

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	3
PRESIDENT'S PAGE	4
Welcome to New Members	6
Deceased Members	6
Report from the GAS Autumn Workshop. Krakow, November 2008 by Pam Kleinot	7
Dublin Presentations:	15
1) Dialogue Through Images, Dialogue Through Projects by Angela Sordano	15
2) The Large Group: From Despair to Dialogue by Thor Kristian Island	27
3) Working with Chronic Primary School Refusers in an Analytic Group by Kate Young	35
Life and Times of Cambridge Group Work by Dan Jones and Ruth Wyner	39
Reflection Group and the Training of Group Analysts by Carla Penna	43
Correspondence	49
Commentary on the Selected Papers of Pat de Maré by Dieter Nitzgen	50
2009 Foulkes Lecture and Study Day: Authority and its Vicissitudes by Dieter Nitzgen	53

2 *Group Analytic Society – Contexts*

The GAS Forum	54
GAS/IGA Film Group Listings	56
Research Paper	57
Obituary: Louis Ormont	60
IGA/GAS Library Update by Elizabeth Nokes	61

Editorial

There are a number of themes in this issue of Contexts. First, we have a number of talks that were given at the Dublin Symposium and also a report about the GAS Autumn Workshop in Poland. Dieter Nitzgen, later in this issue informs us about our plans for the 2009 Foulkes Lecture and Study weekend and also provides a review of a manuscript, not yet published, that has been discussed by the GAS Management Committee over the course of the past year or more as one aspect of a proposed project to support the publication of Group Analytic Texts that would not naturally appear to be attractive commercial propositions to established publishing companies. All of these pieces, together with the text supplied by Gerda Winther, our President, contribute to the role of Contexts in informing our membership about the plans and activities of the GAS Management Committee and of our wider membership.

We should also, however, be accountable and take into consideration the views of our membership. To this end we will include a section for “Correspondence”. This is not a new idea – even in the fairly recent past letters were written to the editors for inclusion in Contexts, which seems somehow to have become less informal and the letters have stopped. We would really like to hear from you and to be sent letters for publication: about your views on what is published, our activities, about burning and important issues, etc. Please do write.

We also have two papers, one about working with primary school children, written by Kate Young, and one about group psychotherapy with adolescents, written by Angela Sordano, and both presented at Dublin. There are also two papers about groups in training contexts, one a report of the use of a long-term large group in training, and the other the application of a thinking or reflection group. These papers continue our focus on training issues.

A report from Cambridge continues our focus on presenting the history, activities, and ethos of local Group Analytic groups or societies. We, as editors, are always pleased to reports from local groups. Please do keep these reports coming.

Terry Birchmore and Paula Carvalho

President's Page

We are now starting on a new year, but before moving on to that I want to dwell at two events that took place late in 2008 - the GAS Autumn Workshop 14th – 16th November in Krakow, Poland and the Memorial Day for Pat de Mare, 22nd November in London. Both important events in their own way. The theme of the Autumn Workshop was Trauma: Individual and Group Experience. The event attracted over 60 participants from different countries and was very well organised by the Local Organising Committee headed by Joanna Skowronska, who is also a member of the Management Committee of GAS. Krakow with its old town and historical buildings was a very beautiful frame for the event. The workshop was preceded by an optional tour to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Some twenty five persons took part in the tour. The workshop was a deeply moving experience for everybody who participated. Visiting and being close to a place that was so recently the scene of atrocities, impossible to forget and forgive, made a deep impact, together with the theme of the workshop. The lectures and workshops helped us digest the experience and the small and the large groups to put words to it and to share both personal and group experiences.

The week after came “The Celebration of the Life and Work of Pat de Mare” a joint event by the IGA and GAS. Many took the opportunity to take part among them Pat de Mare’s widow and children. There were so many participants that the Institute of Group Analysis was filled and we had to turn some people away.

The day began with short presentations by Malcolm Pines (UK), Lionel Kreeger (UK), Rocco Pisani (Italy), Tom Ormay (Hungary) and R. Schoellberger (Italy), Richard Blackwell (UK), Karen Stefano and Rachel Lenn (USA). The presentations gave a highly nuanced picture of the man and his work. Three large groups conducted by Don Montgomery followed. They were an amazing experience, a mixture of public and private memories of Pat; of his theoretical concepts; his personal history and the history of group analysis; of the seemingly incompatible sides of him being a marxist and a devoted catholic at the same time. Even though it was a sad occasion, the loss of a dear colleague, it was a very rich day and a beautiful reminder of Pat de Mare’s legacy to all of us.

Turning now to 2009 the preparations for the Annual Foulkes Weekend in May are well advanced as you can see in this issue of Contexts. Morris Nitsun widely known for his book on the Anti Group and his latest book on Desire will give the lecture “Authority and Revolt” and Will Pennycock–Grieves, group analyst, will be his respondent. The following day the Study day will start with presentations by Anton Obholzer former director of the Tavistock and Portman Clinics and Sylvia Hutchingson, group analyst and former chair of EGATIN and one or two students representing the younger generation’s view of the theme. The presenters and the theme promise to deliver an exceptionally exciting event and we hope as many as possible of you will take part.

Other tasks for the management Committee in 2009 will be to continue the work in the Constitution Revision Working Party, to co-operate with the chairs of the existing group analytic bodies EGATIN, EFPP, IAGP and GAS around the subject of accreditation, and together with the IGA, London to arrange scientific events around the coming results of the joint research project, “A Systematic Review of Research into Group Psychotherapy”. Finally preparation for the next Autumn Workshop will also be one of our key tasks.

What has preoccupied everyone in the Autumn of 2008 and continues to do so in 2009, I suspect, is the global financial crisis, which influences and will continue to influence thousands and thousands of peoples’ lives. How do we as group analyst understand the present financial situation with the breakdown of seemingly untouchable organisations (banks and insurance companies) and the people who had power in them and misused this power? No one has the full answer, but it is important that we as group analyst use our knowledge and experience to reflect on the situation not only in the clinical world of small groups but also with large group psychology and in our understanding of the social unconscious. Just as we can say no man is an island no group is an island: small and large groups exist in a context and is pervaded by this context at all times.

Gerda Winther
President, GAS

Welcome to New Members

We have been informed of no new members in the last quarter of 2008.

Deceased Members

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.

Editor's e-mail addresses:

Terry Birchmore: birchmore@yahoo.com

Tel. 0191 3826810 (UK)

Paula Carvalho: paulateresacarvalho@sapo.pt

GAS Postal Address:

Group_Analytic Society

102 Belsize Road

London NW3 5BB

Tel: +44 (0)20 7435 6611

Fax: +44 (0)20 7443 9576

e-mail: admin@groupanalyticsociety.co.uk

**Report from the GAS Autumn Workshop.
Krakow, November 2008**

Pam Kleinot

I returned from a tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau in November 2008 trying to understand how that could have happened. What drove human beings to act in a way that seems impossible, unthinkable? Yet terrible things are still being done and genocides continue. Many years ago I visited a concentration camp in East Berlin where residents in the area had blocked out their windows so as not to hear the screams! One of the issues raised and quickly side-stepped in the Large Group in Krakow was how far would I/we go under certain circumstances, inviting an exploration of the Nazi in each of us. Can we look at our own cruelty, sadism and destructiveness or do we have to locate it in the Other? In the words of Shakespeare, "We know who we are ... but we know not who we might be" (Hamlet, Act IV, Scene V)

About 60 people spent two intense days at a transcultural conference on trauma which took place at the Institute of Psychology in Krakow's historical old Jewish quarter of narrow streets and cafes. There was a striking absence of Israelis at this workshop – only one.

About one-third of the participants were from Britain and Ireland and one-third from Poland. Other participants came from Germany, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Russia, Bohemia and Czech Republic.

There was a pre-conference optional tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau. About 30 people headed off by coach with dread and anxiety. Some had avoided visiting the death camps but took the opportunity to process the experience in a safe forum provided by the autumn workshop held jointly by the Group Analytic Society and the Institute of Group Analysis “Raszow” Warsaw.

This workshop – which coincided with the 90th anniversary of World War I Armistice and Krystallnacht (the night of Broken Glass that served as a prelude to the Shoah) – was a significant event for many people. There were small and large groups, lectures and workshops. Several participants said how valuable it had been for them and marked an important change in their thinking. Others felt their identity had been shaken.

The Polish organising committee were courageous to host this workshop. They were generally hospitable and generous providing abundant snacks, delicious cheesecake and a Gala dinner. Some of us were surprised that there had been no thought about health or religious dietary requirements. There were two courses of pork on the menu at the Gala dinner. Although this was quickly rectified by providing fish, strong feelings were evoked.

I felt privileged to be introduced to the Auschwitz tour by child survivor and group analyst, Alfred Garwood. I was deeply moved by his personal story of being born in a ghetto in Prezemysl, Galicia, and being sent with his family along with many Polish Jews to Bergen-Belsen. He graphically described what it was like for Holocaust survivors to live under constant terror of annihilation, dogged by a fear of persecution and victimisation. He told us he only had somatic memories as he was two-and-a-half years old at the time of liberation.

Eight hours after our early morning start many of us arrived at the Institute of Psychology, shaken and thirsty, for the official opening of the workshop. It began with a lecture on the Concept of Trauma from the Group Analytic Perspective which I found impossible to take in after seeing clothes that babies wore before being herded into the gas chambers. We were told that numbers were tattooed on children’s legs because their arms were too small.

A very fine lecture by Werner Knauss was wasted on me. The idea that annihilation anxiety and the total breakdown of the expectation

of empathy followed life-threatening trauma wafted over me as I tried to digest my experience of walking through the industrialised killing machine built by human beings to murder other human beings. Werner's reference to German atrocities and cruelties and not to Nazi ones fleetingly caught my attention as not every German is a Nazi and not every Nazi is German. However, millions of Jews were transported like animals in cattle-cars. After they arrived at the camp most were selected for the gas chambers, others for slave labour or medical experiments. Gypsies, Polish dissidents and the handicapped were also sent to the gas chambers in the Auschwitz complex which constituted the largest and most efficient extermination method employed by the Nazis. After people were gassed and burned, their ashes were used as fertiliser. No matter how much I have read about and seen, I find the fact that hair was woven into cloth and lampshades made from skin so unpalatable that it is impossible to process.

Survivors of the selection were dehumanised with shaved heads, striped uniforms and tattoos replacing their names. As I walked through the grim barracks and muddy terrain I found the endurance of such conditions beyond my imagination. I recalled Victor Frankl writing about how thinking of his wife enabled him to find the strength to stay alive. He said those without hope died quickest in the camp.

“We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph,” he said in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Many of us were gasping to speak about our feelings and thoughts as the space and room prearranged for this purpose in Auschwitz was inadequate. We needed the Large Group and I was sorry it did not precede Werner's lecture. I could not remember a word of the respondent – Jewish-Polish psychiatrist, Maria Orwid. My report is based on memory, my perceptions and associations as I did not take any notes over the two days. I have tried to make sense of why, when I first wrote my report, I killed off Maria Orwid. I have done some Internet research on her and she has been quoted in a paper (Dasberg, 2000) as saying: “I had many problems [as a child survivor of the ghetto], but I am not sure whether I had identified those problems with the Holocaust, because there was a period of ‘conspiracy of silence.’ Later [before beginning in-depth research on Holocaust trauma], I had to come to terms with it myself.”

I think she represented an environmental container that didn't feature in the death camps as all maternal warmth, safety and holding was obliterated. Perhaps my wiping her out in a way paralleled her own research in which she found most Holocaust survivors she interviewed in Poland encountered anti-Semitism and tried to conceal their origin.

Following these lectures, we had the first of the three large groups, facilitated by Earl Hopper, which gave us a chance to explore our many feelings including confusion, persecution and helplessness. It was a mammoth task in too little time. Despite this limitation, none of the Large Groups started on time. I understood the late coming not so much as an attack on the process, which must have been a factor, but as a manifestation of the huge difficulty with crossing boundaries of nationality, ethnicity and generations. Many people came to this workshop with massive anxiety.

There was an immediate split in the first Large Group between those who had been to Auschwitz and those who did not go. I was overwhelmed with anger and murderous feelings after such a visceral experience. I also felt envious of participants who had not been to the death camp museum and looked so fresh and clean as I longed to erase chilling images of display cabinets filled with shoes, suitcases and tufts of hair.

Auschwitz is Poland's most popular "tourist attraction" packed with adults and children. Our tour was littered with comments ranging from horror, torture to theme park and too sanitised. It was apposite that our group "inadvertently" split after about four hours of what seemed a never-ending view of the largest cemetery and site of mass murder in the world. About half the group followed our tour guide to the selection platform and view of the Dr Josef Mengele exhibit – the "Angel of Death" who waved his cane: death to the left, life to the right, while the other half of our group "unknowingly" wandered off in the opposite direction. I personally had had enough and did not want to hear another word or statistic. I felt contaminated and wanted to scrub myself.

