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## EDITORIAL

The Winter workshop 'Being Displaced' proved to be very appropriately named as the Society moved out of Daleham Gardens while the workshop was taking place. From the content of the papers about the workshop in this issue, it is clear that the move became part of the matrix. Although 'Contexts' home has not moved, everyone including the editors, has been affected by leaving a much loved base and container for around 20 years. The President of the Society comments on this in this issue. Undoubtedly the membership will have feelings about the changes and we look forward to receiving your thoughts for the next issue.

We do need to clarify - and this might be again an opportune moment- that 'Contexts' is the newsletter for the Society, not the Institute. From time to time we receive copy which is about Institute affairs. This is not suitable or necessarily of interest for publication to all GAS members. We are always sad to return copy but we do feel this is an important boundary. The Institute of course has its own publication 'Dialogue'.

In this issue we are particularly pleased to have received papers inspired both from the workshop and other areas of practice. We would still like to have more response to articles published and hope that you will do so for the July deadline. Thanks in anticipation!

Can we remind contributors (again): PLEASE DON'T  
NUMBER PAGES (think about it!) TRY TO FIT  
TEXT ONTO COMPLETE PAGES  
(One or two lines on an otherwise blank page is  
not practicable.) EDS.

## Committee Matters

The Copenhagen Symposium, excellently conducted by Gerda Winter, was reported as making a good surplus. Up to £1.0,000 could be coming to GAS funds.

The new premises for GAS are now at 90 Belsize Lane, the committee were aware the new address, telephone and fax needed to be drawn to members attention.

The separation and clarification of the relationship with the Institute was given a lot of discussion and thought.

The committee discussed the need to promote and present Group Analysis more widely and effectively, in Britain on the Continent and in N. America.

The European Symposium 1999 will be in Budapest. First publicity is expected soon.

### *SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS*

Is there anybody out there with a paper that is burning to be given?

If there is please contact any of the following people from the Scientific Committee.

Marisa Dillon Weston.

Wil Pennycooke Greaves

Teresa Howard

Kim Knudsen

Mike Parker

Marie Louise Rabe

John Woods

## The Society's Office

For the time being the Society's office is at:

90 Belsize Lane                   tel: (44) (0)171 794 3116  
London NW3 SBE                   fax: (44) (0)171 794 4990

Our Executive Officer is Mrs Brenda Ling.

A myth is already beginning to be told that the Society has been forced out of its shared premises at I Daleham Gardens by the London Institute of Group Analysis. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As part of a continuing policy of increasing the differentiation of the Society from the Institute we have for some time been seeking to establish a separate Society office. The increasing size and activities of both organisations have made it difficult efficiently to administer them from one office. Moreover the Society seeks to draw members from other group-work trainings both in London and across the world. Our very close links with the London Institute have sometimes felt an impediment.

It is clear that our new office cannot immediately be within 1 Daleham Gardens without breaching existing contracts with tenants who use rooms there and substantially reducing the income of the Institute. Proposals are being considered for making alterations to I Daleham Gardens which would create an extra room so that the Society's office could be at that address. If these proposals are satisfactory to the Society we shall return.

Because such arrangements will clearly take several months to explore and put in place the Society Committee decided to take temporary office premises outside but near to Daleham Gardens, timing the start of those arrangements to coincide with the termination of Mrs Ling's contract with the Institute.

Meanwhile a Housing Working Party convened by our Hon. Treasurer Brenda Foguel is considering a wide range of options. These include accommodation at I Daleham Gardens, a possible small office near to Daleham Gardens, and more extensive premises which would incorporate the Journal office as well as the general office, together with rooms for the Society's activities. During this period Society events will take place at Daleham Gardens as usual.

Brenda Foguel would be very glad to hear from any member who knows of a suitable property in either of the latter two categories.

Bryan Boswood                   President

The winter Workshop 1997\1998

The London Winter Workshop is an important event in the society's calendar. It attracts up to 50 . people, a majority usually from outside the United Kingdom for 5 days of intensive work, much of it experiential in small, median, or large groups.

The Committee would value proposals from members who would like to convene the next such workshop.

They should reach me before the end of April.

The workshop is always repeated in the north of England later in the year and sometimes in other countries. Colleagues offering to convene must be willing also to be involved in the repeat event in the north.

Bryan Boswood      President

## Brenda's Agenda

**We Have Moved!**

Our address is now;

90 Belsize Village  
Belsize Lane.  
London NW3 5BE

Tel. 0171 794 3116  
Fax 0171 794 4990

The planned date of departure from the IGA premises coincided with the audit and the London Workshop and unfortunately (as with many members) an extremely bad attack of the 'flu. After having moved 7 van loads of GAS belongings, time ran out at 10.30 am. I am extremely grateful to two workshop participants, Isobel Greenwood and Piers Lyndon for their time and concern by literally picking everything off my desk and the surrounding area (8 car loads) and transporting them to the new premises.

To my friends I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for your support and confidence - you gave me back my self esteem.

In order to make the administration easier I would really appreciate it if you would adhere to deadlines, particularly when paying fees.

## GAS THEATRE GROUP

Following our successful theatre outing to see *The Homecoming* at the National Theatre, reviewed in this issue by Kevin Power, we have arranged another visit.

ART at Wyndhams Theatre on 10th May at 5.00 pm

This is said to be a very amusing play, though with a serious theme connected with art, and was chosen after requests for something a bit lighter than Pinter. There has been a lot of interest and tickets are going fast. Anyone interested should contact Bryan Boswood. As before, we plan to meet afterwards for a meal and discussion somewhere near the theatre.

Anyone who would like to hear about future visits and be on our mailing list should contact Bryan Boswood, Irene Bloomfield or Sheila Thompson. Suggestions about future plays are also welcome.

## SUMMARY OF THE N.E. SECTION NEWS

## FUNDING STRATEGY

Given the clear political as well as psychosocial appreciation of Group-Analysis in the Former Soviet Union, evidenced in 1995 when workshops were held in Tbilisi Georgia, and in Nizhy Novogorod, we have focused on a joint funding strategy, gathering together the most powerful requests for training and funding we could. These include requests from the Ministry of Education, Russian Federation; Moscow University, Psycho-Social Faculty; the National Research Centre, Moscow, Psycho-Neurosis Department; and in Georgia the Ministries of Health and Education and Tbilisi University. This has been a joint exercise with our group-analytic colleagues and conveners, notably Marina Chittashvili and Tatiana Serebriokova, who attended the Copenhagen Symposium, and Dr. Sergey Kenty of Moscow, with his links to Prof Asmolov, vice Minister of Education and Moscow University. An example of networking.

The considerable task of funding has now commenced, with applications to the Know How Fund, U.K and Euro funding, initiated by a letter from the President of GAS and the Chair of the N.E. Euro Section. We aim for £20,000 per location for four years, as required. There is much competition for such funding. We are soberly confident, D. V.

