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Editorial

In August we hosted our European (International) Symposium in Group Analysis, in Dublin. Many people were there and for five days shared in a vivid and involving experience. Plenary sessions, sub-plenary sessions, Trinity College, small, medium and social dreaming groups, pubs, lunches, Dublin, dance, music, workshops, Mansion House, walking and large group, all of this happened quickly and intensively.

The scientific level of the plenary sessions was very high, as well as the standard of the symposium as a whole, with lots of interesting sessions and events happening at the same time. Inevitably, individual and group anxieties and fears about communication, belonging and understanding were raised and present, verbalized or at least felt and echoed, mostly in the special setting that is the large group.

In an effort to register and retain these moments, to broadcast some of the scientific papers and contribute to elaboration of all the scientific and emotional contents of the Symposium, we have produced this special Symposium issue of Contexts.

We would love more people to send us their own contributions, their scientific presentations or commentaries, to publish in our further issues. The soup that was the Dublin Symposium was rich enough indeed to merit further exposure, gentle reheating, and consumption at leisure so that the thoughts, experiences, and generous sharings might provide food for thought and perhaps further creative extensions of our discipline. Please don't keep this work to yourself – share it with our community. We all know that how much you gain from a group is dependent on how much you put in.

And last, we want to thank and congratulate our colleagues from Dublin especially the organizing and the scientific committees, for the extraordinary welcome, work and organization they have done. Thank you all

Paula Carvalho and Terry Birchmore

President's Page

Many took part in the Dublin Symposium in August, around 560 people, the highest number ever, a testimony to the increasing interest in Group Analysis and to the desire to share one's work with colleagues. It was a truly successful event not only in numbers, but also in content. We are very thankful to Liz O'Connor, the chairperson, the LOC, the SPC and its Chair Jacinta Kennedy for the enormous task they have had to organise all this for us.

I have heard from many quarters that the high quality of the plenary speakers and respondents was a continual pleasure and stimulant, and the combination of group analyst and a non group analyst participants proved to be very fertile and was greatly appreciated. Some found the scientific programme too rich, with too many choices and too little time for reflection between sessions. This is a recurring dilemma, of whether to accept or not all the submitted abstracts and there are no simple answers.

The number of participants posed some interesting questions for the large group. How large can a large group be? Is there a limit and will it be necessary in the future to split up the large group if numbers continue to grow? Another problem pertaining to the large numbers was acoustics. There were many complaints about not being able to hear. These usually occur in this size of group and complaints tend to diminish towards the end. People tend to hear better when anxiety and resistance lessens after some time. However with this size of group the technical side of the acoustic probably needs to be looked after in the future. Something was tested in Dublin, but did not work. The large group really is a very special phenomenon and an asset to Group Analysis. It continues to intrigue and stir up your feelings. After the Symposium I went for a car trip with a couple of friends round Ireland, which was a great experience – the ever changing landscape, the light, the historical sites, the pubs – and what did we talk about every day – was the large group. How to understand the themes, certain passages, what was not talked about and why, and I could continue.

Some concern has been expressed that the scientific programme was not sufficiently Group Analytic, that Group Analysis is in danger of being diluted and thereby losing its essential core. I don't feel that danger is so big. Looking back in abstract books of former symposia there have always been many forms of applied groups and

presentations from other psychodynamic orientations. However it is important that we have some purists/traditionalists among us so that we don't forget where we came from: to keep the balance between new developments and contact with the original theory.

The Symposium also marked the end of office for three members of the Management Committee Anne Lindhardt, Denmark; Lauren Storck, USA; and Earl Hopper, UK who each in their way have contributed to making our committee work very inspiring.

Four new MC members were elected: Joanna Skowronska, Poland; Robi Friedman, Israel; Don Montgomery and David Glyn both from the UK. Welcome to them all.

With the new administration we will continue the projects already started such as following the joint research project of the IGA/GAS, the "Systematic Review of Research into Group Psychotherapy". In Dublin the research team presented their preliminary work and methods to a very interested audience, who had many questions and comments. The project is scheduled to be finished by December when we will know the results. We will also continue the work with establishing and consolidating of a local UK-chapter and get the Working Party for a revision of the Constitution going. Inherent in this work is the internationalisation of the Society. The dialogue with South Africa will be continued with reference to a future joint event down there. To that end there were meetings with the South African group in Dublin. A future co-operation between the chairs of the different group analytic bodies EGATIN, IAGP, EFPP and GAS about accreditation was decided after a fish bowl session in Dublin formed with the intention of looking at common goals where co-operation would be fruitful. In this meeting accreditation came up as a priority.

Last but not least it is an important task to get people interested in becoming members of the Society. A large membership is a way of establishing Group Analysis in the world and being taken seriously in official places. It is a central responsibility of the MC to work towards that end and the best way to do it is by organising and arranging events of high quality. The first such an event is the Annual Foulkes Lecture in May 2009, which this year will be given by Morris Nitsun. So make a point of reserving 15th May in your diaries now.

Gerda Winther
President, GAS

Welcome to New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Society. We hope that you will actively contribute to the Society and that we will hear more from you in this publication and on our Internet Forum, and also actively participate in our events and workshops. Our Society depends on your participation and the sharing of expertise and experience.

Ms Ellen McCoy, Associate Member, London, UK
Dr Juan Tubert-Oklander, Full Joint Member, Mexico
Dr Reyna Fernandez-Oklander, Full Joint, Mexico
Dr Daniel Riordan, Student Member, Sydney, Australia
Miss Julia Slater, Full Member, London, UK

Deceased Members

We note the death of **George Christie** earlier this year. George was a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and group therapist, with an interest in psychogenic infertility. He was a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, a Past President of the Australian Association of Group Psychotherapists and a Director on the Board of the International Association of Group Psychotherapy.

We would welcome writings in memory of the any deceased members and in recognition of their contribution to Group Analysis.

Be a Contexts Writer!

Contexts welcomes contributions from members on a variety of topics:

- Have you run or attended a group-analytic workshop?

- Are you involved in a group-analytic project that others might want to learn about?
- Would you like to share your ideas or professional concerns with a wide range of colleagues?

If so, send us an article for publication by post, e-mail, or fax. Articles submitted for publication should be between 500 and 2,500 words long, or between one and five pages.

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

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

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Request for new blood!

The Editorial Committee of Group Analysis, the International Journal of Group-Analytic Psychotherapy, is looking for new members. Forty one years ago S. H. Foulkes started "Group Analysis International Panel and Correspondence" and in the first issue he wrote: *"To me it does not seem difficult to accept that communication, verbal or*

otherwise, can take place, from one mind to the other with complete disregard of whether the brain substance is located in one or other skull of the participants." In the same spirit, in an ever growing circle of group analysts, our journal became the medium of that communication of minds. Since Foulkes, its editors were Pat de Maré, Harold Behr, and Malcolm Pines. The ever growing circle demands ever growing responsibility, with new ideas and representation from various circles of our members, including the young and the international. The only way we can continue being the medium is by mirroring the full scale of our readership.

We have been the journal of the Group Analytic Society London, bringing together group analytically minded colleagues across the world. I am asking any of you, who would like to join our Committee to get in touch with me. Please let us know who you are, and how you see the future of group analysis and our journal.

Tom Ormay tomormay@t-online.hu
Editor of Group Analysis

14th European Symposium in Group Analysis, University of Dublin. 18th–22nd August 2008

Despair, Dialogue, Desire
Personal Accounts and Papers from the Symposium

Introduction and Greetings

Greetings to GAS members from Dublin. I want to say thank you to all those who managed to attend the Symposium and to all those who presented their work in the scientific programme. We have had many very kind and constructive comments from many people and we appreciate them all very much.

It seems overall it was a very full experience. Certainly the expansion of the afternoon scientific programme had an impact in terms the experience. Some people found that the amount of choice and the variety of presentations and workshops to be very rich whilst others felt

that there was not enough time for dialogue or time with colleagues. On the one hand it was felt to be inclusive and created more opportunity for presentations but on the other hand it made for long and tiring days. But participants were able to make choices about this and many took time out to visit interesting places in Dublin city.

The response to the other innovations in this Symposium, such as the inclusion of the literary and artistic alternative sessions and supervision groups, was good and many people chose to attend the open art session given by Carol Lark each morning at 7am. The number of participants attending, with such a truly international representation, was remarkable. Below is the breakdown of delegates by country and I think this is very interesting to see.

Certainly there is much to learn from this Symposium this learning will inform the next and in the meantime enrich our practice in Group Analysis.

With Good Wishes,

Liz O'Connor

Country Count for Full Delgation

Country	Nos	Country	Nos
Australia	10	Mexico	3
Austria	5	New Zealand	6
Brazil	2	Norway	64
Cameroon	1	Poland	2
China	1	Portugal	12
Croatia	1	Romania	1
Czech Republic	3	Russian Federation	1
Denmark	59	Serbia and Montenegro	1
Finland	9	Slovenia	8
France	1	South Africa	9
Germany	17	Spain	2
Greece	38	Sweden	37
Hungary	4	Switzerland	4
Iceland	2	Taiwan	1
Ireland	95	Turkey	1
Israel	12	Ukraine	2
Italy	12	United Kingdom	108
Japan	3	United States	15
Lithuania	10	**Total**	**562**

A Personal Account of The 14th European Symposium in Group Analysis: 18th–22nd August 2008

Final day of the Symposium, morning coffee-break following the final small group

"Rosalyn, will you write something for Contexts about your experience of the Symposium?"

Oh no – who has had the audacity to collar me – when my defences are down? – I've not taken any notes. "Oh OK, Terry, – I'll try" Who said emotional health requires belonging to a social network? Humph!

So here is an impressionistic account of my 5 days in Dublin, in praise of the (mostly) Irish women who brought this amazing banquet together.

Engaging with the Symposium

For me – and, I imagine, for most of the delegates, the Symposium started many months before – with an invitation to chose from – it has to be said – a huge offering of lectures, sub plenary lectures, workshops. How to make a rational choice when overwhelmed by such a feast? Expediently, I concentrated on the manageable rather than reading through all the material, narrowing my selection down to those workshops and lectures that might help me with my personal work despairs and desires. Thus I opted to join a small group (for balm, to come to terms with the loss of my small NHS personality disorder service) and workshops mostly relating to Organisational Dynamics to help me both understand better how "my" service had come to be taken over by a bigger fish and to gain confidence in setting out as an Organisational Consultant in my own right.

