badly-paid working people or unemployed who, in Marx’s (1907) terminology, would be called the new “lumpen proletariat”. They now constitute a medley of social classes or the “microphysics” of the power of the social classes, which as a whole, owing to this structure, can only live and act in terms of need (Real). Each class on its own level cannot produce ideas, i.e. ideology (Symbolic), or mutual relatively benevolent mirroring (Imaginary), as was the case in earlier times. Living at the level of post-ideology (Žižek, 2015) necessarily leads to a state of constant war and splintering among them (a fragmented Imaginary), which is not a conflict of ideas (Symbolic) but a conflict over the selfish distribution of the Real, in terms of ensuring either survival and well-being or the over-concentration of wealth.

The most controversial point in this “microphysics” of the social classes lies in the fact that the latter tend to lose both their character and their “dress” as social classes. When these same groups lose their social class and their social status the way is paved – at least that was what happened on the edges of capitalism and imperialism in the era of modernity – regarding the absolute poverty of the masses and the decline of parliamentary democracy, with the result that the masses themselves now seek the imposition of a totalitarian regime (Arendt, 1951) as they are easily carried away by excessive and unrealistic ideas (Symbolic), leading to utopian or illusionary visions (Imaginary). However, the globalized society, owing to the mass culture of over-consumption, narcissism and eudemonism that it has imposed on all social classes, mainly through the development of new technologies (Harvey, 1989; Jameson, 1991; Žižek, 2006), has led to an under-estimation of the Symbolic and the Imaginary and an increase of the Imaginary in the sense of the pseudo-Imaginary, which seems to have “blocked” the phenomenon of promoting the masses who could develop dynamic totalitarianism.

Something that also prevents any outbreak by the masses – strange as it may seem – is the rise of various nationalistic movements, as well as local wars and migrations that have emerged as a result of either expanding globalization or the reaction to it. The dilemma that has been spreading through Europe for decades, as to whether it will become one nation following the precepts of globalization, or remain an artificial union of separate nations, thus being globalized superficially, is the same dilemma faced by humanity as a whole. Brexit, apart from anything else, can be read as a result of the profound ambiguity of the middle class, which has been badly hit by the globalized economy. More than half the people in Britain’s middle class (mainly older and less educated people) together with the working class, voted for Brexit, primarily as resistance against mass immigration, while younger and more educated people from the same class, together with rich people, voted against Brexit. This split of social classes symbolizes the depth of the above ambiguity and the dilemma between Euro-centrism and globalization, while at the same time it portends the fact that we are now entering a post-globalization period, in which there are trends in favour of returning to stronger nationalities.

On the other hand, the interdependence of national economies, which has been complicated by the globalization of markets, has made it very difficult, if not impossible, for totalitarian regimes to arise at least on a national level. However, under no circumstances can we rule out the possible emergence of a “chain” of totalitarian regimes that would start out on the national level but then spread to the whole world in a very peculiar mixture of a globalized attitude and extreme nationalism. In this, the increasingly complex monitoring and recording of private life would be of great help, which is happening ever more frequently today through the rapid development of technology and the internet on the level of a globalized society. This monitoring is so invisible, discreet and elaborately processed through the use of the electronic devices and the internet that, although it is much more systematic and detailed even than the asphyxiating monitoring exercised by the regimes of “Really Existing Socialism”, it goes totally unnoticed, which is why it is much more dangerous in terms of the development of a future perspective and possible policy of the totalitarian type (Snyder, 2017).

Furthermore, people’s utter degradation (proletarianization or lumpenization) caused by the austerity measures required by the new accumulative trend of contemporary capital leads today’s subjects to “addiction” to the philosophy of a meagre salary and little.

In terms of Arendt (1951), this situation, although in a post-capitalist manner, alludes to the transformation of the human being from a *homo fabricans* to a *homo laborans*, i.e. to an ordinary person of labour – therefore to a person absolutely dependent on the yoke of need, who could potentially obey any authority – which, together with other factors, could very well open the road to totalitarianism. On the other hand, the control over and ultimately the violation of private life leads to social isolation and loneliness. Both are the touchstones not only of the totalitarianisms that have emerged up to now, and that Arendt (1951) so aptly describes, but also those that could potentially develop in the globalized society. And finally, to use Lacan's (1994, 1998) terms, let us take into consideration the total degradation of the Symbolic together with that of the Imaginary, in conjunction with the overflow of the Real and the development of an inflated pseudo-Imaginary, as we are living them today. All lead to the imposition of views such as post-truth (truth is not whatever corresponds to reality but whatever one manufactures as truth, and attributes meaning to as such) and in driving the subject into a withdrawn narcissistic state (the subject is no longer mirrored in things or in others, but only in himself, for example, through constant selfies). From this viewpoint, the future does not look very hopeful.

Havel mainly attributed the totalitarianism that his country and the countries of “Really Existing Socialism” more generally once went through, which he called post-totalitarianism to distinguish it from the classical dictatorships, to the trend of the ordinary “powerless” subjects to allow themselves unconsciously to “live within the lie” and to avoid “living within the truth”. In order to feel secure, the citizens had to pretend that they were following the official ideology and culture dictated by a hypocritical state that had reversed and changed completely the meaning of words and values by applying in practice the opposite of what they meant, thus losing their freedom, truth and self-dignity (Havel & Keane, 1985). Undoubtedly, the culture of the contemporary bourgeois liberal democracies is light years removed from the culture of the “democracies” of “Really Existing Socialism”. Despite which, they present many similarities in terms of the hypocrisy that characterizes their base, as it was diffused through ideological or post-ideological constructs. This is why Havel considers meta-democracy based on an “existential revolution” as the best form of government (Havel & Keane, 1985). In their new form as globalized, haven't the liberal democracies tended to take on the characteristics of a totalitarian (post-totalitarian) regime reminiscent of “Really Existing Socialism”, but in an even more devious,

supposedly anti-totalitarian, form? Now the lie no longer needs ideology (bourgeois or socialist) to be imposed. It is circulated and installed through the reversal of the values put forward and indeed instituted by the same post-ideology, such as by promoting post-truth, leading the citizens to live in a lie that no longer needs to be promoted by being disguised as truth, i.e. as an idea that corresponds to objective reality (ideology). The lie is proposed and openly sanctioned as truth, i.e. as the only true reality – despite the fact that it is obviously a false subjective opinion, or construct (post-truth) – on the pretext that it is beyond truth in the classical sense of the term (the truth as simply corresponding to reality).

Group analysis has been hit in particular today by the growing crisis of globalization and post-capitalism. The fundamental principles on which group analysis is based have particular symbolic weight. Its main principle is that of the matrix, especially in its primary form as “foundation matrix” which is conceived as a “firm pre-existing community or communion between the members based on the fact that they are all human”, i.e. “they have the same qualities as a species, the same anatomy and physiology, and also perhaps archaic traces of ancient experiences” Foulkes (1990: 212). These principles contest the idea of *nuda vita* and its interrelation with phenomena of social exclusion and, above all, with conditions of a “state of exception” and totalitarianism, by supporting the subject when he or she lives and is recognized as free and self-ruled, with as little censorship as possible, in an organized group or community based on the idea of social inclusion. They are likewise vehemently opposed to the collective driving forces of history as proposed in the era of modernity – which was founded on an overstressed Symbolic and Imaginary at the expense of the Real – as well as to a pseudo-collectivity based on the breakdown of the Symbolic together with that of the Imaginary and the over-inflation of the Real and the Imaginary as it is cultivated in the context of post-modernism and globalization. From this viewpoint, group analysis is one of the strongest antidotes to the side-effects of the post-modern culture and global capitalism.

Finally, it is we ourselves who, by not always being in a state of vigilance to preserve freedom, truth and the dignity of our subjectivity, have built the walls around us, which are even more dangerous when they are not material but mental and social in nature. We ourselves create potential inner presuppositions of a “state of exception”, despite the fact that we are the ones who have the power to remedy our own powerlessness (Havel & Keane, 1985). Berlin, which experienced at first hand the brutalities of Nazism, and once

reacted militantly by tearing down the wall of “Really Existing Socialism”, could today – in collaboration with other European cities that have become shining historic examples of resistance, including Athens – become the symbol of opposition to the new walls that are being erected around us, not at night as in the era of “Really Existing Socialism”, but in broad daylight before our very eyes, which can always see farther than our glance can usually reach. A “state of exception” can potentially threaten our existence at any given moment even if it is publicized as a state that removes the exception. But, beyond the walls, the most emblematic point of our existence is always shining. It is the only thing that can escape every “state of exception”, and remain unchanged at that border where the human being reaches the limits of the unknown and of sacredness: freedom of thought and, based on it, freedom to choose at least our own death.

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From Athens to the Berlin Symposium

By Zoe Voyatzaki

Berlin...It will be my first time in this city, the historic capital of Germany, though I have visited the country many times in years past. An initial association is what I have heard about Berlin! That it is 'open', freer and more relaxed compared to other German cities; artistic, preferred by young people, tolerant of diversity... so I look forward to the experience of being there.



The Symposium... I really look forward to participating and meeting with the whole (or as close to it as possible) of our group analytic community, seeing colleagues and friends again in this clan-like gathering. It brings forth other good memories, such as having been in the group that organized the London Symposium, to name one.

But what I am most intent on this time is to share my concerns about what is happening to Europe and the world, with the group analytic community. It is so encouraging to see that colleagues on the GASI forum have shared their reactions and anguish about these concerns...Terrorism (as recent as Manchester and London), Brexit, the refugee crisis, the situation in the USA, the election in France... Austerity and the rise of toxic nationalism... Perhaps more than ever before, we, as group analysts see and try to take action as

regards the whole system, the wider context both through CONTEXTS and by what may transpire in the Symposium itself.

At the same time, I feel apprehensive. I see that in past Symposia there would be 10 - 15 participants from my own Institute alone. Now very few can afford it, trainees especially. This time only three of us will come.

Some other thoughts

Crossing the border from the South to the North of Europe, from Athens to Berlin, I cannot help but think of themes of inclusion and exclusion. Berlin having been the city that was divided by The Wall, it especially makes me think of the situation in Europe and the world in general. One such concern being the tendency to start building new walls, be it between the USA and Mexico or in the Visegrad countries trying to keep refugees out.

I wonder, where is the European Union going? Why did the British vote for Brexit and why did none of us expect it? How could it be that both conservative and left wing aligned Britons felt oppressed by the EU and voted against it? Was there no other way to effect change?

Berlin perhaps became the city that signified unity and hope, when the Wall was torn down, moving away from the Cold War dichotomies. But what might it allude to now? How about the division of the North and South of Europe? The rich and the poor. Two-tiered EU, the fast moving and the 'slow'. The PIGS of Europe. The rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer.

Are we not living in a state of war within the Union, not a military war but an economic one - no less lethal for that. As a Greek, I will bring up the example of Greece; not only because it is my country and I can feel it gasping for air; not only because it is the first EU country in which this war has stricken with such force. "...the economic assault on Greece in 2015/16 (and to a lesser extent, on Spain, and Ireland) seemed like the outbreak of economic war on the 'third world' within Europe. (Dick Blackwell, GASI Forum, 29/3/17) But I also bring it up because I agree that Greece serves as an experimental ground; if the austerity regime should pass, the rest of the countries can follow, first the weaker one, then the 'stronger' ones. As you might know, the Austerity attack on Greece continues - relentlessly, with recession which has been described as the longest continuous one, in times of peace. Its consequences include rising death rates, soaring suicide rates and even infant mortality rates rising for the first time since WWII!

I write the above being aware of the fact that we, Greeks, have allowed ourselves to become vulnerable by inappropriate or destructive practices of our governments over many years. Victims often have a responsibility in leaving themselves in a vulnerable situation. But does that justify that the perpetrators attack? Again, quoting Dick: "... there has been the punitive response to any country, (Spain, Portugal, Ireland or Greece) that seeks any way out of 'Austerity'. Indeed, it is hard to see the treatment of Greece as anything other than violent and sadistic." (Forum, 7/9/16)

The question now is how much profit are European governments willing to allow banks and multi-national corporations to make? And at what cost? Shouldn't they at least try to follow Tiberius's advice that "sheep should be sheared, not skinned?" If not, won't "the sheep" perhaps Brexit, Grexit, or Frexit?

Unpleasant and difficult issues, but very real. At least we will have the space and time to face them together in our group analytic koinonia, and that is good.

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Berlin – A View from the Street

Photos by Martina Stang





“I'm the little warm centre of the world”







Is Germany a Paradise for Group Analysis?