Finally, our keystone programmes with the Association of Group-Analysis, St. Petersburg, now convened by Gerry McNeilly, with Jane Campbell and Pat McGrath, is funded for a further year thanks to David Kennard and the Berr Trust's £10,000.

Given the above, it is apposite to hear from the President of AG.A, St Petersburg, Vladimir Shamov, of a recent Russian Presidential Decree supporting the training of psychoanalysts in the Russian Federation, something previously prohibited. Group Analysis is appreciably more relevant to the psycho-social situation in Russia in the minds of our colleagues there themselves: however this is a timely background development for our funding applications.

Raymond Blake, Chair, N.E. European Section,  
International Development Committee.



## 25th London Workshop 1996 -1997: Being Displaced

### The participants

This year we welcomed 21 participants, 10 of whom came from as far afield as the US, Finland, Germany, Sweden, France, Israel, Scotland and the Netherlands. Numbers were less than half that of last year's winter workshop. Initially many felt cheated that there were no small groups as usual. There was speculation that this loss contributed to so few participants. Another theory centred on the displacement of the Group Analytic Society from Daleham Gardens. The moving out was visibly occurring during the week.

### The speakers and conveners

The speakers and conveners also came from many places and orientations;

Alan Roland, a practising psychoanalyst from New York and author of, *'In Search of Self in India and Japan: Toward a Cross Cultural Psychology'* Princeton University Press (1988) and *'Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis: The Asian and North American Experience'* Routledge (1996).

Dieter Nitzgen from a small village near Freiberg in Germany, a member of the Group Analytic Society (London) and the Association of Freudian Psychoanalysis (AFP), working in private practice and in-patient treatment of addicted patients. He is also a teacher and supervisor of the Institute of Group-Analysis (Heidelberg).

Goran Ahlin, from Sweden, the Director of Psychotherapy training at the Institute of Psychotherapeutic Psychiatry at Langbro, as part of the Stockholm Health Care system. He has published many books and articles on Group Analysis, therapeutic community care, psychotherapy, pedagogics and in 1996, completed his doctoral thesis on group analytic theory and research. He is a member of the Group Analytic Society (London).

Suman Fernando, originally from Sri Lanka, was a consultant psychiatrist for 23 years until he took early retirement in 1993. He has published extensively on transcultural psychiatry and related matters and is author of *'Race and Culture in Psychiatry'* Croom Helm/Routledge (1988) and *'Mental Health, Race and Culture'* Macmillan/MIND (1991) and recently edited *'Mental Health in a Multi-Ethnic Society: A Multidisciplinary Handbook'* Routledge (1995).

Radha Bhat, born in a town in Karnataka, India and grew up in Bombay city on the Western coast of India, specialises in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Group Analysis. She trained in Median Group practice under Pat de Mare. She works as a consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry in Bromley, Kent. Her special interest is in working with people from different cultures and races in therapeutic settings and also facilitating dialogue.

Siv Andersson, born in a rural area of mid Sweden now living in Gothenburg (Little London) in the South West. She is an authorised psychologist and psychotherapist in private practice. Siv started working with groups in 1978 and nurtures a warm interest in Median and large group dialogue. She is fascinated by its possibilities and difficulties. Observing and taking part in the creative potential of a group is a great pleasure for her. She attaches particular importance to transforming hate into energy in the service of collective human thinking and reflection. 11

Teresa Howard, born in England of mixed parentage and grew up in New Zealand, originally trained as an architect and later trained in systemic practice and learned her Median Group skills from Pat de Mare. Her work centres mainly on facilitating change in organisational settings. She is also a visiting lecturer at the University of Reading where she conducts either experiential groups or lectures on Median Group processes on a number of courses. She has a particular interest in working with cultural difference and facilitating dialogue in median and large groups in all kinds of settings.

### **The workshop format**

Each day, except New year's Day when we started later in the morning, began with a lecture which was followed by two small median groups, each of 14 members. The day ended with a large median group of 28.

The week began with Alan Roland talking about, "Walking the Bi-Cultural Tightrope: Indians in the United States". He described a theoretical framework, based on a bi-cultural self, for understanding the miscommunications and misunderstandings that often occur between Indian-Americans and Euro-Americans: the contrast between three psycho-social dimensions of Indian family hierarchical relationships and the culture of individualism in the United States, and how this affects psychological functioning. He then delved into issues of psychoanalytic therapy with American-Indians: value issues of Euro-American psychoanalysts who work with Indians; cultural sources of psychological conflict and resistances; how cultural factors affect the transference and the nature of the self and self-object relationships; and the complex interaction of problems in adapting to American society with personal psychopathology. Lastly he touched on the similarities and differences between Indians in the United States and other Asians such as the Japanese and Chinese.

On Tuesday, Dieter NiZgen described the effect of Melanie Klein's displacement to England in a talk called, "Contexts of Mourning and Mourning in Context". Taking Foulkes' definition of the individual as a 'nodal point in a network' as his starting point, he put Klein's work into the wider perspective of her coming to Britain and the subsequent loss of her native language together with her position in the psychoanalytic movement in the thirties with Hitler risen to power and Freud's death looming. Klein's concept of a 'depressive position' was a milestone in psychoanalytic thinking; Winnicott once compared its significance to the discovery of the Oedipus complex by Freud. While this concept is usually understood individually, as a result of Klein's personal suffering, 'an exploration of Klein's psyche' as Phyllis Grosskurth wrote in her biography, Dieter's paper attempts a more contextual understanding related to Klein's own life experience.

On Thursday, Goran Ahlin, described two experiences of "Living in Limbo". The first, was his own of living in voluntary exile (for professional reasons) in a foreign culture and the second, of a client living hidden as a refugee in Sweden.

On Friday, Suman Fernando's talk "Racism and Cultural Difference in the Mental Health Services" made a number of very important points. Firstly, the term culture refers to patterns of belief that are held in common by a group, an institution and professional body. Culture is not static but constantly changing. Secondly, that although 'race' has no scientific validity, 'race thinking' is a powerful entity that affects 'common sense'. Racism was developed concurrently with the classification of races in European thinking and is deeply embedded in psychology and psychiatry. Thirdly, the term ethnicity includes aspects of race and culture. Ethnic identity may form a part of 'identity' but neither should be seen as a 'static' condition.

As modern racism confounds concepts of 'race' and culture, racism is often articulated in cultural terms and issues of cultural difference and racism are sometimes difficult to separate. Cultural factors determine the concepts of mental health and illness as well as what constitutes 'treatment'. An historical approach demonstrates the power of racism in psychiatry and psychology. Current issues about the diagnosis of schizophrenia/psychosis as well as the way psychiatry functions as an arm of social control are deeply worrying, harming black and minority groups in society and form a source of danger for society as a whole. There is an urgent need to examine these issues and develop ways of confronting racism and addressing cultural difference.

### **The large median group**

This group turned into a powerful container for understanding experience in a new way. The theme of the workshop powerfully resonating in the process. Many people felt displaced from the familiar territory of the small group and felt upset because they did not know what to expect. The rules appeared to have changed and did not seem clearly defined.