Later I was saddened to realise I'd missed a very powerful workshop referred to in the large group, "The Secret Peacemaker," Brendan Duddy's role\quiet white knuckle ride, in bringing the UK government and IRA together in peace talks. I wish it had been better advertised – it seems it probably should have been one of the keynote events.

Arriving at the University of Dublin Trinity College

Feeling somewhat bruised by work, my hope in joining the symposium was to be swept up into the current of activity – without having

to think too much about how to get from place to place. However, although we all received smart green canvas satchels with everything we needed inside, the sparsity of sign posting meant map reading was the order of the day and I had to stay "adult," as I navigated myself around the city. Thank heaven for my colleague and friend Sue Greenland with whom I attended the event.

Impressions
Literature
A desire, from the organising committee to weave the arts, especially Irish literature into the symposium, to help contain, process and understand the journey we were taking together. The symposium opened with an amazing lecture from Prof. Declan Kiberd: "Joyce's Ulysses: a talking cure" comparing the trajectory of Ulysses and Dante's Divine Comedy, and privileging the ordinary. How I wish I'd read these works. What a beautiful treatise to both of them.

So many opportunities in the conference to express oneself through the arts and arts therapies – so many opportunities I missed – too much else I wanted to take in.

The Large Group
What nonsense, the large group. Five hundred-plus people having nothing meaningful to say whilst complaining that they cannot hear each other. (My mother's oft – said remark to her squabbling daughters: "If you cannot find anything pleasant to say to each other, shut up" ringing in my ears.) My admiration for the woman who, in exasperation, walked out of the first large group session. In my small group, John Slane, the group conductor, gently encouraged me to stay with it, my having become more acutely aware how quickly I "walk" when feeling betrayed, hurt or attacked (or out of my depth, perplexed and bored). I stayed with it. I was still as overwhelmed by the aggression and nonsense. But then, in the second session, a Brown Girl in the Ring suddenly materialised. She spoke (what I surmised was) her mother-tongue – translated for us by her husband. I did not understand Spanish, I did not catch the translation, but her humour, warmth and beauty were magical. So…inevitably she had to be challenged "This is a speech – not a dialogue". I had to agree – much more and I too would have become irritated – but who is to say that speeches are not acceptable? – a lot

of the other contributions were, to my mind self centred or inane. I was glad I went to the second large group but still found it unfathomable. Amazingly by the third group, others – notably Morris Nitsun, did divine meaning from the group process, illuminating the envy towards the couple. (How obvious when pointed out) and dead-on cue, Gerda Winther (President, GAS, London) and her husband Henning Green sitting apart from each other, both jumped up simultaneously to speak.

Themes
Desire: born of loss – reminding me of Freud's concept of the ego, built up from "the shadow of the [lost] object."

Envy:

- of the "generative" couple. Generative\creative identity being a concept that Prof. Joan Raphael-Leff brought to the conference in her lecture "Generativity and the Diversity of Desire."
- of the younger generation wresting the baton from the older generation, notably played out between the father figures challenging the younger men by for example, demanding a place in the "inner circle" of the large group and by questioning new ideas coming from the speakers.
- of the men, the speakers were mostly men and clearly not afraid to take the limelight. Come on girls – centre stage is there for us too. But of course the risk with centre stage was that there were 500 plus potential critics ready to shred your well-formed thoughts (and it did happen). Perhaps easier to say "its not fair." And yet I think there was also a denial of the beauty and power of the women of this conference – notably Gerda and the wife of Juan Tubert-Oklander and the organising committee that put the whole thing together. Women were "doing it for themselves"

   And, oddly enough, no expression of envy of friendship couples\groupings. Maybe because the majority of us came with others, perhaps like me, to help ameliorate against the loneliness of being amongst such vast numbers. How do you find your voice (to express envy of friendships) as a singleton surrounded by pairs and small groups?

My personal learning

I came to Dublin bruised by the take over of my small team by a "sister" team from within my organisation. I was perplexed that our small but effective service could be in effect, be destroyed by colleagues from within the same organisation, with me experiencing the scapegoat role and being cast out.

Whether fairly or not – I took comfort from The Lord Alderdice's lecture "Desire, Death and Dialogue." Referring to the work of Girard, (I think) he spoke of cultures\communities using the scapegoat as a kind of pressure valve – to help prevent greater destruction. The destruction being the release of energy caused by the shame and humiliation of the group and its sense of identity following a collective trauma. The destruction or casting out of the scapegoat, Lord Alderdice suggested, prevented worse atrocities from occurring.

From my personal experience I could not quite see what would have challenged my organisation to such an extent, maybe my team challenging the status quo, by using a different way of thinking about a patient group? I did not know, but nevertheless the lecture helped.

Following on from this I attended the two workshops led by Garland and Murphy. "Teams in Trouble."

A beautiful link to Alderdice's lecture. Two important learning points when consulting to an organisation for me were: 1. Stick with the role, don't get embroiled in the personal (somewhat along Agazarian lines of thinking) therefore ask, "What is the purpose of this dynamic?" And 2. if you dig back into the history of a team in trouble, invariably you will find a trauma still inhibiting the freedom to work.

Maybe that is the shame my organisation is struggling with? A failure to make deeply damaged people well – and at least one suicide in my "sister's" team, perhaps encouraging the dependency upon its charismatic leader – and the unconscious desire for a scapegoat.

With these thoughts, I needed no more from the formal side of the symposium – although there was still much more to receive. But equally if not more importantly was the connection to colleagues. I think Stuart Whiteley refers to the importance of the informal time between therapy groups in a therapeutic community. For me, the symposium had something of a therapeutic community about it. I needed the space between the formal sessions and I greatly appreciated Keith Hyde seeking me out, giving me the opportunity to speak

of my grief over loosing a service that had become part of who I was. He understood the struggle to reclaim one's soul, given perhaps just too easily to a capricious NHS.

The Thursday gala evening also provided a chance to dance to some fantastic jazz – another great way to integrate experience and shake off the blues.

The small group: The secure base

The symposium offered a huge amount. It was almost as if our Irish hosts were afraid to be found frugal. There was very little space to sit and contemplate, constantly on a route march from one venue to the next. The advantage of the route march was the exercise in an otherwise sedentary 5 days. It seems churlish to criticize such generosity, but I think there is a lesson there for future organisers – sometimes less is more. And I am so grateful for the small group conducted by John Slane, a calm presence providing that secure base within which to make sense of all the ideas. Apparently Slane means elephant in Slovenian. The elephant is my favourite animal. They have wisdom, a sense of family – and they have long memories. I hope so. I also hope that as a baby elephant I will take some of John's shadow into my life.

Finally I ducked out of the Friday afternoon – and the last large group; I had a plane to catch – but had also had enough. I looked around the library housing the Book of Kells – and brought home with me a Celtic angel.

On the back of my angel it says:

"There have always been angels, divine messengers and guardians… They are powerful symbols of consolation and timely assistance; of mysterious origin; an essential part of our existence, to be reached by our imagination."

I think I have returned from communing with Angels.

Rosalyn H Mayho
25th August 2008.

Dublin Presentations

Dante and the Transformation of Despair: Group Relations and their role in creating Hellish states of mind or Blissful collaborations

Jarlath F. Benson

Dante Alighieri is the great poet of despair and bliss who plumbed the very depths and heights of human experience. He describes the deliverance of the human Soul from a spiritually dead and self-centred life and offers a model for transforming Despair into Dialogue and Hope which is particularly relevant for the modern Group analyst.

Dante was born in 1265 and was a renowned poet who lived in Florence and was involved in the politics and government of the city until his party was deposed by a rival faction and he was exiled. He never returned to Florence. This was an enormous source of pain to him for the rest of his life and was a huge motivating factor in his writing the Divine Comedy.

Dante wrote the classic poem. The Divine Comedy which has continuously inspired all generations since because of its central idea that human life is a pilgrimage inspired by love – an odyssey from error to truth, from darkness to light, from isolation and alienation to complete association and communion.

The Divine Comedy is made up of three sections: Hell known as the Inferno is inhabited by those who have been separated from the social body and are alienated and isolated; Purgatory is an harmonious society in which everyone accepts responsibility for their actions,behaves socially and deplores damage to others; in Paradiso the human is pure spirit devoid of selfishness and constitutes the ideal society.

Retribution is the keynote of the Inferno. Hope is the promise of the Purgatorio. Fellowship and love is the essential nature of the Paradiso.

Dante sets out plainly to illustrate the pitfalls and consequences of moral degeneracy as a consequence of pathological narcissism and lack of relationship; he indicates the steps of moral purification and refinement of consciousness through creating mutual and ethical group relations and he gives a clear vision of the underlying reality of human life.

Although the Divine Comedy appears to be a model of spiritual development set within a medieval Christian context it is also a profound meditation on the deepest and enduring realities underpinning human groups. Dante asserts that humans are essentially relational beings and insists that the individual personal and social are inextricably interconnected. We are each responsible for the welfare and quality of life of our fellows and they for us. Human beings in order to be human beings cannot exist outside a group or community and must contribute actively to it. Civic action and group engagement are therefore some of the highest forms of moral or immoral activity.

Dante's expressed aim is to move the human from a state of misery to a state of happiness and he is clear that his poem is a most practical guide emphasising the vital importance of mutual relations and collaborative sharing. This contrasts with the aim of Freud who declared that the purpose of Psychoanalysis was to help men move from "neurotic misery to common human unhappiness."

Central to the poem is the importance of corrective emotional experience painfully gained as a result of the process of learning and teaching fundamental truths. The Commedia is a celebration of learning and acquiring knowledge and provides profound insight into the growth of the human mind. Unwilling to acquire right knowledge the minds of the spirits in hell are permanently clouded – in Purgatory the spirits are gradually enlightened and in Paradiso the spirits have reached complete happiness because they share in total knowledge with the Omniscient organising principle which for Dante is God.

Right knowledge for Dante is about the reality of and search for human and cosmic interconnectedness and the pursuit of the means of transformation of that regressive narcissism which results in self-idolatry and the extinction of civilised relations. Underpinning this vision is Dante's insistence on the centrality of Free Will and moral responsibility on the part of the human. No psychic determinist – Dante is unambiguous; the individual must hold himself responsible for his actions and the words he utters and such action must be deliberate and graded if it is not to distance us from the love of God and from each other.