By Martina Stang

Since I began to travel to international GA meetings, I realised, how extraordinary the conditions (economic and structural) for GA in Germany are. Whenever I spoke about the health care system that makes GA possible here, colleagues looked at me with big eyes and couldn't believe it. As a result, I became more and more curious about other countries' conditions. In preparation for the GASi symposium of group analysis "Crossing Borders" in August 2017, that will take place in Berlin, I was asked to write something to prepare and inform our guests about the organisational and practical aspects of Group Analysis in Germany. I will focus on the organisational, not the historical or scientific / theoretical aspects. I want to present the very special conditions under which GA can take place in Germany for both group analysts and patients. It seems to be so easy to build up groups in Germany while GAs in other countries have to face a lot of struggle before and while working with groups, because patients have less access to groups, if they are not able to pay by themselves. In my very special international supervision group (founded with some other participants of the Summer School of 2015 in Prague and conducted by Peter Zelaskowski from Spain with participants from Slovenia, Finland, Israel and Germany - we meet regularly on Skype) I became more aware of my privileges in working with groups. For example, I relatively easily have built up 3 groups, while the others struggle to hold together one group. Not to forget, that I can earn more money with my groups than others do...so I'm a little bit ambivalent about writing this. What are the negative aspects, if it's so easy to do groups? Are the conditions causing a lack of critical potential of working with groups? What does it mean for the impression people have internationally of German Group Analysis? There also are some Group Analysts in Germany who only work with patients who are paying the group by themselves. I never understood why this is better. I understand that paying for yourself can lead to more responsibility for your development. On the other hand, it means, that not everybody is able to do group therapy depending on their financial situation. One Question that is often discussed is, if established psychotherapists aren't critical of social and political changes and if we help the "system" to "repair" people who suffer the postmodern needs of the working sphere.

Since 1967 psychotherapy has been integrated in the so

called *Kassenärztliche Versorgung* of Germany, meaning that every patient (with an ICD 10 diagnosis!) is allowed to go to a (licenced and only psychological or medical) psychotherapist and that insurance pays for it.

In 1999, the “*Psychotherapeutengesetz*” - a special law - was passed, which regulates the supply of psychotherapy for outpatients and the prerequisites within which one gets the possibility of going to a (licenced) therapist, without having to pay and without the delegation of a particular physician. Approved psychotherapists need to be trained within the rules of the “*Psychotherapeutengesetz*”. Within the “*Psychotherapeutengesetz*”, the conditions and the number of sessions for people in the legal health insurance companies in Germany are regulated. If you only have a training in GA, but no licence (you have to pay for this after your individual psychotherapy training) you can only work with self-paying or private patients, facing the same problems as colleagues from other countries. For the licence in Germany that allows you to treat all patients, you have to pay up to 80.000 or 100.000 €. But this licence allows you to treat all patients no matter what their health insurance company is and how much money they have. In recent years people in Germany have had to pay for a lot of their medical treatments themselves, but still not for psychotherapy. This is the consequence of a study from the 60s, which showed that companies were saving 3 Euros for every Euro they had been paying for psychotherapeutic treatment, because people treated with psychotherapy need less days in hospital or expensive medical treatments.

For now, I will only refer to the legal health insurance system (*Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung, GKV*) through which 70 million people are insured. In Germany, everyone has to be in one of the more than 100 health insurance companies, (in the past more than 200). Together with the old age pension, unemployment, accident and nursing care insurance, the GKV is part of the social insurance system and the German Health Care System. There are also private health insurance companies which have their own individual conditions and reimburse the costs of a psychotherapy in different amounts.

Compared to other countries, on the one hand, Germany has very good conditions for psychological and medical psychotherapists. Especially if you have a psychoanalytical training, you can work for a long time with outpatients, also if they are unable to pay for themselves. On the other hand, the selection of psychotherapeutic methods accepted by the health insurance companies is very limited: only 3 methods (both also group and individual) are allowed/paid for

by insurance and the therapist has to be either a physician or psychologist. However, if you work with children and adolescents you also can be teacher, social-worker etc. Although, after your initial training you have to do a training (3 – 5 years) to get a first licence as a psychological or medical or child and youth psychotherapist - the so called “*approbation*”, that allows you to treat patients on your own. Then you can do an additional training as a group therapist/analyst.

The 3 methods that are accepted for therapeutic treatment (both in individual and group therapy) are:

- Cognitive behavioural therapy (the largest number of therapists in Germany) up to 80 individual and 80 group sessions paid for by the insurance;
- So-called “*tiefenpsychologisch fundierte*” psychotherapy (I think it’s similar to psychoanalytic therapy in other countries). Here we work with a focus and not with all the conflicts and symptoms a patient has. They are allowed to do the training in GA. But for them it’s not possible to apply to conduct group analysis for their patients – they are allowed fewer sessions with their patients (up to 100 sessions of individual and 80 of group therapy are paid for by insurance). With this kind of training only, you also can do psychodynamic groups, but you only can get the contingent for therapy groups, which means only up to 80 instead of 150 sessions of group therapy.
- Psychoanalysis. All psychoanalysts also are allowed to do the “*tiefenpsychologische*” Therapie. (up to 300 sessions individual and 150 of group therapy)

How do we have to apply for group therapy/ group analysis?

The system allows you to treat from 3 to 9 patients in one group in twice-weekly-sessions at 100 minutes. For every patient, the insurance pays the same money, no matter what diagnosis. They pay only if a patient attends. So, for missed sessions, the patients mostly have to pay by themselves. A recent development is that you are also allowed to run smaller groups with only 3 patients, then you earn the same money than with bigger groups. If you are a group analyst and have a private practice (= licence either for TP or PA or for cognitive behavioural therapy for adults), you can apply for a patient to take a first step of 80 sessions (TP 40) of 100 minutes. To prepare the patient

for the group it's possible to do a few (up to 4) sessions of individual preparation. For this you have to write a report about the patient's symptoms, his or her former illnesses, his or her psychopathological state, a biography and any psychodynamic considerations regarding the complex connections between psychological conflicts, the roots of the symptoms and the meaning of the unconscious conflicts. And, last but not least, a treatment-plan based on the psychodynamic theories being applied. You have to show with this report, that the symptoms of a patient put at risk the patient's ability to work or study or to love or be socially integrated.

You also have to include in the treatment plan information about the particular group you want somebody to join. This is quite difficult and complex work which you have to complete up to 8 or 9 times before you can start with a first group. Sometimes this takes so much time that you lose some patients before you can start the group.

This anonymized report is then supervised by an external supervisor (psychoanalysts who are not necessarily group analysts) who then make a recommendation of the insurance to pay for the therapy, whether to reduce the amount of sessions or not approve the proposal.

If a patient needs more sessions after the first 40 or 80 sessions (normally after one or two years) you can apply for a further 70 (20) sessions, in which case you sometimes have to write a report about the patient, regarding his/her development inside and outside the group. While a patient is undertaking group you can offer up to 8 individual sessions (4 in TP), either regularly or if the patient needs it (in acute crisis, etc.). There are therapists who don't do individual sessions with group patients, while others do more.

Once accepted ("bewilligt") it's recently become easier to change a treatment from individual to group and vice-versa. You only have to inform the insurance company and a new grant will be approved.

The latest changes in the German "PTh-Richtlinien" try to promote group psychotherapy, not only because it's another way to spend less money for mentally ill patients. Now we are able to apply for the first 24 sessions of psychotherapy (both individual and group) without any report. So, it would be possible to do short term groups with less bureaucracy. That integrates another innovative model of treatment: to do both individual AND group therapy either with the same or different therapists. Then you are required to co-ordinate the planning of the treatment with the other therapist. Only a few group therapists do this currently.

How much do we earn for a group treatment in Germany?

For a 100-minute group session we earn (per patient) between 51,07€ (7 patients) and 88,03€ (3 patients), depending on the number of patients (up to July 17 it was 44€ for any number of patients). For an individual session, we receive 88 € plus extras. That means that from July 2017 for conducting group therapy we will be paid 20% more, which has caused a new interest in becoming a group therapist. This is evidently a positive development, but group therapists had hoped, that there would be modifications in the process of applying - especially the need to write a report for every single patient of a group in the beginning and sometimes for the whole group treatment.

Nevertheless, only 1% of treatments payed for by German health insurance companies are group therapies. The reasons are various and not for discussion here. When Building up a new group you have to write an individual report for every patient. If you have more than one or two groups you are continuously having to write new reports. That means, the bureaucratic efforts are high and many colleagues find them too much, so they don't do groups. Nevertheless, you can work with patients for 2 up to 4 years, meaning that good groups work together with not too much changes of patients and, as a result, can go deeper in the level of transference and provide an atmosphere of deep trust and seriousness in their work. Most of the GA in Germany have mainly individual patients and are conducting one additional group once a week. But there are more and more colleagues doing more than one group.

So, I don't think, it's a paradise for GA here, but we are aware that there are good conditions in comparison to other countries. These days it appears that younger colleagues more often take on an additional group training, than was the case with former generations.

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Between you and me – society. What (group) therapy can learn from anti-discrimination work

by ManuEla Ritz, Thomas Munder & Anja Schütze

The idea behind this text was to have a dialogue between group therapy and an educational approach that is sensitive to matters of power, privilege and discrimination. The most important questions were how group therapy and group therapists can create groups that are more appealing, more welcoming and safer for people facing discrimination (e.g., black people, Turkish people, transsexual people, people from a lower-class background). Two educational trainers (ManuEla and Anja) and one therapist (Thomas) met and discussed these matters. These discussions are reflected in the following e-mail exchange between Manu and Thomas.

ManuEla: Yesterday, in the midst of our preparation for this article, I chose to terminate my individual therapy. However, the word “chose” does not really fit. Because for a real choice, I would have also needed to see and have a way to stay. For seven months, I went once a week to psychodynamic therapy. The main issues were supposed to be my feeling of (not) belonging and my relationships with people. As a newborn, I was “put up” for adoption and I believe that these very early experiences of being abandoned shape many of my behavioural patterns and choices.

I have been an anti-discrimination trainer for a decade-and-a-half. One of my priorities is racism. As a Black woman – born and bred in Germany – I experience racism again and again and I think it is important that critical educational work is predominantly done by people who do not only have books, but also reflected experience.

Naturally, the conversations with my white therapist also, every now and then, touched my work, which cannot really be separated from my private life. I experience racism and I work against it: as a trainer, as a mother, as an author, as a covenant of other persons who experience racism...for my therapist – let’s call her Mrs. Z. – it seemed very important to address my personal problems separated from racism.

I explained to her that almost everything I do and don’t do –

and especially my sense of (non) belonging, as well as the relationships I choose and the way I live them – is directly or indirectly related to racism, because racism has inscribed itself in me. Mrs Z., on the other hand, felt that we cannot really recognize my real personal problem, as long as all is covered with the foil of social power relations. Unfortunately, I could not make it clear to her that power lines like racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, etc., shape us all – not just myself, but also Ms. Z. – by placing us in different social positions. One might not notice, might not need or have to notice, as long as one is located on the privileged side of these lines. Personally, I could say, for example, that I do not care about ableism¹, I am not (yet) (negatively) affected by it, and therefore it has nothing to do with me. I can say and believe that. But apart from the fact that this kind of belief is disrespectful to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (quite an ableistic statement in this context), my belief does not alter the fact that my experience, of not being disabled in this society, is shaping a view of the world and myself, and also my ignorance about ableistic living environments.

To ask of me to leave the “topic” of racism on the outside (which for me is not a "topic" but the reality I live in) or to at least not make it so big that it superimposes everything, sounds to me like: “Let’s amputate your heart so that we can take a calm and rational look at your mind to see what your problems are”. Or the other way around: “If you could only let go of your rationality, then we could, devote ourselves entirely to your feelings”. Either way, it's going to be an amputation. Either way, I cannot be present with everything I am and what moves me – including my experience of racism – because it interferes and blocks the view of what is really happening inside of me. And yet, it is society and individual actors in this society (including myself) who have made me the person I am.

Thomas: When I think about the way discrimination and therapy are related, the basic idea of group analysis seems like a good start:

¹ “Ableism refers to a discrimination practice against people, who are regarded as having physical and/or mental ‘disabilities’ and/or restrictions. At the societal level, social exclusion tendencies and prejudices are underpinned and strengthened by institutionalized forms” (Gender Institute Bremen) (<http://www.genderinstitut-bremen.de/glossar/ableismus.html>)

individual and social domains are regarded as inherently connected. Therefore, it seems clear from those individual social positions (in your example a black patient meets with a white therapist) are part of the therapeutic work. Regine Scholz (2004) writes that shared and non-shared social experiences and historical pasts represent the background of a group's work (Foulkes' so-called foundation matrix, see also Bonadie-Arning, 1993). The more homogeneous groups are socially, the less the group will negotiate social issues, the more likely it is that social issues remain unconscious and unreflected - perhaps this applies only to groups made up of privileged people. The more heterogeneous a group is socially, the more inevitable it is that these current and historical relations of the different social groups and their asymmetrical power relations will (unconsciously) influence the dynamic of the group, in a destructive and/or a constructive way. For Scholz, a constructive way is to renegotiate the social hierarchies present in the group and finally, after doing some work, to arrive at a mutual recognition and appreciation that enhances the self-esteem of all participants. I am sure we're going to get to the question of what group leaders need to do, to create preconditions for a constructive process.

I would like to return to you and Mrs. Z. It seems to me that your former therapist refused to fully acknowledge the importance of racism in your life and in your therapeutic relationship. Maybe what happened can be described as the two of you encountering difficulties in coming closer; difficulties which could not be overcome, and the woman partially blamed you for this. We may assume that the process of renegotiation between the two of you did not work, maybe because Mrs Z. somehow was resistant to dealing with the impact of racism on herself.

This example reminds me of psychological work about everyday racism (Sue and colleagues, 2007). They contrast the open and conscious form of racism of the right wing, with the rather hidden and for the most part unconscious racism of the liberals. One typical microaggression they describe – invalidation – seems to fit with your example: denial of one's own racism or one's own role in the maintenance of racism, emphasizing equality of all human beings in our society, claiming to be "colour blind". In psychotherapy research, there are findings that demonstrate both the occurrence of microaggressions in therapists, and their negative influence on the therapeutic relationship (see Owen, Tao, Imel, Wampold, & Rodolfa, 2014). For example, in one American study, about half of the 120 black clients or clients of colour of a university counselling centre said

that they experienced some form of microaggression from their counsellor (Owen et al. 2014).