The following day began with small groups followed by a choice of three workshops. I attended a workshop on "Intervision" of the work with a Holocaust Survivors' group in Poland by Katarzyna Prot and Krzysztop Szwejca. I learnt that the group had been running for 10 years and people only left when they died. The other two workshops on offer were: Second Generation Phenomena in individuals, groups and post-war European societies by Alfred Garwood and

Gerhard Wilke exploring what it was like to be the child of holocaust survivors and a Nazi soldier and the third workshop was by Estela Welldon, Mirroring and Complementary processes in victims and perpetrators of incest placed in the same therapeutic group.

My small group was comprised of members from the Czech Republic, Ireland, Germany, Britain and Poland. There were debates in each of my three small groups on whether to open/close the window as people were too hot, too cold and couldn't breathe. Nothing was going to make this difficult experience comfortable as people struggled to communicate across cultures. English as a second language was just one of the many barriers. Two Polish women in my group shared their experience of how the workshop was affecting them. One later left the Large Group because she had stomach pains, became hot, clammy with racing heart beat and thought she was going to faint. An ambulance was called for another Polish woman in my group who bled profusely from her nose and mouth while in a church overwhelmed by her feelings the previous night after leaving the Workshop venue. She told us her grandfather was in Auschwitz but she did not know why. She gave me permission to raise what she had told us in the Large Group.

One of the themes to emerge in the Large Group was around inclusion/exclusion and who had suffered most which was captured in a dream by one of the participants. She shared her group dream in which she was walking through the centre of Krakow after a night out with friends, feeling happy but it was late and their hotel was far away. A Polish person said the tandem bicycle transport would come through the street and take them to the hotel. It soon appeared. It was very long with many people pedalling. The dreamer went on: "All my friends found free spaces but there was no space left for me. I felt frightened." Someone told her to sit on the handle bar which she did and the bicycle sped through the empty street. Suddenly a man stood in front of the bike and shouted "Stop!" The bike stopped instantly. The man, who was holding a gun, walked along looking at each of the people on the bicycle in succession. The dreamer was terrified that he was going to choose her because she was not on a seat pedalling. He stopped in front of someone else and said menacingly: "You are not a Polish student!" The dreamer woke up feeling very frightened, raising central themes in the conference around terror, victimisation, the generations, who was Jewish/not Jewish, East/West European, chosen, persecuted etc.

The Poles were generally silent in all three Large Groups made up of two concentric circles. They mainly sat in the outside circle. I found the Polish silence in the Large Group disturbing and wondered whether it echoed the silence that pervaded Germany and Israel after the Holocaust and the transmission of trauma into the second and third generations. Or was the silence because they carry the guilt and shame of their grandfathers? They therefore become representatives of their forefathers and have no right to speak in front of those who “are” victims. To speak as an individual is to be a perpetrator.

In the Large Group, I tried to make sense of the pork at the Gala dinner, highlighting possible unconscious hatred (anti-Semitism) and suggest that the Holocaust with its long arms and legs eclipsed every other possible trauma at the conference. No one could trump it, which may have silenced the Poles. It was as if there was no space to tell their stories and the impact of being ruled by Nazis, then communists and what it was like to carry the horror of Auschwitz being in their motherland.

I think the silence, somatising and pork at the Gala dinner encapsulated what Foulkes (1957) termed the “autistic symptom” about something that could not be spoken or thought about but “mumbles secretly to itself, hoping to be overheard”. I suggest that the pork enactment was a manifestation of the invisible and constraining cultural forces of the Social Unconscious.

The difficulty of English being their second language came up and 10 minutes before the conference closed, a Polish woman on the workshop organising committee said they had felt like hostages trying to satisfy guests. It soon emerged that she had meant hosts as her colleague across the room pointed out. The word might have been lost in translation but it was a meaningful slip, highlighting the tension between the Group Analytic Society in London and the Institute of Group analysis in Poland as well as us all being hostages to social and historical events.

It was difficult for The Large Group to explore issues of racism in general and the upsurge of anti-Semitism in particular. The unconscious Other (foreigner) is inside all of us in the form of unconscious longings and impulses and much easier to project than explore. Hatred of the Other is an inherent facet of racism and xenophobia. The Other becomes non-human. As referred to earlier, one of the issues raised and quickly side-stepped was how far would I/we go under certain circumstances? Can we look at our own violence/cruelty/sadism? Hannah Arendt suggested that atrocities were not carried out by

monsters but by a mentality that was ordinary. She used the phrase “the banality of evil” to characterise war criminal Adolf Eichmann’s actions as a member of the Nazi regime who operated unthinkingly, efficiently carrying out orders without considering the impact on those he targeted, who had become the dehumanised Other.

The idea of who would do such things as in Auschwitz and the implicit “Not me” response has been challenged by psychological experiments: Social psychologist Solomon Asch’s 1951 conformity study showed that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning people betrayed their own judgment because of peer pressure and were willing to call white black; Yale Psychology Professor Stanley Milgram’s 1963 research showed that ordinary people were prepared to subject others to potentially lethal electric shocks when encouraged by authority and; Psychologist Philip Zimbardo’s 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment showed that ordinary people could become persecutors or cowering victims by situations in which they found themselves. In his book “The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil”, Zimbardo suggests this does not reside in the individual but in a system that creates these situations.

Our destructiveness and murderous phantasies go back to early experiences of oedipal conflicts, sibling rivalry and exclusion from the primal scene. Individuals often turn nasty when challenged because their sense of self (identity) is under threat when they feel hurt, rejected, shamed etc. The fragmentary nature of identity has been described by Frosh (2008) who suggests that the dissolution of self-boundaries in a Large Group at times mirrors psychosis.

Identity is threatened as large groups regress and genocidal phantasies may be too dangerous to think about so are therefore enacted. Perhaps this was done at the workshop in the form of me killing off Maria Orwid as a symbol of Poland where the horror of Auschwitz took place, and was the absence of Israelis not some unconscious genocidal enactment of what gets projected and destroyed with the abhorrence of Otherness? As I am writing this report the war is escalating in Gaza and the death toll rapidly rising. The shadow of the Holocaust is played out in genocidal phantasies on both sides as each wants to get rid of the other: Israel declared “war to the bitter end” on Hamas and the Gaza blockade has made life impossible for residents of the impoverished enclave while the Israeli’s fear of being annihilated by Palestinians “driving them into the sea” was reactivated when Hamas began firing rockets into southern Israel, one exploding next to a children’s playground. I have come to realise that behind

every act of violence there is an undigested trauma and unmourned loss. The trauma is concealed in the pain and loss of buried memory evoking feelings of helplessness and murderous rage. Parents unable to mourn horrific experiences unconsciously transmit them to their children and the trauma is passed from one generation to the next. This is true of individuals and societies that have suffered massive trauma.

I have found the workshop difficult to process. Following our return from Krakow, eight people met in London to discuss their experience. Overall I thought the conference was worthwhile but would have preferred no lectures, only experiential groups to process such difficult material. This workshop was significant for me: I went because I am a member of the hated Jewish race whom Hitler wanted to exterminate. I am also a white South African so I have had to grapple with the group identities of being a victim and perpetrator. Krakow is the birthplace of my grandmother but there is so much missing data from my own history and the important work at these conferences helps me understand experiences that I can sense but have never been able to articulate, what Bollas (1987) terms the “unthought known”.

My thinking around transgenerational trauma has been influenced by the ideas of Gampel (2000) who has compared massive social violence to radioactivity which is impossible to stop, Hopper’s (2003) theory of encapsulated trauma, Volkan’s (1999) chosen trauma, Mitscherlich’s (1967) *The Inability to Mourn* and Bettelheim’s (1961) notion that “what cannot be put into words cannot be put to rest”.

References:

- Arendt, H (1994) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Penguin Twentieth Century Classics) (Paperback)
- Bettelheim, B. (1961). *The Informed Heart*. London: Granada Publishing Ltd.
- Bollas, C (1987) *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*. Free Association Books, London
- Dasberg, H (2000 - Revised January, 2007) *Late-onset of post-traumatic reactions in Holocaust survivors at advanced age*
- Foulkes, S.H. and Anthony, E.J. (1965). *Second Edition. Group Psychotherapy: the Psychoanalytic Approach*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. Reprinted 1984. London: Karnac.
- Frankl, V (1963) *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Washington Square Press
- Frosh, S (2008): *Desire, Demand and Psychotherapy: On large Group and Neighbours*, lecture, Dublin
- Gampel, Y (2000) *The Prevalence of the Uncanny in Social Violence in Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma* (Publication of the Society for psychological Anthropology) by Antonius C.G.M. and Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco. Cambridge University Press

- Hopper, E (2003a). *The Social Unconscious: Selected Papers*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hopper E (2003b): *Traumatic Experience in the Unconscious Life of Groups*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Volkan, V. (2001). *Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas: An Aspect of Large Group Identity*. *Group Analysis*, 34, pp. 79-97.
- Zimbardo, P (2007) *The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil*, Random House Publishing

Pam Kleinot is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist working with individuals and groups at St Bartholomews Hospital, London.

Email address: pamkleinot@hotmail.com

Websites:

Hannah Arendt Wikipedia Article with Links: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannah_Arendt

Victor Frankl: <http://www.rjgeib.com/thoughts/frankl/frankl.html>

The Lucifer Effect: <http://www.lucifereffect.com/>

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

***Despair, Dialogue, Desire* Dublin Presentations**

Dialogue through images, dialogue through projects Angela Sordano

The treatment of personality distortions, in either their deprivation or de-integration aspects (and often due to transgenerational, intercultural ties), cannot be successfully achieved through Ego support, because Ego investment impedes the necessary decentralisation from the “me”, to the “we”, that is useful for the constitution of group unity and the sense of “us” (Neri C, 2006).

One of the main problems characterising groups with adolescents in the 14 -17 year old range is the high drop-out rate and the swing in their presences within the group. This instability hinders the realization of that specific group self redefinition process.

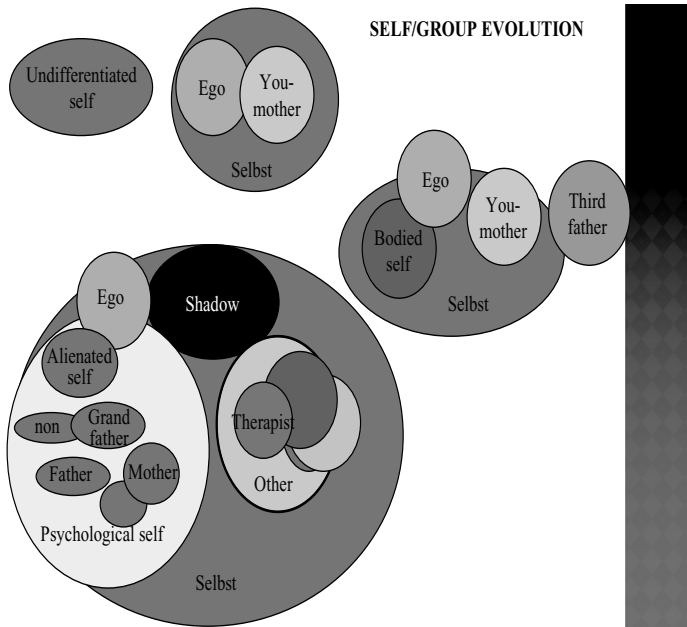
The clinical work here presented has the goal of underlining the relevance of dreams, active imagination, narration and of the game in the development of a symbolic dialogue within the group. In other words, the co-construction of images keeps the inter-subjective matrix alive, also in the case of many individual absences in the sessions.

Introduction

Before presenting some session examples from an adolescent group, I would like to highlight some basilar theoretical concepts that underpin my clinical approach.

1. Group inter-subjective relationships tend to be structured through symbolic configurations which characterise the meaning of interpersonal exchanges.

In my work I normally try to fix the evolution of these configurations from four points of view: 1) the structure (Pichon Rivière E.1985; Puget and al.,1996; Foulkes S.H, 1976); 2) the collective imaginary: mythological and archetypal level(Kaes R, 1996; Marinelli S, 2004; Neumann E.,1980; Jung C.G. ,1980); 3) emotive knots in the inter-subjective relationships (Montefoschi S.,1989;



Stolorow R.D., Brandcraft B. Artwood G.E., 1995) and 4) contents: issues. If we observe a group from a symbolic configuration point of view, we can easily bring to light the way in which group dynamics are moving and build a “hypothesis” about the step of the separation-individuation process both individually and for the whole group.