The Structure and narrative of the Divine Comedy

The Commedia is an immense and complex creation – more than 14 thousand lines long and any introduction to it must be a humble endeavour providing the reader with a few insights to undertake the journey Dante lays before us. The dramatic action of the poem

describes Dante's exploration and journey through an immense poetic universe into which we are invited as fellow travellers. The topography of this universe is divided into three regions. Hell is a triangular shaped hole in the earth created when Lucifer the most brilliant of the angels was cast out of Heaven after his rebellion and physically plunged into matter. From a modern psychological perspective it corresponds to the deep unconscious or shadow aspect of the human. Dante moves down into the centre of the earth to the Satanic core of Hell under the guidance of the wise Virgil, investigating various discrete regions where specific modes of sinfulness are punished in symbolically apt ways. The general movement downward reflects an increasing degree of severity and pathology. The gates of Hell are marked by those infamous lines:

> "Abandon every hope All you who enter."
> (Inferno. Canto 111.line 9.trans. Musa.1995.)

The deeper the pilgrim goes, the more he – and we – learn about the psychology of sin and the structure of the human shadow. By the time this part of the journey ends, Dante is sufficiently aware of the nature of evil – that evil is a frozen and embittered human heart and a refusal to relate with or consider others – to begin the purgative process that leads ultimately to God and right relationships.

The material displaced by Lucifer's fall to earth is pushed out on the other side of our planet as a mountain called Purgatory that Dante painfully ascends in the poem. Whereas Inferno deals with the effects of narcissistic relationships Purgatorio deals with the causes of narcissistic relationships and insists that the only way of transforming self-centredness is through contrition and the recognition that one must learn new ways of relating to oneself and others. This requires self-examination and the actual telling and revealing of one's shadow to others. In group therapy this is the most difficult of steps and is often experienced as a humiliation but is in fact restorative because it is an attempt at making restitution for what has been lost through previous self-indulgence and self-absorption by emphasising a participatory and other-centred attitude to life. As in group psychotherapy Dante gives us a picture in Purgatorio of souls learning to work together to make reconnection and provides a precise model which includes dream analysis, cultivating the inner life of imagination, fostering an aesthetic sensibility and specific guides to collaborative relations.

The third realm is Paradiso in which the techniques for higher states of consciousness and creative collaboration are elaborated. Mutual mirroring, right vision and loving relations are central to the transformation of narcissistic preoccupations and are continual refrains and motifs beautifully described in the Commedia:

> "The more souls there are above who are in love
> The more there are worth loving: love grows more
> Each soul a mirror mutually mirroring."
> (Purgatorio. Canto xv.lines 73–75.)

So it is clear that Souls who see properly love more and make themselves thereby better "reflectors" of God's love. (Paradiso.canto xiv,line 33–60.) One who sees the world properly will be filled with love for God and other people; one who is not imbued with such love will demonstrate that he or she has not properly seen the world and mistakenly makes their own self the world centre. Getting the vision "right," seeing the world as it really is increases the capacity to love mutually and relate reciprocally. Perhaps we can come close to a perception of Dante's Paradiso by recalling De Maré's concept of Koinonia applied to large groups which he defines as "spiritual-cum-human participation in which people can speak, hear and see, and think freely, a form of togetherness and amity that brings a pooling of resources." (de Maré et al 1991. P.2.)

The poem begins with Dante lost in a famous allegorical landscape.

> "Midway along the journey of our life
> I woke to find myself in a dark wood
> For I had wandered off from the straight path.
>
> How hard it is to tell what it was like
> This wood of wilderness, savage and stubborn
> The very thought of it brings back all my old fears.
>
> A bitter place! Death could scarce be bitterer
> But if I would show the good that came of it
> I must talk about things other than the good. (Canto 1.lines1–9)

The symbolic and psychological implications of the scene are clear. Dante realises he is in a profound existential crisis and must face circumstances and creatures who represent threats to his soul's

survival if he is to recover the knowledge of how to live creatively and hopefully.

The Dark Wood is the experience of a HARDNESS OF HEART in which a pathological narcissism has so possessed the soul as to render it incapable of turning to God or knowing which way to turn. (cf.Dorothy Sayers, 1949. Hell p73).

This mention of sin and evil may make you uneasy but it is important to remember that Dante is a medieval Christian writer whose theology does not undermine the profound psychological value of his insights into the human condition. We can easily reframe sin and evil as a regressive narcissism that hardens and freezes the heart and makes all others objects with no value at all and eventually extinguishes civil relations.

Dante beholds the Mountain of Purgation and Repentance. It can be ascended from " the right road" but not from the Dark Wood because there the Soul's cherished aims have become externalised and appear to it as demons or beasts with a will and power of their own, blocking all progress. Once lost in the Dark Wood a person can only escape by descending within the self so as to see sin not as an external obstacle but as the perverted will to chaos and death within the human. But Dante offers us – the living souls – the remedial possibility of journeying on our behalf through the hellish state and revealing for our self-knowledge the nature of impenitent sin and all its evil potentialities.

As Dante journeys through hell, purgatory and paradise, therefore, he is also going through states of personal and human potential, and we accompany him on this pilgrimage from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom.

Dante has three guides through the otherworld: Virgil guides Dante from the dark wood, through Inferno, up Mt. Purgatory to the Earthly Paradise. Virgil is the embodiment of human reason – an image of a masculine analytic mentality – a traditional model of the group analyst. This can only go so far and must give way to Beatrice who is an incarnation of a feminine intuitive wisdom mind. In group analytic terms Beatrice might represent the maternal container and "thinking breast" function of the group.

Beatrice was for Dante an actual woman in her own right whom he deeply loved but she also represented for him an image of nobility, of virtue,of the redeemed life and in some sense an experience of *Almighty God* Himself who manifests through her.

Beatrice guides Dante from the Earthly Paradise, up through the various circles of heaven; and St. Bernard of Clairvaux takes over in

the final stages leading Dante into the permanent presence of God and the ideal society.

Dante's overall theme is that *Love pervades the universe* and that we human beings either find harmony in that love or by opposing God's love, damage the creation, ourselves and the others around us.

Dante powerfully asserts that the love between two humans – is one of the most powerful inducements to come alive to the love of God. The individual who loves narcissistically – *love of an earthly object for its own sake rather than seeing it as a manifestation of the divine* demonstrates his lack of reason and vision and removes him self further from Charity which is the source and goal – the true '*cosmic force of generation*'. Such a Lover lacks the vision and reason which would instruct and illuminate him both to the personal reality of the beloved and the realisation that the beloved is a vessel for the manifestation of Divine Love.

Beatrice is the woman who initially draws Dante into and onto the path that leads towards Universal Love. This path consists of a series of graded and ordered loves and relationships spread over the entire universe but it starts for Dante with the love for a woman providing the entry point for a deep encounter with Divine Love. Dante's love for Beatrice is ennobling and spiritual and it is passionate and in his view this personal passion fits in with God's universal scheme of redemption and correct relationship.

Love then is the generative force in the universe as Dante recounts in canto17 of the Purgatorio:

> Neither creator nor his creatures ever,
> My son, lacked love. There are as you well know,
> Two kinds: the natural love, the rational.
>
> Natural love may never be at fault;
> The other may be: by choosing the wrong goal,
> By insufficient or excessive zeal.
>
> While it is fixed on the Eternal Good,
> And observes temperance loving worldly goods,
> It cannot be the cause of sinful joys;
>
> But when it turns towards evil or pursues
> Some good with not enough or too much zeal
> The creature turns on his Creator then.

> So you can understand how love must be
> The seeds of every virtue growing in you,
> And every deed that merits punishment.
> > (Purgatorio. Canto xvii.lines 91–105.)

Dante is very clear: the Creator and every creature is moved by love but this supreme love, which is no other than the love of God, may err by an act of will or choice and being so misdirected may become perverse and evil.

In canto 16 Dante explains his understanding of the relation of human will to Divine Will.

> You men on earth attribute everything
> To the sphere's influence alone as if
> With some predestined plan they moved all things.
>
> If this were true, then our Free Will would be
> Annihilated: it would not be just
> To render bliss for good or pain for evil.
>
> The spheres initiate your tendencies:
> Not all of them – but even if they did,
> You have the light that shows you right from wrong.
>
> And your Free will, which, though it may grow faint
> In its first struggles with the heavens, can still
> Surmount all obstacles if nurtured well.
>
> You are free subjects of a greater power,
> A nobler nature that creates your mind
> And over this the spheres have no control.
> > (Purgatorio. Canto xvi.lines 67–81.)

And again in canto18:

> You have the innate faculty of reason
> Which should defend the threshold of consent.
>
> This is the principle on which is based
> The judgement of your merit – according as
> It winnows out the good love from the bad.
>
> Those men who with their reason probed the depths
> Perceived this liberty in man
> Thereby bequeathing ethics to the world.

Let us assume that every love that burns
In you arises through necessity;
You still have the power to restrain such love.

This noble Beatrice knows
As Freedom of the Will: remember that
If ever she should mention it to you,
                        (Purgatorio. Canto xviii. lines 62–75.)

So it is clear: human beings are fundamentally motivated by love. But an individual or group can love too much; can love too little or love the wrong thing. The twin towers bombers are lovers. The paedophile is a lover. Hitler was a lover. But the path of love requires reason and discrimination and the careful and educated exercise of one's free will and choice because on the journey of the soul the object of one's love is *not just the thing in itself but also the love of God who is manifesting and sacramentalising the object.*

Thus the informing and compelling wellspring of the Divine Comedy is Love – not a love restricted to the idealisation of one passion but the articulation of a force that impels every creature to obey the highest dictates of its nature. Dante's simple but profound message is that love permeates the universe and that human beings through the exercise of reason and will either cooperate or turn away from love and is so doing are elevated to the best of themselves or are degraded to the worst of themselves.