Experienced winter workshop participants unwittingly found themselves in a strange and unreliable world. Here in the wider setting of the median group, group-analytic life did not operate in quite the way many had come to expect and rely on. So, the conveners found themselves constantly being challenged for not getting it right as if the rules and culture of the small therapeutic group applied. Remarks about sloppy boundaries abounded. Different ways of doing things were seen as wrong rather than different: a usual response to the experience of being brought face to face with a strange new culture. Unusually the workshop was convened by three women; another new culture. Did three women in authority make it easier to be challenging?

Again and again we returned to the theme of the world beyond the family and the small group. Do we want democracy or dictatorship? If the conveners make all the decisions then we have the makings of a dictatorship. But if they make the decisions we can all feel safe and looked after. With clearly defined hierarchies our position is clear. Without them each of us can feel cut adrift in an endless sea without definition. In these groups we have to establish our place. We learnt a South Indian saying; "A door is a wall unless it is open". Such a closed door is the ultimate symbol of a rigid hierarchy. The inevitable lack of trust brought about by a strange process, that relied on 'on-the-level dialogue', got acted out by a fight, in the break just before the last median group, on the last day. It was the final challenge to the conveners. "Are you going to take control?" we were asked.

A major preoccupation of the week was, "Why is the Group Analytic Society moving out of Daleham Gardens?" and "Why is Brenda being displaced?" All the talk about local group analytic affairs had the effect of making visitors from overseas feel excluded. They felt unable to understand what was going on. The host culture had again not been very welcoming. One overseas participant suggested that next year, we should have a workshop entitled "Unfinished Business". Many felt they had been invited to sit in on a quarrelling family and reflected on the pain of divorce for children. But, was there another way of seeing what was happening? Could we see ourselves as a congregation? Would this change our perspective and ways of dealing with the situation? Could our adult selves be relied upon to think through what needed to be done?

"Do you have to be old to train as a group analyst?" "Do young people really know what they want?" "Is group analysis just about therapy or is it something more and applicable to the world beyond the clinical setting?" At the New Year's Eve party the 'oldies' surprised the 'youngies' with their enthusiasm for dancing to rave music. So things can change. Old people can find their youth and the young can have the wisdom usually attributed to the old. And it can be creative.

By the end of the week many felt that the median group format had been a welcome change and enrichment. There had been an opening up of possibilities that hadn't been thought possible before. The realisation that 'median' does not just mean an increase in numbers but an increase in contexts and possibilities brought with it the acknowledgement that people could be more adult and this felt good. Such groups can also provide a safe place for a large number of people to get together and work through the consequences of having been through such urban traumas as bombings and fires in the underground.

There was sadness about ending. It had been a full week, surprisingly full. The prospect of feeling displaced by going back to our homes and places of work was difficult to contemplate. When we are away we change but so do the people and places we leave behind. Somehow there is no going back.

## ***Being Displaced***

### **25th London Workshop '96-97**

#### **A median Group-analytic exploration ( dialogue) of the socio-political dynamic of being displaced from our home, home town, country or land of origin**

The time between the old year and the new is a dislocated week, usually without the routine of work tyranny, no scaffolding of habit and duty and absent friends,. For some the time is a luxurious freedom, for me the week often stretches my ingenuity of being without the usual tyranny of work . So electing to be part of the 25th London Workshop was an intellectual response to studying my own feelings of displacement and an emotional response to the lacuna of the changing year.

The following notes are my personal response and memory of an important and supportive week. Other people will have remembered or responded to different moments, but hopefully I have picked up the main themes.

The workshop started with a registration evening and buffet. I was expecting a big reunion of old contacts ,friends and acquaintance from previous workshops, and surprisingly there were very few people there. The workshop had about 25 participants and there was some discussion about low -turn out, and I admit to some envy that other people were less displaced then me and had in my fantasy, huge successful family holidays to enjoy. By the end of the week the other participants seemed so familiar that we had created our own network from the original displaced feeling of that first night

The daily structure for the week was a morning paper, two concurrent median groups, lunch in the outside world, the second set of median groups and a final large plenary group. This structure worked well as it moved from an external intellectual input through the intimate interactions in the median groups. These allowed rich interventions in the large group, with an additional layer as three of the lecturers had multiple roles as participant members in both the median and large group.

The first lecture set the tone for the week. Alan Roland described his experience as a psychotherapist with Asian and Japanese Americans, living and working in USA <sup>1</sup> His sensitivity and respect for different cultures gave us a clear sense of the confusion felt by leaving one established culture and trying to maintain a sense of self in another. The original cultures were often at variance with the North American verbal assertiveness, compared with the innuendo and unstated

<sup>1</sup> Roland A The Asian and North American Experience; Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis; Routledge ,London. 1996

needs of the expected in Japanese culture. What should be retained, what left behind, and how much of the self was held by the rituals and value of the family and community of origin? He argued that a trans-cultural shift is more possible by developing a bi-cultural self, and the move towards individuation expected by Western cultural. He listed six indicators of psycho-social dimensions that varied across the cultures he works with;

1. Hierarchical relationships, deference, loyalty and obedience.
2. Self esteem and the inferences of criticism and challenge. 3.

The balance between deference and passivity

4. The ability to vocalise direct anger
5. recognition and judgement of a superior person
6. Intimacy and interdependency.

Listening to Alan I was reminded of my own upbringing and how I now relate to hierarchy, the concept of 'superior' people in my life, and my dislocated response to interdependency. Being bi-cultural is hard work!

The second lecture from Dieter Nitzgen was a thorough and creative look at the rationale and motivation of Anna Klein's, work: how her flowering came through her displacement to England, and writing in another language than her mother tongue. He wondered how 'mutter-shprechen' effects the symbolic basis of analytic theory. He discussed the possibility of Klein somehow holding a collective Freudian mourning, and that mourning itself bringing about a self object differentiation. I am unable to truly do justice to the quality of Dieter's theoretical knowledge, so recommend reading his paper, My own interest was engaged by the concept of arrested mourning by preservation of the first and necessarily lost love object. My translation of Dieter's argument is simply represented by a flow of death and life.

MOURNING

> CLOSURE

> INHERITANCE

>

DEATH <

MATURITY <- LIBERATION and CREATIVITY

The third lecture presented by Goran Ahlin was in the form of two stories about moving from one country, voluntarily, and an other as a victim of torture and oppression. Both reflected the workshop themes that we discussed; being invisible, unheard and fragmented in a different culture. I felt involved an moved by Goran's work and able to reflect on the ideals we search for by shifting into new cultures. It holds the seduction of becoming re-integrated and whole, yet the reality can be the opposite. He shared these two intimate and acutely observed stories, that seemed to me a way that bound the workshop, and allowed us to move towards each other, perhaps in reparation of all of our loss.