The psychodynamic model used in our approach does not refer to an epistemology based on object relations, but to a self model based on inter-subjective (Mitchell S., 2002, Fonagy P., Target M., 2001) and Jungian concepts of personality (Lyard D, 1999, Neumann E, 1991). In this perspective, mind is a dynamic field regulated by integrating or de-integrating forces within the individual and the relational context. The individual Self develops from an undifferentiated matrix which concerns the mother and child relationship to a structure organized through a configurations of roles. This structure becomes slowly interiorised (psychological self). The psychological self so configured follows a dramatic functioning as dreams. The “Ego” in this perspective is a specialized part of self functioning, strongly characterized by meta-cognitive aspects and aims to organize the consciousness of the “me” and relations with the real world, with the body responses, the emotions and feelings (Gasca G. 2003, 1993, 2001). Since for Jung, mind and personality are not defined within the human body, we can read the psychological self as individual perspective of what is happening in the field of a collective context. Jung has differentiated the individual self from the “selbst” which refers to the collective issues. We use the Selbst concept in the group context, as an instance similar to Foulkes’ dynamic matrix and through it we can refer to inner social aspects of an individual mind functioning, or to family or group intersubjective functioning. The shadow is best conceptualised as an unconscious knot that seeks a solution in the group dynamic.

Figurative thinking is the main media which allows interaction between affectivity and self structure. In my clinical approach for adolescents, dreams, active imagination represent the main tools to realise a dialogue between acting and thinking. The work through images permits the passage from pre-symbolic to symbolisation. The failure to think symbolically about images is a very important diagnostic sign (Jung C.G, Kaes R., 2001, Di Fini-Sordano A., 1998 Arnheim R. 1996, Lucignani e al. 2007).

Session fragments

The group process will be described through five configurations.

First meeting

The adolescent group of which I will speak consists of three boys and four girls between 14 and 17. They have been sent for different problems: school phobia, family abuse or deprivation, learning disabilities. The methodology of the conductor combined verbal sharing with role-playing.

The start was gradual and to facilitate acquaintance and informality warming up exercises were proposed. For example, they were asked to imagine being in a fairytale and to enter it through a specific character and situation.

In this group two girls discontinuously attended the sessions. One case attended once, but proposed a personal scene that became a metaphor of the group unity. All the members played the scene and enjoyed themselves due to physical involvement linked to spraying movements.

The scene was acted out through role play:

“A very warm summer day in which my friends and I went into a fountain and sprayed each other with water”.

1st configuration

Structure: the group constitution

Collective imaginary: separation from the home, the entrance into the wood and meeting the wolf.

Emotive knots: despair and loneliness

Contents: most of the adolescents compare experiences of abandonment, loss, and parental inadequacy.

Erika (14 y.o) had just had a protected appearance in Court in order to put forward her sexual abuse revelations. She narrated at the opening of the session a dream; she made two days after the last group session and before the court hearing:

“I was at the beginning of a wood. It was dark, but I felt the entrance as inevitable, even if I was scared. After a while I saw a fountain. I entered and suddenly I felt drawn into it. I realised I was in an abandoned town where all the buildings were damaged. The place inspired great desolation and everything was grey. Houses did not have doors or windows.

After a while a dog came towards me and enjoyed playing with me. It was brown. It looked like my old dog, the one I had at home!”

Before this dream, when Erika presented herself to the group, she self defined as a Little Red Riding Hood crossing a wood and with a shadow following her without defining itself. The dream, now, gathers all the elements referring to the self representation, loneliness, despair, damaged feelings re-actualized by the court hearing. At the same time the dream presents some figurative elements representing the group, such as entering the wood or the experience to be drawn into the fountain. What appears meaningful about the dream dramatisation is the unconscious changing prospective of the self, thanks to the “other” encounter.

The passage from a lonely girl to someone who can break the “other” loneliness emerges when Erika, acting the dog’s character, feels the hope that someone arrives to break the town’s desolation. Acting out the meeting, a new emotive experience occurs opening the possibility of a change to her script.

Benny, a 15 year old boy, called by Erika to play the dog role, following the discussion associates this with a memory of his childhood when he was seven years old. He lived in a social community and an educational operator told him that his father had committed suicide.

Acting this painful communication he appears stiff, as if he were frozen in his feelings, but exchanging roles to the educational operator he can mourn through his tears. The observer role permits him to recognize all the despair for that loss. After this scene Benny plays a virtual scene in which he asks his father why he killed himself and the father answers because “I was sad”.

The session ends with Francesca telling her dream:

“Outside it is cold. I go inside a castle. Everything is dark. I start to go up and find myself in a wonderful place in which there is the sun, a field of grain, a tree with many apples there is a canary flying thoughtlessly”.

The scene becomes a cathartic game and everybody leaves the group cheerfully.

After this meeting, in many sessions, adolescents worked on the theme of difficult relationships with parents, of feeling invisible linked to the experience of a heavy burden of expectation that they should become adults too early.

2nd Configuration

Structure: brothers, couples, contra-dependent dynamic and the construction of a collective self.

Collective imaginary: meeting the witch and the community of “brothers” in the wood .

Emotive knots: transgression experience.

Contents: most of the adolescents speak and act measuring adult limits.

In this phase of the group process there are many “couples” of friends. It seems as if the affiliation process can start through a particular partnership between two members, generally omogender, based on complementary aspects.

Awaiting the arrival of the last two members, Francesca and Erika imitate some T.V. characters: two attractive and smiling girls who present a television show. They do it in front of a camera. They will enact these character interpretations in different moments during group sessions, upsetting the scenes and discussions in the group.

Francesco says that one day last week, he did not go to school but went to a supermarket with some friends. Going back home he saw his mother on the bus. Luckily his mother did not see him. But once at home he decided to speak about it and far from his expectation his mother forgave him.

The leader underlines Francesco ‘s change: “Previously he brought to the group the image of a reliable boy, today he brings a new aspect: the possibility to be “transgressive” and to carry on a dialogue with his parents about this “new” part of him”.

The scene of a two-way change in the adolescent/parent relationship emerges. Also Federica tells of something new in her life. After having spoken of her painful feeling of being “invisible” to the world, the previous week someone stopped her in the street and invited her to take part in a publicity spot. While this event is narrated Francesca and Erica again start to imitate TV characters and seem like twins in a mirror, Benny and Marco are pushing each other and Francesco laughs while watching this game.

The leader underlines what is happening in the group: “We are speaking and acting the same, taking pleasure in being protagonists and testing the adult’s boundaries”. Answering this, Federica says that she has run away from home three times, but the last time something amusing occurred. She left shoeless. So she had to go back home and her mother, refusing to let her in, threw them out of the window. During discussion and dramatisation Francesca and Erika took off their shoes and the boys started to throw them in the air.

In this developing process moving from abstract shoes to real ones, all group members seem to move in a pre-symbolic space. This

middle space between action and thought seems to favour the integration of anxiety and in the same time to permit a protected experience of autonomy.

In other words, the leader is put within an imaginary scene in which playing a parental role she has to exercise all her ability to resist boundary violations, but in the meanwhile she has to permit the experience of a new competence.

3rd Configuration

Structure: generational difference

Collective imaginary: the defeat of the Giant

Emotive knots: the feeling of persecution and also invisibility as protection

Contents: holocaust, repression and conflicting requests from the adults

The group starts comparing their work for the final school examinations.

Conversation follows a free association argumentation.

Francesco says that he is studying the Holocaust. Erika says she saw “Schindler’s List”. Francesca says that she saw “Apocalypse Now”. Someone underlines a specific situation, from “Schindler’s List”, in which the children were hidden from the Nazi’s view, in the sewage drainage system. Erika narrates a dream:

“I was with my school mates at lunch. On one side of the cafeteria there was a boy and a girl who were billing and cooing, another boy was making fun of a second girl for her inability to conquer a male. Erica, in the role of a third girl, enters that conflicting situation to help her friend but in the meantime a group of professors come in and punish all of them with a suspension”.

Federica associates to Erika’s dream a similar one in which a boy she has loved for long time gives her a kiss. But the group seems more attracted to a reciprocal spontaneous game. It seems as if everybody has distanced themselves from the loving argument and enjoy breaking all the setting rules. Francesca and Erika move as they were in a gym. Benny and Marco pretend to fight each other. The leader feels left out and while she is trying to remind the teenagers about some group rules, everybody protests and Erika says “This group is very boring”

The constant passage from free playing and role playing and vice-versa seems to organize group cohesion through decentralisation

from the rational thinking process to return through dramatization to a reflecting Ego.

4th Configuration

Structure: gender and the construction of intimacy

Collective imaginary: the love between Eros and Psyche.

Emotive knots: overcoming familiar matrix links and the birth of a new subjectivity.

Contents: the impossibility of avoiding examinations and sexual initiation

Francesco speaks about a theme linked to the next school examination. He says it's impossible to escape from examiners: "If you play truant someone in authority will come to your home!" The theme seems to underline the impossibility of avoiding a passage ceremony. His main worry is the request, during the final exams of middle school, to have to sing. Everybody laughs but at the same time associates this argument to similar experiences.

The leader expresses her opinion: "We are speaking about weakness and terrible tests". Benny starts to speak about his dream: "I was on my bed with a young girl. Suddenly my mother enters my bedroom, but she does not see the girl. She speaks to me as if I were alone. Probably she can not imagine what I was doing. She thinks I am still a baby. I can't tell the group who the girl is because she is present".

The next scene belongs to Federica: "I am in the kitchen with my parents and brothers. The news is on T.V. A man is speaking about a fifteen year old girl who is pregnant and wants to have the baby in spite of her parents' desire. When the brother asks his father what he would do if Federica was pregnant both parents became angry:-This argument is taboo in our home!- they answered."

5th Configuration

Structure: the passage from dyadic relationships to triadic ones

Collective imaginary: the appearance of the hero

Emotive knots: overcome victimisation, trans-generational predictions and trauma

Contents: New self Project

"Sexual initiation" and the "birth of a baby" themes have an important development in the next session. Benny narrates a new dream in which he was watching two boys fighting over a girl. The relationship between the two boys is totally unequal, since one is bigger

and stronger and appears as an adult aggressor and the other one is smaller and weaker as though a child victim. He links this dream to a real scene when he was derided by his elementary schoolmates for being alone, without parents. The dream structure shows something deeper, memorised more in the body than in his consciousness and belonging to his early physical abuse for which he was removed from the family.

Acting the school scene he realizes that close to him there was a girl who tried to help, giving friendship, solidarity and strength but in that moment of loneliness he paid no attention to her. After this role playing he says that there was a third possibility between tears as a victim or an aggressive reaction.

The passage from a dyadic relationship to a triadic one allows the possibility of overcoming victimisation and impotence. After Benny's dramatisation, Erica speaks about a dream in which she chooses to dance with another boy and leave the first one who has an adult characterisation. In the scene there is a triadic structure. The dream representation actualises something about the adult sexual possession and her choice to distance herself from him. Federica speaks about her grandfather from whom she was separated when she was young. In the scene there are two girls and him. The grandfather teaches her how to be free and live her natural instincts. The leader is impressed by this transition image from one identity to another and asks participants at the end of the session: "What changes have you perceived in yourself?" most of them underline aspects related to subjective perception in interpersonal pair relationships or in relation to inner emotions. Before leaving Erika asks the leader "Do you adults dream like we teenagers do?"

The integration of a new adult point of view is revealed by the changing perspective on the fairytale characters in the conclusive psycho dramatic play.

Therapeutic factors

In adolescent psychotherapeutic group process we can underline different therapeutic factors referring to horizontal relations within the group or to vertical ones with the leaders. Azima Cramer and Richmond have already underlined the necessity for leaders' active conduction and their ability to establish boundaries and limits to acting out (1988).

In the session here described we have seen:

The birth of couples who imitate and tease each other. This kind of partnership is a dyadic mirroring form and the key to increase self esteem and self worth through a relationship with the “other”. In our group this couple had a tendency to enter into a complementary relationship. That relates to research findings showing that groups have the capacity to either integrate potential social competence, or shadow aspects. For Example Benny and Marco became real friends in the group. Marco was a passive boy who gave up school after undergoing aggressive acts. The ability to overcome this symbiotic mirroring corresponds to a change in inner role configuration. For example Marco at the last meeting said: “I don’t know why I stay with someone who physically hits me all the time”.

It is necessary to permit a “free space” in which the body can freely express itself through objects and games in order to facilitate the passage from enactment to symbols. In this developmental group process concrete objects slowly become transitional thanks to the leader’s ability to link them to symbolic scenery. Dream telling and the birth of dreams are important signs of this symbolic elaboration and of group dynamics.