In this sense Dante's towering poem is a medieval draft of a complete group analysis. Group analysis offers the alienated and self-absorbed individual a second chance – an opportunity to engage in ordered and graduated mutual and loving relationships in which desire can be re-educated and appropriately re-directed. The sterile isolation and self-congratulatory monologues of Inferno are gradually and with the assistance of a wise guide transmuted into the conversations and mutual ambitions of a developing community so characteristic of Purgatorio. And finally the loving relations of Paradiso mirror a delight and a concern with persons and existences other than ourselves which at times evokes and catalyses experiences of exaltation and transcendence.

The pure spirituality, radiant charity and ineffable tenderness of Dante's vision ensures that his text remains a classic that never belongs to the past but always to the present. It carries a permanent message of group relations and significance for all generations and still makes

a direct and universal appeal to the heart and the conscience after 700 years.

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Dublin Presentations

Extremes of desire, rage and despair in sexual and political conflict

By Cherry Potter: group analyst and writer

Pilar is a young wife who, after suffering years of abuse at the hands of her husband, flees the marital home with her small son. She begins to make a new life for herself but returns to her husband after he promises that he will not abuse her again. But when Pilar returns home her husband flies into a violent rage. He strips her naked except for her bra, throws her onto their balcony, drags her back into the apartment and tries to strangle her. In terror Pilar wets herself. Her husband looks at her in disgust and walks away. This is the story of Take My Eyes, a Spanish film about domestic violence directed by Iciar Bollain.

How can psychoanalysis and group analysis can help us understand: 1) men who are driven by an urge to enforce their power and

control over women by abusing her and degrading her sexually? 2) women who are attracted to abusive men? and 3) the repeating cycle of violence between perpetrator and victim?

Clearly these are complex issues, particularly as I have chosen a canvas that ranges from the personal to the social and the political. I will only be able to touch on the surface in this paper.

Splitting, Projection and Projective Identification

These are the key analytic concepts I want to consider, particularly as the husband in the film appears to be in the grips of an infantile regression to what Klein described as the paranoid schizoid position. Klein understood paranoid anxiety "as anxiety about imminent anni-hilation. In this position, before the secure internalisation of a good object to protect the ego, the immature ego deals with its anxiety by splitting off bad feelings and projecting them out. However, this causes paranoia. Schizoid refers to the central defence mechanism: splitting, the vigilant separation of the good object from the bad object." (Mitchell, S. A., & Black, M. J. 1995).

(Web Links: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_mechanism; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Splitting_(psychology))

The film shows how the husband, when he is in a rage, has no empathy for his victim wife. She is entirely to blame for his violence; she has asked for it by her actions. She has caused his unbearable feelings of powerlessness, humiliation and shame, she has emasculated him and she must be punished for this. He uses his violent rage to make her feel what he believes she has made him feel – like the Kleinian baby he projects his bad feelings back into her.

By degrading her he reduces her to a worthless object. The more he abuses her the more grandiose and powerful he feels. By demonstrating his power over her body and her sexuality he regains his masculinity and his potency. There is something in the scene reminiscent of the Nazis treatment of the Jews – stripped naked and abused they become less than human, they become worthless objects that deserve to be destroyed.

Women Who Lose Themselves in Love: some case studies

Over the past few years I have run two 12-week analytic groups for Women Who Lose Themselves in Love – these were women who have a pattern of destructive and self destructive relationships. Subsequently I worked with a number of these women individually and

in my long-term group for women. These 2 case studies are based on this work.

Emma's Story

At 28 Emma, a petite, childlike dancer, looked ravaged by life. When she was a child she regularly witnessed her father's out of control rage as he trashed the house and beat her mother. She had a particularly traumatic memory of her father threatening to murder her mother, cut her into little pieces and bury them in the greenhouse. This climate of terror was normal life for Emma until she was 10 when her father abandoned the family home and went off with another woman. On access visits Emma would sit perched on the edge of a chair, for hours, sometimes days waiting for her father. In order to hold onto her image of her idealised father, she blamed her mother for driving him away. In her imagination she clung onto the idea that if she was good her father would return, like the prince in a fairy tale, and tell her he loved her.

As an adult all Emma's boyfriends had been violent and disturbed. But nevertheless she loved them desperately. A restraining order was placed on her violent boyfriend, Ben, which he broke. He subsequently served a six month prison sentence. She said she was terrified that he would come and find her when he came out of prison. But she didn't change the locks on her flat or her mobile number. And when he came to find her, instead of reporting him to the police, she began meeting him secretly in parks at night in the dark. She was frightened, but they had to meet like this so he wouldn't get sent back to prison.

Emma could see how her love for Ben was like the love she felt for her father, loving him and terrified of him at the same time. But she couldn't help loving him. She was deeply ashamed because of all the work done by the police, the social services, and me, to help her. She was plagued by feelings of guilt and worthlessness. She had always felt guilty; convinced everything was her fault, even as a child.

Cathy's Story

"Why is it so hard to leave someone who is trying to destroy me?" Cathy, a teacher aged 29, asked me almost as soon as she sat down for her first session. She appeared vulnerable, every inch a victim, although she possessed a somewhat wild, Wuthering Heights kind of beauty; easy to imagine her racing desperately across the moors searching for her Heathcliff.

Her partner, Jake, didn't beat her up so the bruises would show, instead he pinned her to the wall with his hands around her throat, dragged her by her hair, threatened to smash her through the window and kept her awake all night shouting at her and telling her he wanted to kill her.

Cathy's mother was a violent, out of control alcoholic, always in and out of rehab and psychiatric hospitals. Her father was a cold, frightening businessman. Between the ages of 4 and 10 he came to her bedroom at night and sexually abused her. The rest of the time he hardly looked at her. Mostly Cathy insisted that she hated both her parents and she couldn't remember ever loving her father. Until one day she became very embarrassed and cried because it was so hard to say this terrible thing. After her father sexually abused her he would suddenly look pathetic, fragile, and guilty. He would sit there, kind of slumped, ashamed and upset about what he had done. She felt sorry for him then and she felt that she loved him because he needed her to comfort him. She had exactly the same feelings for Jake who, after almost killing her, suddenly becomes pathetic, vulnerable and needs her to comfort him; that's when she loves him most: "he's as if my Dad loved me".

Cathy desperately missed being with Jake as a couple despite the fact that he was cruel and didn't have any empathy for people he was hurting. He was handsome, charismatic and powerful. It sounds crazy because he was so dangerous but being with a powerful man like Jake made her feel safe.

She also missed Jake because of the times when they were like children, playful and fully alive. Like her, Jake also grew up in a violent, alcohol-sodden household. Cathy conjures up a vision of the two of them like feral children running wild with no parents to look after them and love them, so they try to look after each other, but they are so damaged they end up hurting each other. But at the same time they are the only ones who can really understand each other in a world full of normal undamaged people.

After a period of resisting Jake's attentions he left the area. In therapy Cathy became silent. She said she was depressed, suicidal, still afraid that Jake would find her and kill her. I wondered if she was more afraid that he wouldn't come, that this was really the end with Jake. She cried. She felt completely abandoned, as if she was falling apart, fragmenting, life without Jake, everything, was now pointless, completely meaningless.

Both these relationships are like a revenge tragedy, where the sequence of extreme emotions of love and hate are played out again and again as if on a loop.

The abusive love/hate cycle in 3 acts

Act 1:
The narcissistic cocoon: their passionate and grandiose love is fuelled by their envy and hatred of normal people in the outside world.

Act 2:
The narcissistic cocoon becomes smothering.

The hatred turns inwards.

He regresses like an enraged infant in a tantrum – he hates her like he hated his out of control mother who must to be punished for not loving him properly.

She is both his helpless victim and filled with hatred and rage at the power he has over her which is like the hatred and rage she felt towards her father.

She attempts to escape from her abuser and seeks help.

Act 3:
His rage burns out.

He becomes the helpless crying infant, terrified of losing her, full of remorse, desperate for her forgiveness. She is again his object of desire, his idealised good mother.

This is the moment she has always longed for; she is desired, and she is the only woman who knows how to love him and save him from himself.

She rejects help and returns to her abuser.

How can we understand what is going on in these relationships?

Splitting and projection
Both partners are splitting and projecting their loved and hated objects onto the other.

A kind of Projective Identification
He acts out his infantile rage with his hated mother on his own behalf. And she is his victim. But a part of her is also feeding and feeding off his enormous rage. Both Emma and Cathy experienced

intense feelings of hatred when they were being abused and both had fantasies of killing their abusers although they were both too terrified to act out these fantasies. His rage, and the rage that it generates in her in retaliation, is the closest she can get to her own infantile rage, a rage that she dare not express because she may destroy everything she loves and needs for survival.

Repetition compulsion

Attachment Theory shows how often our experience of love as an infant becomes our template for the kind of love we seek in our adult lives. "Why can't I fall in love with nice men?" many of my patients wail. The answer is because nice men don't inspire in them the passion, the pain and the fear they have learnt to associate with love.

In his book, The Illusion of Love, Why the Battered Woman Returns to her Abuser, Celani refers to Fairbairn's work with abandoned and abused children. He notes how the children preferred to return to their abusive parents than remain in the care home: "they prefer abuse to the high anxiety of feeling abandoned and cut off from their identity. This is similar to the woman who is victim of her partner's abuse who prefers to return to her abuser than remain alone. She needs him to keep her identity intact." (Celani 1994) I think this explains why for Cathy the prospect that Jake may find her and kill her was less frightening than that he really had abandoned her.

Power and Powerlessness

One of the fundamental positions in Celani's book is that the abuser and the victim of abuse are psychologically similar. According to Celani: "… the apparent differences between them arise from the contrast between the independent and dependent [attachment] style rather than from basic differences in their character structures." Celani (1994)

But why should men and women adopt different attachment styles? Celani's failure to address this question adequately, I think, demonstrates the limitations of analytic theory that doesn't fully take into account the social and cultural settings, in particular the patriarchal power hierarchy, and the part this plays in forming the differences in male and female identities.

The male abuser typically has an intense and paranoid fear of feeling emasculated, impotent and powerless in his intimate relationships and in the wider world. He uses violence and intimidation to regain the feeling that he is powerful and in control and to bolster his

grandiose demonstration of potency. If he has grown up in a family where the father demonstrated his power in this way and in a culture where this kind of masculinity was prized, the man is more likely to continue the behaviour pattern.