The last lecture was given by a psychiatrist who came specially for the last day. Suman Fernando gave a professional and wide ranging set of definitions to demonstrate the inherent racism in the British Mental health system. He demonstrated how the cultural values of scientific thinking have created a western hegemony around the way we perceive and respond the mental health and illness

Dr Fernando gave presented some concepts that he has published that (2) were very helpful in seeing the power of that socialisation

<b>Eastern Ideals</b>	<b>Western ideals</b>
integration and harmony between; persons/environment: families: within societies: in relation to spiritual values	Self sufficiency
Social integration	Personal autonomy
Balanced functioning	efficiency
Protection and Caring	Self-esteem

He pointed out the difference between liberation and therapy from the two perspectives

<b>Eastern</b>	<b>Western</b>
Acceptance	Control
Harmony	Personal autonomy
Understanding by awareness	understanding by analysis
Contemplation	Problem solving
Body-mind-spirit unity	Body-mind separation

It was only when I formulated a question "awareness of what?" that I realised how profound was the dislocation between the two cultures. Even thinking of that question showed my acculturation in western hegemony. Which is why ,for me it is so easy to understand that Western' psychotic' labels may be an inappropriate response to the other person's way of feeling.

He offered a construct that showed how a patient may be seen and how the interdependent misunderstanding feeds the behaviour of displacement.

Patient seen as	'alien/undesirable/disturbed'
Diagnosed as	bizarre/aggressive/psychotic
Felt by patient as	alienated/unwanted/ angry

Dr Fernando's input was a mirror for us all about our own collusion with institutional mechanisms of displacing others, and a personal recognition of my own perspective as an inhabitant of the western world.

I hope I have shown how each lecture gave us food for the median and large groups, though I cannot record the details of the debate in this report, my sense was that most members benefited from the growing matrix of this temporary community. In fact it was essential that we built that network, as the external matrix was being displaced in front of our eyes. 'Coincidentally' (which we all laughingly know is no coincidence) the workshop was held during the week that the Group Analytic Society was moving to a new home at 90 Belsize Village. We were involved with the transition, as observers, participants, members, and innocent bystanders. Some of the participants were uninvolved in the history and its implications and were alienated by the evident passion evoked by the very name of Daleham Gardens. So there we were, remembering, repairing and living with displacement.

It can only add credit to the conveners that they held the matrix through the week, and created a space for us to move from one year to the next, with festivity, food and frivolity. They also created an emotional space for the transition towards a healthier understanding of the personal and cultural effects of separation and new attachments.

*Angela Eden works with groups, teams and individuals in a commercial and industrial setting.*

*She uses the concepts of Group Analysis to help work. colleagues build creative solutions and improving their working lives.*

Angela Eden

'Being Displaced'25th London Workshop of The Group-Analytic Society (London)30th December 1996 to 3rd January 1997

Four days have passed since the workshop ended, four days of being tired and weary with disturbed nights, my mind in a fog of confusion, intensely preoccupied with the fleeting thoughts which come and go in rapid succession, glimpses of insight which vanish as quickly as they come. I am desperately struggling to understand and retain the learning given to me by so many people, I know I do best when I can feel the impact of what has been said and I was able to feel strong emotion during the workshop.

I had been afraid of participating and made the decision not to attend to avoid feeling displaced, it took the intuitive sensitivity of one of the conveners to recognise and understand my fear and invite me to face it in the workshop, thus I was enabled to attend.

On Sunday 29th December we were invited to meet for registration, food and wine, to make contact with one another in a relaxed atmosphere. I was not relaxed but delighted to meet familiar faces and renew contacts from previous workshops. I met new people, their faces registered but their names made no impact, I was too anxious and afraid and made a poor attempt to hide my fear. What was 'Being Displaced' to mean for me? Could I tell my story? Would I have the courage to face the pain I have spent years avoiding? Was it relevant anyway? I soon learnt that I and the whole workshop were to be the witnesses, with no escape, to the displacement of The Group-Analytic Society from 1 Daleham Gardens, and the pain and distress we were to feel.

On Monday Alan Roland needed no paper to give a very interesting talk about his research and therapeutic work with Indian and Japanese people and the cultural differences he had discovered and how he worked with these differences in therapy.

He talked with relaxed ease and assurance about his work which enabled me to be attentive, understand and relate to what he said. I felt he was talking about shock and trauma, the shock of the expected becoming the unexpected, the perceived slight to the self and the resulting disorganisation, trauma, when experiencing the unfamiliar when there is no safe place to feel and be secure and slowly adapt to change.

He talked about the difficulties in mixed marriage between American/Indian, American Jewish/Indian, American/Japanese, American Jewish/Japanese, the many problems felt very close to home for me and I am a Scot married to an Englishman.

I resonated with the displacement experienced by the Indian and Japanese people Alan talked about and felt strongly my own sense of rootlessness and not belonging, and how I was often restless and searching with no inner peace.

In the large group I was powerfully put in touch with loss and displacement by discussion about loss of breast feeding and how to bridge the gap. My anger was aroused by a flippant remark 'you put the nipple in'. I was suddenly aware of the enormous loss being talked about and I could feel my own loss acutely. I was enabled to share with feeling my experience when my younger daughter was a week old, of sudden life threatening illness, a pulmonary embolism, the subsequent hospitalisation, refusal by medical staff to treat me while still breast feeding my daughter, my refusal to stop feeding which after twenty-four hours I had to reconsider, common sense prevailed and my emotional world and that of my daughter was permanently traumatised when she was sent home and I remained in hospital for treatment. I had lost my baby, what despair and pain. For us there has been a permanent sense of loss of one another. I was asked 'where was the delight in the baby?' I knew no delight only pain and fear of loving. Twenty-four hours before her birth I had learnt of my own displacement in my family by my father telling me that his second wife was expecting a baby.

With my story I allowed myself to once again 'Be Displaced' to re-experience the acute and exquisitely searing pain of loss which has become a huge distended weight inside my body, an inability to cry out or weep, a few burning tears occasionally slide down my cheeks which makes me aware of my distress but brings no relief. I wonder whether the



long enduring pain will ever end.

On Tuesday Dieter Nitzgen talked about Context of Mourning and Mourning in Context. I was greatly helped by his references to Melanie Klein and her mourning experiences. I realised that she needed to feel safe to mourn and that only happened when she came to England and found someone who was willing to help and support her to settle and find a new life where she could be heard and valued. I was able to say that I had felt safe in the large group the previous evening, and I knew I was being helped, so had been able to attempt to start to mourn the emotional loss of my daughter.

New year's Eve brought good food, wine and in the end a lively party with spontaneous dancing to rave music, the pleasure of meeting and sharing with a young man our common experience and search for self development, and where the empty bottles came from!! We laughed together, what a delight. Thus 1996 became 1997 and we sang Auld Lang Syne in true Scottish fashion and toasted with champagne, not a Scottish custom, we kissed and wished each other a Happy New Year and we knew that the smiles and jollity were the front to the pain of loss we were attempting to face together. Happiness and sorrow felt so close.