The connections within dreams, real happenings in the group and personal experience through a figurative narration are able to translate projections and feelings within a dramatic plot. For example, in Erika’s dream we can see through the dark atmosphere of the entrance into the wood either the anxiety about entering the new group situation, or the anguish of returning in contact with the inner aggressor. Being drowned in the fountain assumes a different meaning because it relates to the group’s expectation of her joining them. The two anti-thetic energetic directions seem to have found in the dream an integration that needs only to be displayed. All these emotive aspects have been experienced during role play and sharing in the group without any specific verbalization about these complex symbolic process. By meeting the dog, Erica makes a synthesizing experience of all these levels, linking past and future.

Role playing as promoter of empathy and emotive tuning (Zizzo G., 2002).

Leader subjectivity, through the ability to swing between the necessity to impose limits and to read the symbolic scene of the group dynamics. This can be realised through a constant reference to an inner scenery that integrates group transference and leader counter-transference (Richarz B., 2008, 2002).

Group cohesion to overcome developmental conflicts between generations (Evans J, 2001).

Triangulating function of the group in promoting secondary intersubjectivity level (ability to represent the other point of view): “Do you adults dream as we do?”

Conclusion

In the construction of a therapeutic relationship there are three aspects which hold a dialogic space: the leader’s ability to elaborate his/her own counter transference in the encounter with the group scene, the second is pairing relationships in the group and the third figurative or symbolic language.

Relating to the leader, one of the principal difficulties in conducting an adolescent group is to maintain the perception of his/her own role as one within the group scene, even if they feel excluded from the group.

During the evolution in the group process, the leader’s position changes, being at first a neglecting parent, then a sadist authority and finally someone able to guarantee personal individuation.

Relating to pairing we must not forget that the true protagonist is the group and not the individual. The strengthening of belonging to a pairing community and developing group dynamics are the basis of identity redefinition.

Adolescents between 14-17 years old are characterised by the difficulty of integrating reality in the multiplicity of possibilities. For this reason the inter-subjective process in the group is precociously dominated by collective imaginary which recalls themes similar to mythic or classic fairytales.

The beginning of a differentiating process is often underlined through images which allude to the battle against a terrible giant (holocaust, examination committee, and so on). The Eros riding the group relationships instead becomes the way to manage this developmental conflict and to overcome defensive solutions which have fed the self de-integration.

In this cohesive passage body and traumatic memories can be integrated in the mind.

Therapeutic success is underlined by the passage from desire to project which implies overcoming ancestor ties.

Objects have an important function for the passage from body to symbolization. The shoes thrown into the air became transitional objects starting to represent the symbolic tools of autonomy

realization. While the “birth” mentioned in the initiation meeting metaphorically reveals the projection of the self in the future (Sordano A., 2006)

Bibliography

- Arnheim R. (1969) *Il pensiero visivo*, Einaudi, Torino
- Azima F.J. Cramer, Richmond L. H. (a cura di) (1989) *Adolescent Group Psychotherapy*, Madison, CT, International University Press.
- Corbella S. (2002) *Il lavoro di gruppo con gli adolescenti*. Riv. Gruppi vol. IV n.1 gennaio aprile 2002
- Di Fini A. Sordano A. (1998) *Possibili significati del drop out e dell' acting out in un gruppo di psicodramma per adolescenti*. Riv. Psicodramma Anal. N.7 genn.
- Evans J. (2001) *Psicoterapia Analitica di gruppo per adolescenti*. Borla, Roma
- Fonagy P.-Target M. (2001) *Attaccamento e Funzione riflessiva*. Raffaello Cortina Editore
- Foulkes S.H. (1976) *La psicoterapia psicoanalitica. Metodi e principi*. Astrolabio, Roma
- Gasca G. (2003) *Psicodramma analitico. Punto d'incontro di metodologie psicoterapeutiche*. Franco Angeli, Milano
- Gasseau M.- Gasca G. (1989) *Lo psicodramma junghiano*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
- Habermas J. (2005) *La condizione intersoggettiva*. Ed. Laterza, Bari
- Kaes René (2001) *sogno o mito? Due forme e due destini dell'immaginario*. Riv. Funzionegamma
- Jung C.G. (1976) *La dinamica dell'inconscio*, vol.8. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
- Jung C.G. (1980) *Gli archetipi dell'inconscio collettivo*, vol.9/1. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
- Lévi-Strauss C. (1980) *Mito e significato*. Net,Saggiatore, Milano
- Lucignani G.-Pinotti A., a cura (2007) *Immagini della mente*. Neuroscienze, arte, filosofia. Raffaello Cortina Editore
- Lyard D. (1998) *il bambino in analisi*. Vivarium, Milano
- Marinelli S- (2004) *Mito, sogno, gruppo*. Borla, Roma
- Mitchell S. (2002) *Il modello relazionale. Dall'attaccamento all'intersoggettività*. Raffaello Cortina ed., Milano
- Montefoschi S. (1989) *L'uno e l'altro: interdipendenza e intersoggettività nel rapporto psicoanalitico. Laboratorio di ricerche evolutive*. Feltrinelli, Milano
- Neri C. (1996) *Gruppo*. Borla, Roma
- Neumann E. (1980) *La personalità nascente del bambino*, Red, Como
- Pujet J.-Bernard M., Games Chaves G., Romano E. (1996) *Il gruppo e le sue configurazioni*. Borla, Roma
- Richardz B. (2008) *Group process and therapist's subjectivity: interactive transference in analytical group psychotherapy*. International journal of group psychotherapy, 50(2)2008
- Scategni W. (1996) *Psicodramma e terapia di gruppo. Spazio e tempo dell'anima*. Red, Como
- Schechner R. (1984) *La teoria della performance*. Bulzoni, Roma
- Sordano A. (2006) *Fiaba sogno ed intersoggettività. Lo psicodramma analitico con bambini e adolescenti*. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino

Zizzo G. (2002) Adolescenza e psicodramma analitico. Riv. Gruppi vol. IV n.1
gennaio aprile 2002

Angela Sordano

Psychologist-Psychodramatist

APRAGIP-Coirag Italy

Email angela.sardo@fastwebnet.it

Mobile: 0039-3392679150

Home: Strada Genova 138, 10024 Moncalieri- Torino- Italy

Tel.0039-0116472244

Clinical Service: 011-68020604 V. Debouché 8-10042 Nichelino, Torino

Dublin Presentations

The Large Group: From Despair to Dialogue

Thor Kristian Island M.D.

Participation in the large group is often perceived as a frightening experience, where the individual suffers the loss of a familiar and confirming attentive environment which undermines the cohesion of the self. The member of the group feels helpless, alienated, deskilled and caught up in a situation which might represent a threat to the identity of the individual. Much has been written about these primitive and archaic processes that take place in the “limited session” large groups. In this paper I will present some of the differences between these groups and the processes that take place in ongoing long term large groups with a more established cohesive large group self. These large groups can provide an arena where personal growth can be attained and where individual as well as group and cultural conflicts otherwise not possible to reconcile, can be worked on and resolved. I will discuss some of the prerequisites for the developmental maturation of the large group with emphasis on cultural context and leadership format and style.

A vignette.

At a three day international conference there was a daily large group. Towards the end of the large group, the last day, a man told about his terrible experience of the civil war in his country. Full of tears he

told how his family was killed during the fighting, that he had lost his parents and brother and sister. The rest of the large group were quietly listening to him, some with tears in their eyes, other crying silently as he spoke. Most of the members were deeply moved by what he told, struggling to find words of consolation. Then suddenly the two consultants of the large group got up and left the room without saying anything. The group was over. Most of the members left the room with the consultants. Other sat in shock, enraged or confused by the way the two consultants had terminated the group, without a word of comfort or understanding to the exposed member of the large group.

Afterwards in the evening the large group was heavily discussed among the conference participants. Some were still angry with the consultants who had ended the large group so insensitive to what was going on. They had re-traumatized the member, they said. Others were more supportive of the consistency of the consultants in their task of convening the group, and setting the frame and boundaries around the group. Some were pointing to the responsibility of the individual participants not to expose such difficult material toward the end of the session. Some experienced the large group as inhumane and destructive, and they said they would never expose themselves to such a malignant theatre.

What is it like to participate in a large group?

“There is so much noise I cannot hear myself think” said Turquet in his phenomenological analysis of the large group (Turquet 1975). I guess most people have experienced the large group as a frightening setting where the “normal” expectations that the person has of his social and psychological environment are no longer met (Pines 1975). One might feel lost, out of touch with aspects of self and others in the large group. There is a fear of alienation from the group, domination by the group, and a pressure toward surrendering to the group, giving up one’s identity. One is put more clearly in touch with the primitive aspects of one’s own personality. The individual member feels immature or helpless, unable to find a familiar and useful role. One becomes de-skilled and disoriented, caught up in a situation that represents a threat to the identity of the individual (Turquet 1975). The individual suffers the loss of a familiar and benign attentive environment. In the language of self psychology: a lack of nurturing and confirming selfobject responses. The unfamiliar situation, the presence of strangers, the difficulty of grasping the task and nature of the group, the uncanny feeling of people sitting behind, out of visual contact, the spoken words often being ignored, cut off, ending in space, treated as non-events, drowned in

other's speech or responded to in very strange ways, incongruent with the initial statement, distorted and disjointed, full of projected material: all these are here and now realities which undermine the cohesion of the self. The narcissistic rage activated by this highly frustrating situation is frequently split off and projected into the large group which, in turn, is viewed as progressively more dangerous and disruptive.

There is much attention toward the leader(s) of the large group. A dependent wish that the leader could find a Messianic solution to the difficulties, and criticism and aggressive attacks when he does not. Challenge and competition with the leader often takes place. With ambivalent wishes and fear that he might be "killed".

Though some reflection might take place and some shared themes can be identified towards the end of the large group event, these groups seldom reach beyond the forming and storming stage. I guess most of you will recognize this description of what I call the short term large group so typical of congresses and conferences. And most of what is written about the large group describes the processes of such short term large groups. As if that is an inherent quality of the large group as such: no matter the context, the composition, the leadership, be it in a congress like this one, a Tavistock conference where one major aspect of the large group is to study the large group per se; the study of the large group processes and dynamics, the self-acquisition of insight through the experience here and now, or any other short term large group setting.

Let me go back to my previous vignette.

In another large group the same situation developed. A man was talking about his terrible experiences during the civil war in his country. The members were deeply touched by his story. Then one of the consultants say: I understand that you are in deep pain now, and we certainly have mixed feelings about what you are telling, but we have to stop now. Then the consultants get up and leave the room.

Same setting, same story, but another leadership style. And probably different experience of the large group among the members. Preferred by some, and disliked by others. There might be different opinions about which one is better. And it does not imply that one is more correct, but the outcome will be different. My contention is that it is not the large group format per se that makes the experience, but a combination of context, purpose, magnitude, history, culture and, not least, leadership style.

In the "short term" large groups there is a lack of history and an established group culture. Often there is no shared understanding of the purpose of the large group. "The study of the large group per se"

seems often unclear and diverse, and out of context. And when there is no meaning you cannot expect to find anything but meaninglessness. In my opinion the context constitutes the meaning.

The large group will, however, offer some compensatory mechanisms for survival. One of these is the sub-group membership. It is commonplace for large groups to identify on the presence of sub-groups, and to split into smaller groupings when tensions, conflicts and anxiety predominate. These subgroups provide a means of organising the chaos which threatens.

At conferences we often see attempts to construct a history of the large group, and connect the present large group to previous large groups.

– “I remember when we last met in Heidelberg, in Jerusalem, in London, in Bologna, in Molde etc. etc”.

As if this very group has met before and has a history. Though every large group takes place in a cultural and historical context, this very present group has no actual history. And though the creation of a pseudo-history supports the feeling of belonging for the “experienced old-timers”, it only creates confusion and alienation to the “new-comers”. What seemingly unites also separates.

Let me now say something about what I call the “ongoing (slow open) long term large groups” which meet regularly for a longer period. My experience is from the large group of the training programme in group analysis in Norway where the large group is an integrated central element of the block training programme. This large group has been going on continuously since 1984 and I have attended all the meetings except one or two. I believe that the experience with this large group is also relevant for other ongoing large groups in other contexts, like staff process meetings in hospitals and other organisations, community meetings in therapeutic communities etc.

The purpose:

The purpose of the large group in this context is multifaceted. One aspect is to study typical large group processes and dynamics in the “here and now” in order to experience and understand that such events, statements and incidents have unconscious roots. Another aspect is integration as the training community’s “City Square”, where a continuous analysis of personal, cultural, professional and political training course dynamics takes place. Here the affective implications of being a citizen of this training community can be explored. The participants meet in a variety of settings, and each setting has its distinct

task. Hearst and Sharpe (1991) and others (Island 1996) have pointed to the implications of being a part of a challenging project, which requires rapid adaptation to different modes of relating. These modes include regressed patient role in the therapy group, peer- supervisor in the supervision group, intellectually and cognitively present in theory lectures, and even confused, frightened and identity threatened in the large group where confirming and consolidating responses from others cannot be taken for granted.