Another thought: to me, what you say about your discussion with Mrs. Z. about the importance of racism for your therapy relationship sounds somewhat abstract and theoretical. I wonder why that is. Scholz (2004) assumes that the group work – and we can assume the same for individual therapy – remains static and frustrating and potentially painful until it becomes possible in a sufficiently safe climate to speak personally so that "otherwise abstract concepts like 'discrimination' can be understood as experiences of distinct individuals" (p. 531).

ManuEla: Let me begin with my thoughts on your last thought. I did not feel that both of us, Mrs Z. and I, were talking theoretically about racism. To say that my racism experiences influence my life is not theoretical, I think it's rather clear-cut, practical and true-to-life. What we did, however, was to stay on the surface and this is comprehensible from both perspectives. Speculating and interpreting, I would guess: if to Mrs Z. racism was not relevant to our therapeutic work, or even perceived as superimposing, there is no reason for her to go deeper. And with the statement "I know that I am not a racist" Mrs. Z. has also made clear that the "topic" does not seem to have anything to do with her as a person.

By the way, I find such statements very remarkable, especially when they are made by white people. I (as a black woman) could not assert myself with a clear conscience, not to catch me sometimes in racist-coloured thought. I know with 100% certainty that I'm not a right-wing person! But not racist? I know the racist songs, books, sayings and names of food I grew up with and also the negative attributions concerning me. I know that when I was young, I naturally, and therefore perhaps more poisonously, internalized racist descriptions of myself. I know how exhausting, protracted, and painful it was, to again and again rid myself of such violent influences and of internalized racism. And I also know, which images are evoked in many encounters with people. And how media reports, which implicitly contain discriminatory statements, enmesh me and how I must actively concern myself with them in order to expose their discriminatory allusions, and not to swallow them, not to digest them and not to internalize them. You know, I'm not surprised about the results of the study you mention. People who claim not to be racist prevent themselves from finding out, how their looks, questions, assumptions and actions hurt people experiencing discrimination.

By the way, I find the widespread concept of everyday racism quite inappropriate. Not only because it implicitly suggests the idea of a what a Sunday or holiday racism looks like :). It is also interesting that there seems to be no everyday sexism or everyday anti-Semitism. Discrimination is discrimination, no matter when, where, how, how often and by whom it is exercised. Everyday racism sounds trivialising in my ears, as if it were about trifles, peanuts, that simply belong to the lives of black people and people of colour and must be endured. I believe that small but (daily) repeated needle-pricks, in the heart of a person, into their soul, their self-consciousness and their dignity as a human being, can be just as harmful, if not deadly, as a deliberate deep stab with a knife.

Back to therapy: one of my reasons for staying on the surface with Ms. Z. clearly was a protection from further injuries and also from being pathologized. Another reason was a certain clarity on my part regarding her, which were all familiar to me from my work. I recognised a lot of what she said as typical "white defence mechanisms" as they are described, for example, by Lida van den Broek (1993). And I know from personal experience and from my work, at which moments there is no point in furthering the discussion or going deeper, especially if only I am the one who is going deeper, while the other person wants to stay on the surface. Because only the superficial self-image of "being no racist" provides security. In addition, our relationship was not free of hierarchy.

What I found pleasant with Ms. Z. was that she did not make me feel like a "patient" for a long time, but as a person who wants to reflect on the ways of life and who sought support for that. The fact that this feeling changed just in our last session, in which it came to the break up, and in which I felt pathologized, is certainly no coincidence ("Too tall or too fat people have quite similar experiences to you."). To reinterpret discrimination – in my case racism – as a personal problem, in my opinion, is not only an unthoughtful and ruthless act, but rather a violent and racist one.

And this brings us to the question you have already indicated. What does a power-sensitive, power-critical group leader need? How should he or she be like? What should he or she have? At this point, I deliberately stop writing personally about myself and my therapy experience. Because honestly? Also in our exchange, I experience an asymmetry. You too? The different ways that people who experience discrimination and privileged people (can and want to) talk about discrimination is not new to me. While you are explaining therapeutic approaches and quote other people, I talk about myself, and try use

my experience of hurt and humiliation as a starting point to recognize and explain patterns.

Here then are my experiences and insights as an anti-discrimination trainer, although I cannot and do not want to leave my personal experience entirely out of it. I do not know if there are such things as announcements/descriptions in therapeutic settings. If so, in my opinion, they should be written in such a way that people with different experiences of discrimination not only feel addressed, but also truly invited. For me, this would also mean that the group leader is already reflective of his or her various social positions and makes them transparent. When I announce my workshop on power-critical educational work ("Train the Trainer") it always says: "Black adult who has grown up in East Germany with an academic background. Atheistic-spiritual, ableistic Cis-Hetera. Power-critical trainer, mother, author..." This way people know in which respects I am privileged (as an adult who is no longer negatively affected by adultism, but rather, potentially, exerting it; as a cis-woman who fits with, supposed, heteronormative ideas; as a person who is not a member of a religious faith stigmatized in Germany), and when and where I speak and act from a perspective of an experience of discrimination (as a person with experiences of racism, as a woman who grew up in East Germany but who is often passing² to be spared negative attributions towards "the Ossid"; as a woman with experiences of sexism).

Especially in the areas of life where I do not have my own experiences of discrimination it is not enough for me to simply know and say this, but rather to educate myself regarding these matters. I rarely do this on the basis of theoretical texts, but I am looking explicitly for the testimony of peoples who have had these experiences. In leading groups, it is important for me to be audible, clear and comprehensible, where I can speak out of my own experience, and to be quiet, careful, open-minded and learning, where I am privileged. Also, very important: knowledge from experience is not negotiable, not to be questioned, nor to be trivialized, but simply left standing and accepted at best. If this is difficult for me or not to succeed, this is neither due to the experiences of the other person, nor to the way in which he or she presents or interprets them, but exclusively to me. My

² Borrowing from the English term "to pass" - passing in this context means to hide individual identities, not to show them, not to debate them, but also not to live them (out).

defence mechanisms, my inability or my unwillingness to deal with the uncomfortable truth (about myself).

Thomas: When reporting above about the studies, it felt a bit strange getting so scientific, but since I felt these studies speak to some of the matters discussed and I thought they might be interesting for readers, it seemed like a good idea to put them in. Now that you ask whether I find our exchange also asymmetric, I clearly feel that I agree. I wonder where my personal point of connection is to the topic.

I remember situations in which I have observed discrimination and presumably at times also played an active or passive part in discriminatory processes. I remember encounters where I felt prejudices, and felt ashamed of them but still could not free myself from them. In addition to this, I feel sad about being separated from many people because of racism (without being able to say what this separation really is). My primary school class consisted of children with Italian, Yugoslav, Greek, Turkish and even German backgrounds – later in the Gymnasium, after the summer holidays, only Germans were left. How sad!

I realize that while I am writing, I try to clarify something, say something I believe in. I believe in relationships and in the fact that relationships, if they succeed, make it possible to overcome separations. Without having a good idea of how to do it, I think therapists need to reflect on their social position in order to avoid burdening and injuring patients with their defences, before there has been the opportunity to get to know each other, to be important for each other, to forgive and to bear the other, and to change for the other. Maybe, behind some of these white defences lies a fear of really coming closer to the other.

So it seems like paradox to me: I think therapists need to be more reflective of matters of power and their own social position in order to be more "inviting" and truly open for people who experience discrimination. And at the same time, only the relationship with each other makes one endure and makes it worth bearing the insensitive, aggressive and hurting stuff that will surface inevitably.

ManuEla: Much of what you write about uncertainties, shame, guilt and fear I know well. From my workshops and also from and in myself. And yes, I am very close to you in everything you write about relationships. For the vast majority of people, it is probably vitally important to feel connected with other people and to feel and experience belonging in diverse ways. That's why it is so bitter and

violent, when people struggle to belong and yet have to experience, again and again, that they are not fitting with whatever constructed norm (I, as a Black German, am often denied to be German or I have to prove it with my passport).

I believe, (a)symmetries and hierarchies between people always play an important role in the context of relationships. Even if...or precisely because power is never absent in life, I find it important to keep the hierarchies between me and other people as flat as possible, preferably disappearingly small. In this respect, I would, for example, wish for a more sensitive and conscious use of the word "patient". To speak of a "therapist" and a "patient" is the epitome of power, asymmetry and hierarchy. Don't you think? Certainly, there may be people who suffer from diagnosable mental illnesses. (I believe that, though I tend to be sceptical about such diagnoses.) But even if this case, I ask myself why and for whom it is important to use words such as "patient" and "therapist" to build up and preserve an "up" and a "down", a "leading" and a being "led", a "knowing" and a "not knowing" or "knowing less".

In this sense, one's prevailing ideas of people is another important point for power-critical group leaders, or let's better call it a power-critical togetherness. I assume that all human beings, whatever their diagnosis, age, origin, worldview, have a certain knowledge from experience, and as long as this knowledge does not contain something inhuman, I am curious about it and see how, where, and from whom I can learn something new. Learning is never a one-way street for me. Basically, I less lead groups than I open spaces where people can learn from and with each other. I believe such an approach to building and "leading" groups helps to reduce uncertainties, shame, guilt, and anxiety.

Speaking of something you write somewhere above: "Without having a good idea of how to do it, I think therapists need to reflect on their social position." I agree. And the really good news is, as an anti-discrimination trainer, I know how to do it, and would like to accompany you and your colleagues to enter this unsafe and often also shame-filled and terrifying territory. Not as "patients", but as people who are going on an exciting journey (to themselves). And I'm glad about every single person that goes on this path. I believe that the more people consciously and critically deal with social power relations, the less painful and more liveable life on earth will be for all people.

Thomas: Could you give an idea of how you work in your workshops?

Or more specifically: Suppose a group of white and otherwise privileged therapists would turn to you, what would we do together?

ManuEla: What would I do if a group of white and otherwise privileged therapists turned to me to reflect on their social positions and privileges? Well, first of all, I would be delighted because I know that many people who are discriminated against start therapy and terminate it sooner or later for quite similar reasons as described at the beginning. This shows that there seems to be a lack of therapists who (a) acknowledge social power relations as a problem in which all human beings (including themselves) are involved, (b) who (begin) to understand the impact of discrimination on individual, interpersonal, institutional and ideological levels, and (c) who don't seek to ban the impact of ongoing collective traumatizations, such as racism, from the therapeutic process, but explicitly involve and give room to these life-impeding experiences. (see Fernandes, 2015)

After my joy, I would like to explore what the participants of such a group are looking for and need for themselves and their work. Perhaps the answers to this question would be similarly searching and vague as in your e-mail above, but surely they would become more specific over the course of the workshop.

Presumably, I would begin by analysing the structure and workings of discrimination by using adultism as an example, because the discrimination of young people (to not be respected, not taken seriously, being smiled at and shamed, not being questioned and being ignored, evaluated and challenged, controlled and regulated) is the only social power system that all people have experienced more or less strongly. The biographical work with adultism also provides a good basis for understanding racism, hetero-/cis-/trans-sexism, ableism and so on.

Well, and then, after looking at all the different forms of discrimination that exist in our society, we would focus on the social positions of the individual people and what we have learned and been taught in our respective positions along various power lines. What we do know because of our experience as a privileged or de-privileged person and do not know. What we can see and what remains hidden from us due to our perspective. What makes us act in what way or not.

Finally, we would deal with the recognition of one's own privileges. This is a step where people often feel ashamed, because privileges are usually nothing, people earned themselves, are rather something which fell into their lap. Something that nevertheless, or exactly because of that, allows for a more comfortable life compared

to a life without all these invisible privileges. However, it would be important not to stop at this point of shame and maybe guilt. Rather it would be important to discuss how each individual person can use her or his privileges – as white, as German, as (cis-)man, as person without disability, as adult, as therapist – so that they might benefit less privileged people and make life easier.

For all of this, many exercises, methods, reflections, biographical units and texts are available from people who know from their own experience of what they write, sing or perform. It might be important to mention that I always work with explicitly involving the feelings of participants, because discrimination is something that is usually felt before it is processed.

Last not least: it is important for me to have fun with my work. And so, in this fictitious case, I would wish, and make sure that – although the matter is serious – there is lots of laughter, because humour facilitates learning and understanding, as well as opening up and helping commit to a relationship.

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Vestiges of an almost forgotten time: crossing borders to interweave the past and the future in Berlin

By Carla Penna, PhD

I've never been to Germany, neither to Berlin, but I never wondered why. However, when - to the surprise of my parents and my grandfather Oswin - I was born blonde, this trait was immediately associated with the German nationality of my great-grandmother. She was born in Frankfurt and immigrated to Brazil in the 19th century. The reasons for crossing continents remain unknown and today it is almost impossible to trace. However, my blonde hair was a source of distinctiveness in my family and once-in-a-while, during my childhood, my mother would call me 'my little German'. In a family with Indigenous and Portuguese documented Brazilian roots, this alleged 'German trace' revealed not only the hybrid composition of the Brazilian breed but also the appraisal of European traditions that lie disguised in the social unconscious of Brazilian people. Moreover, it unveiled an uncanny personal trait within a 'dark-haired family'. For better or for worse, my hair became a trademark, a sign of difference.