New Year's Day was the day of the displacement of The Group-Analytic Society and in the median group we shared the pain of being displaced in school and the lasting effect it left. I felt so different from other people when they talked about their learning experiences which seemed so unlike mine, however I understood another's humiliation and tried to exclude myself from the group, I was not allowed to escape and I shared my rejection from school before it even began and my inability to learn and achieve academically resulting in me feeling intellectually inferior.

Thursday brought us knowledge in a very special way from Goran Ahlin as he told us his story of voluntary migration with care and sensitivity in a way I could use so well to learn. I knew it took courage and the precious gift of friendship to return after such a long absence to the place where he had shared pain and anguish, to again share himself. I wept throughout as I shared emotionally his slow disillusionment, disappointment and humiliation in defeat as he returned home with his pain and loss. I felt comforted and supported and not so alone with my life experiences.

Next he talked about living in enforced exile and his work with a man from Bosnia who had been the victim of torture in his homeland. The story he told about this man and the difficulties experienced by his wife and family focused me clearly on the unresolved conflict and dilemma in my life.

At lunchtime I needed to be by myself and I quietly escaped to Karnac's bookshop to browse and purchase the book Goran recommended "Migration and Exile" by Leon and Rebecca Grinberg, another gift of learning awaits me there.

In the large group there were many words of concern expressed about the displacement of The Group-Analytic Society. An attempt to understand why, few of us were in a position to know and those who were took the flack without defence or retaliation. It took a very experienced, competent and articulate voice to moderate, make sense and express what it is like to be on the other side of difficult decisions. The loneliness and isolation of decision making was recognised, voiced and acknowledged with relief of being understood from those that knew, but still the pain remained.

On Friday Suman Fernando gave us his thoughts on Mental Health Services: Racism and Cultural Difference. He impressed me with his honesty in saying he had been reluctant to talk to us and wondered how his views would be received. I found his ideas

refreshing and stimulating and what I valued most was his encouragement to think freely. What were symptoms. What was behind the symptom, what did a label do to people, what was the phenomena of schizophrenia? He thought it had outgrown its usefulness. I thought we were all people with our own life experiences and to think what mould had those experiences forced us into. I liked what he said.

*THE BODY IN THE GROUP*

GAS Scientific meeting.

28 October 1996

Dr John Andrew Miller's talk on *The Body in the Group* left me stimulated and wakeful for a while as I was re-awakened to the ways in which, in an analytic group setting, I take note of the non verbal messages which may be expressed in posture, gesture, facial expression, make-up or choice of clothing.

In a new group, when I am trying to establish a holding environment and I am weighing up whether to break a period of silence, I often observe breathing patterns, as these can give valuable clues to levels of anxiety within individuals and in the group generally.

Members bring their physical presence into the group. Their first impressions of each other are what they see. Assumptions are made, often based on body shape, style of dress, or colouring. At this early stage in the group's development, members are exploring their new relationships through identification - like me, not like me.

In the early stages, language, too, may be relatively body focussed. For instance at the beginning of their third session, members of one group discussed whether or not dress had been an important consideration, particularly at their first meeting. This led on to how they should dress as counsellors. (I guess the topic may have been triggered by my appearing in trousers for the first time!). A lively exchange followed about how they would react to their counsellor's style of dress, its colour or its degree of informality if they themselves were to become clients.

One group member at the end of this session visualised the group as being in a circle around a pool. Members readily identified themselves or each other as having dived in, belly flopped, dipped in a toe, kept wellies on or just stood well back.

The play of words around the pool stayed with this group, continuing to evolve into more abstract associations to do with space and silence. The pool began to fill with 'sludge' forming a 'rich compost of communication' enabling 'seeds to germinate' and 'roots to grow down'. A 'rich feed' for the group!

At the meeting Teresa Howard raised the possibility of a workshop on *The Body in the Group*. I shall certainly look forward to it.

Gillian Recordon  
3 Vicarage Drive,  
Grantchester, Cambridge  
CB3 9NG

4th December 1996

CONDUCTING A GROUP THROUGH AN  
INTERPRETER

There has been some discussion whether by conducting a group through an interpreter one can obtain an authentic picture of what is happening in the group. A personal account of a group using an interpreter may therefore be of interest.

In 1992 I was invited to take part in a two-week Conference in the countryside outside Moscow. During the week I was there I gave some lectures and took a group. It was my first attempt at conducting a group through an interpreter and I was surprised to find I was as caught up in the group as if I was speaking in my native tongue, and had the strong feeling that I was actually understanding and speaking Russian. This was largely due to my good fortune in having Ekaterina Kroll, who is a group therapist, as interpreter. Here is an account of the group written shortly afterwards.

There were ten members of the Group besides myself as conductor and Katia Kroll as interpreter; four men and six women. All the participants at the Conference had chosen which group to go in and the choices were made after I had given a lecture on the effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse. We started with only two men and two more joined us at the third session. There were in all eight one-and-a-quarter hour sessions over three days.

In order to get to our room we had to make a long journey going downstairs into the basement, through an unlit tunnel with some water at the foot of one of the steps and then emerge into another building. I asked them to introduce themselves by first name and whether they were therapists or students. Two independently worked for the 12 Step A.A. Alcoholic Programme. One worked with women in prison, one was a Psychiatrist and several were students. I made sure the chairs were in an absolute circle. I said we had very little time to work together in the group and that having an interpreter would slow us up.

I suspected that it might be difficult for us to trust. I shared my fantasy from the tunnel of going down into a dark place and being born into the light.

There were long silences and an extreme feeling of heaviness. There were fantasies of roads being blocked, trains with nowhere to go, a feeling of suicide as an escape, a sense of despair, of an "impasse". If a member said anything important the other members did not take it up. There was the hope that I would be the saviour and somehow lead them out of the impasse. I said they saw the strength as being in me but perhaps our job was to tap the strength and resources in each one of them.

At the third session we were joined by the two other men and there was a sense of levity and hope that they might get us out of our difficulties. The members slowly began to talk about themselves, but seemed to leave much unsaid, particularly the oldest female woman member of the group. A young girl disliked the way an older woman dressed. It later transpired that this was typical of the Communist party and this woman had been in charge of young Communist adolescents. She revealed this with some embarrassment. The girl said she had herself been in the young communist organisation and had dressed like that herself.

An older man told how his grandfather had been killed by Stalin and he himself had been demoted for standing up against the regime. He told us this with great bitterness and there was some hostility and conflict in the group until another member said we should not judge anybody's behaviour. I felt an intruder from the comfortable West into what was a most painful conflict in the group. I spoke of my own fear as a young girl in the War that if the Germans occupied England, I might not have the courage to resist, but would collude.

Another young girl wept as she said she had been stifled by the atmosphere of the regime and wanted to break free. Another said all she remembered of the regime as a child was that those in authority never paid any attention to their needs, and treated everyone else as numbers. There was evidence of much suffering, stoically borne.

At times the torrent of talk precluded the interpreter from being able to translate everything said, and I probably missed a great deal and so concentrated on the emotion in the group.