The training program itself is a complex integrated whole, where the involvement of a rich matrix promotes an open and self-exploring communication. The large group reflects themes from the small therapy groups as well as “political” issues related to training (Island 1992, 1993; Lorentzen 1990). One important task of the large group is to help integrate affects connected to the various aspects of the training program as such, both on a personal, group and inter-group level. If there is an overflow of strong emotions from one context to another, the large group can contain these emotions and channel them to the appropriate setting. When the large group is not converted to a “parliament” for decision-making, or starts discussing practical or organizational issues to avoid the exploration of underlying affects, the large group has the potential to be an arena in which destructive emotions can evolve, be exposed, highlighted, explored, understood and transformed. Thus the participants’ comprehension of unconscious dynamic processes may be promoted. In the large group there is a shared endeavour to explore the dynamics between “surface” and underlying unconscious forces within the group.

Context.

The large group described here takes place within the specific context of a group analytic training community (Island 2003). Every large group takes place within a certain context, and the process will always be influenced by that context. At the same time, the large group will influence the context, the surrounding environment. The large group should be understood within its cultural and historical context, though this view seems to be underestimated or even ignored by some large group convenors and authors.

This group has been going on for 24 years. The trainees participate for 1-5 years, and some of the trainers have participated since the beginning. There is a collective shared “leadership” with all the trainers. The group takes place in the same room every time, and the boundaries surrounding the group are safe. This group has a long and continuous history. A strong cohesion and group culture

is established, - which might be comparable to the cohesion of the small groups, at least for the more advanced trainees. This group culture is conveyed to the “new-comers” by the “old-timers”, and thereby transmitted from “generation to generation”. At the same time the new-comers bring new aspects, challenging curiosity and life to the group, thereby contributing to the constant vitalization of the large group. There is a constant interchange between tradition, culture and new input. The participants develop a feeling of belongingness to the large group, the training community and the larger group analytic community as such. Thereby the large group is a significant contributor to the development of a professional identity as group analyst.

Though the dialogue can be confusing and disruptive from time to time, there is less of the Tower of Babel, and the large group seems to have developed a shared language which most of the participants acquire. Because the members participate for a longer period there is less anonymity and the members address each other more personally, - like in the small therapy groups. That implies that injuries also might become more personal and less addressed to the collective. But for many of the participants the large group is experienced as safe enough to explore deeply personal matters that otherwise can be difficult to work on in the smaller, intimate and family-like small group. We have experienced that the large group can work meaningful on personal issues that concerns several members of the group, issues that could not be dealt with in the small groups. The capacity of the large group to handle tragic and dramatic material with empathy and concern is striking. Under these circumstances the large group is comprehended as a nurturing and confirming selfobject milieu that offers belonging and communality.

The large group continues to exist in the participants’ mind between the sessions.

After the previous week-end I had a dream which I connect to the large group

What you (n.n.) said in the large group last session made a great impact on me ... and it encourages me to be brave enough to say

When I started the training I never thought the large group would ever be meaningful to me, but now, towards the end of my training I find it one of the most challenging and important elements of the training for my personal and professional development.

We often find that members are stimulated by the courage and openness of the other members in the large group. And it seems important for

the participants to say at least one thing in the large group before leaving the training, as if to put ones personal stamp in the large group history.

Mainly the conflicts to be resolved in the large group are about tensions and fight between various sub-groups like gender, sex, profession, ethnicity and power issues, old and new, relations to the training institute, the “leaders”, the staff etc. Conflicts and tensions that also reflect the surrounding society. Compared to the short term large groups there is less preoccupation with the convenors, and considerably less hostility and dependency, and more willingness to explore the relationship with all its projective components.

While the short term large group temporarily can work, explore and reflect, but easily returns to chaos and disintegration, the ongoing large group temporarily becomes chaotic, disintegrated and frightening and reach a communicative arrest, but then, often by an enabling, thoughtful comment from one participant, - or if necessary from one of the convenors,- the group returns to a reflective dialogue, exploration and expanded understanding. There is a creative shift between chaos and integration, between distortion and dialogue.

In the short term large group metaphors are often misunderstood and thereby the playful space between fantasy and reality collapses, which renders it dangerous to remain in the large group. In the ongoing large group there is a communal understanding of metaphors, and the use of metaphors often generates a creative and playful space for exploring complex issues otherwise difficult to discern (comprehend).

Challenges

A large group with such a long tradition and history, with a well established culture, and a consolidated large group self with values and ambitions runs the risk of becoming rigid and reified. Sometimes this large group self is challengingly compared to a religious congregation, which is the opposite of a constant “culture of enquiry” and the ideas and values of group analysis. Is there room for non-believers? Do we have to comply with the leading values of this large group? What is allowed to say? Is there room for criticism? What could be expressed without retaliation? These are important questions that need to be taken seriously and explored, and not only attributed to the internal censorship of the individual participant. Is there a truth in it? Are we open enough? Do we as staff have too strong convictions about how the large group should work and be run? Within a collective staff of several members there are of course different opinions about that. A collective

leadership does not imply that the staff speaks with one voice. Within the intersubjective context of the large group each of the staff members participates with their individual style, personality, theoretical orientation and meta-psychological frame of reference, both influencing and being influenced by the group. In a large group there is a continuous interplay between the exposure to the primitive processes and the cultivating aspects of the group. I think we all agree that the large group convenors should attentively monitor their interventions in order to maintain this perspective, being considerate to the individual members, the large group and the training program as such.

In order to maintain the free and open dialogue and the sustained culture of enquiry there is a need for a continuous self-analysis within the staff group, to comprehend what is going on and to counteract destructive processes within the staff group.

Prerequisites

Let me towards the end sum up what I think are the prerequisites for establishing such a large group culture:

Time is one aspect. More time than what is available at congresses are needed. It took us a couple of years to establish what I will call a consolidated large group self

Context. Though every large group takes place within a context, often this context is ignored when the large group is set up. The large group must have a meaning within the context, and the context provides the large group with meaning

Stable participation among the members. This will necessary follow from the context. Cohesion and belongingness to the large group will develop. In the early days of our project some of the participants skipped the large group. This never happens now.

Predictability and stability regarding dynamic administration, room, space, boundaries around the group

Leadership. The function of the convenors is to engender the development of a safe space and a culture where experience, exploration and self-reflective dialogue have preference. The large group convenors contribute to the process in the form of enabling comments, voicing some of one's own thoughts and feelings, contributing to the imagery or symbolization in the group in order to facilitate the process and enable a free and associative dialogue to develop and expand. The convenors have a broadened understanding of selfobject needs, the impact of empathic failure and fear of re-traumatization in such groups. An important role of the staff members is to secure

the boundaries around the large group; one member of the staff is designated to keep the time boundaries.

References:

- Hearst, L. and Sharpe, M. (1991) 'Training for and trainees in Group Analysis.' In J. Roberts and M. Pines (eds) *The Practice of Group Analysis*. London/New York: Tavistock/Routledge.
- Island, T. K. (1992) 'From peers to parents – from trainee to trainer.' I.G.A.R. Conference Bulletin. (Warsaw) 22–34.
- Island, T.K. (1993) 'Sitting at the trainer's table': Boundaries and barriers within a block training community. In W. Knauss and U. Keller (eds) *Proceedings from 9th European Symposium in Group Analysis*. Heidelberg: Mattes Verlag.
- Island, T. K. (1996) 'Distortions, echoes, reflections: the role of the large group in group analytic training community.' In F. Peternel (ed) *Median and Large Groups in Group Analytic Training*. Ljubljana: University Psychiatric Hospital
- Island, T.K. (2003) "The Large Group and Leadership Challenges in a Group Analytic Training Community" in Schneider, S. & Weinberg, H. (eds) *The Large Group Revisited*. Jessica Kingsley publishers. London, New York
- Lorentzen, S. (1990) 'Block training in Oslo: The experience of being both organizer and participant.' *Group Analysis* 23, 361–366.
- Turquet, P. (1975) 'Threats to identity in the large group.' In L. Kreeger (ed) *The Large Group*. London: Constable.

Thor Kristian Island is psychiatrist and psychotherapist in private practice in Oslo, Norway. He is training group analyst and director of the Institute of Group Analysis, Norway.

Address: Institute of Group Analysis, Norway
Huitfeldts gate 9
N-0253 Oslo
Norway
e-mail address: island@iga.no

Dublin Presentations

Working with Chronic Primary School Refusers in an Analytic Group

Kate Young

I would like to present this paper on a therapy group which I ran as Specialist Clinician for children 7-11 years who presented as depressed

and anxious school refuser's within a Child and Adolescent Mental Health service in London.

The group was run and supervised along group analytic lines with the emphasis on prevention of further social exclusion by aiming for appropriate reintegration within mainstream education or identified specialist provision.

The group ran once a week for 1.5 hours during term time and the membership of the group was eight, the duration of the group was two years.

The main focus of work done in the group was sharing, exploration and solution finding for the group as a whole. This was done via a fish tank which the group purchased and stocked. Each individual having their own fish, the tank was cleaned and maintained at the beginning of each session with other members 'taking care' of absent member's fish. When the group was not there I looked after the tank and so held the group in mind.

The group dialogue which arose from this 'fish tank' process was enabling of the children to discuss similar fears and anxieties of not feeling safe or contained in either their family situation or school situation. The fish tank representing I believe the group analytic situation in concrete form.

The success of the group in helping individual children negotiate their reintegration into education was high, but the impact the group had on self esteem and better social communication was marked. In addition their identity and position within family structures.

In my work as a Child and Adolescent Clinician it was revealing the effect that failure for positive attachment could have upon children and young adults in their lives and their ability to attach to important social life groups. I became very interested in the ways a fragile sense-of-self leads to fragile attachment within groups and its consequences—lack of skills in negotiating and remaining in important life groups such as schools, workplace and family.

This prompted me to run groups for seven to eleven-year-old children, for whom separation anxiety was beginning to obstruct their entry into important social groups, schools, after school clubs, ordinary play situations, etc. I also had identified more severe symptoms of difficulty in attaching to life and peer groups. This was being manifested in the following way chronic non – school attendance, drug and alcohol use, bullying and eating disorders.

The aim of the treatment was to provide a group environment where the individual young person could develop skills needed to positively attach to a group. I used the general application of group analytic treatment in my work with these children. The group can offer the opportunity for attachment practice; it is an environment where the fragile individual can achieve a sense of creativity and productivity and feel a connectedness to their peers. The individual can learn from being in the group setting how valuable contributing to the group in relationship to self and worth.

A pattern of persecution and exclusion is mirrored in the increased activities of children bullying in the playground of schools. The absence of adult rules and supervision in these settings encourages the same destructive forces. In the group analytic setting, difference, persecution, and aggression can be safely revealed, “refereed,” and contained.

Group analysis can offer a new attachment relationship experience, because it is able to regulate and restructure attachment-related fears through offering opportunity to struggle with tension and anxiety by holding the needs of the individual and group in a symbiotic relationship. It offers hope of reconciliation to isolation and alienation to the fragile individual.

When I began working with these children experiencing school difficulties, the group members shared, on the surface, the unifying diagnostic label of “poor school attenders.” However, through my assessment, I realized that the common underlying themes in each of these individuals were variations of attachment anxiety. Every young person in the group had experienced feelings of both fear of separation—from the primary caregiver—and isolation—from their wider peer groups.

Whenever the group met—every week during term time—the experience shared and explored by the members concerned the very common feeling of apprehensiveness that joining and remaining in the group evoked in them. This experience was particularly evident in new members’ style of approaching the group. In terms of physical proximity, it was common for a new member to gradually join the group. Initially, the new member would start by sitting with their carer outside the room where the group met, having the opportunity to open the door and say hello to the group. Then, she/he would make progress by sitting on the “door chair” in the group room, from where he/she would be able to easily leave the room and connect with the parent or carer.

The terror of separation and isolation had caused these young people to feel that the education system was their bitter enemy. This feeling

was manifested in a variety of reactions to it, from Monday morning stomach aches, to a miscellany of minor alignments, to deliberate self-harm, to clinical depression. Although the generic symptom was school refusal, I believe that low self-worth, negative self-image, and feelings of abandonment and hopelessness constituted manifestations of fragile attachment. The individuals' difficulty to attach affected their capacity to join their peer groups, further contributing to their exclusion from mainstream education. What became evident throughout the work with this group was their predisposition toward a lack of confidence when contemplating attachment to new groups. Awareness of being different and fear also contributed to their isolation with added vulnerability to bullying and stigmatization from other young people.