The concept of identification has a central role in Freud's work and identifications are responsible for the constitution of human subjectivity. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud described a primitive form of identification, identification by trace, and its presence as a fantasy in the unconscious. Throughout Freudian literature the concept of identification was enriched by developments around oral incorporation in melancholic states, allowing, as well, discussion about the nature of object relations in narcissism and the Oedipal complex. Years later in *Group Psychology and Analysis of Ego* (1921), Freud pointed to the importance of identifications in the creation of the social bond. Somehow, my 'German hair' connected me to: some of my European unknown roots; a past of immigration; and probably an uncanny and 'haunting lost object'. I can't be precise about the way this fact shaped the co-creation of my identity, however since childhood, I was also influenced by my admiration for German culture and, through my attachment to history, I became interested in German and Jewish fate during WWII, pursuing impossible answers for impossible questions. Only recently I learned, through Hannah Arendt (1950), that instead of understanding the reasons for genocide, horror and evil, I was able, facing its reality, to resist it intensely.

Indeed, resisting, mitigating and transforming human suffering had already conducted me to psychoanalysis and group analysis, but it was only when I joined The Group Analytic Society - and its fruitful interbreed of disciplines - that my 'resistance' acquired meanings of *Koinonia*.

Group Analysis became a passion and an intellectual harbour which plunged me throughout the last decade, with Hopper and Weinberg (2011, 2016) and other colleagues, to the research of the social unconscious. In addition, the group analytic environment empowered me in an active pacifism (Bobbio, 1979) through my collaboration in projects such as Reflective Citizens and Psycho-Social Dialogues with Marina Mojovic, Chris Scanlon and Svein Tjelta, among others.

Recently the Western World has faced tremendous hardships and personal and social sufferings (which remind us of the years between the Great Wars) that threaten current social systems with fourth basic assumption (Hopper, 2003) figurations. Moreover, neoliberal policies, corruption, immigration, unemployment and exclusion processes are conducting people to the 'weariness of the self' (Ehrenberg, 2010) in which feelings of helplessness, resentment, fear and hate are fuelling fundamentalism, violence, terror and absolute states of mind. Immersed in this scary context the 17th International Symposium of the Group Analytic Society International will take place in Berlin. What can we expect? Will we be able to cross inner and outer borders to promote reflection and dialogue in a spirit of *Koinonia*? Or will we be trapped by polarisations, twentieth-century working through of traumas and its psychic transmissions? How a Symposium in Berlin will favour incohesion processes and fourth basic assumption vicissitudes? How is it related to Foulkes and group analytic origins and conception traumas? Will we be courageous enough to face the past and move towards the future?

Anticipating the challenges, I can only think of Walter Benjamin's concept of history and his reflections on the 'angel of history' – inspired by Paul Klee's drawing *Angelus Novus*: It shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it

in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Walter Benjamin, 1940: 257-58).

Benjamin's angel's allegory brings to the readership a myriad of contradictory feelings that paradoxically interweave the past and the future, horror and blessings, melancholy and hope. The angel is fixing his gaze on the past as a catastrophe, not a chain of events. He is impotent, he would like to stay, resurrect the dead, heal, but he cannot. Encompassing illumination and redemption, Benjamin confronts us with the despondency and despair that inhabit personal and social realms. However, 'the storm from the Paradise' pushes the angel in the opposite direction, back into the future.

In the Berlin Symposium, we will face challenges, similar to the one faced by Benjamin's angel. On the one hand, the ghosts from the past will be alive, opening unhealed wounds, awakening 'unhoused parts' (Scanlon & Adlam, 2008) as well the remains of a 'catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet'. On the other hand, the progress, the fears and claims of the current world, the need to cross borders in the social, cultural and clinical realms push us back to the future, back to 'action' - the only activity for Hannah Arendt that depends on the presence of others, that depends on a shared common world, on *Koinonia* (Penna, 2016) - to slow up the horror that our 'gaze and our open mouths' pictures in the present and the future. So, during the Symposium: Will it be possible to combine, in a dialectic way, the needs from our unmourned past / unhoused parts with the queries of the turbulent current world? Will we be mature-enough to find the right thread to interweave the past and the future, on behalf of a fairer present?

In the Christian-Jewish tradition, the word for angel means 'messenger' and a messenger is someone who crosses borders. From Paradise to Earth, from Earth to Hell, from the past to the future, the angel's wings enable it to cross borders. Under a more positive outlook, the angel's flight can bring movement and the interbreeding of ideas, nations, races, pains, colours and hopes. Yet, the fear of crossing borders is immense, it threatens our innermost feelings and

our identity, brings fear of annihilation and a longing for purity and the safety of well-known boundaries. However, without crossing borders life becomes impossible and condemned to the boredom of sameness. Nevertheless, each crossed border points to the new, to the unexpected, to the uncanny, to unhidden differences, to identification traces, to ‘blonde, black, curled or plain hairs’. These differences shape matrices, foundation matrices and are influenced by power relations, race, gender, identity and many other figurations according to the context or the current inter-group conflict.

In this regard, my expectations for Berlin range from excitement to nihilism, from dismay to a longing for mature hope. In Germany, some of my interbred female identity will join / rejoin with a small part of an unknown ancestry. However, it is just a personal trace, something that won’t separate me from, or place me in opposition to, humankind. I am interested in people, in differences, in mutual recognition, but most of all in unbounded love.

See you in the Berlin’s large group!

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A Journey from Israel

By Leah Chaikin

The last time I attended a conference overseas was the GASi Summer School in Athens. It was my first time in Greece. I was fascinated by street names which I could hardly read, the unfamiliar language, the Greek culture, the ancient ruins in the streets and the ever-changing views of the roads, their slopes and atmosphere. I was curious about the special building of Athens Group Analytic Institute in which the conference took place, and especially their unique way of supervision. I learned a lot about crossing professional borders and widening vision. I felt like I was exploring a whole new land, uncovering an unknown, special, fascinating world of learning.

I told myself that I would write about coming to the conference in Berlin with the same adventure-ready state of mind – reaching a new place I've never visited, a place that conceals new and unfamiliar worlds. I thought that I will write from my professional position, not from my personal identity as Jew or Israeli. I thought I would write about my curiosity to reach a big, professional and colorful conference with an interesting title. I am going to a GASi conference – and it just happens to be in Germany.

I wanted to write as a group therapist, not as a daughter of a Holocaust survivor, but the pen pulls me again and again to the same point, as if it says to me, who do you think you're kidding? Do you really think you can write without going there? Go to the conference as if it is an island without seeing the sea surrounding it? You are going to Germany. That's your choice.

I've never been to Germany. That was an obvious fact, something I've inherited from my father's genes, which were changed in the years of that war. I can hear my father's voice, as if he's still alive, asking me: What did you lose there? What have you got to look for there? I have an idea of what I lost there, but wonder what am I looking for?

Coming to Germany for a conference is an interesting way to reach *that* country. I'm coming as a group therapist, wearing my professional "hat" and my curiosity to learn new things. The hat is a great camouflage, a great excuse for my father, who passed away 14 years ago but is alive inside me all the time. Am I crossing my own borders with this journey? Are these really my borders, or are they the borders I've inherited? Can I tell the difference?

I have participated in three Israeli-German Dialogue

workshops, which so far have taken place in Israel. Many issues, sunk deep in my soul, surfaced during the conferences, and during the months that followed them. Some of these issues were processed, some still wait, some refuse to leave the dark depths. Maybe they wait for the next Israeli-German Dialogue workshop in October. Maybe the trip to Germany will be the hook at the end of the fishing rod that pulls them out.

I am going to the conference in Berlin. First time in Germany. I don't know what it will feel like. I don't know how it will affect me. I wonder and have questions, but I do know this: I'm going to meet friendly faces of dear colleagues from group analysis, familiar from previous conferences...and I will not be alone.

Leah Chaikin

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Germany and ‘coming home’

By Robi Friedman

My first association is: “we did the journey”. By “we” I mean those who were enemies, the children of victims and the children of the perpetrators. By “the journey” I mean a complex personal/social development, which, I think, probably took 60 years; this development is a tale of transformation from hate, rejection, estrangement, revenge...to closeness, tolerance, acceptance, inclusion and eventually love. “We” have worked through hate, rejection, scapegoating and “we” have reintroduced guilt, shame and empathy. “We”, Germans and non-Germans, did the journey at the same time, we did it together, as strange as it sounds, everyone in their own way, but unconsciously connected and reciprocally influencing our emotions and relationship.

Every part of the “we” did his personal and family and community work. Germans had to distance themselves from their parents, and terribly painful intergenerational conflict had to be fought to get to this point. On the other hand, I grew up with beloved family members who were traumatically hurt, in one way or another, by Germany and Germans. For many decades, many of us could not be in any way ‘neutral’ to Germany. My favourite aunt, an Auschwitz survivor, with whom I grew up, and who had lost large parts of her family, including a 3-year old son, had the most benevolent attitude: “I don’t hate Germans”. But my cousin (her second son) and me had to struggle most of our lives to turn this hate into emotions which enable dialogue and even friendship. Now “we” will meet in Germany, to make another step towards an even more productive relationship.

There is no real “cure” for the rejecter and for the rejected without some kind of “coming home”. Not everyone can walk this path and we should accept that there are many ways to fill the void caused by the tragedy of WWII and the madness of a soldier’s matrix. But for those who find it important to “make the journey”, for those who are willing to meet in Berlin at the 2017 GASi Symposium, we look ready to struggle for the great next step in our relationships, and not only between Germans and not Germans.

Robi Friedman

President, GASi

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An Encounter with Seamus – thoughts on leaving home and crossing borders in the context of the Irish diaspora

By Julie Howley

I started my group analytic training in 1998, a couple of weeks after the Omagh car bomb killed 29 people and injured 220 – a reaction by a split within the IRA to the ceasefire and the development of the Northern Ireland peace process. I completed my training in 2005, shortly before the IRA formally announced the end of its armed struggle. My training was bookended by the Peace Process which can be seen as a maturation from paranoid-schizoid processes in the society of Northern Ireland and the Republic.

However, back in 1977 I was an impoverished student and had a part-time job as a bar waitress in a beautiful old city centre pub in Dublin. It was three years after the Dublin bombings which devastated the city and in which I lost a friend. I met a man in the pub one day and had a conversation that has stayed with me. I am going to call him Seamus. Seamus was about sixty. He had emigrated from Ireland to America as a young man in his twenties and this was his much longed-for journey to visit his home place and to link up with family and friends from his youth.

Of course emigrating from Ireland to America in the '30s was considered a permanent event. American "wakes" were held when someone was emigrating as it was considered akin to a death (a wake is an Irish gathering in the family home of a person who has died – as a comfort to the bereaved and a celebration of the life that is lost). Seamus had come home to find all changed and no kith or kin remaining with whom he had any connection. He was an outsider in his home place and, as he told me his story, he filled up with tears. I was left feeling quite overwhelmed by his sadness, his loneliness, his desolation. He later sent a bouquet of flowers to the pub for me and this seemed to compound my intense sadness for him – I was the only person with whom he had managed to connect during this so longed-for visit.

Ireland knows a lot about leavings and less about coming home. Oisín is our archetypal emigrant. He was the son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, leader of the Fianna, the band of hero-warriors in the Irish mythological cycle. The myth goes that Oisín left his friends and his father to go with Niamh of the Golden Hair, a woman of the Sídh (Faerie) to Tír na n-Óg, the Land of Eternal Youth. In Oisín's leaving

there is the passionate desire to be a man unfettered by the constraints of paternal authority. And in this story I find a resonance with themes in the Irish social unconscious, our recourse to both fight and flight - from oppression, repression, authoritarianism. This seems to reflect the paternal authority that is internalized as both harsh and emotionally absent. This theme resonates throughout Irish literature. I think of Christy Mahon in Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, who fled his village after believing that he had killed his father. And Christy Mahon's odyssey reminds me of that of the IRA – killing, on the run, safe houses. And, on the other hand, I am reminded of Gar in Friel's *Philadelphia Here I Come*, a motherless boy whose father is emotionally absent and incapable of connecting with his son. Both these and so many more are examples of the repressive paternal authority from which we must escape in whatever way we can.

But the other side to what we might call the dilemma of emigration is the desire to stay, and the longing for home that is often so profound that it can inhibit the ability to connect to any adopted home. Surely this is the desire for mother and for the comfort of maternal holding? For all emigrants there is a dilemma in adjusting to the new place but for some, like Seamus, there is something more akin to an acute bereavement. We might think then of the desolation of the emigrant as representing primitive processes of fragmentation and fusion.

The verse below from the folk song "*The Emigrant's Farewell*", one of thousands of such songs in the Irish traditional repertoire, captures something of the emigrant's experience of loss:

*"Farewell, sweet Dublin's hills and braes
To Killiney Mountain's silvery streams
Where many's the fine long summer's day
We loitered hours of joy away
Don't forget love, do not grieve
For my heart is true and cannot deceive
My hand and heart I will give to thee
So farewell my love and remember me"*

These words seem to have a quality of freeze-framing, of secreting memories in a safe and treasured place, of overwhelming grief and loss. In thinking about the themes of inclusion and exclusion I am thinking of thousands of men and women like Seamus and I suggest that many emigrants have never managed to really leave home and instead become wraithlike occupants of some liminal space, the

borderland between here and there, unrooted, disconnected except from some part-object internalized memory frozen in time.