At the last session I asked the most silent members what they were feeling. One woman dealing with alcoholics and concentrating on the future rather than the past, had felt at the beginning that the group was a waste of time. She had remained silent throughout most of it but surprisingly at the end said she had felt it had after all been worthwhile. A man who had fantasized the impasse, gave a long fantasy about how he thought each member of the group stood, which was amazingly apt. At the end he also surprisingly said there was no longer an impasse. I said he had talked about every group member, but had blocked me out of his fantasy. No one responded to this transference interpretation.

The oldest woman member remembered her forbears who had been highly musical.

One or two other women members still seemed sad and somewhat withdrawn. I told them I felt it had been a privilege to be working with them and that I would always remember this group. I was grateful for the expertise and sensitivity of Katia Kroll as interpreter.

At the beginning there was this sense of despair, of impotence, of a lack of initiative or drive. The middle part of the group was taken up with anger and guilt and a feeling that they had never been listened to or cared about by those in authority. At the end there seemed some resolution, some sort of feeling that together they might help themselves towards better things, some feeling of pride in their forbears and some sort of hope for the future. No doubt the whole conference helped towards this feeling as, for one week or two, they were with like-minded people, obtaining the learning for which they were so hungry and able to make contact in a trusting and safe environment, before returning to the extreme hardships and deprivations of the coming Winter.

## Group Psychotherapists and Schools

The working milieu of the vast majority of teachers, whether nursery, primary, secondary, further, higher or adult education, is the group. Teaching is group work, if it is anything. Yet the theory and practice of group psycho-dynamics seem to play little part in informing the work of teachers and teacher trainers. I think there are undoubted and excellent opportunities for group psychotherapists to begin to establish links within the teaching profession, to market groups and group work training and, in so doing, play a considerable role in 'the great education debate'. In my view there are services we can offer in two key areas.

The first is the more straight-forward and I think well within our means. Each school is required to provide five training days per year for its staff and, in my experience, often struggles to fill these days with meaningful task-relevant experiences. I see no reason why group psychotherapists should not be seeking to put the weight of their various training and professional institutions behind a range of one or two day packages specifically tailored to developing the group skills of teachers and promoting group psychological thinking within schools and colleges.

The second is more challenging, as it is essentially ground-breaking and would promote a shift in the culture of our schools towards psychoanalysis. It is about finding a place for the group-analytic group in education, forming spaces in which teachers might be allowed the luxury of talking openly about their work at 'the chalk face' and in the wider institution. This may not sound too revolutionary and exciting, but in terms of the current narrow frame in which education is debated and fought over, it would entail a complete change of emphasis.

### Teacher Groups

In 1995, with the backing of the Westminster Pastoral Foundation, along with some limited time, money and guidance, I launched a pilot project called 'Teacher Groups'. The modest aim was initially to set up one 'Professional Development Group' (pDG) drawn from the secondary schools of two west London boroughs. The aims of a PDG are to

'provide a safe place for teachers to talk confidentially with their peers, so as to share teaching skills, strategies and techniques in the following areas: behaviour management, classroom control, the use of sanctions, communicating with children and adolescents, stress reduction, planning. In addition they exist to help teachers develop an awareness of the group psycho-dynamics of their classroom... individuals are encouraged to bring examples from their current workload. Wider school issues are also explored. The groups are lead by a qualified and practising teacher and group analyst.'

The ideas underpinning 'Teacher Groups' slowly evolved out of a wish to apply my newly acquired skills as a group psychotherapist to my first profession - teaching - in order to establish some sort of bridge between two compatible professions, which in (my) reality have little to do with each other. From my work as a mainstream and off-site teacher I know that teachers are generally poorly supported and rarely supervised, that space is not provided for teachers to reflect upon and process their practice, and, for whatever reason, that teachers tend to avoid talking openly about their work. There is no money or space in the time-table for regular support and supervision - for any space in which one is paid to reflect upon what one does. To suggest to teachers that such a place should exist is often to invite incredulity.

As a 'professional' you 'should be able to cope' and if you cannot 'then you should not be a teacher' .

### **Failing Schools and Bad Teachers**

According to the dominant ideology of the day, there are failing schools and bad teachers, albeit occurring in small numbers but nonetheless with high public profiles. With the preferred solutions arising from school inspection and teacher assessment being the closure of failing schools and the driving out of bad teachers, little mention is made of possible alternatives. It is all too easily forgotten that the workload of a teacher involves more direct contact with people than any other profession. And yet, how many teachers are supervised or receive any degree of formal support? Many teachers feel close to breakdown. In an environment so hostile to their difficulties increasing numbers are dropping out of the profession. Taking flight is often experienced as the only way of avoiding the more severe consequences of the job. Very few teachers are paid to talk with their peers about their work on a regular basis. On the whole, teachers are not expected to talk about what they do. If they were then a regular and intimate space, which allows for an on-going dialogue between colleagues about the fine detail of their work, would be provided for them to do so.

The demands of delivering a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and, increasingly so, of achieving academic success, dominate the culture of most schools. Resources are not made available and the opportunity to talk, intrinsic to psychotherapy and relatively common in social work, is portrayed as a luxury, thought of as superfluous or even irrelevant to the essential tasks involved in simply getting the job done, which for many is keeping one's head above water and surviving. Those that are unable to cope, and these are the bad teachers, are over-stressed, all too often sick, constantly talking about leaving the profession, taking early retirement or actually leaving the profession. The costs are great - for the teacher, for the school and for the child. In the politicised culture of education, the needs of pupils and parents, the customers, are seen as separate from and hierarchically more important than those of the teacher. So, for example, the threat of exclusion hanging over teachers in difficulty is dissociated from the threat of exclusion hanging over pupils in difficulty. The needs of teachers and pupils have become dangerously polarised to the degree that teachers behaviour suggests that they now experience their pupils as the enemy and are counter-attacking by refusing to work with disruptive pupils, sadly resorting to the same strategy used on them as the sole means of dealing with the difficulties of their work. "If we could just get rid of the bad teachers and the bad pupils....."

Before training as an analytic group psychotherapist, I worked as a full-time teacher in two secondary schools. Both were vast communities. Each day was an immeasurably long chain of individual interactions, verbal and otherwise, with hundreds of young people, often in a swirling and rapidly moving maelstrom of bodies, actions, noises and smells. I would be filled with foreboding and apprehension from Sunday evening. Walking through the school gates was like voluntarily sacrificing myself to an awesome and terrifying monster. Washed-up at the end of the week I would miraculously find myself still alive, ecstatic and exhausted. Later, while training I worked in off-site education, where class sizes were much smaller but the behaviour of the 'pupil' was much more challenging. Only in the latter was there any in-built possibility of regularly reflecting on relationships with colleagues and pupils. However, this was only if the space was argued and fought for - it was never thought of as part and parcel of the work.