In this group of 7 to 11 year olds some of the older children in the group are on the verge of moving to much larger senior schools. The transition for these children is not an anticipation of excitement or adventure, but a fear of "getting lost," with all the other children, and disappearing in a much larger school. They also express fear of not "fitting in."

I would think of these young individuals as having the potential to develop a lifelong fragile attachment, because poor school attendance means less access to positive peer interaction and socialisation. The weekly group which has been running for a year and a half has provided an interim peer group situation. What follows is an example of dialogue when the group discussed 'difference' [all name references have been changed for confidentiality]

The group was talking about being different (Hassan B was a new member of the group):

Hassan B: I was bullied in year 5 for being Turkish.

Alice N: That's racist out of order.

Hassan B looks at Matt T—an established member of the group—and says: Yeah and you were one of the kids who did it.

Matt T: Yeah it's true I did but I did it to be part of that gang.

Hassan B: But they used to bully you as well.

Matt T (laughing): Yeah put my head down the bog, shit man.

Alice N: So the both of you were bullied.

Hassan B and Matt T together: Yeah.

Dan W: So we don't have it here. No bullying.

This example illustrates how the group has created its own culture. Those who have been rejected in other groups come together and belong to the group, even those such as Hassan who was bullied by

Matt acknowledge they have a shared experience of being isolated and excluded from the larger school peer group.

Conclusion

The continuing involvement of children and young people in positive significant life groups needs to be thought about and extended in our everyday practice.

We can work individually and with the families of children but enabling protected and boundaried inclusion in groups outside of educational and peer group situations does allow the individual to:

- Explore communication and relationship techniques within the therapy group
- Explore anger and frustration
- Learn about alliance building and empathising with others
- Take the practised social and emotional skills from the group and use these towards joining healthy age appropriate life groups.
- Kate Young.

Group Analyst, Full GAS Member, working within Child and Young Peoples Services.

Life and Times of Cambridge Group Work

Cambridge is a proud, some would say arrogant, city – no doubt because of its University, founded by rebel monks from Oxford University some eight hundred years ago. Maybe Cambridge still likes to do things its own way at times. The development in the city of an interest in groups in general, and group analysis in particular, certainly has something of this flavour about it.

The largest figure on the local landscape is Dr David Clark. He came to Cambridge as Medical Superintendent of Fulbourn Hospital in 1953, and presided over an era of great creativity in terms of unlocking wards and establishing principles of social psychiatry that led to some of the early experiments in therapeutic communities.

David Clark had been a colleague of S H Foulkes at the Maudsley, and his facilitating energy and enthusiasm for group cascaded down through the ranks at Fulbourn. In this climate, staff of all different sorts began working in groups with patients. Wards were run along therapeutic community lines; in fact the whole hospital was, and the hospital chaplains ran discussions groups for patients and for theological students on placement.

As a result people were desperate for more theoretical input. In 1975 Cambridge Group Work (CGW) was formed. People came in from several strands: these included hospital staff, David, Bernard Zeitlyn and Agi Lloyd; hospital chaplains Ronald Speirs and Bill Lintott; Margaret Farrell from Child Psychology and David Anderson from Social Services. Within four years CGW ran its first Introductory Course, which had sixty members.

Although none of the people who set up CGW were originally trained as group analysts, and although they had a sense of being able to do things just as well as anyone from London, links were established with the Institute of Group Analysis, particularly in the shape of James Home and Hans Cohn coming up regularly from London to provide both group therapy and supervision. Also two CGW members had taken up some IGA training: Ronald Speirs, who handled much of the CGW administration, completed the old Advanced Course and Bill Lintott became the first local person to qualify as a group analyst.

By 1980, an application was made to the IGA for the annual Introductory Course to be recognised as a gateway to further training, and the IGA asked Jane Abercrombie to assess it and to provide weekly supervision at her house in Little Shelford, just outside Cambridge. But she did more than that. As David Clark wrote after her death: "To be a mere inspector is something that Jane would never tolerate and she soon began to challenge us and to probe and enrich our discussions ... Under [her] influence we abandoned formal lectures ... and instead focussed on the students' own learning ... in seminars ... carefully devised to allow members of the course to discover how much they already knew about group dynamics and share the richness which was already amongst them."

People from the Introductory and other courses wanted to continue meeting and to have more training and recognition. They formed the Associates of Cambridge Group Work which organised workshops and social events. There was a period of rivalry between the Associates (the adolescents) and the CGW Council (the parents) which

was eventually healed with the help of the IGA (the grandparents). Out of this energy, the Council's Advanced Learning was born, while the CGW Society was formed separately to organise workshops and social events.

The Advanced Learning was active from 1986 to 1994 and offered a training consisting of five modules: theory, supervision, co-conducting with a senior therapist, personal group therapy for at least two years and a fifth module which was usually a written paper of the student's choice. Completion of the course was seen as the way to become a Council member.

There were long and complicated negotiations to get academic recognition through the University of Cambridge's Institute of Education and Extra-Mural board. Eventually the Diploma course was approved ready to go but it did not attract enough applicants to make it viable. The UKCP structure was not then in place. Later people started going to London or eventually to Turvey to train with the IGA, and the Advanced Learning ceased. Looking back, perhaps there was a transport factor. In 1985 the journey to London by rail or road seemed prohibitively long.

There were still, however, some tensions with London, and for a few years in the late 1980s the Cambridge course lost its accreditation over various issues, mostly about groups being run by staff who were qualified in Cambridge terms but not in IGA terms. This was resolved when Colin James moved to Cambridge and set up a rival Introductory Course with IGA accreditation and staffed by group analysts from London. This course only ran for one year owing to its greater cost and lack of sufficient contact with CGW's already existing local network and expertise. CGW was by then beginning to include more people who had trained in London and it quickly re-established its accreditation.

These days there seems to be a slow but steady stream of local people doing the Cambridge Introductory Course and then going on to further training, although the Turvey Institute's block training in Bedfordshire is now more popular as a destination for this than London.

The Group Therapy Centre in Cambridge, which nowadays offers CBT as well as analytic groups, is a direct descendant of the Fulbourn revolution and, like most of the group work currently going on locally, has been strongly influenced by it.

Some of the founding members of CGW are still active, especially Agi Lloyd and Margaret Farrell who remain CGW Council

members. Others who still contribute but in less active form include David Clark, Bill Lintott and Ronald Speirs. The Introductory Course continues to flourish in these difficult times, having run annually since 1975 with only one break, although nowadays there are generally only one or two small groups making up the Course. And NHS employees seem to have largely been replaced by people working in prisons.

The continuity of tradition established by CGW has enabled its activities to continue with a local flavour and the training to make use of local resources. For example Juliet Mitchell, a local Psychoanalyst and writer at the University of Cambridge, has lectured on the Introductory Course on her work on Siblings.

Nowadays CGW Council has an active membership of thirteen people. They continue to work with groups of a diverse nature, reflecting broad areas of expertise, interest and experience whilst still holding firm to group analytic principles.

Each year CGW organizes one or two workshops welcoming nationally recognised colleagues to take a lead in facilitating rich and exciting themes. Most recently Laurie Slade, a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist, offered some ‘Social Dreaming’, with a distinctly different large group experience, intense and moving. We loved the unique seating arrangements.

As well as the Introductory Course there is a two-day taster in the delights of working in groups, a useful diving board for those who are unsure of committing to annual training. A recent addition to our programme is the David Clark Annual Lecture, inspired by our determination to keep alive the pioneering spirit of community and collaboration. David Clark himself presented the first of these lectures.

He and subsequent lecturers contribute to an oral history of CGW, reminding newer recruits of those inspiring early days when time and resources enabled patients and practitioners to work collaboratively, and where all parties gained from the learning and from each other. With Cambridge experiencing its share of the attacks on analytic groupwork, this helps keep us going as we venture out to work in therapy groups, with staff in organisations and with therapy trainees.

Written by **Dan Jones and Ruth Wyner**, with assistance from members of Cambridge Group Work Council and Honorary Members.

Web Links

Group Therapy Centre, Cambridge: <http://www.grouptherapy.cambridge.org.uk/>

Cambridge Groupwork: <http://www.sue.greenland.btinternet.co.uk/index.htm>

Reflection Group and the Training of Group Analysts
Carla Penna, Brazil

Abstract

This paper discusses the Reflection Groups which started initially in Argentina with Alejo Delarossa in the late 60's. Reflection Groups are inspired by Operative Groups, conceptualized by Pichón-Rivière in Argentina, who developed in psychiatric institutions, groups for medical staff, providing a setting where difficulties with patients, tasks and the institution could be discussed and worked through. The paper aims to demonstrate the role of Reflection Groups in the training of group analysts, especially in relation to idealisations and expectations around the development of their identities as group analysts.

The Group Analytic Psychotherapy Society of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Sociedade de Psicoterapia Analítica de Grupo do Estado do Rio de Janeiro- SPAG E. Rio), was founded in Brazil in 1958, under the leadership of Walderedo Ismael de Oliveira, and directed toward psychoanalysts who desired to study psychoanalytic groups. The Society was strongly influenced by projects carried out in Argentina, which, according to Martins (1986) were “the starting point of Group Psychotherapy in South America due to the presence of various analysts who had come from Europe after the Second World War”. The Society continued consolidating, and other units were organized, first in Porto Alegre, and later in São Paulo. These were the result of the pioneer work carried out by Alcyon Baer Bahia, who, in Rio de Janeiro in 1951, organised the first group dedicated to therapeutic activities in Brazil (Mello Filho, 2000).

In SPAG E. RIO, in Rio de Janeiro, the training, as in psychoanalysis, is based on a three-part program: personal analysis, supervision

and theoretical training. Added to this is the Reflection Group, which is a fundamental experience for any candidate in group analysis. The Reflection Groups are still not widely dispersed but they have been on the SPAG E. RIO obligatory curriculum for at least twenty years.

The idea of introducing Reflection Groups into the training program came about by recognizing the necessity to provide an opportunity for reflection among the students. Innumerable questions and doubts arose during the training and there was no forum where they could be discussed. This shortcoming generated a series of acting outs and conflicts in addition to a high rate of training abandonment.

Reflection Groups started with Alejo Delarrosa (1979) in Argentina in the 60's, as a development of Operative Groups, conceptualised in the late 40's, by Pichón-Rivière (1982). Operative groups started inside the Buenos Aires Borda Institute, with the aim to provide a setting in psychiatric training, where difficulties with patients, tasks and within the institutions, could be discussed and worked through. Later, only in the 70's, Reflection Groups were incorporated in training in Group Analysis, aiming for a setting where training analysts could experience speaking in Foulkesian vocabulary, different levels of communication, and a group network. These groups are important tools in the training of group analysis in addition to their intrinsic therapeutic effects.

The Reflection Group has, as its basic objective, reflection. Zimerman (1991) gives us two reasons for using the name: the first is dictated by the actual meaning of the word reflection, which suggests an improved and continuous flexion of ourselves and the assumption of appropriate responsibilities. The second reason is that the word reflection suggests the properties of a mirror, leading to the idea that everyone in the group can reflect in a speculative manner, creating a gallery of mirrors (Foulkes, 1957).

The Reflection Group has no analytical purposes and usually does not make individual or group interpretations, but the communications developed during the sessions create a therapeutic effect, providing substantial changes among the members. In many ways the Reflection Group is pretty much close to a therapeutic group without actually being one. According to Terzis (1995), the aim of the Reflection Group is to provide a setting to make the transition from the empiric to the conceptual, discussing the interpersonal relationships established in a dynamic manner, allowing the individual to reflect about himself, the other, the task, the group and the institution (Terzis, 1995:23).

Usually, meetings take place on a monthly basis and last about an hour and fifteen minutes. The coordinator is a training analyst from

the institution, but he does not participate in any academic training activities within that specific group, aiming for a good enough neutrality to preserve an analytic framework. In fact, because of the amplitude of the proposal and the particular difficulty in defining its limits, much resistance has arisen to its understanding, and innumerable difficulties occur throughout the work. In the beginning of the training activities, the student, generally a recent graduate enrolls in a theoretical-clinical training course full of anxieties and doubts, looking for information, knowledge and objective answers. Although neither the theoretical lessons nor the supervisors provide immediate answers to their questions, they bring the promise that at some moment in time the desired knowledge will be acquired.

Clinical practice also evokes anxieties centred on what is “right or wrong”, or expectations regarding a good professional performance. This atmosphere provokes in the training analysts a constant search for more supervision, creating altercations and conflicts or, in some cases, a sense of apathy, impotence and failure. Despite their shortcomings in this area, the nurtured fantasy is that they will attend an enlightening lecture or supervision, which will finally provide the definitive answer that they are looking for.