If the woman has grown up in similar circumstances she is more likely to have learnt helplessness and suffering from her mother. She will also have Oedipal needs that put her in competition with her mother for the affection of men like her father. Her sense of her own power relies on her ability to be sexually attractive to men. As we have seen with Emma and Cathy, she also has an intense need to mother men fuelled by her fantasy that, unlike her inadequate mother, she can save men from themselves.

In one session Cathy furiously attacked me for suggesting that she was really a "strong women". She didn't like to be called strong. She hated ball breaking Amazons like those 1970s feminists wanted women to be, she thought they were unattractive and horrible. She liked being feminine because men prefer feminine women.

But why was acknowledging her own strength was so frightening for her? I think the answer was partly that in the session I had attempted to support the strong woman part of her that could resist returning to Jake and repeating the abuse cycle. This brought her face to face with the unbearable feeling of fragmentation, emptiness and abandonment. She was angry with me because although she was furious with her own powerlessness she desperately wanted to return to the familiar, self destructive, victim position. At the same time she was also resisting her own strength because unconsciously she was drawn to unleashing the danger of her own powerful destructive impulses.

Part 2. Splitting and the Denigration of Women in Society

Are there lessons we can learn from the 'cycle of abuse' model that may be useful to our understanding of the wider social and political world? As a result of feminism, many women in the post-70s sexually permissive western democracies have more power than ever before. So why is it that the abuse of women continues to be so prevalent in our society?

According to the Amnesty International website: "The stark fact is that every year, 3 million women in the UK suffer rape, trafficking, harassment, forced marriage, domestic violence or some other form of gender-based violence." Currently two women a week are

murdered by their partners. Prostitution and the trafficking of women are the third highest 'black market' income earner after drugs and the arms trade. In London alone it is thought that up to 80,000 men regularly pay for sex.

High profile serial killers have long held a prurient fascination for the media and public. Hence the multitude of 'Serial Killer Thrillers' and TV crime series where beautiful young women are portrayed as screaming, terrified victims or corpses on the pathologist's slab. Thank heavens for forensic psychologists to give us all respite from the relentless horror and reassure us that good science will triumph over evil; justice will be done.

Emma was almost exclusively attracted to men on the fringes of the criminal underworld. She was acutely embarrassed and ashamed when in therapy she eventually confessed that she wanted to be hurt sexually. It was not about orgasm, she had never had an orgasm with a man; but for her pain made sex more intense. She found it hard to say what she meant but it was something to do with her need to sacrifice her self sexually to the point of oblivion which was also when her insatiable desire to lose her self in love was, for a moment at least, satiated.

Cathy worked as a prostitute for 6 months when she was a student. She did it to earn money, but she knew that wasn't all there was to it. She claimed the sex was no big deal, she felt numb when men were doing it to her, she dissociated, like she had when her father was sexually abusing her. But she also confessed that when she worked as a prostitute she felt powerful. She finally had to stop working because she felt such a huge rage with her punters she wanted to kill them.

Not all men who frequent prostitutes or are addicted to on-line pornography are driven by a desire to violently abuse and sexually degrade women. And it would be foolish to suggest that all women who are victims of male violence are psychologically motivated to be attracted to their abusers. Numerous women become victims because they find themselves trapped in circumstances beyond their control. On the other hand some women who repeatedly find themselves attracted to the underworld of abusive sex and violence are acting out a life-script formed by their early childhood experience of neglect, abuse and worthlessness. And the more independence and freedom women gain in society the more some men feel driven to reassert their masculinity by demonstrating their power over women through violence and degrading them sexually.

Part 3: The Paranoid Schizoid Mindset and Fundamentalism

Can this analysis of the perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse give us some insights into the psychological mindset of Fundamentalist Religious Sects?

Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witnesses have a patriarchal system ruled by male elders. Women are forced to dress modestly and must obey their husbands and the male elders without question. Members of the sect are not allowed to go to college or vote and must avoid all unnecessary contact with 'worldly people' (non Jehovah's Witnesses). They believe that the world will shortly end and only Jehovah's Witnesses will be saved. If a member of the sect disobeys the rules they are 'disfellowshipped' (no member of the sect is allowed to talk to them). The sect's policy on rape is that unless there are 2 men who witness the abuse and make a complaint (an unlikely scenario) the perpetrator shall be treated as innocent. Furthermore the allegations must never be disclosed to outsiders or 'worldly' people.

Beth's Story

Beth Ellis, aged 29, grew up in Wales in the Jehovah's Witness sect. She was sexually abused throughout her childhood by her violent stepfather. On occasion these rapes were watched by one of her father's friends, a fellow Jehovah's Witness. Beth's mother was a victim of domestic violence and anally raped by Beth's stepfather. Beth was 9 when her mother fled the family home. For 3 months Beth thought her mother was dead. Then, when her mother returned she was told her mother was a whore and she was only allowed to see her for two hours a week, supervised by Jehovah's Witness male elders.

Despite the fact that Beth's adult life is blighted by PTSD, fuelled by the terror that her stepfather will find her and kill her for telling, for the past 3 years she has been fighting to take her stepfather to court for his crimes. During this period I have been working with Beth not as her psychotherapist but as a journalist to publicise her case and her writing mentor and editor for a book she has written about her childhood and her long hard battle for justice. Her book, Silenced, (to be published by Random House in May 2009) depicts not only how she has been silenced by her rapist stepfather but also by the police and

the criminal justice system. (The Police and Prosecutors Failing Rape Victims by Leigh and Potter, The Guardian January 2008)

Islamic Fundamentalists

Islamic Fundamentalist sects demand that women be veiled and segregated at every level of society, starting at puberty. Public displays of affection between husbands and wives are forbidden. In bed any sexual position where the woman is on top is sinful. Women who let a single lock of hair fall beneath their headscarves are beaten for abusing their sexual power. Wife-beating is common. What is the effect on young unmarried men who, like youths the world over, are subject to a whole host of fears about their burgeoning sexuality? What do they do with their unacceptable sexual fantasies fuelled by the strict regime and the temptations of the mysterious, hidden female world? Too often they project their self-disgust on to their object of desire, whom they blame for causing them to have "impure" thoughts.

Fatima's story

When I first saw Fatima, aged 32, she looked hunched and lifeless. She was severely depressed and rarely left her refugee hostel. As a teenager she had been raped by her brother-in-law. Her mother swore her to secrecy – imperative to save the family honour. Years later, despite a successful career, her mother, against Fatima's wishes, arranged for her to be married to a much older man. To conceal her lost virginity, her mother hired a doctor to sew up Fatima's vagina. In an act of rebellion Fatima took rat poison in a mosque. Her mother publicly denounced her daughter to protect the family from scandal. Should Fatima ever return home her brothers would murder her for bringing dishonour to their family. "Honour" killings were common in her country — the authorities either turn a blind eye or issue six-month prison sentences.

Whilst the sexually licentious West is portrayed as "the Great Satan", purveyor of all evil that must be destroyed, in modern Islamist Tehran there is a thriving sex trade — an estimated 84,000 women are in prostitution and thousands of girls are sold as sex slaves across the Arab world.

Christian Reconstructionists, an American fundamentalist sect, also advocate the death penalty for adultery, homosexuality and "unchastity before marriage" (but for women only). Studies of the psychology

of Fascism show how the Nazi cult of obeying, adoring and fearing the Führer was rooted in the patriarchal family obeying, adoring and fearing the father. The Nazis, like modern Islamic and Christian fundamentalists, also idealised virgins and women who were submissive housewives and perfect mothers. Their form of extreme masculinity values, above all, male bonding and sacrificing their lives for the high ideals of racial or religious purity, with the promise of glorious martyrdom. (Sex and the Single-Minded Muslim, Potter The Times August 2005)

Conclusion

These religious sects appear to be in the grip of a mass psychosis. Like a paranoid psychotic they nurture delusions of grandeur and an imaginary hotline to God. Like a paranoid psychotic they split the world between those they hopelessly idealise as pure and good, and those they denigrate as evil and out to destroy them.

It is also striking how fundamentalist religious sects, whatever their race or creed, have in common with male perpetrators of domestic violence an obsession with maintaining total power and control over women in particular her sexuality. In both groups many men and some women appear to be stuck in what Klein called the paranoid schizoid position.

As a result of feminism women the world over made incredible gains in the social and political arenas during the 20th century. In societies where women are respected as equals the culture tends to be more tolerant, more able to enjoy intimacy and less violent towards women, children and outsiders. But despite developments in liberal social democracies, the Kleinian baby remains in a rage. The battle of the sexes and the cycle of sexual abuse and violence appears set to run and run.

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Analysing our Cultural Matrix – some insights from philosophy

When the government commits itself to providing more talking therapies within the NHS but then limits this to CBT, and when flagship

therapeutic communities are closed as a result of changes in the funding arrangements, we see how bureaucratic attitudes dominate public life. As described by Max Weber, the bureaucrat is concerned with the efficient matching of resources to ends. But the question of which ends are not his concern. When this is joined with a scientific and clinical approach that also avoids such questions, a climate is created in which it is difficult to articulate the contribution that group analysis, and other analytical therapies, can contribute to addressing human distress.

If group analysts are to get the measure of these attitudes, one precondition is to understand how our cultural matrix has developed in this way. One valuable guide that is, I believe, highly relevant to the practice of group analysis is a work of philosophy that was published over 20 years ago. This is "After Virtue" by Alastair Macintyre. It has since become a modern classic and was republished last year. Its author was described as "essential reading for anyone interested in the humanities and social sciences" in the London Review of Books.

Can a work of philosophy really be relevant to group analysis at this time, you may ask? Yes, when it analyses our cultural matrix and reveals the roots of the thinking that is hostile to group analysis. This hostility is grounded in individualistic patterns of thought that do not admit to social and ethical obligations. Macintyre's analysis can be seen as a contribution to understanding the social and cultural manifestations of narcissism. The symptom that he begins with is that, as a society, we are unable to settle ethical controversies on a rational basis. He shows how our culture once had a sense of a shared pursuit of the good life and how this provided a coherent framework for addressing problems. Now, lacking such a framework, our controversies are effectively settled by political means. Macintyre is intrigued by the fact that even so participants present their case in rational terms and so continue to have aspirations towards a rationality that in itself is suggestive of a coherence that is presently lacking.