### **PCSR Education Group**

In 1995, Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (PCSR) was formed and, along with it, the PCSR Education Group. I have been working with this group since its inception and our current project is the collection of data, evidence and testimony regarding 'Education, a System in Distress'. The group hopes to document the material gathered and widely disseminate it. We are hoping to provide a public platform for psychotherapists and counsellors in order to contribute to the current education debate. I think that, as Group Psychotherapists, we can make a particularly valuable contribution to this process.

### **A Role for Group Psychotherapists**

There are many areas of debate to which we could and should contribute as group specialists. For example, arguments rage over whether size matters and what style of teaching is most effective. One view suggests that bad teachers are unable to control any group, no matter what size. We know that dynamics vary according to the size of the group. However, how exactly might we apply small, median and large group understandings to the debate over classroom size - surely something we should be concerned to do. Another view is that bad teachers are bad because of their trendy permissive 'pupil-centred' teaching methods and that what is needed is a return to traditional didactic 'teacher centred' approaches in which the teacher is a strong authority figure. An application of Bion's 'basic assumptions' might elucidate much in this polarised debate.

How do we as group-analysts view what happens in schools and why is our view so poorly represented within the mainstream of education?

'Teacher Groups' is currently on hold and as yet there are no Professional Development Groups. There has been certainly a good deal of interest and a degree of support from local teaching institutions. However, I have felt very isolated and up against it. I realised that 'Teacher Groups' is a project requiring many heads, much work, more publicity, money... It is a project requiring commercial, lobbying and diplomatic skills, a good deal of confidence and courage... and colleagues.

**I am therefore proposing that a Committee is set up to explore and take further the above ideas. If you are interested in participating contact me on 0181 5233061. I look forward to hearing from you.**

**Peter Zelaskowski, December 1996**

Group Psychotherapist, Westminster Pastoral Foundation and at Open Door Young People's Consultation Service. Teacher, Southwark Education Department Learning Support Service

## GROUP ANALYSIS IN EDUCATION BY ACCIDENT!

My first experience of working within the framework of an analytic group was before I knew there was such a thing and long before I was conscious of drawing the threads together of my working and life experience and psychotherapy.

I had moved from secondary into primary teaching. This was a deliberate choice, I wanted to know about education from the beginning. I had also been offered a post in a training college and did not feel properly informed or equipped without this primary experience. The desire was greeted with suspicion. I had to beg to be allowed in. Someone eventually converted my insistence on being interested in what was going on at primary level, into 'research' so that was all-right.

I was offered a class of eight year olds, and to my surprise was also offered the choice of a classroom. In the main building or in a pre-fabricated hut standing on the perimeter of the playground and overlooking the playing field.

I learned much later that this was where everyone wanted these particular children to be, but the head was humane and felt he ought at least to give me the chance to remain in the main school, as I had by common consent, been accorded the class with a reputation second to none. They were noisy disruptive and uncooperative, with individuals constantly exposed as being in some major trouble or other. I was to find this out, meantime my unconscious prompted me to choose the hut.

That was the beginning of a year when it gradually dawned on me that I was expected to provide solutions, to discipline, to insist on performing something that looked like teaching with children who saw their role as being totally resistant to being taught.

There was an abundance of energy, enthusiasm, curiosity' all over the place, but not much satisfaction and certainly not much to look at, let alone show, at the end of the day.

I think now, that was when I first began to feel my way towards an awareness of the importance of people being involved in a proper way in their own creative potential. The system the children were resisting had been, as it were, designed on a drawing board. It had not grown and arisen from them - the group, but was something imposed. It didn't fit.

On a day when there had been more complaints than usual about behaviour in the playground, I threw away the timetable, re-arranged the furniture and we all sat down



therapeutic/analytic group.

Bullies and scapegoats were identified. Feelings were expressed with sometimes devastating honesty. Solutions were offered with spontaneity, originality and care. Our group in the hut began to find the ability to release and direct energy to promote change and find a sense of well being.

We created a book of 'Liberties and Laws' which was added to and edited regularly. It formed our constitution. The children found great satisfaction in referring to it and working within this structure gave them a sense of identity as a group.

We worked together on projects of which we were justly proud. We sat down in the circle regularly, as in that first session when I had refused to solve 'their' problems, and when difficulties arose it was quite common to hear someone suggest 'lets have a meeting'.

For the rest of the school what happened in the hut was a mystery. People were increasingly intrigued, but it was not something we advertised. I didn't, as I would now, draw attention to the importance of confidentiality. Somehow the experience was recognised as private and I am still wondering how this sense of 'keeping it in the family' happened whilst never being voiced. There was an extraordinary sense of loyalty. Educational establishments seem very obvious places where Group Analytic principles can be applied. As Caroline Garland has said 'To say there is no brief for their practice is not at all the same as saying there is no opportunity for their application.'

She also encourages convening groups on an entirely impromptu basis but trying to keep group analytic principles in mind. I had no principles in mind when I sat down with 28 children in a hut in Hertfordshire. Since that time I have read a lot about what I experienced. The rage resentment anger and confusion that was generated by 'a leader who refuses to lead, a teacher who will not teach, an expert who keep his own counsel' (Hughes 1983) I also experienced emerging from the storm, and that class is still as vivid in my memory today as it was when we found Group Analysis by accident.

Post script. I now work in the NHS with emotionally disturbed children and families. I also run Analytic Groups for adults. I moved out of education and although I still have some contact with schools, I find that there is less tolerance and understanding of how groups can help. This has something to do with the pressures that staff find themselves under. I welcome Peter Zelaskowki's contribution, and would like to be optimistic.

Anne Harrow.

## Selling Group Analysis - 20 years later.

Group analysis had to establish itself in an environment of prejudice, with two negative expectations in particular: that there was insufficient time for the individual patient who had to share the leader with the whole group and that it would be impossible to reveal problems to strangers.

I started work as a group analyst in a large hospital where I was one of the first qualified group conductors employed by the National Health Service. Up to that time groups had been conducted by a variety of staff, i.e. nurses, occupational therapists, junior doctors, social workers. The general attitude within the network of psychotherapy was that groups were inferior to individual treatment and that anybody could conduct a group. Individual treatment was rarely available at the hospital and patients' conclusion was that National Health Service offered groups because this was a cheaper form of treatment.

It was my job to "sell" group-analysis which needed enthusiasm. Luckily I could provide a lot of this. with the willing help of the trainees of the Institute of Group Analysis who needed the experience, we soon had several groups running and our two rooms in a Portakabin were no longer sufficient. We were moved to a real house.

It is disappointing to see that 20 years later group-analysis is apparently still struggling to find its place among other therapies and the main objections are still the same. While reasons for rejecting group analysis may have deep, unconscious origins, the conscious anxieties - sessions not offering enough time for each individual - and having to reveal problems in a group of strangers, can be alleviated in the assessment.

Patients usually understand when it is explained that they do not have to take turns - that the powerful process which develops in the group benefits all participants. As far as the "talking in front of strangers" is concerned - this is far more therapeutic than revealing ones problems to a therapist in the cosy one-to-one situation.