In fact, every day they are submit to institutional idiosyncrasies and strive incessantly to adapt them to the reality, fighting with primal anxieties and personal and institutional frustrations, still not worked through in their personal analysis. Michael Balint (1961) reminds us that “the doctor should develop an understanding of him (or) herself as an object of the relationship which can provide the support required by the patient.” (1961: 72)

The Reflection Group provides exactly the setting where these difficulties can be handled, worked through and reflected upon. Initially we always find strong resistances among the training analysts to understand its function and principally they don't know how to use the provided space. As the work progresses the group learns to communicate and share their anxieties. Awakened fantasies can be brought out and worked through in a safe and continent environment. The facilitating communication, the awareness of different levels of communication and the emergence of a matrix among the participants provides a healthier relationship with the training tasks. The Eros integrating force will be strengthened and the libidinous bonds which, according to Freud (1921), unite the members of a group will be demonstrated by the discovery of mutual identifications and common problems.

In Reflection Groups all group phenomena are presented. Transferences, counter transferences, acting outs and resistances will dominate the scenario. In the first sessions resistance is enormous and persecutory anxieties, passivity and dependence will be at the forefront. Communication and reflection are still not tolerated, and the integration of dissociated aspects will be impossible by that moment. As in any group setting, regression, primary anxieties and oscillation of Bion's basic assumptions will be up front.

As the clinical training progresses, anxieties intensify and some personal fantasies increase. They question their professional identities, and, emphatically, their limitations and difficulties in regard to what they imagine it is to be a good professional. According to the group, the handling of these problems can take various directions. Anxieties may increase to the point where discussion is not tolerated or a total paralysis sets in. The coordinator, the Institution, the professors are attacked, all seen as persecutory authorities, almost paralysing the training development. On the other hand, an excessive idealisation of group cohesion can hamper the indispensable expression of differences. Another possibility is the strengthening of bonds, when affinities and a working group can flourish. In this case, communication and a group identified with the task (Pichón- Rivière, 1982) can be at the forefront.

As we know, in group process, usually group members substitute their own ego-ideals by an ego-ideal of the group (Anzieu, 1984). So, the Institution as a group can be invested with ideal expectations in which a seat of knowledge and its perfection is demanded. Some training analysts are still unaware of these processes, and can't handle with the optimum distance placed between the desire and the reality. Within this hiatus we may ponder a situation – which I will call here helplessness - as a result of the discrepancies, which results from the hiatus between what the training professional, omnipotent and narcissistic, imagines what his profession is and what it is in reality. As in the analytic process, which is based on the absence of satisfactions and in the confrontation with castration, the path of the training analyst is surpassed by this process too.

Birman (1993) quoting Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), discuss the opposition between the instinctive forces and the possibilities of satisfaction, which are always out of step. This asymmetry is the origin of anxiety and it is a permanent indicator to the individual of his structural condition of helplessness (Birman, 1993: 78). In our case, the training analyst seeks to surround himself

with a series of guarantees, lectures and supervisors in order to avoid facing this reality, which, however, will always be present.

The containment of the Reflection Groups opens the door for training analysts to cross the bridge, substituting omnipotent behaviours and idealisations, to a professional improvement achieved by the awareness of the limits imposed by reality and their ubiquitous helplessness.

The Reflection Group is fundamental in the construction of the identity of a conscientious professional insofar as he is led to change, to communicate and to reflect upon his own condition, where doubts are more prevalent than certainties, theoretical and technical discussions, questions without answers are always challenging. As the training analyst recognizes these processes he can distinguish which refers to his fantasies and ideals and which refers to reality. Finally, he can advance from the condition of submissive, due to the repressive effects of his capabilities brought about by an attitude of submissiveness to the imaginary father who protects and teaches him, (personified in the professors and supervisors) to an attitude of greater awareness of his possibilities. If this transition can be achieved within the reflection group, the training analysts will be guided to a more creative and integrated performance in tune with reality.

Zimerman (1993), quoting Bion, tells us that the Reflection Group provides learning from experience, starting from the development of the training analyst's "capacity to learn to learn", that is to say by means of the fine tuning of the function of "thinking thoughts" (Bion, 1962). Today we know that one of the major problems among training professionals is that they don't know how to think. It is interesting to note how Zimerman (1991) observes that one of the major problems encountered in these groups is "students who think they think, but don't think because they are thinking the thoughts of others, or against others, or even concentrated on their own navel". (1991:54)

Learning from experience within the Reflection Group is fundamental in the shaping of professional identity, as one is transferred from an idealised world where the principle of pleasure, narcissism and omnipotence predominate to a direct contact with reality. The frustrations encountered within the training Institute, theoretical lectures and supervision, reveals the predominance imposed by the "principle of reality over the principle of pleasure" (Freud, 1911). Working through anxieties, reflecting upon them, communicating,

learning and thinking in a reflection group are encouraged by learning from experience. As Freud reminds us in *Formulations Regarding The Two Principles in Mental Functioning* (1911) by the conquest of the principle of pleasure and its substitution by the principle of reality.

This achievement is acquired during the training process, by learning to support conflicts and doubts, dissolving ideals of knowledge and nurtured fantasies regarding their professional identities. Only by reflection on his limitations and by “learning to think” what an analyst is will the individual overcome the feeling of helplessness and will lead to the construction of a creative relationship with the environment (Winnicott, 1971). Acquired creativity within the Reflection Group may produce thoughts and may modify the reality. Helplessness from here on will be the mainspring and it is only by the exercise of our infinite possibilities as a thinking human being that we may gain some comfort on our interminable journey through human relations.

Bibliography

- Anzieu, D. (1984) *O Grupo e o Inconsciente Grupal*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Balint, M. (1961) *O Médico, Sua Doença e os Outros*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas.
- Bion, W.B. (1962) *Learning from Experience*. London: Heinemann.
- _____. (1970) *Experiências com grupos*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago.
- Birman, J. (1993) *Dionísios desencantados*. In *Série Estudos em Saúde Coletiva* n. 54. Rio de Janeiro: UERJ/IMS, 1993.
- Delarrosa, A. (1979) *Grupos de Reflexión*. Buenos Aires. Ed Paidós.
- Foulkes, S.H. (1957) *Group Psychotherapy : The psychoanalytic Approach*. London: Penguin Books
- Freud, S. (1911) *Formulações Sobre Os Dois Princípios do Funcionamento Mental*. ESB Rio de Janeiro, Imago Ed. 1969.
- _____. (1921) *Psicologia de Grupo e a Análise do Ego*, ESB Rio de Janeiro. Imago Ed. 1976.
- _____. (1930) *O Mal Estar Na Civilização* ESB. Rio de Janeiro. Imago Ed. 1974.
- Martins, R. (1986) *Grupoterapia Hoje*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas.
- Pichon-riviére, E. (1982) *O processo grupal*. São Paulo: Ed Martins Fontes.
- Terzis, A. (1995) *O Grupo de Reflexão em um Curso de Pós Graduação: Estudo Psicológico*. In *Revista da ABPAG* Vol. 04 1995.
- Winnicott, D. (1971) *O brincar e a realidade*. Rio de Janeiro, Imago ed.
- Zimerman, D.E. (1991) *Grupos de Reflexão*. In *Revista da ABPAG*. Vol. 01 1991.
- _____. (1993) *Como trabalhamos com Grupos*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas.

Author: **Carla Maria Pires e Albuquerque Penna**

Psychoanalyst, Full Member of CPRJ from International Federation of

Psychoanalytic Societies
Full Member and President of the Group Analytic Psychotherapy Society
of the State of Rio de Janeiro- SPAG E. RIO
Past President of Brazilian Group Psychotherapy Association - ABPG
Address: Av Visconde de Albuquerque 694 apto 402 Leblon Cep 22450-000
Rio de Janeiro,RJ, Brasil
Tel: 55 (21) 2512-4189
email carlapenna@ig.com.br

Correspondence

Since we have received no items of correspondence from our members in the previous three months we offer a piece of correspondence written by Patrick De Mare in 1979. This was published in *Group Analysis*, before that journal became a more formal publication. Patrick was then the editor of the journal.

Excerpt from Correspondence to Goran Ahlin, Group Analysis, March 1979.

“I suppose basically I would never have dignified anything that I have ever done in large groups with the word “research” simply it has been a manner of working, to begin with in extra-ordinarily difficult situations such as a psychiatric social club or the would-be therapeutic community of Halliwick, and also various ward groups in the middle of the war at Northfield; also recently in Germany where I attended the Friedewald Conference in which it was obvious that the German students themselves felt helpless in the face of the various oligarchies, whether authoritarian or terrorist, to which they felt they had been subjected.

In fact I think it is generally agreed that the whole of society is at the mercy constantly of oligarchy and the small offices of officialdom and bureaucracy. It was only at Halliwick that I experienced the full impact of a total community of over 100 members

standing up to the ill-advised tyranny of a management committee. The essence of the whole problem is the new development which has taken place

in sociology today in the development of a double thrust not only as in the past from political and economic pressures, but for the first time the acknowledgement of the emergence of citizenship about which Prof. Halsey wrote extensively. The point here is that while most other forms of large group activities are instinctive, biological, the discovery of the capacity to exercise dialogue in a large meeting, the development of *koinonia*, has to be learned, to be discovered. This unfortunately is not widely recognised, largely because such procedures are enormously time consuming. The large group I conduct has gone on for four years, once a week, and we are only just beginning

to understand how to start looking at the faint possibility of research work. One thing is clear and that is, if we have multiple leadership in a large group, most of the group's time is spent in resolving conflicts of these colleagues, rather than discovering their own potential as a large group and is therefore wasted in a constant personalised preoccupation with oligarchy of the small group”.

Pat de Maré

Commentary on the Selected Papers of Pat de Maré (ed by Rachel Leff and Karen Stefano)

What follows is a personal account of my reading of the Selected Papers of Pat de Maré (ed by Rachel Leff and Karen Stefano).

The book consists of four parts including a preface/book introduction, an epilogue and an addendum. Each part is dedicated to a particular aspect of Pat de Maré's work and is being introduced by several eminent group analysts. The first on Small Groups by M. Pines; the second on Large Groups by L. Kreeger, the third on Median Groups by R. Pisani and the fourth on the Meeting of Minds by Tom Ormay. The preface and book introduction are written by the editors and Dick Blackwell wrote the epilogue. The addendum

includes an Autobiography of Pat and a chapter on the technique of group by B. Beaumont dating from 1935.

The volume is a compilation of (mostly) already published papers, most of them in group analysis and some not so easy to get hold of. There is one undated paper on Non-transference Elements of Group Analytical Psychotherapy not yet published. Portraying the evolution of de Maré's group analytic thinking from the beginning, the book is thus a collection in the best sense of the word. What makes it more than just a collection, are the carefully composed introductions to each of the four parts.

Scientifically, the volume not only furthers the understanding of Pat de Maré's work but also that of Foulkes himself. In his best formulations, de Maré displays an almost uncanny grasp of Foulkes and Foulkesean concepts. This becomes particularly obvious in his paper on Michael Foulkes and the Northfield Experiment and on Non-Transference elements. For instance, in his impromptu about Foulkes: 'for him there was no facile split between intelligence and feeling and he appeared to feel with his thoughts and think with his feelings as if thinking were an instinctive, enjoyable process'. This enhances our understanding of Foulkes as a person as well the intellectual thrust of his work. Particularly important in this respect is de Maré's insistence that the development of group analysis did evolve from a larger, institutional context rather than just from small group psychotherapy. From today's perspective, I think, we need to re-consider his statement that 'since those days in which the environment had forced itself upon us in the form of warfare I think we have lost ground'. In all these aspects and many more, the book is a valuable and contribution to a fuller understanding of group analysis as a theory and practice, a contribution in fact indispensable for students and teachers alike.

Moving thematically from small to large and median groups on to the subject of the Mind, the volume gets more complex, complicated and despite careful editing, even confusing. It is certainly a step yet to be taken to establish Pat de Maré as the legitimate successor European philosophy from Plato although sometimes suddenly his flashes of intuition do signal a way out of the cave of the conventional mind. With regard to this, it is a pity that his intellectual co-workers: especially the late Bion and Lacan figure so little in the text. Also, we may wonder why Cornelius Castoriadis, the greek-french marxist philosopher and psychoanalyst whose ideas of a radical individual/social imagination come so close to some of Pat's points

of view that they can be said to complement them, is not mentioned throughout the book. From an editorial point of view, what is also missing sadly, is a more careful delineation of the crucial concept of 'koinonia' which even in Pat's own historical note seems to be floundering between classical Greece, the Greek Orthodox Church and the Acts of the Apostles. Regarding his own faith between communism and Catholicism, a more rigorous philosophical/theological treatment of 'koinonia' as an impersonal fellowship would have been helpful for the interested reader. However, these are minor points which do not invalidate the obvious merits of the book as it is now. Not so minor perhaps is my objection to the title: *Expanding The Boundaries of Group Psychotherapy To Societal Healing*' which for me is more messianic than I am able to stomach. Couldn't we speak, more soberly, of an expanding of the boundaries of group psychotherapy to culture and society instead? Personally, I would prefer this from a thematic as well as from a selling point of view as it places the book in a scientific and/or professional context rather than an shamanistic one. One may wonder indeed, whether societies can be 'healed' at all? From what and by whom?