When I think now of Seamus I am glad we spoke, I am glad that he felt heard but I still feel his intense grief. Leaving home and crossing borders – these are journeys of great meaning and intensity. They are odysseys indeed. The journey from persecution and danger to safety might be the starting point but there is a parallel, internal journey which is fundamentally about identity and about the legacy we carry across the generations which informs our sense of self and of how we organize together. Berlin more than most places holds so much of these themes – hope, despair, connectedness, separation, persecution, genocide. The foundation matrix of our collective project of group analysis was forged out of Nazism, emigration, the challenge to create a new place of belonging. In some sense we are bringing this project home at a time when we are faced with great challenges in the world – of polarization, of oppression, of hate and rage spilling over into annihilatory violence. We have an opportunity to use this gathering to transcend our individual experiences. Oisín, our mythological emigrant, was fated to neither find his old world or regain his new world but instead to become lost in the transition. In looking towards Berlin, I feel both an anxiety, that we might expect too much resolution from this symposium, and a concurrent hope, that we will hear each other and find connection.

“Always those who leave expect to come back to the same world. They want it to be unchanged – the same companions opening their arms to welcome them; the girls they left years before as young and pretty as ever; their friends gathered together, agog to hear stories of adventures. But those who leave never come back to the same place”.

Massey, E. (2003): “The Return of Oisín”, Legendary Ireland, O’Brien Press, Dublin, p.108

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Mallorca – Berlin

By Joan Coll

Visiting Germany at the peak of the summer season feels like a welcome escapade from the heat, and from the throngs of tourists populating the island of Mallorca, my homeland.

Some Germans call Mallorca “the seventeenth lander of Germany”, and some Mallorcans feel “invaded” by this modern-day German contingent.

We’re used to “invasions”, the Mallorcans. In a certain way, they make us feel stronger, as long as we “survive” them. Our mother tongue and culture are still alive and kicking, even burgeoning in certain areas.

So, visiting the capital of the “invaders”, and feeling welcome there, speaking the language of another invading “tribe”, does have a very particular appeal, for an English-speaking Mallorcan.

After Brexit (and Trump) Berlin may well become more than just the capital of Germany, and the lingua franca of Europeans may end up being German, instead of English, with permission of the French.

Berlin, the once-split city. And Germany, the once-split country, which once had a “leader” who did militarily invade most of the continent, while at the same time decimating a considerable part of its own population. He wanted more and less at the same time. Quite a split. A few of the non-decimated ones made it to other “free” countries. And one of them created something called Group Analysis, in the context of this terrible splitting.

So, as a group analyst living and practicing in Mallorca, going to Berlin to meet up with hundreds of other group analysts from around Europe and the world is dizzyingly mind-spinning, but at the same time it does feel integrating and healing. A reparation of sorts. A healing?

One of my mottoes as an “islander” group analyst has been Donne’s “no man is an island entire of itself”. I refuse to even be “an island in the stream”. I do value the island, but I cherish the stream. In my case it led me to start my training in Barcelona, and complete it in New York City.

We group analysts spend a lot of time talking about expanding into the outer world, beyond the therapy room, and opening ourselves up to society and to other currents or “streams”. I do wish we could find the way to put into action our beautiful group analytic

verbiage, crossing borders, wading streams, and tearing down walls. I do hope Berlin brings all this, and much more.

Joan Coll

Palma, May 31, 2017

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Crossing borders in Berlin - the true Phoenix?

By Catharina Asklin-Westerdahl, Christer Sandahl, Lena Wennlund, Ulf Åkerström & Ann Örhammar

Can we celebrate Berlin being the cultural capital of Europe for almost 100 years, including destruction, death and resurrection? Berlin is attracting young people again, from all over Europe. They want to experience the vibrant atmosphere, the nightlife, the cutting-edge of history. The city has the same attraction as it had long ago during “the golden twenties”.

Can we learn from the history of Berlin, so painfully present in today’s turbulent world? January 30, 1933! No more freedom of speech, no more freedom of the press or freedom to organise. Crossing borders with fear, anxiety and sorrow: Kurt Lewin from Berlin to the USA, Stefi Pedersen from Berlin to Norway and then in 1943 over the winter mountains with a group of Jewish children crossing the border to Sweden, - and many more; also, from Frankfurt am Main, Michael Foulkes.

At the same time, young girls from wealthy families in Sweden were sent to Berlin and the countryside to learn how to become good housewives. Some of them fell in love and stayed, lost their young husbands in the war and were not allowed to come back with their children until the bombs fell and Berlin was in ruins. They went from rich to poor and nothing, to collect from behind the border, the wall, only painful memories and questions.

The Cold War, the Wall 1961, the East and the West. Twenty-eight years may seem a short time for a wall, but it felt a very long time. We experienced the hope and the trust in the future that followed 1989. And now history seems to be repeating itself. What have we learned? Can we influence things? In Berlin they seem to think so. “Wir schaffen es!” Or not?

What kind of borders do we need to cross now? We want to be able to make a personal choice to cross borders if we wish to. We cannot do it by ourselves. No man is an island! And we need a respectful explanation if we are not allowed to. Dialogue provides a “no” that is understandable and which one can live with, as opposed to the closed border where no answer is given. Can we talk constructively about these things in the large group? Will we all feel on the verge of a nervous breakdown? Is breakdown and chaos the only way to work through what we are experiencing? Or is there another way?

To us, Berlin represents openness, integration and development. The kind of things we need for a secure base for human encounters. Can we formulate a hope for the future in Berlin this year?

Catharina Asklin-Westerdahl, Christer Sandahl, Lena Wennlund, Ulf Åkerström & Ann Örhammar
Stockholm, Sweden

Bike and Hike the Wall

2017 GASi Berlin Pre-Symposium

Bike

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Hike

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Type of Proposal

Pre-Symposium cycling and hiking tour Social dreaming matrix and
median group

Keywords

Borders, Inclusion-Exclusion. Leaky Containers

Abstract

In concert with the Symposium's theme of crossing borders we have organized a 3-day bike and hike expedition around the Berlin Wall. The Wall is a symbol of the consequences of failed dialogue. We will practice dialogue on our expedition around the Wall with a group of international colleagues. We will begin each day with a social dreaming matrix and end each day with a median group that will be co-convened by Dale Godby from the USA and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard from New Zealand and England. See the attached information on how to enroll. Correspond through the email addresses above with Dale Godby for the biking and Julie Howley for the hiking.

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- Fareed Zakaria. www.fareedzakaria.com. Former managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, host of *Global Public Square, (GPS)*—a TV international news show, and a *Washington Post* columnist.

Berlin Wall Cycling Tour 2017

Riding August 12, 13, and 14. Sat., Sun. and Mon. Symposium registration begins Noon Tuesday August 15

Accommodation

General instructions: please book a room of your choice at the following hotels. We have negotiated rates to include breakfast, wireless access, and all taxes. You must book your rooms before 15 June 2017 to ensure a room. Please pay attention to cancellation policies by hotel as some are steep. There are detailed instructions for booking each hotel on the following pages.

COSTS for three days:

Bike Rental: €30 Guide: €120 Hotel and Breakfast €330-€400 (Single or Double Rooms) Meals €50-€70 (Depending of appetite) TOTAL €530-€620

Night 1, Friday, 11 August 2017

This is the night prior to our morning departure on bicycle.

Myers Hotel Berlin – 855-516-1090 Negotiated rate including breakfast, wireless access, tourist tax and VAT as follows:

Single room EUR 122.00

Double room EUR 142.00

***** Please use code word **GASI** when booking*****

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Berlin+on+Bike,+Knaackstra%C3%9Fe+97,+10435+Berlin,+Germany/Myer's+Hotel+Berlin,+Metzer+Str.+26,+10405,+Berlin,+Germany/@52.5329785,13.3988202,13.62z/data=!4m1!4m1!3!1m5!1m1!1s0x47a851ffb3ae1125:0x2711f06d6857ac1e!2m2!1d13.4134189!2d52.539673!1m5!1m1!1s0x47a84e0347a8eff3:0xd39a276e2b4ebdee!2m2!1d13.4178973!2d52.5313032!3e2>

Night 2, Saturday 12 August 2017

After day 1 of cycling.

Pentahotel Berlin-Potsdam +49-69-256699300 or e-mail reservations.berlinn.potsdam@pentahotels.com

All rooms are double rooms including breakfast, use of fitness room and VAT as follows:

Standard double room EUR 71.10

For an additional EUR 10.00 there is an upgraded room category called “penta plus”

***** Please use code word **GASI** when booking*****

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/pentahotel+Berlin-Potsdam/@52.4038702,13.2158291,13.72z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x47a85be58305497d:0x816349fee35fcb1a!8m2!3d52.40198!4d13.2400053>

Night 3, Sunday 13 August 2017

After Day 2 of cycling

Hotel Lindenufer – Spandau – 49 30 353 770 0

The block of rooms contains different room categories but all include breakfast:

Double room standard EU 147.0

Comfort Double EU 167.0

Budget double with 1 king bed EU 137.0

Single EU 102.0

*****Please use code word **GASI** when booking*****

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hotel+Lindenufer/@52.5381892,13.2048553,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x47bf23d8371920b9:0xe81f001cc61fd874!8m2!3d52.538186!4d13.207044>

Night 4, Monday 14 August 2017

Symposium Registration begins at noon in the Maritim Hotel on Tuesday August 15. We recommend that you book a room for the night of Monday 14 August at the Maritim or wherever you plan to stay during the Symposium.

“Hiking not Biking” – Draft Route Plan

General comments:

- The hiking option offers the opportunity to pause, explore, reflect *en route*. In order to build in time for this the suggested walks are not in excess of 15 kms.
- On days 1 and 2 we will need to allow travel time between the walk and the hotel where the median group will take place. Of the hikers, I think some have booked in to the hotels on the biking route and others are staying in the city. As far as is possible I have built in the necessary transport links for everyone to connect with the start points of walks and for the “city dwellers” to return to their accommodation;
- Day 2 has the shortest walk time but potentially the longer travel time to the hotel in Spandau;
- We will eat lunch together at a suitable spot *en route* – some suggestions for the location of this are included;
- In relation to any of the material here please feel free to send back any comments/feedback. All the routes are taken from the Michael Cramer book “*Berlin Wall Trail*”.

Pre-hike Median Group

For those who are in Berlin sufficiently early on Friday, 11th there will be a gathering of both hikers and bikers in Myers Hotel (Metzer Str. 26). Time for this group will be confirmed and it would be good to know who will be going.

Day 1: Saturday, August 12th

i) Potsdamer Platz to Warschauer Str: This includes wall segments, the “topography of terror” (centre of SS power including the “house prison” of the Gestapo), Checkpoint Charlie and Open-Air Exhibition/Wall Museum) **Distance: 8 kms**

ii) S-bahn from Warschauer Str. to Lichterfelde-Süd (S7 to Friedrichstrasse and S25 Friedrichstrasse to Lichterfelde Süd) - lunch at “Teltow Gallery”

iii) To Pentahotel Potsdam along the Teltow Canal **Distance: 6 Kms approx**

iv) Median group

v) Following group those staying in the city can return via Teltow or Wannsee S-bahn stations

Day 2: Sunday, August 13th

- i) Start point: Wannsee S-bahn station. Visit to the House of the Wannsee Conference (Holocaust memorial). (From Pentahotel take bus to Wannsee station; from city take S7 from Alexanderplatz, or Friedrichstrasse to Wannsee
- ii) walk back to Wannsee S-bahn station (30 mins) and take S7 to Potsdam Griebnitzsee station.
- iii) walk from Griebnitzsee to Volkspark Potsdam taking in Hiroshima Park, Griebnitzsee Lake walk (including the villas occupied by Stalin, Churchill and Truman during the Potsdam conference of 1945, Gliener Bridge (Bridge of Spies), Park Babelsberg, Volkspark Potsdam **Distance: 7 km**

This walk can take in the Jewish cemetery opened in 1743 which is only open on Sundays. Head cover necessary for this.