Group analysts may find Macintyre interesting because his historical survey shows how, in classical Greece and in medieval times, people took it for granted that identity came from membership of their social groups, from the family or tribe to the city-state. Taking this context for granted, they understood both problems and solutions in social terms. Interestingly, both periods were times of transition from a relatively simple form of society to one that was more complex.

The virtues they recognised and valued were the qualities of excellence you needed to perform a social role. They recognised, in other words, that excellence was not one thing but included a range of human qualities that were socially valuable and therefore admirable. Different roles and different situations required different qualities. These were the virtues. Central for them were: friendship, courage, self-restraint, wisdom and justice. And the context for exercising the virtues was the polis, so that the good citizen and the good man were one and the same.

Macintyre also shows how these qualities of excellence are always at risk from the behaviour that is the antithesis of excellence. The Greeks described this as pleonaxia, often translated as 'having more than one's fair share'. Macintyre thinks that it better reflects what they meant by translating it as 'acquisitiveness'. When a participant in the Olympic Games behaved in this way he was breaking with the Olympic ideal and desiring not to run or throw excellently but to win the prize! In Macintyre's tragic reading, the story of Western culture is a continuing, and losing, struggle between the life of the virtues and acquisitiveness or, to put it another way, between the efforts to sustain human community and the grasping for individual and external benefits that undermines this.

He is interesting about the medieval period. He sees it as a time characterised by the struggle to create a new cultural space protected from the violence and disorder that were endemic and between the claims of the local rural community and the universal claims of the Church. Much effort went into creating new institutions, to promote learning, culture and the civility of urban life. These efforts raised critical questions about leadership and education. What were the qualities needed by a statesman and how could people be trained for this? These concerns led to the founding of universities and schools and shaped medieval discussions about the virtues.

The resources for this medieval project, says Macintyre, were slender: feudal institutions, monastic discipline, the Latin language, ideas of order and law (Roman in origin) and the new culture of the 12th century. He asks: How was so little culture going to be able to control so much behaviour and invent so many institutions? His answer has a nice group analytic flavour: By generating tension and creative conflict between a series of oppositional forces, secular and sacred, local and national, Latin and vernacular, rural and urban. It is in the context of such conflicts, he comments, that moral education goes on and that the virtues come to be valued and redefined.

The activities that embody the virtues, and contribute to the civility of urban life, he calls practices. His account of them offers much food for thought. To enjoy the benefits of a practice, you have to enter a learning process that involves subordinating yourself to other practitioners. You have to learn what is due to whom; to take the risks involved; to listen carefully to what one is told about one's own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts. It requires changes of attitudes as well as the acquisition of skills, a respect for those who have gone before you and a willingness to be judged by those whose excellence in the practice is acknowledged by others.

Not only do the goods that follow from this benefit the community of all those involved but they are internal as well as external. Even a not very good chess player, for example, can gain the internal benefits of playing chess, if he is willing to submit to the requirements of the game. The significance of this is huge. It means that real excellence can only be achieved within such a social form and also, contrary to popular misconceptions today, that it is not exclusive. Participating in a practice does not depend on high levels of skill but on those qualities known as the virtues. Without them, certain goods will be barred to us. In particular, he suggests, we need the three intellectual virtues of justice, courage and honesty. Cheating, for example, renders participation pointless because you do not gain the internal benefits that way.

What dramatises the value of these virtues is their role in the life of institutions. Without at least some of those involved exercising the intellectual virtues, practices will be unable to resist the corrupting power of institutions. Sustaining institutions as vehicles for practices is, in Macintyre's view, dependent upon an appreciation of the virtues. Without this there can only be recognition of external benefits and not of internal ones. When this happens, he says, two things result. Competitiveness becomes a dominant feature and the virtues suffer attrition, although imitations of them are widespread!

This interconnection between the virtues, institutions and a practice weakened over time and resulted, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the rise of what he calls 'the newly invented social institution, the individual'. With this, the sense of a narrative unity for a life, and of purpose, are lost and so is the social context for the virtues. The concept of 'a shared good' is thought of as an illusion. This leads to a reductive re-framing of the virtues as necessary to limit the destructive effect of natural passions; morality becomes a

solution to the problems of egotism and its content is altruism. Such a perspective, and its assumptions, is hardly going to predispose people towards group analysis. By contrast, both classical and medieval tradition taught that my good is one and the same as the good of those others with whom I am bound up in human community. This is why the highly valued virtue of friendship was defined in terms of shared goods. Unlike the individualism that has its roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these older traditions could be a valuable resource for critiquing current policies and attitudes and for showing the value of group analysis.

Macintyre sharpens his critique with three particular descriptions. Two of them he presents as characters who personify the spirit of the time. One is Max Weber's Bureaucrat who is concerned with the efficient matching of resources to ends. The other, drawing on Kierkegaard and Henry James, is the Rich Aesthete. These apparently very different characters share an instrumental, manipulative approach to others, with no sense of ethical or social responsibilities. He also suggests they can coexist in the same individual, split between work and the private sphere. His third example is based on the Bloomsbury group and the philosophers who influenced them. Here, the characteristically modern self, who has thrown off the burden of both Christian and utilitarian moral obligation, is articulated. Their core claim was that the 'good' was indefinable and that 'personal affections and aesthetic enjoyments include all the greater, and by far the greatest goods that we can imagine'. Macintyre's caustic comment is that this rejects all claims about social action as a social end and results in a highly impoverished view of how 'good' may be used. If these characters embody defining qualities of our age, again, this helps account for the hostility and indifference to group analysis and therapeutic communities.

A further consequence of these intellectual changes is that public discourse is conducted on the basis that values do not have a place, since they are purely subjective. This is affirmed in both bureaucratic and scientific discourses. By framing much public discourse in this way, the true contribution of group analysis and other analytical therapies cannot be presented or registered. For that to be possible, a sense of purpose and value, related to social life, needs to be acknowledged.

Following current affairs after reading Macintyre provides a continuous series of examples of the conflicts between the pursuit of excellence and other attitudes, such as the bureaucratic. When domestic

politics is dominated by issues of delivery, understood in narrow terms of reaching targets and therefore focusing on externals, activities with the character of practices are going to come under pressure. However, it is also relevant that the public services that Government has focused on have been far from excellent and also that the professions involved have often been obstacles to reform rather than agents of it. Rather to my surprise, I have come to have some sympathy for Government in its struggle to improve services. They are showing a concern for excellence even as their methods sometimes undermine this.

Reading the news has also revealed stories that are, in effect, examples of applied group analysis. One concerned the police commander of Stockport who understood the importance of working with the local matrix and has seen the most dramatic reductions in crime of any borough in England and Wales figures. Car theft is down by 40%, burglary by 42% and life-threatening attacks down by 29% (The Guardian, January 31, 2008) Another was the college principal who made conscious use of dialogue and partnerships to turn around a failing college. (The Guardian, October 30. 2007) In the light of these and other examples, I found myself wondering what group analytic institutes could do to demonstrate the social benefits of group analytic insights and practice beyond existing clinical settings …

I began by noting the tension between the practice of group analysis and the dominant assumptions of our culture. Some of Macintyre's most interesting points concern what is necessary, especially for leaders, when facing such challenges. The key to responding to better effect, he suggests, is having a good understanding of one's tradition. It is this that enables some leaders to respond more effectively. What he means, I think, is that without a deep understanding of one's tradition, leaders are more likely to respond with a fundamentalist understanding and this hampers their ability to defend their cause. Macintyre's analysis of our cultural matrix also helps by providing valuable interpretations of the assumptions and social practices that colour our own attitudes and which yet are inimical to practices, like group analysis, that promote the pursuit of excellence and human flourishing.

Sean Cathie
Associate Member of GAS

The GAS Forum

The Forum is now becoming a more active and interesting space within which fellow GAS members discuss issues, share understandings, experiences and information, and agree and disagree. If you would like to join this lively community follow these instructions:

The first step is to send an email to me at: birchmore@yahoo.com

I will then sign you up to the GAS Forum and you will begin to receive messages from the Forum.

The most important second step will involve you setting up your own Google account and this will allow you to change your email settings, unsubscribe if you wish, to read the files placed on the GAS Forum Google Group site, and generally to take control of your own administration. This will be expected of you.

So, you now need to create a Google Account in order to do what you want with your subscription to the GAS Forum. You will need to follow these steps:

Visit the Google main page at: http://www.google.com/

Any Google main page will be fine, however, Google.de, Google. co.uk, Google in Chinese, etc., etc.

Click on "Sign In" at the top right hand upper corner. On the page that loads click on "Don't have a Google Account? Create an account now". You then need to type the email address you have used to sign on to the Forum and choose a password. Easy!

You can then, from the Google Main Page, click on "more" at the top of the page, then on "Groups" – the GAS Forum will then be displayed and you can enter the site and change your email settings, view past messages, and view the files placed on the site by members.

Recent "Threads" Posted on the Forum

- Virtual Institute
- Lateral Thinking
- Can You Regulate Psychotherapy?
- Tapping Into Dublin
- Leonardo Ancona
- Communications for All
- Our Forum, The Large Group Online
- The Witch

Terry Birchmore

CULTURE
GAS/IGA Film Group

12th December. Little Miss Sunshine

Little Miss Sunshine is part of an emerging trend that taps into the very real and urgent concerns of working people in increasingly pauperised Bush's America. This dysfunctional family road film emphatically links internal pathology to the greater economic stress and inequities over which they have little control.

The yellow brick road in 'Little Miss Sunshine' leads to a girls' beauty contest for Olive (Abigail Breslin), a cutie who's nonetheless not quite pageant material. Olive's entire family piles into a wheezing van to deliver her to the competition for the titular crown: Uncle Frank (Steve Carell) recently survived a suicide attempt, mum (Toni Collette) is loving but overextended, dad (Greg Kinnear) is an aspiring self-help guru and therefore a nightMaré, brother Dwayne (Paul Dano) is a mute and sulking teenager, and grandpa (Alan Arkin) is crusty and foul-mouthed.

Discussed by David Wood, Group Analyst, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist.

16th January 2009. Venus

Written by Hanif Kureishi. Directed by Roger Michell (UK 2006).

Sex and death from the perspective of old age as the character played by Peter O'Toole becomes transfixed by the young niece of his friend, played by Leslie Phillips. Outstanding cinematography, tragic comic script and heartrending, vulnerable performances.