If a patient still refuses a once-weekly group and rejects individual sessions, why not suggest a weekend block-group with up to ten sessions over three days. This should reassure him/her at least about getting enough time?

Herta Reik

## The Homecoming

On Saturday 25th January eleven Society members and spouses met at the National Theatre in London for the afternoon performance of Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming". This was the initial meeting for those in the Society wanting to combine their enjoyment of theatre with group discussion afterwards.

The Drama and group-analysis have a number of obvious links; each concerns human beings and their interactions within the entirety of the human condition. In the group we see this concern unfold without knowing what the outcome will be between those present, what each will bring and what the whole process will add to the members' understanding of themselves and others, including the conductor. However we do make an assumption based upon experience that the process in itself is most likely to be beneficial. In the Drama the outcome can most likely be known beforehand (every play has only one First Night); as readers we can study the text and form an opinion as to the author's intention. When seen on the stage, our enjoyment and appreciation are live, influenced by the interpretation of director, producer, actors, set-designers and by the audience itself. No matter how much we study the text, we must judge the play where it seeks its justification, in performance. No matter how much we read and are told about groups the only place to know and learn is in the group itself.

This play is considered a modern classic

and representative of Pinter's best work. All the scenes take place in the sitting room of the family home of Max, a butcher by trade as was his father. Max is father to Lenny (probably a pimp) and Joey (almost a boxer) and brother to Sam (a chauffeur), who all share the house.

Behind opaque screens the other rooms downstairs and above are easily identified as bedrooms and a kitchen. There is no female presence in the house, for Jessie - wife and mother - has been dead some time before the play's action. Max acts as mother for the entire household as well as being the ageing, snarling patriarch. He grimly bullies and feeds the rest of the household, while Lenny snarls back, Joey sullenly complies and Sam does his best to maintain some self-respect before his brother's insidious and demeaning remarks.

Into this house of knives arrives Max's eldest son Teddy and his wife of Six years, Ruth. They have three small sons back in the USSR where Teddy is a professor of philosophy. Ruth is woman and mother; she both captivates and transfixes the males' gaze. She is archetypal Mother-Madonna-Whore, three in one, a female trinity. By turns the men react to her in one of these three guises. They abhor her and revile her, wish to prostitute her, themselves seek sex with her, and lastly wish for her entire protection and love as madonna figure: the Everyday, the Sacred and the Profane. As background, interwoven with the dialogue we piece together parts of the gruesome history of Jessie also as mother-madonna-whore.

Family history is repeating itself in several ways. There are three brothers in each of the three generations; the patriarchs are both butchers; Joey looks set to emulate Sam in not finding a woman for himself; Lenny has guile enough to avoid falling dependently into the arms of Ruth yet seeks to exploit her; Max's remarks on how much fun they had as boys when he bathed them is inversely echoed by Ruth's disgust with the insects (almost an anagram of incest) back in America; and is Teddy emulating Max's other brother who is never named, leaving to save himself? While Teddy fathers three boys, he teaches philosophy not butchery. Yet is he returning to America without a mother for his sons to give them as good a bathing as his own father gave him and his brothers?

The possibility of further repetition of the mother absence, paternal abuse and denial that anything is wrong seems strong.

There is a poetic unity in the whole drama which just cannot be pinned down. And there are the famous Pinter silences, rather formless and ugly, laced with menace. It was this atmosphere of cold unformed menace which I went away with uppermost in my feelings. The more thought applied to the plot the more complex and inter-related did the themes show themselves to be. My intellect was fascinated, admiring the ability of the playwright to have fashioned such a piece of work which hung so well together.

Yet my sympathy for the human situation presented on the stage was not engaged. At least two of this male

family's generations seemed hugely needful of a real mother while denying this need enormously; their ambivalence over this screamed silently all through the play. Taking this further, they all needed mother and father who could take the responsibility of managing the family from the shoulders of successive younger generations. The males were dreadfully weak in their individual and collective approach to their living; lacking the good authority of a father who was not vengeful or abusive while providing paternal holding and containment was almost as great an absence as that of the maternal and the female erotic.

"The Homecoming" asks questions and leaves the audience seeking answers. afterwards our party gathered in the Royal Festival Hall's café and had about an hour's discussion with tea and coffee, and from where much of what I have written has been gleaned. This is perhaps what theatre-going needs, the opportunity to have discussion while the play is still fresh and still disturbingly in mind.

My thanks to Janet and Bryan Boswood and Sheila Thompson for having arranged the block booking - indeed having thought up the whole project in the first place. The group thought that such a theatre visit might be enjoyable for Society members about every three months. So keep an eye open for announcements for further trips in "Contexts", else let Sheila and Bryan know of your interest. By the way, the seats were excellent - front row of the circle!

Kevin Power

**Median Group Section** The  
Group-Analytic Society (London) 1  
Daleham Gardens' London' NW3 5BY

Please reply to:

26th November 1996

Dear Anne and Sheila,

Perhaps you would be interested to hear what is going on in the Oxford introductory course of the I.G.A, since David Parsons, a probation officer, had introduced Median groups to the prison system, initially at Whitmore High security prison in Cambridge, in 1992, following his experiences with the Median Group section seminars. Later with Peter Garrett he set up a charity "Prison Dialogue", This echoes Foulkes introducing group analysis to the armed forces, in this instance Dave introduced the Median Group to the prison service, Attempts have been made in the past to apply small groups but this activated disturbing family insights as distinct from more appropriate social 'outsights'.

With best wishes,

Pat de Mare  
5 Holly Place  
NW3 6QU

(See enclosure)

from Raymond Blake. Chair. East European Section

### THE GROUP-ANALYTIC SOCIETY

In 1980 there was a lot of conflict between the overseas members and the Group-Analytic Society. I proposed there be a Membership Committee. Ronald Sandison was the past Chairman.

In a recent meeting of the International Development Committee there were four Continental and two British members. The anger of the Continentals at having to meet in "a stuffy cellar" was strong. The situation was due to weak management in London by all concerned, leading to an abrupt decision in which the Continentals had no say. They missed Daleham Gardens. The Brits contained their anger; there was not much else to do.

Now, I understand, the Continentals will be party to all major decisions in the G.A.S. We are going international organisationally.

We next meet at our A. G.M. with a finale from our President, Bryan Boswood, who has so facilitated our internationalism.

As chair of the East European Sub Committee, and having convened many workshops in Europe, I've learned much of man's destructiveness and capacity for healing from our E. European colleagues. It is analogous to moving from small group psychology to median group culture. The Society is in for change. Many members prefer small groups.

Re. Contexts - I think 90% is U.K copy. Perhaps we could facilitate a more international flavour as in our Symposium issue.

There is much in G.A.S. that is comparable to the ambivalence of the U.K towards the European Union. Small groups can be insular. The small group is for the development of personal identity, the medium group for social and cultural identity. The world is a large group. In my view we should have much to offer to all size groups.

Raymond Blake