- iv) Lunch in Volkspark Potsdam
- v) Tram from Volkspark to Potsdam main station; S-bahn S7 to Alexanderplatz and S5 to Spandau and Hotel Lindendauer
- vi) Median group
- vii) For those not staying in the hotel return to city centre on S5

Day 3: Monday, August 13th

- i) Start Point: S-bahn station Wollankstrasse (From Spandau take S5 to Friedrichstr. and S1 or S25 to Wollankstrasse; from city centre take S1 or S25 from Friedrichstr.
- ii) this walk follows the end of the cycle route and includes Bornholm Bridge, Platz des 9 November, Mauerpark (wall park), Bernauer Str., Chapel of Reconciliation, Memorial at Bernauer Str., Monument for Jewish Children's Transports, Reichstag, Monument for Sinti and Roma, Monument for the Wall victims, Brandenburg gate, Holocaust memorial. **Distance: 11 kms**
- iii) Final Median Group in Maritim Hotel

Options for Public Transport costs:

- The walks cover 3 zones – A, B and C. Only the Potsdam stations on day 2 are in zone C. A dayticket for all three zones (ABC) is 7,70Euro. A dayticket for Zone AB is 7 Euro.
- A single trip for Zone ABC is 3,40Euro and for Zone AB 2,80Euro. So, depending on the number of times each day you

use transport, the single tickets may be cheaper. (*Potsdam and Griebnitzsee are in Zone C so you would need the ticket for ABC.*)

- A 7 day ticket for Zones ABC is available for 37,50Euro. This may be a good option for those who are not staying in the Maritim Hotel and who will need to travel around Berlin over the course of the whole week.
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BOOK CORNER

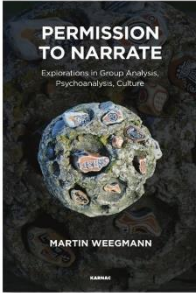
Request for Foulkes Letters and Documents for Society Archives

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

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

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

NEW FROM **KARNAC**



PERMISSION TO NARRATE
Explorations in Group Analysis,
Psychoanalysis, Culture

BY MARTIN WEEGMANN

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

BIC Code: Psychoanalysis (JMA)

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

'These excellent and elegant essays extend the frontiers of group analysis, adding further depth and breadth, not to mention innovation, to our discipline and researches.'
—Malcolm Pines, group analyst, author of *The Evolution of Group Analysis*

'Very original, imaginative and striking – a different point of view on what we do.'
—Liesel Hearst, group analyst, and co-author of *Group-Analytic Psychotherapy*

'This book is a fascinating account through a series of essays, made more interesting still by its courageous self-disclosures and glimpses into the author's own history.'
—Professor Edward Khantzian, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Harvard Medical School

Contents

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

About the Author

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

EVENTS

GAS International Quarterly Members Group (QMG)

The dates for sessions in 2017:

Saturday 28th January

Saturday 29th April

Saturday 15th July

Saturday 21st October

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

Conductor: Ian Simpson.

Venue: Guild of Psychotherapists
47 Nelson Square, London SE1

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

The fee for the group is £30 per day.
You can pay on the day by cash or cheque
or in advance at the GASI office:

1 Daleham Gardens, London, NW3 5BY
+44 20 7435 6611

All GASI members are welcome to the QMG.

Crossing Borders: Social, Cultural and Clinical Challenges



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

- first announcement -

Berlin | 15 – 19 August 2017
Maritim Hotel Berlin



Saturday 1st July 2017
9:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Institute of Group Analysis
1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY

Our Bodies: Our Groups

New Readings in Group Analysis (NRGA)

The annual New Reading in Group Analysis conference presents an exciting opportunity for anyone interested in Group Analysis, whether member of the public, IGA trainee or IGA Member, to come together to discuss emerging ideas, visions and applications the field. Over the years, the NRGA conferences have promoted dialogue on many levels; within the Group Analytic field; between Group Analysis and other fields; as well as between the theory and practice of Group Analysis. It is a forum where both new and old narratives can be heard and discussed, providing an opportunity for reflective and critical thinking while building on the Group Analytic foundations of the field.

This year we have an exciting day planned with three group analysts presenting different papers on aspects of the body and embodied experience in group analysis. The NRGA Committee consists of Vasilli Magalos, Claire Barnes, Julia Borossa, Maddy Loat and Daniel Anderson.

FEES (Early Bird / Full Fee):

Early Bird until **31st May 2017**

IGA Students **£49 / €55**

IGA Members **£59 / €75**

Non-members **£69 / €85**

PROGRAMME

- 9:00 AM** Registration and introduction
- 9:30 AM** Presentation followed by Q&A
Catherine Hayes - *"The language of the Symptom and the Velveteen Rabbit"*
- 10:10 AM** Presentation followed by Q&A
Sue Mitchell - *"Open wounds. Visible impairments and the conductors body"*
- 10:50 AM** Refreshment break
- 11:00 AM** Small group
- 12:30 PM** Lunch break (provided)
- 13:30 PM** Presentation followed by Q&A
Susanne Vosmer - *"Romantic love in group analysis"*
- 14:15 PM** Small group
- 15:45 PM** Refreshment break
- 16:00 PM** Large group
- 17:00 PM** Drinks and snacks

Book Online
Enquiries

www.groupanalysis.org
020 7431 2693

The Small Groups are conducted in a group analytic way.

The Large Group is conducted by an Israeli and a German Group Analyst.

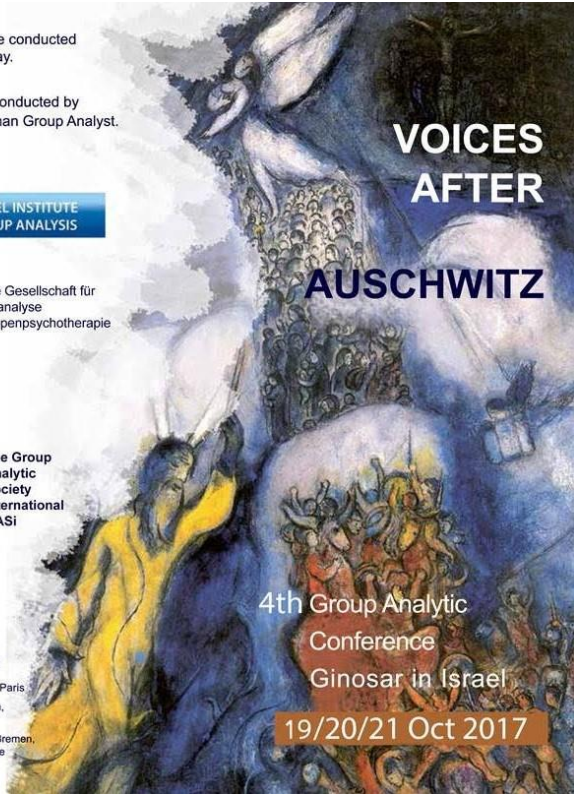
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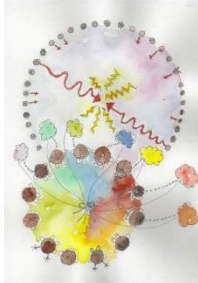


CREATING LARGE GROUP DIALOGUE IN ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY

A two-year residential professional development programme—from October 2017 to July 2019

The day will come when whole communities and nations will deal with their affairs in this way.

SH Foulkes, founder of Group Analysis (1975)



Since Patrick de Maré began his pioneering study of large groups at the IGA in the 1970s it has become clear that *real Dialogue* in a large group can release *enormous potential for individual and collective creativity*.

This has been demonstrated in management consultancy, management development/training, peace negotiation, prisons, local government, community architecture, schools, higher education, therapeutic communities, reflective citizens projects, youth and community work and in psychotherapy training.

Over the last 40 years the IGA has developed an Organisational Consultancy Section and a series of seminars in Management and Leadership, and jointly with the University of Hertfordshire, MA and PhD courses in Management.

This course is the first formal training bringing together the potential of the large group with our work on management and leadership. It will not only enable participants to facilitate dialogue in any setting but it will also place them at the leading edge of sophisticated approaches to management and organisational development.

MATCHING LEARNING with PRACTICE

Our aim is to make this course inspirational and transformative. Learning will be through seminars and group experiences each weekend, and through live 'action research' based on each participant's own working or living environment.

WHO FOR?

Anyone from any background wishing to include people in decision-making, peace-making, consultation processes, bridging racial, cultural and religious divides, or tackling local or global challenges.

If you are working in a school or higher education, local government, prison or probation service, social work or trade union, with youth and community development, as a management consultant, in a therapeutic community, or struggling to survive in the NHS, or as clergy, politician or civil servant, you can expect this course to give you quite new perspectives.

WHERE?

Roffey Park, one of the foremost colleges for management training in the UK set in beautiful countryside only 15 minutes by taxi from Gatwick airport or 20 minutes from Victoria, an hour from London Bridge or Blackfriars by train. The course will be residential with accommodation and all meals.

WHEN?

YEAR 1: 6-8 October 2017; 19-21 January 2018; 9-11 March 2018; 11-13 May 2018; 20-22 July 2018.

YEAR 2: 12-14 October 2018; 18-20 January 2019; 8-10 March 2019; 3-5 May 2019; 19-21 July 2019.

Start and finish times, 16.30 on Friday to 15.30 on Sunday, are designed to encourage participation from anywhere in the UK, Europe or beyond.

COURSE FEES

Registration Fee: £300 (non-refundable)

YEAR 1: £1,800 if paid in full by 28th May 2017 - £2,000 thereafter (full payment due 28th August 2017)

YEAR 2: £1,800 if paid in full by 28th May 2018 - £2,000 thereafter (full payment due 28th August 2018)

Payment plan: £2,250 per year = 6 instalments of £750 by 28.08.17, 28.12.17, 28.04.18, 28.08.18, 28.12.18 and 28.04.19

FULL BOARD AND ACCOMMODATION

£324 (incl. VAT) per weekend for 10 weekends over 2 years payable in addition to delegate fees.

NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?

Please contact Teresa von Sommaruga Howard on Teresa@groupanalysis-uk.co.uk and refer to

www.groupanalysis.org/Training/CreatingLargeGroupDialogue

The Institute of Group Analysis | 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY | 020 7431 2693 | iga@groupanalysis-uk.co.uk | www.groupanalysis.org

The IGA is a charity registered in England and Wales (280942) and in Scotland (SC040468); and is a company registered in England and Wales 01499655

Feedback from a former delegate:

"I am still realising now what I have taken away from the weekend and putting it into practice. Best of luck to you all and thank you for your professionalism, hospitality and kindness."

Reflective Practice in Organisations

The Institute of Group Analysis | 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY | 020 7431 2693 | iga@groupanalysis-uk.co.uk | www.groupanalysis.org

The IGA is a charity registered in England and Wales (280942) and in Scotland (SC040468); and is a company registered in England and Wales 01499655

DIPLOMA IN REFLECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE

Two-part training in working reflectively with teams in organisations

LONDON 2017/2018

Foundation Weekend in Sept/Oct 2017 + 6 Saturdays from November 2017 - July 2018

With a long and distinguished track record of expertise in group dynamics, the IGA offers the most thorough, rigorous and practice-based training available in conducting Reflective Practice Groups or working with teams in an organisational context. The training is relevant to all who work with teams within organisations, or conduct groups promoting reflection and dialogue.

Recent social and political shifts have profoundly rocked many living in the developed world. In the UK, the referendum on departure from the EU has revealed deep divisions, and created new conflicts for many people with complex identifications. Group analysis is a science enabling meaningful engagement with others, different from us, with different experiences and holding different views: a crucial discipline in navigating current challenges.

Now in its third year, the IGA's organisational training, Reflective Practice in Organisations, has helped practitioners conduct effective groups in some of the most traumatised organisations in our society. The training focuses on applying group analysis in public/ work settings, and equips practitioners to contain difficult conversations, and enable creative conversations. Course members deepen their capacity to enable people to sit together with profoundly different feelings and thoughts, and yet achieve dialogue.

While covering practice essentials, the course goes beyond teaching a systematised method, instead enabling graduates to assess for, design and make carefully calibrated interventions.

Comments from people who have taken the Diploma:

"What I have found useful is getting together with others doing this work and hearing their experiences; the conscientiousness of staff and fellow students. It was challenging establishing a group, and getting it going; the IGA have been very helpful in finding me one."
- Fred

"For me, this course was a timely and very welcome opportunity to gain support and a deeper understanding for the often difficult task of facilitating Reflective Practice groups. What I have found particularly helpful about the course is both the comprehensive and extensive range of concepts and theory covered – all of which has proved extremely useful in deepening my practice; as well as the intense attention to supervised practice in the on-going supervision groups. The course is extremely well organised and delivered, and creates a deeply bonding and effective learning environment with other participants. I would thoroughly recommend this to anyone facilitating Reflective Practice groups."
- Maggie McAlister, Jungian Analyst, WLMHT



Institute of Group Analysis
1 Daleham Gardens
London, NW3 5BY

CONTACTS

Convenor, Christine Thornton:
christine@groupanalysis-uk.co.uk

Course Admin, Sam Evans:
training-fc@groupanalysis-uk.co.uk

DATES FOR 2017/2018

29 Sept – 1 Oct
18 November
16 December
20 January
17 March
19 May
14 July

Fees from £2,030 / £2,075

Application forms can be downloaded from the IGA Website.

DIPLOMA IN REFLECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE:
www.groupanalysis.org/Training/ReflectivePracticeinOrganisations/ReflectivePracticeinOrganisations

Foundation Weekend:
Reflective Practice in Organisations
www.groupanalysis.org/Training/ReflectivePracticeinOrganisations/ReflectivePracticeFoundationWeekend

The Visitors

A Psy-Fi Tale

By Mike Tait

Part IV

The Visitors spoke about ‘the quality of relationships’, as if that could ever be a reply to a scientific enquiry, when they were evading sharing their clearly advanced technology. They spoke a lot about ‘coming alongside’ but did little to show dignitaries the respect to which they were accustomed or to make anyone in the meetings feel good about themselves. When they announced they were planning to change the location of the discussion, no-one held out much hope. It was becoming apparent that they had no interest in viewing humanity at its best - to only regard conversation as meaningful if it was located in the venue most resonant with current definitions of social failure – and most conducive of chaos. Most disturbingly, they seemed to consider this as indicative of being motivated by an integrating impulse.