Discussion led by Yana Stajevo, film maker, script writer and regular contributor to Screen Memories.

13th February 2009. The Diving Bell and the Butterfly

Written by Ronald Harwood from the book by Jean-Dominique Bauby and directed by the artist Julian Schnabel (France/USA 2007).

A beautifully shot and gloriously cinematic re-telling of the true story of Jean-Dominique Bauby, editor of French Elle magazine, who dictated the book by blinking one eye, whilst suffering from locked-in syndrome following a stroke.

Discussion led by Professor Vic Siedler, professor of sociology at Birkbeck College.

13th March 2009. The Mother

Written by Hanif Kureishi. Directed by Roger Michell (UK 2003).

A hard hitting film about sexual attraction across generations, with the added taboo of an older female, younger male who are in-laws and the havoc that occurs within their family because of this.

Discussion led by Dr Estela Welldon, consultant psychotherapist and psychiatrist, group analyst and author of 'Mother, Madonna, Whore – the Idealisation and Denigration of Motherhood'. We are hoping that she may be joined by Hanif Kureishi.

All films shown at The Institute of Group Analysis, 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY. Friday evenings monthly starting at 7.30 p.m.

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RESEARCH
Long-Term Psychotherapy Outdoes Short-Term for Complex Mental Disorders

Leichsenring F. & Rabung S. (2008). Effectiveness of long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy: a meta-analysis. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 300, pp. 1551–1565.

Long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy for at least a year was more effective overall than other treatments in helping adult patients with personality disorders, chronic or multiple mental disorders, or complex depressive and anxiety disorders ($P = 0.002$), found Falk Leichsenring, D.Sc., of the University of Giessen, and Sven Rabung, Ph.D., of the University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf in Hamburg, Germany.

Psychodynamic psychotherapy relies more heavily on the therapist-patient than traditional psychoanalysis and aims to allow patients to understand the causes of their mental disorders to help resolve them. After treatment with the longer-term therapy, patients were better off than 96% of those in the comparison groups, the researchers

reported in the October issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"Long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy yielded large and stable effect sizes," they wrote. "The effect sizes for overall outcome increased significantly between end of therapy and follow-up."

Some studies have supported the use of short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy for specific mental disorders but evidence for the effectiveness of longer-term treatment has been lacking, according to the researchers. In addition, they said, some studies have suggested that short-term psychodynamic psychotherapy is not adequate for treating many patients with complex mental disorders.

To assess the effectiveness of longer-term therapy, the researchers searched the psychiatric literature and found 23 studies (11 randomized controlled trials and 12 observational studies) published from 1960 through 2008 that evaluated outcomes following the treatment. The studies involved 1,053 patients who received long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy and 257 who received other treatments. All of the studies examined therapy lasting for at least a year or 50 sessions and had a prospective design. The mean number of sessions of long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy completed by the patients was 151.38 and the mean duration was 94.81 weeks. Mean follow-up after treatment was 93.23 weeks.

In the meta-analysis, long-term psychodynamic therapy yielded significantly higher outcomes in overall effectiveness, target problems, and personality functioning compared with shorter forms of psychotherapy. Overall, there was a between-group effect size of 1.8 (95% CI 0.7 to 3.4), indicating that patients were better off with long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy than with other forms of treatment. The within-group effect size was 0.96, a large effect according to the researchers.

In various subgroup analyses, the researchers said, long-term psychodynamic therapy led to "significant, large, and stable within-group effect sizes across various and particularly complex mental disorders," including personality disorders, chronic mental disorders, multiple mental disorders, and complex depressive and anxiety disorders. Effect sizes ranged from 0.78 to 1.98. Anything over 0.80 is considered large, the researchers said. The effect sizes increased significantly from the end of treatment through the end of follow-up ($P = 0.007$). The duration of the therapy was not significantly correlated with outcome ($P > 0.07$). Post-treatment outcome was not significantly influenced by age, sex, diagnosis, therapist experience, use of treatment manuals, or training in the applied treatment.

The researchers said that future studies should evaluate the cost-effectiveness of long-term psychodynamic therapy compared with that of shorter-term therapies because long-term therapy is associated with higher direct costs.

They acknowledged that the meta-analysis was limited by the small number of studies and possible methodological problems in older studies.

In an accompanying editorial, Richard Glass, M.D., deputy editor of JAMA and clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago, wrote, "As these authors point out, there is evidence and abundant clinical experience indicating that despite the desire for brief, cost-effective interventions, patients with complex mental disorders … are often unlikely to respond to short-term treatments." He said that the results of the meta-analysis demonstrating the superiority of long-term psychodynamic therapy satisfy the demand for evidence supporting its effectiveness. "Clinicians who provide long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy will find that the overall results of the meta-analysis comport with their clinical experience," he said.

Dr. Glass wrote that it is "ironic and disturbing" that use of psychotherapy is declining even as evidence for its efficacy is increasing. "To some extent this may reflect the cost-efficacy of treatments for some mental disorders with medications and brief supportive visits," he said. "However, this trend appears to be strongly related to financial incentives and other pressures to minimize costs." He asked, "Is that what is really wanted for patients with disabling disorders that could respond to more intensive treatments?"

"This study provides a great value for doctors and for patients, and one would hope could have an influence on policy decisions," added Dr. Charles Goodstein, a clinical professor of psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine and Langone Medical Centre in New York City. For someone who's just started having symptoms – considered an acute problem – short-term therapy may be helpful, according to Goodstein. But, for those who've had mental health symptoms chronically, short-term therapy may boost them to a "barely liveable level" but not to a good quality of life.

Context: The place of long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy (LTPP) within psychiatry is controversial. Convincing outcome research for LTPP has been lacking.

Objective: To examine the effects of LTPP, especially in complex mental disorders, i.e., patients with personality disorders, chronic mental disorders, multiple mental disorders, and complex depressive and anxiety disorders (i.e., associated with chronic course and/or multiple mental disorders), by performing a meta-analysis.

Data Sources: Studies of LTPP published between January 1, 1960, and May 31, 2008, were identified by a computerized search using MEDLINE, PsycINFO, and Current Contents, supplemented by contact with experts in the field.

Study Selection: Only studies that used individual psychodynamic psychotherapy lasting for at least a year, or 50 sessions; had a prospective design; and reported reliable outcome measures were included. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and observational studies were considered. Twenty-three studies involving a total of 1053 patients were included (11 RCTs and 12 observational studies).

Data Extraction: Information on study characteristics and treatment outcome was extracted by 2 independent raters. Effect sizes were calculated for overall effectiveness, target problems, general psychiatric symptoms, personality functioning, and social functioning. To examine the stability of outcome, effect sizes were calculated separately for end-of-therapy and follow-up assessment.

Results: According to comparative analyses of controlled trials, LTPP showed significantly higher outcomes in overall effectiveness, target problems, and personality functioning than shorter forms of psychotherapy. With regard to overall effectiveness, a between-group effect size of 1.8 (95% confidence interval [CI], 0.7–3.4) indicated that after treatment with LTPP patients with complex mental disorders on average were better off than 96% of the patients in the comparison groups ($P = .002$). According to subgroup analyses, LTPP yielded significant, large, and stable within-group effect sizes across various and particularly complex mental disorders (range, 0.78–1.98).

Conclusions: There is evidence that LTPP is an effective treatment for complex mental disorders. Further research should address the outcome of LTPP in specific mental disorders and should include cost-effectiveness analyses.

Short Reports of Recent Research Papers

Therapeutic factors and language patterns in group therapy application of computer-assisted text analysis to the examination of micro processes in group therapy: Preliminary findings. Psychother Res. 2008 May; 18(3): 345–54. Authors: Fontao MI, Mergenthaler E.

Abstract: The aim of this single-case-design study was to examine the relationships between therapeutic factors in group therapy and the language features of the group dialogue. Forty-two transcripts from a group treatment were investigated. Emotion-abstraction patterns (EAPs) were identified for the group as a whole using computer-assisted text analysis, and therapeutic factors were rated by external judges using the Kiel Group Psychotherapy Process Scale. Significant positive relationships were found between insight and the EAP connecting and between catharsis and the EAP experiencing. Interpersonal learning-output, catharsis, and self-disclosure showed higher scores in connection with the therapeutic cycle, which, according to the therapeutic cycle model, represents a sequence of EAP related to a successful therapeutic process. The current findings show that the use of EAPs allows the identification of key moments in a group therapy process.

The Group Stories Fabric Technique (GSFT): A Clinical Tool for Understanding Transference Issues in Group Psychotherapy. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 227–243 Sep 2003. Author: Lev Wiesel, Rachel.

Abstract: This article presents the group stories fabric technique (GSFT) that is a tool that helps group members confront transference that is projected onto other members, the group leader, or the group as a whole. The GSFT involves the recounting of personal stories by group members and the giving and receiving of feedback in response to these stories. The technique consists of the following four phases: (a) Each member tells a personal story; (b) the other members provide feedback to each story, and this feedback is analysed; (c) transference issues are analysed; and (d) the group atmosphere is discussed in the context of the group story.

Predictors of Change during Long-Term Analytic Group Psychotherapy. Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics; Jan/Feb 2004; 73, 1. Authors: Steinar Lorentzen; Per Hoglend

Abstract: All studies on patient variables as predictors of outcome are on short-term groups. Therefore, we wanted to study predictors of outcome in an observational study of 69 out-patients treated in long-term, analytic group therapy (mean = 32.5 months). Methods: Based on results from research on short-term groups, we selected 6 predictor variables representing central domains (demographics, diagnosis, initial severity of disturbance, chronicity, expectancy, and treatment duration) and explored their relationship with 5 outcome variables (Global Assessment of Functioning, Global Severity Index, Inventory of Interpersonal Problems-Circumplex, global improvement, and chief complaints) by multiple regression analyses. Results: Treatment duration up to 2.5 years was a strong positive predictor. Contrary to findings from many short-term studies, the presence of personality disorder, chronicity, and high initial severity of symptoms were not associated with less favourable outcome. Furthermore, marital status was not a positive predictor, and expectancy of a better outcome was only positively related to 1 of the outcome variables. Highly tentative results from exploratory stepwise regression analyses indicated that interpersonal problems on the subscale of 'coldness' might also be a negative predictor in long-term therapy. Conclusions: The study indicates that predictors of outcome in long-term group therapy may be different from those found in short-term therapy.