When it became clear that this would be an international meeting there was considerable curiosity and some relief. The dignitaries present at the previous meetings had mostly given up hope of achieving any national advantage. At least now they might share their exasperation and allay the suspicions of their neighbours. It was of no surprise to the previous participants, but of some consternation to the new invitees, when the Visitors announced the terrorist camp in which the meetings would take place. They seemed to have chosen a group of fanatics who had for some time displayed a complete lack of compassion for the suffering they caused amongst innocent civilians in a variety of countries. It was clear that the terrorists’ motivation for allowing international visitors into their camp was to give an abhorrent ideology credibility – to suggest that some recognition of their claims was conceivable.

Yet the international delegations, particularly those who had not previously met the visitors, were reluctant to give up the chance of conversations with an unknown intelligence that might not happen again for centuries. The Visitors guaranteed security which sent a ripple of curiosity through both international delegates and potential hosts. The Visitors didn’t seem to carry any weapons but they were clearly so scientifically advanced that few doubted their capacity to enforce their guarantees. Those who had met the Visitors previously braced themselves for a further attack on values fundamental to a civilized society.

The Visitors begun by asking questions about: beliefs, the evolution of frontiers, the distribution of wealth and forms of government – but soon distorted international protocol until those present found themselves being asked to reflect upon the quality of their interactions and how those were impacted on by their personal and social histories. (Those who had braced themselves were not surprised.) The Visitors failed to challenge the diatribes of the fanatics but inquired as to the motivation of the manufacturers who had built the weapons they carried. They seemed more interested in the history of the region than in current atrocities – as if the notion of parenting could be extended beyond an individual’s family history – implying that responsibility lay as much with the historically influential powers as it did with the perpetrators of atrocity. When they asked questions such as: *‘What is a helpful parental response to a traumatized child?’* and *‘should an enraged baby be eliminated?’* it was too much for some of the representatives of the larger powers who went outside to consult with one another.

The survivors from the prison conversations expected a reaction of outrage similar to that of ‘the hard men’ in the jail, when it became clear that the perpetrators of atrocity were being viewed by the Visitors as traumatized or ‘vulnerable’ rather powerful or righteous. They were not disappointed and for a moment it would seem as if outlaws and respectable politicians were on the same side encountering an alien threat. More often, ‘the terrorists’ seemed bemused rather than dangerous and diplomatic representatives, who had been thoroughly briefed by security experts before attending these meetings, found themselves worrying that they were relaxing their vigilance. It was not clear, at those times, whether the terrorists seemed less alien because there were genuine aliens in the room.

Some didn’t know why the Visitors had invited them from the psychiatric hospital. Others didn’t know why they’d been invited from the prison. The government minister thought that the Visitors were losing their minds – although the nature of mind seemed to be one of their central pre-occupations. He realized that he’d stopped listening to their questions. Why had they bought her - this woman who made him think about his daughter? A hospital manager found herself exchanging glances with the politician. This was no environment for a vulnerable patient. A nurse, who recognized both the hospital manager and the politician from hearing the latter speak in the recent mental health debate about local responsibility for the health budget and, knowing that the former had implemented the resulting cuts without negotiation in relation to the harm caused, took

some pleasure in their discomfort. The schizophrenic woman noticed that the terrorists seemed to shout at regular intervals about killing – which was what her voices had been doing for years. The chaos of the courtyard with all those foreign languages and shouting voices felt strangely familiar. She felt less alone. She also realized that she fancied the angry terrorist with the Adidas trainers who seemed to be returning her looks. That was unfamiliar. She thought that the medication had blunted her erotic thoughts. She wondered whether she was enjoying herself. That also was unfamiliar. She enjoyed the eye contact. The hospital manager noticed the flushed looks with some disquiet. This patient was vulnerable and in no position to make decisions about the nature of happiness.

‘Was that why she had been left alone with her voices for most of her life? Was that why her wishes had been ignored and her long-term psychotherapy was no longer funded?’ Who was asking these questions? The manager noticed: she had never seen the Visitors’ mouths move. How did they zone in on what people were thinking? Or were they fragments of conscience that pushed through her policy formulations? Why had these people accepted the invitations to come to this dangerous place? Why had she?

The Visitors kept the focus on those who suffered and, rather than supporting demands to challenge atrocities (which would win support in the civilized media), they focused on the numbers who had died through disease, malnutrition and the absence of clean drinking water - implying international culpability - as if local governments were not accountable for their own problems. They drew attention to differing living standards and inquired as to whether, in an international marketplace, there was a direct co-relation between comfort in one area of the world and death in another. It was as if they were linking anyone with a reasonable standard of living to the perpetrators of shocking atrocities. They did not regard normal behaviour as neutral.

‘Did attempts to protect national security, if the actual numbers killed by those attempts were similar to the initial terrorist attack, demonstrate an equivalent level of atrocity? What was defensive military action and ‘collateral damage’? Might all deaths, wherever they occur be regarded similarly? What was the distinction between a ‘surgical strike’ and knifing someone in the street, except that the former allowed for a greater measure of disassociation?’ The Visitors must have had considerable intelligence to move across vast tracts of space but they seemed unable to comprehend such concepts as ‘the greater good’, national self-interest, national security, geo-

political considerations and national sovereignty. They seemed to see national boundaries as little more than lines drawn recently on maps and it appeared that the only definition of ‘responsibility’ that they could understand involved international compassion.

They drew no distinctions between the actions of democratically elected governments and those of ‘rogue regimes’. *‘Were tyrannical dictatorships or corrupt regimes also in need of loving, thoughtful interventions?’* Surely the history of humanity showed that many regimes (as with individuals) would only take notice of force? They evinced little interest in war crimes trials which international representatives explained proudly as an example of giving international expression to civilized behaviour. *‘Was thoughtful authority always difficult to sustain and in all societies easily lost?’*

‘If humanity was viewed as a family, why would authority figures exterminate or imprison their children rather than putting all their efforts into inclusion and reconnection? Did loving parents mortgage houses to pay for a child’s education or medical bills? Did this have relevance to how nations might relate to each other?’ They seemed to understand that some ‘children’ might be extremely difficult to help but asked whether most mothers would go to somewhat more imaginative lengths than they witnessed being attempted by professional bodies and political entities despite their greater resources. *‘Why was the human family considered less important than the biological family?’* The warder wondered whether the Visitors had the same view of the developmental difficulties of nations as they seemed to have in relation to individuals in the prison.

These references to authority and parenting sent a ripple of disquiet through the room. After all, there were many ways to parent and to exercise authority. Some of those present had sent their children to boarding school so they could pursue careers without the daily interruptions of managing children – justifiable in terms of giving their children a good education. Others had been quick to seek a medical diagnosis when their children or adolescents became difficult and the idea that they might be expected to spend hours tolerating and thinking about the feelings stirred up in them by difficult offspring was an alien concept.

The politician wondered whether the Visitors knew somehow about his daughter and the impact of his unpleasant divorce. He found himself recognizing in the fanatic’s diatribes on greed and hypocrisy similar themes to the accusations of his daughter. He’d thought he was protecting her – but from what was becoming less clear as he watched

the ‘vulnerable patient’ become enlivened by the unfolding drama. Had she chosen to come to this hell hole? Was it not too stressful? Was she competent to make choices? He realized that he hadn’t felt able to stay away despite disparaging the venues. Was he questioning his own capacity to choose? What had motivated him?

It was becoming clear that some of those the Visitors brought with them felt that they had more in common with the position of the terrorist in relation to authority – albeit without the religious rhetoric and the homicidal intent – than they had with the official representatives of their own cultures. The Visitors noticed this disquiet - as they noticed the youth of many of the current hosts who seemed most fervent in their cruelty. *‘Was the apparently fanatical faith of these young people a conduit for a deeper rage and sense of disillusionment? Why did many people become displaced from their extended families and their communities? How much did invasion and economic disruption impact on ideologies? Who took ‘responsibility’ for these matters and would they be held to account in the way that it seemed that some of the larger powers intended for the young terrorists?’*

The man who’d killed his wife despised these murdering fanatics, but felt secretly pleased that the Visitors had included him on this venture. It wasn’t just that it was a holiday from prison; it seemed like the Visitors had wanted him to come. It was a long time since he’d felt that. Could he like aliens without liking foreigners? They didn’t seem to care about danger. Could they even be hurt? Why was he feeling sad?

The way the Visitors organized the discussions, it seemed as if responsibility for anything was impossible to locate. When the representatives of the larger powers attempted to place it on others they were soon examining the historical impact of their political and commercial practices on current events. When the smaller powers attempted to locate cruel practices with particular tribal groupings or with the larger powers, it wasn’t long before they found themselves reflecting on their inter-personal interactions, systems of governance and wealth distribution. When the hosts of the venue attempted to locate evil in the beliefs and practices of others in the room, they found themselves examining their daily interactions – despite their attempts to explain why these were irrelevant compared with the current moral endeavour for which they were eager to die.

She liked it when the fanatic she fancied talked about his willingness to die. When he quoted his religious text that told him to die, it was as if he understood what her voices had been telling her for

years. Had he also had parents who had oscillated between anger and despair? Did he know what it was like to be bullied? She liked the way the Visitors questioned him but didn't seem to want to harm him. She recognized the hospital manager, the murderer and the politician from the hospital and enjoyed the way that the Visitors made them explain themselves. She noticed that the voices were quiet in case the Visitors made them explain themselves. Was this the Visitors' ward round?

The businessman serving time for fraud was puzzled by how alive she looked. He was also unnerved by the sadness on the face of the murderer who he'd avoided in the prison. The businessman regarded violence as messy and unnecessary. He wasn't sure why he'd chosen to come to this place with the Visitors. Did he choose or did he just find himself doing things?

'Were international companies who determined the prices at which medicines would be sold (meaning that not all countries could afford those medicines) on a par with instigators of genocide? Were explanations of economic self-interest disconnecting justifications for allowing people to die?' These were inquiries – however disturbing the direction they took - rather than condemnations. Why did the Visitors refuse to condemn the cruelty of the powerful even when the inconsistencies and rationalizations of governments and companies became exposed? The wish to form alliances against those perceived as abusing power was confounded by the Visitors' apparently viewing angry revolutionaries and complacent super-powers as emotionally young entities who needed creative, restorative interactions rather than international law courts. *'Might the cruelty of the mighty and the down-trodden both elicit sadness? Was 'power' a child-like state of mind - given the limited capacity of most human beings to reflect - and the even more limited time that their molecules hung together in what was known as 'a life span'? Did moral absolutism interrupt reflection? Were condemnations and idealization both part of a cycle that might helpfully be interrupted? How might groups discover links and restorative interactions rather than triggers for hate?'* Their refusal to condemn anyone infuriated everyone.

Sometimes contemporary responsibilities disappeared into an historical fog. Sometimes the sense of accountability was overwhelming. Most disturbing was that it was shared.

The government minister who had first met with the Visitors in the prison experienced a familiar twitch of discomfort as the Visitors again shifted the conversation away from any possibility of moral or legal retribution. He shuddered as he imagined a society and a world devoid of consequence. Understanding, however multi-

dimensional it became, would never act as a form of deterrence. It seemed that Visitors were characterizing international relations as a form of continual interaction and reflection in which everything was forever 'becoming' without any prospect of arrival. Clarity seemed to have become defined as a defence against thinking.

Part V will be in the September issue

CONTEXTS' COLUMNISTS

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!

Statistical Power – A tool that helps you find out things

In studies as in life, at times, you get unexpected negative results. Don't blame your study design, others, or yourself, but think about doing a power calculation for your next study. This can help. What do you do?

The first thing when planning a study is to work out how many participants you need (your correct sample size). If your main purpose is to test a hypothesis, for example, that twice weekly group psychotherapy will be more effective than once weekly group psychotherapy, you need an adequate sample size (enough participants) for your study, because your sample size depends on power.

Power is the probability that you will correctly reject the null hypothesis. Or put differently, the probability that there truly is an effect of a given size, so that you can reject the null hypothesis. (The null hypothesis simply means that nothing interesting is happening with your observed data). You do a power calculation to decide how many participants you need to be reasonably sure that you don't miss a positive result, because you simply do not have enough participants.

How do you do it? You can calculate power with a formula. This helps you to work out your exact sample size. Typically, power is set at 80% or 90%. Let's say you believe that 50% of clients will get better within one year of once weekly group psychotherapy. You hypothesise that your twice weekly group will increase this to 70% of clients. If your twice weekly psychotherapy is effective, you set an alpha at 5% and power at 90%. This means that there is a 90% chance of showing with your study that twice weekly psychotherapy does indeed work better than once weekly groups.

How many clients do you need for your group? There is a simple formula: Sample size = Noise divided by signal and then squared.

What's noise? It's the variation. Signal is the size of the difference from the null hypothesis. (Often called effect size). Applied to your sample size in the above example, you believe that the twice weekly therapy increases wellbeing rates from 50% to 70%. In this example, the effect size is 20%. Put into the formula, you would need a minimum of 250 clients to show that twice weekly therapy is more effective than once weekly groups.

Let's try another example: if you wanted to see whether twice weekly psychotherapy improves wellbeing rates from 50% to 60%, your effect size is 10%. If you conduct your study and use an alpha of 5%, an expected rate of 60% in your experimental group and 50% in your control group, you would need more than 1000 clients, according to the above formula.

That's all there is to it. So, the next time, you plan a study which has a hypothesis, do a power calculation when planning it, so you don't miss any positive results.

Cheerio for now,

Susanne Vosmer

s.vosmer@gmail.com

MY WORLD – YOU’RE WELCOME TO IT

Art cuts deep

I’m Sorry, So Sorry, (that I made you cry)

Yes, I know what you’re thinking, “where has mwywti been, I’ve missed the mix of professional satire with surreal juxtapositions, all told with good-natured, gentle humour”. Well, I’m telling you, mwywti suffered an existential crisis at the prospect of not being in print; sort of allergic to being digitalised. However, examining its own navel, or rather, self-descriptive title, it realised that, all along, it had had the freedom to be whatever it wished, so could just be itself at last and damn the medium (yeah, matey, but we’ll all be keeping an eye on what this so called “self” turns out to be [columns don’t really have “selves” do they?]).

BOB

If mwywti had not suffered its dark night of the soul it would have been here last year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the release of *Blonde On Blonde* (BOB) in June 1966. As it is, in the meanwhile Bob has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition”. Interviewed after giving the announcement, Sara Danius, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, said a good place to start with Bob Dylan was *Blonde On Blonde*, going on to place him not just in the cannon of English and American literature but in the tradition of troubadours going back to oral traditions in Greece 2500 years ago.

Mwywti would go along with this, primarily because it regards *BOB* as his supreme work (not his most perfect, that’s *John Wesley Harding*). If this column persuades just one person to listen again, its work here will be done (and yes, Chris MacGregor, that does include you. I know you prefer Laughing Len, apparently all women do, something to do with his “soul”, but give Bob a chance to entrance). Let us count the ways:

Bob’s voice. A combination of chant, talking blues, singing, moaning, deadpan tone, passion, indifference, and channelling generations of blues, country, folk and pop singers including Buddy Holly (whom he acknowledged as both an influence and as transmitting something to him when Buddy looked into Bob’s eyes from the stage – “it gave me the chills” he says). It is a wondrous thing, unique to this album, a

mystery that still holds.

Operatic. So enticing, entrancing, vivid is the voice that mwywti sometimes wishes that it didn't understand English (what do you mean "you don't seem to understand English"?), so it could just listen to the tone, quality and cadence, as in listening to an opera or Bach Passion in a foreign language, and still find the meaning.

Timing. Musicians say Frank Sinatra's timing is excellent, well Bob's is it's equal here, not a foot put wrong, emphasising, undermining, caressing the words into new depths of meaning. Just hear him sing "Oh mama" on *Stuck Inside of Mobile* - each time a different moan of release (rather than complaint) - it'll make you feel happy.

The musicians. Everyone is at the top of their game. Clearly inspired by Dylan at his amazing best, responding creatively and flexibly to the songs and Bob's rendition of them. They are all working really fast, the whole album was made at three groups of sessions, one in New York which only produced one song that made it to the album (*One Of Us Must Know*), and two in Nashville with a different set of musicians (apart from Robbie Robertson); the whole album was made in 8 days, there is a lot of improvisation, working in the moment. Kenny Buttrey should get special mention for his consistently inventive and varied drumming - timing again.

The songs. Though clearly rooted in the blues, even those most obviously drawing on the conventions (*Pledging My Time*, *Leopard Skin Pillbox Hat*, *Obviously 5 Believers*) re-create the tradition as modern, sophisticated urban blues though ultimately they and all the others are unclassifiable. Something has to be said here about *Just Like A Woman*, which is perhaps the only song to have become seriously wearied by repetition. But this isn't the reason it needs rescuing, no, this is because of its egregious misogyny. Mwywti's answer to this is to understand it as not being about a woman at all but a transvestite or transgender man/woman (Bob would have met plenty at Andy Warhol's Factory [though mwywti also acknowledges the biographical fallacy {or, perhaps in this case, phallusy}]). Though this doesn't completely forgive the contempt it at least aims it somewhere else and introduces a sense of irony.

Let's look at one. *I Want You* bounces along like a delicious, demented soufflé, Kenny B gets a star here and Wayne Moss for his

16 note demi-semiquaver run at the end of each verse. The tune is carried by guitar and organ, with decoration from each and a piano that mwywti only found in the mix after 50 years of listening (sometimes its function is percussive, at others it mimics the guitar or organ lines, only sometimes drawing attention to itself). Bob recites/chants the lyrics with an occasional nod to the melody in the chorus. It's sublime.

And let's briefly glance at the lyrics, the first verse is:

*The guilty undertaker sighs
The lonesome organ grinder cries
The silver saxophones say
I should refuse you
The cracked bells and washed-out horns
Blow into my face with scorn
But it's not that way
I wasn't born
To lose you*

Mwywti won't do an extensive analysis but just to note a couple of things. The rhyme scheme is AABCDDBDC so complex, though it doesn't sound it, Sara D pointed to his rhyming as part of his originality. The euphony is evident on the page and even more so as sung. There is also a contrast between the gloominess of the words and the jauntness of the rhythm and melody. And a final point: *The cracked bells* for an American would be an obvious reference to The Liberty Bell, an iconic symbol of American independence and notoriously cracked. There's a picture below. As Bob might have said about this very song "It's not just pretty words to a tune or putting tunes to words ... it's the words and the music together - I can hear the sound of what I want to say."

The harmonica playing. Searing, wailing, his best work on any album. Listen to the end of *Pledging My Time* where there is a beautiful distortion to the top notes as Bob pushes the harp to its limits, yet it still fits perfectly.



Place in the cannon. Let's set the record straight, it's common amongst commentators and biographers to talk of the trilogy *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde*. However, this is a superficial reading because *John Wesley Harding* belongs with them to make up a quaternity, let's not get confused by the 18-month gap and different instrumentation, like BOB it was made in Nashville with 2 of the same personnel. Though this is also true of *Nashville Skyline*, that was the album that represented a real change of direction.

Bob Johnston's role. For some reason, it seems to have become traditional amongst biographers (e.g. Clinton Heylin, Ian Bell, Howard Sounes) to denigrate Bob Johnston's place as producer as if all he did was turn on the tape recorders. Let's look at his history with Bob: he produced *Highway 61 Revisited* (apart from *Like A Rolling Stone*), *Blonde On Blonde*, *John Wesley Harding* and *Nashville Skyline*, very different albums with completely contrasting sound

worlds - that isn't an accident. After the relatively unsuccessful sessions for *BOB* in New York, he was the one to suggest Dylan go to Nashville to work with the session musicians he knew. And listen, Chris, this is what Leonard Cohen said about him:

"Bob Johnston was very sophisticated. His hospitality was extremely refined. It wasn't just a matter of turning on the machines. He created an atmosphere in the studio that really invited you to do your best, stretch out, do another take, an atmosphere that was free from judgment, free from criticism, full of invitation, full of affirmation. Just the way he'd move while you were singing: He'd dance for you. So, it wasn't all just as laissez-faire as that. Just as art is the concealment of art, laissez-faire is the concealment of tremendous generosity that he was sponsoring in the studio."

So let's say "up yours" to the nay-sayers and honour Bob Johnston as a truly great producer, especially on the album in question.

Let this album into your ears and mind and it will be a beautiful companion for life.

Lavinia Palace's Ten Point Guide For A Great Sex Life

1. You've got to want it (no, *really* want it!)
2. Practice makes perfect, so pracsex, pracsex, pracsex
3. One lover can teach what the many can't
4. Guys – for you an orgasm isn't really necessary, it's about process, but for your lover....
5. Before, during or after – which do you prefer? Hey - you don't have to choose
6. Humble yourself to the wishes, needs and desires of your lover, don't be afraid to get down on your hands and knees
7. Think in hours rather than minutes (and if you can think in days....)
8. Ask for what you need
9. Don't be afraid to laugh, don't be afraid to cry

10. You have to *truly* want it

When painter Hans Hoffman asked Jackson Pollock if he worked from nature, he replied - "I am nature"

But love cuts deeper

WHY DON'T YOU CALL, CALL, CALL, CALL ME?

Ring-ring, ring-ring, ring-ring, click

Lavinia Palace: Hullo, this is Lavinia.

Peter Zelaskowski: Hi, Peter here.

LP: Peter.....oh, Peter Zelaskowski, Contexts editor.

PZ: Yeah, that's me. Can I check you said Lavinia, didn't you used to be Davinia?

LP: No, that's my sister, she's the one who's a therapist but not a Group Analyst, although she does work with groups a lot. We've got another sister called Crystal, but we don't talk about her. Our parents were crap at names.

PZ: I need some copy for the next Contexts and understand you're going to Berlin, so wondered if you could write something on your thoughts, feelings and expectations about going there.

LP: Well I can tell you now, if that's a help.

PZ: Sure, go ahead.

LP: Well, I worked for Age UK once when I thought I needed to come to terms with getting older and in my early days there I was at one of their resource centres having lunch. I was sitting next to a woman who was 82 when she started talking about her experience at the end of the war. Her parents were Polish/ Hungarian, they had met and got married in East Berlin. As the Russians rolled in they jumped in the back of a truck to the West leaving all their possessions behind. This reminds me that refugees are what they are for a reason and that immigrants are emigrating with cause. I associate Berlin with division

and reconciliation, walls that are erected and walls that are knocked down, people who are parted and people who are re-united. The theme of the Symposium is crossing borders which I think fits right in with what it brings to my mind. (Incidentally the woman then told me that I reminded her of her daughter so rather than feeling my age I felt like a kid).

PZ: It's certainly a helpful co-incidence that it was Berlin where they were crossing the border. Any other associations with Berlin?

LP: Musically it seems to be an inspiring place: David Bowie moved there in 1976, stayed for three years and produced what's become known as his "Berlin Trilogy" – *Low*, *Heroes* and *The Lodger* – practically the only decent work he did in his life (though you may disagree). He says he did it to get away from all the drugs, though this certainly didn't work at first as Berlin is a strange place to choose for this purpose, given their abundance there. He certainly had a rather crazy time: for instance, he was sharing an apartment with Iggy Pop when one night they went out in a car to score. They met the dealer at a hotel but after the purchase Bowie rammed into their dealer's car repeatedly, for five minutes of madness. He then drove around the hotel's underground car park, pushing 70 mph, screaming above the screech of the tyres that he wanted to end it all by driving into a concrete wall. Then the car ran out of fuel and they both collapsed in hysterics. (Hey, this is beginning to sound like the perfect place for a GA symposium). It certainly gives an unexpected dimension to Iggy singing *I Am A Passenger*, doesn't it?

Apparently, he liked Berlin because he could go around dressed discreetly and not be recognised. One evening on a whim, he climbed onto a cabaret stage and performed a few Frank Sinatra songs. The audience shrugged and asked him to stop as they had come to see a different act. They've got good discrimination, Berliners, no? And chances are we'll all get away with not being recognised too.

He was lucky to have good collaborators on the albums, principally Tony Visconti who helped him produce all three, Brian Eno on keyboards and synthesisers who was responsible for drawing him into something "modern", and Robert Fripp on guitar who helps make *Heroes* the only Bowie album that I have any time for at all. Of course, as usual, all the lyrics are paper thin and don't stand up to more than 5 minutes scrutiny and all the real work was done by the musical team. Still, it was something, and seems to have saved him personally from complete self-destruction.

Before that, in 1973, Lou Reed wrote an album called *Berlin*. I was living in a house with a bunch of people at the time and we had a cat called Atom (ha ha) who would run out of the room every time it was put on because the first track, also called *Berlin*, included sounds of children playing and the poor beast had been traumatised, and injured, when he was flung out of a window by some kids. For a Lou Reed LP it's listenable.

The two women who come to mind, off the top of my head as you've caught me here, Peter, when I think of Berlin are Nina Hagen and Marlene Dietrich, both who sing in their own way.

PZ: I disagree with you about Bowie, he's rather a favourite of mine, but everyone is entitled to their opinion, no matter how wrong. Any other connections that occur to you.

LP: Hmm, like everyone else, probably, I've seen *Cabaret*, so I'm expecting some divinely decadent entertainment, darling. No, really, I want to spend every night, except for the Gala Dinner, going to Jazz clubs and having a wild time. In fact, I'm also hoping that they have some great music lined up for the GD 'cos GA's can really let their hair down. I'm rather looking forward to seeing John (Schlapobersky), Frances (Griffiths), Robi (Friedman), David (Glyn), and Chris (MacGregor), for instance, really rocking out! And you, Peter, of course.

PZ: Thanks, I do rather good Mick Jagger moves when I get going.

LP: I'm sure you do Peter, I'm sure you do.

PZ: Any thoughts about the Symposium itself, other than an excuse to have a good time?

LP: You're getting a bit cheeky given that it's you contacting me and asking for something. But, of course, I love the Symposia, they give a real energy boost, it's great to see so many people from all over the world gathered together through an interest in GA. You can sit with anyone and have a great conversation which seems to start at a different point than usual with "strangers". At the risk of you accusing me of being a hedonist again, I do also look forward to meeting friends and colleagues in a situation where there is lots of time to hang out together. As far as the programme goes, I don't go for the papers, too overwhelming for my tiny brain and not enough time to absorb by

thinking about them with others. But I love the workshops, some of them have been revelatory and/ or transformative for me in the past. So, I also expect to have a good time there, if that's all right with you.

PZ: Only teasing, Lavinia. Is there anything else that you want to say to Contexts readers?

LP: Yes, I want to say – get your ass to Berlin.