Group Psychotherapy Research: Current Status and Future Trends on the Dawn of the New Millennium Group, vol. 24, 2004. Author: Les R. Greene

Abstract: For the past two decades, the group psychotherapy research literature has been dominated by the efficacy study. Over this period of time, this laboratory-based work has acquired a number of methodological requisites all aimed at maximizing its internal validity in order that causal inferences can be made with increasing confidence. These very refinements in methodology, however, have led to increasing criticisms regarding the meaningfulness and relevance of the findings to "real-world" settings. This paper briefly reviews these developments and offers predictions, gleaned from the current

literature, about future directions of research. In particular, three areas are highlighted: (1) the development of effectiveness studies, (2) the greater sophistication of process research, and (3) a renewal of the very early interest in group therapy treatment of medical conditions. The most prominent trend over the past two decades in the psycho-therapy research literature, including that small portion devoted to group psychotherapy, has been the ascendancy of the efficacy study to the pinnacle of scientific respectability. Carefully honed over the years, the laboratory based efficacy study encompasses a lengthy and still growing checklist of requisites all designed to render the inter-pretations of any obtained findings unambiguous and unassailable in terms of internal validity.

IGA/GAS Library Update

Writing as I am at the start of the new academic year, [October 2008], I am looking forward to this time next year, when I hope and suppose that the new library system will be fully installed and the 'teething troubles' ironed out.

The IGA/GAS Library is implementing a library system, which will replace its old, minimal and disconnected Access databases. The system is supplied by Softlink and is know as Liberty 3. The IGA/GAS Librarian has already had experience of this system in two other libraries where she currently works/has worked. [What is known as a 'portfolio career'].

As outlined by Library Committee Chair, Kevin Powers, to GAS members at the AGM in Dublin, in August, 2008, members and stu-dents will be able to access the library database through the IGA/GAS website. Simple instructions on usage will be contained on the site and within the system, and more detailed guidance on effective searching techniques will be provided.

But members don't have to do it for themselves if they do not want to, or feel confident in doing so – I will be happy to continue to con-duct searches, and the new system will make this a speedier and more effective process.

If you want to search yourself, you will be able through a single search to search across the whole range of IGA/GAS library materials,

including books, theory papers and dissertations, and reading list content.

You will be able to search across the whole record, or search in designated field – i.e. 'author', 'title', 'subject' [or 'keyword'].

You will be able to use Boolean searching i.e. combining terms using 'and' – both concepts to be found together in the record; 'or' – one or other concept to be found in the record, 'not' – only records to be found which do not contain the concept.

You will be able to see exactly what the library holds, and each record will consist of a bibliographical record for the item, plus a 'holdings' record, which will tell you how many copies are held, and the status of those copies – whether they are 'reference', are on loan, or are available for loan.

You will be able to send the librarian request messages, asking to borrow items from the collection: I will still need to know if you want a loan posted to you, or will collect it: a way of including this data is part of the customisation of the system that is being put in place.

Alternatively, if you are going to visit the library, you can compile and print out a list of chosen resources to act as a reminder list.

You will be able to export sets of material for inclusion in reading lists, etc.

The student reading lists themselves can be held on the system, which has a facility for 'tagging' any item on the database, and including it on a designated list – so the librarian will be able to create all the year's current reading lists in the system.

Please note that the bulk of the data currently in the system has been transferred from the Access databases, which held minimal content – just first and second author, title, classification, location, only three keywords, publisher, edition, date, ISBN, series and source.

That may sound quite a lot, but – isn't! The new system enables much fuller records, notably including full abstracting data summarising the nature and content of the material in a way that has not previously been possible, and all of which is now searchable. It will be possible to include and identify individual chapters and authors, a very useful facility, since so many books on the topics of group analysis seem to be compilations, by different authors, on different aspects of the title topic.

A 'Notes' field will enable cross references to be made from earlier to later editions of the same title, not previously possible, and in conjunction with this I will mark up the earlier editions to ensure cross reference to the current edition.

Since I took up post I have been creating parallel records containing a full set of data, and such records will give you an idea of how the whole database will look in due course. All new material is entered fully, and existing material will have its records enhanced.

Data fields not present in the previous databases are full format information – is the item a book? Is it hardback? paperback? How many pages has it? Is it illustrated? Is it a dissertation, or a theory paper? Is it a website?

None of this information could previously be included, and as well, the new system has the ability to scan in the covers of books, so that you will be able to know in advance exactly what the item you are looking for looks like.

Whoever set up the Access databases thought that no book on group analysis had more than two authors – they were wrong! On the old system the poor, unsung, third [and further] authors, have languished unseen – now they will get their proper dues!

From the Librarian's point of view, the new system will enable much more effective management and use of the collections, and save me a lot of time, a precious commodity that can be put to better use than for example the previous necessity for repeat searching on the same topic over the multiple databases.

The new system will enable me to give a precise identification to each copy of a title, by means of a unique identifier – and – be warned! – I shall ask for this information to be included on self-service loan records that you make.

To enable this process, and the data enhancement process to proceed as fast as possible, I will need to have access to all stock, so have been, and will be, calling for prompt return of all loaned items. Your assistance in this process will be much appreciated.

Elizabeth M Nokes
Librarian
IGA/GAS Library
1 Daleham Gardens
London NW3 5BY
Tel. 020 7431 2693
Fax 020 7431 7246
Email: elizabeth@igalondon.org.uk

Available at the following times:
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10.45 a.m. to 17.15 p.m.

Request for Foulkes Letters and Documents for Society Archives

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

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

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

BRIDGING IDENTITIES
28 - 31 / 5 / 2009 / Prague / Czech republic

Second Announcement – Call for Abstracts
4th EFPP Group Section Conference

Bridging Identities
Clinical Impact of Groups

Prague/Czech Republic
28–31 May 2009

Under the auspices of the Mayor of Prague, Pavel Bém, M.D.

This conference is organised by the Czech Society for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (ČSPAP) and The European Federation for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in the Public Sector (EFPP).

This Conference will be of interest to those who wish to take a fresh look at group work inspired by psychoanalytic and group-analytic understanding of group processes. As one of the foremost Central European capitals, Prague provides a unique experience for integrating group experiences from both former East and West Europe, from groups run within health care systems as well as in private practice. The clinical impact of social and cultural events on groups and vice versa will also be explored. The Conference will be linked with art exhibitions, multi-media presentations and other cultural events reflecting the mutual impact of psychological and cultural processes.

The Conference programme will consist of either individual or two keynote speakers' session followed by discussion groups, workshops and small and large group meetings with the aim of discovering how identities are represented in groups.

The Conference will also offer the opportunity to consolidate and expand professional networks and to develop a common ground for future work across national and cultural boundaries.

The rich and many layered cultural history of the Czech Republic makes Prague the ideal setting for bringing together the idioms of psychoanalysis, group analysis, and art. An integral part of the conference, reflecting the mutual influence between the current trends in depth psychology and culture, will be an exhibition of visual art, multimedia presentations and other events relating to the subject of bridging identities.

Scientific Programme

Invited Main Speakers

• Thursday, 28th May 2009
Earl Hopper (UK)
'Building Bridges from Despair to Mature Hope: the Clarification, Interpretation and Working through of Transference and Counter transference Processes in Group Analysis'.

• Friday, 29th May 2009
René Kaës (France) 'Unconscious Alliances'
and Earl Hopper (discussant, UK)

• Saturday, 30th May 2009
Rudolf Balmer (Switzerland)
'The Stranger in You – The Stranger in Me. The Group Analytic
Approach to Social Phobia'
Ulrich Schultz-Venrath (Germany)
'What Is Being Changed by the Mentalization-Based Psychotherapy
in Analytic Group Psychotherapy'

• Sunday, 31st May 2009
Morris Nitsun (UK) and Gila Ofer (Israel)
'The Group as an Object of Desire'

Panel Discussions

'Special Groups, Training and Totalitarian Phenomena in Group
Psychotherapy'
Thor Kristian Island (Norway)
Helena Klímová (Czech Republic)
Olga Marlinová (Czech Republic)
Isaura Manso Neto (Portugal)

Topics for presentations and workshops
• Art and group process
• Dreams and reality in a group
• Male and female identity
• Family as a group, group as a family
• Processes in groups: destructive, defensive and anti-group
• Group in different settings and non-clinical application of groups
• Training in group psychotherapy
• Research in group analysis and psychotherapy
• Nationality, culture, politics in groups in Europe

You will find updated Conference programme on the site: www.efpp2009.cz

For further information and registration go to
Conference website: www.efpp2009.cz
or contact

Agentura Carolina (Secretariat)
Albertov 3a/7, 128 01 Prague 2, Czech Republic
Phone: + 420 224 990 811
Fax: + 420 224 918 681
Email: groupconf@efpp2009.cz

Groupworks

A Continuing Professional Development group for experienced therapists & counsellors

Opens Autumn 2008
Fortnightly in term-time
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[18 meetings in the year, totalling 27 hours CPD]

At the IGA /SAP, 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3, near Swiss Cottage tube

A rare opportunity for experienced therapists and counsellors to meet peers in a reflective practice group to digest and learn from experience. The group will be conducted on group-analytic principles which allow us to encounter others in a rich way, and over time to build a supportive and challenging working community. We will

- consider the links between our professional and personal development
- reflect upon the impact on us of our work and of the organisational settings in which we practise

- become more comfortable and effective in groups by experiencing and learning about group processes
- wrestle with dilemmas, paradoxes and ethical issues raised by the work.

Minimum commitment 18 sessions; CPD Certificates provided

The group will be conducted by Christine Thornton, a group analyst [Member of the Institute of Group Analysis, UKCP reg.] with extensive experience of leading professional development groups.

For more information and an application form, go to www. groupworks.org.uk or telephone 01962 620573.

XVII. IFTA World Congress 2009

World Family Therapy Congress in Portoroz

Reconciling Differences: Can Family Therapy Help Heal the World?

Slovenia, March 4–7, 2009

more information

www.paragon-conventions.com/ifta2009

Information About Conference Accommodation in London and Donations to the Society

Please see the GAS Website at:

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