To conclude, I would suggest that the Selected Papers of Pat de Maré not only deserve to be made public for various reasons (some of which I have tried to outline above), but that the Group Analytic Society as a scientific society ought to support this publication in whatever way and in whatever form the publication will eventually take place (this needs special attention and consideration). The publication should be done in order to honour Pat de Maré as one of the founding figures of group analysis and with full respect towards the work of the editors of the Selected Papers, R. Lenn and K. Stefano, and the contributions of those colleagues who introduced its sections: D. Blackwell, L. Kreeger, T. Ormay, M. Pines and R. Pisani. Not to forget the editorial efforts already made by E. Hopper as the present editor of the New International Library of Group Analysis (NILGA). With regard to this, it is to be reminded that at the last AGM in Dublin a Publications Fund was established with the sum of 100BP and is now open for donations.

Dieter Nitzgen, M.A.

2009 Foulkes Lecture and Study Day Authority and its Vicissitudes

When visiting the rioting students at the University of Vincennes in 1968, the French analyst Jacques Lacan addressed them by saying: ‘What you want is a master. And you will get one’. This was the same Lacan who thirty years before, in his paper on *The Family* (1938) had suspected that the rise of psychoanalysis was in itself due to the decline of the paternal imago. Thus, the question of authority and its vicissitudes was not only a key issue in psychoanalysis and also in group analysis, but also of our culture as a whole. This was already Freud’s position in ‘Totem and Taboo’ (1913). No wonder, that questions of authority are frequently discussed throughout Foulkes’ work. Already in his first book, ‘Introduction to group analytic psychotherapy’ (1948), he went to some lengths to define the group analyst’s contribution to the group analytic group including reflections on how to name her/his task and role:

‘In a group composed of patients and meeting for the purpose of treatment, the therapist is normally in the position of its Leader. The term “Leader has, however become overloaded with meaning and particularly with fascist connotations. I will, for our purpose, therefore replace by the less pretentious term of the Conductor” (1948, p. 133)

As we can see, Foulkes is anxious here to distance himself and his professional work from the shadows of dictatorial leadership as it had been represented by Mussolini and Hitler. Although he was never politically engaged on a party level, he was nonetheless (made) highly conscious of the impact of politics and political affairs on groups of all types including therapeutic ones. As Pat de Maré pointed out, as a refugee from Nazi Germany, Foulkes ‘had reason to be sensitive to the political implications of war’. Recalling Foulkes in Northfield, he added: ‘His attitude towards the Nazis was that of the psychoanalysts in Berlin who had declared that ‘in good times we treat them and in bad times they rule us’. Beyond the global context of world politics, Foulkes’ distinction between leading and conducting groups also referred to the different schools of an analytic understanding of groups, namely the difference between his own group analytic approach and that of W.R. Bion. Comparing both, he wrote in 1948:

‘W.R. Bion’s approach, so far as I know it, is essentially related, as far as the group analytic situation goes. However, in my view the

Leader and his basic authority, as invested in the group Conductor, are absolutely essential for so group-analytic-situation to arise, to be maintained, and for it to serve therapeutic ends' (1948, p. 153).

We are very fortunate this year to have an eminent group analyst, Dr. Morris Nitsun, to deconstruct, to explain and to wrestle with such infuriatingly difficult sentences of S.H. Foulkes. The subject of the forthcoming 33rd Foulkes Lecture is 'Authority And Revolt', a title well taking up the challenge to address the complexities and riddles of both. The Lecture will be responded to by Will Pennycook-Greaves, group analyst and senior adult psychotherapist, London, known to a wider public by her paper on 'Autistic and Encapsulated States in Groups' (2004). For the Study Day following the Lecture, we are equally fortunate to have won as one of the invited lecturers a distinguished representative of the Klein-Bion understanding of groups and organizations, Dr. A. Obholzer, who is well known for his book on 'The Unconscious at work'. His reflections on authority will no doubt contribute to the Foulkesean group analytic perspective. We are looking forward to Dr. Nitsun's forthcoming Lecture and the subsequent Study Day which this time will be located in the Tavistock Clinic. It is to be hoped that both events will not only enrich individual thinking but will also stimulate further discussion, dialogue and exchange between those grown up under the inspiring leadership and guidance of our beloved professional 'authorities' and the scientific revolutions, revolts and policies they engendered.

Dieter Nitzgen, M.A.

The GAS Forum

The Forum is a space within which GAS members can 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 David Glyn at: davidglyn@talktalk.net

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

- Foulkes Quotation
- Narcissistic Leaders
- New Administration
- The Great Conductors
- Kristallnacht: Murder by Euphemism - use of words ...
- Louis Ormont dies at 90
- A Silent Participant
- The Meaning of Group Analysis in the Wider Social Context

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 nightmare, 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.

17th April 2009. Y Tu Mama Tambien

Directed by Alfonso Cuarón (Mexico 2002)

A sexually charged coming of age ménage à trios, road film about the maturation of two young men and their relationship with their older cousin. Influenced by French cinema's nouvelle vague and starring Gael Garcia Bernal, this is a bawdy but very affecting and subtle film.

Discussion led by Valli Kohon, psychoanalyst with a particular interest in film studies.

8th May 2009. No Country for Old Men

Written and directed by the Coen brothers from the book by Cormac McCarthy (USA 2007)

A brilliantly directed and acted, award winning modern Western, redolent with erudite allusions to the genre. It explores with the Coens' artistic panache many issues including that of existentialism and how we create our own reality. A truly interesting and fascinating film.

Discussion led by John Kelly, publisher and CEO of Prospect Magazine.

12th June 2009. Russian Ark

A Special Gala Evening in aid of The Neva Project (training for group analysts in Russia). Directed by Aleksandr Sukarov (Russia 2002)

A cinematically awe inspiring and acclaimed film that in one take gives us a historical tour of The Hermitage in St Petersburg.

Discussion led by Sue Einhorn, group analyst and the Neva Course Director, and colleagues who teach with her.

19th June 2009. In the Valley of Elah

Written and directed by Paul Haggis (USA 2007)

Set against the background of the Iraq war on an American army base, this is a political thriller with a profound performance by Tommy Lee Jones. It deals with the themes of loss and disillusion and with the effects of post traumatic stress disorder.

Discussion led by Paul Schulte from the Ministry of Defence and a group psychotherapist.

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

Research

The question of how psychotherapy works, that is, what are the specific mechanisms of change, is still subject to much speculation. The following research report, however, illustrates the power of group psychotherapy to facilitate interpersonal learning and change in a population that is not much studied or engaged with in clinical practice: preadolescent girls and boys. It is also an illustration of how fairly simple research projects might confirm and validate our more literary clinical case studies, and perhaps even our wilder theoretical flights of purely cognitive activity. How could it be otherwise when we base our practice on the theory of the primacy of relationships

between people: this is an old idea that goes back to Klein, Fairbairn, Guntrip, etc. Even further back we can glean these ideas in Dante, Shakespeare, and a myriad of other literary creations, and these literary products merely reflect the experiences of innumerable lives. Change is part of relating to others.

How might research, then, be able to tease out the significant and mutative aspects of interpersonal relating? This is, sadly, an issue that has seldom been addressed in the Group Analytic literature in favour of more intellectual and abstract discussions.

Shechtman, Zipora. (1994). The effect of group psychotherapy on close same-gender friendships among boys and girls. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, Vol. 30.

Recent studies of a group psychotherapy intervention that was repeated over three consecutive years revealed progress in the development of same-gender friendships among preadolescent boys and girls. While no group-by-gender interaction was observed in any of the studies, the results pointed to a tendency for gains among treated boys, accompanied by losses among nontreated boys. The present analysis combines the data from the three years to permit a more in-depth investigation of the unique impact of treatment on boys and girls

Thus, success in altering developmental trends among boys, by encouraging modes of friendships that contain the elements of expressiveness and self-disclosure, may have a crucial impact on their future relationships with the opposite gender. Indeed, Sullivan (1953) argued that by managing intimacy with “chums” during early adolescence, young people practice the mutual discussion of feelings and needs necessary for viable cross-gender attachment, an argument that has been empirically confirmed (Sharabany, 1994).

Socially inefficacious preadolescent boys, in particular, may need assistance in developing relational competence. Elementary school presents a highly appropriate setting for clinical group intervention, in which intimacy may be enhanced by instilling norms which allow for more flexible gender roles. Group psychotherapy, particularly of an “interactional” type, emphasizes relationships in the group. It is argued that the therapeutic mechanisms in such groups (i.e., the climate of support, self-expressiveness, constructive feedback, among others), permit the children to reexperience positive interpersonal relations and encourage close relationships within the group, which

are likely to be transferred to an intimate dyadic relationship. These processes are expected to affect girls as well as boys. Thus, it was hypothesized that both boys and girls will grow in intimacy in a close friendship following group therapy.

All three studies were performed in two elementary schools in a northern city, and in a low-class neighbourhood, in Israel. Together they encompassed close to 400 preadolescent boys and girls (Grades 4-6). All the children were referred to counselling by school personnel due to a variety of emotional, social, behavioural and family disturbances, as well as problems in schooling. Many were socially isolated, lonely or rejected, withdrawn as well as acting out. A Hebrew version of the Sharabany Intimacy Scale, children's form was used to test growth in intimate friendships. This scale measures the psychological level of closeness achieved between two subjects. The self-reported questionnaire consists of 32 items divided into eight dimensions: frankness and spontaneity; sensitivity and knowledge; attachment, contact and closeness; exclusiveness and privacy; caring, helping, and sharing; talking and asking for help; common activities; and trust and loyalty. Each item is rated by the subject on a 6-point scale ranging from absolute disagreement to absolute agreement. Students used their "Best Friend" as the target for completion of the scale.

The group work was based on approximately twenty 45-minute weekly sessions. All the groups were led by the school counsellor and two different graduate students. These were same-age, and in most cases, same-gender groups. Sessions took place in the counselling centre, before or after the regular school day.

A pre-post experimental and control design was employed for the three studies. In one study, the control population was drawn from a waiting list of children; in the others, children from a neighbourhood school, matched by age, sex, and similarity of problem, served as the control groups. Analysis of variance tests were employed on the gains (based on the accumulated data) to establish the differences between experimental and control boys and girls. The *t* tests were used to measure the progress in each group.

The results suggest that preadolescent girls grow in intimacy in a friendship relationship, whether treated or not, in a somewhat naturalistic developmental process. In contrast, only treated boys significantly grow in this domain. These results are consistent with previous findings and they confirm that gender-differential patterns of close friendship begin to crystallize as early as preadolescence. The present

study has shown that intimacy can indeed be developed among preadolescent boys, mainly by instilling norms that allow for more flexible gender roles. Therapy groups encourage such flexibility by introducing new forms of contact and of relating to others. Boys are encouraged to express feelings, share personal information, offer care and support, listen emphatically, and show understanding. In such groups boys actually seem to be freed of cultural inhibitions. While listening to others' concerns, fears and pain--or even to their expressions of joy: boys and girls alike are drawn to share, facilitate, and support.

Beyond the development of new norms and forms of behaviour, children who experience group psychotherapy also grow to trust themselves and others. Trust, or the sense that one is liked by others, is a necessary ingredient in any close relationship. The close group ties, the caring and supportive atmosphere, and the altruistic behaviour of the group all provide individual members with a sense that they matter to others and that others matter to them--the basis for interpersonal trust.

This research has supported the transference of intimacy from the group to a dyadic relationship both for boys and girls. Moreover, this growth in intimacy has recently been confirmed for both genders, by evaluations provided by the "best friends".



Obituary

Louis Ormont 1918–2008

Louis Ormont dedicated his life to the field of modern group process, of which he was a masterful practitioner. He advocated that "those successful in group are successful in life". His several books and over 25 papers on technique taught how working in group provides opportunities for growth and character change not readily available in individual treatment. Over 40 years ago, he pioneered a practice of seeing people only in group treatment and trained hundreds of therapists in his training groups, supervision groups and classes.

In 1989, 72 of his colleagues who had benefited from his work founded the Centre for Group Studies in his honour, an independent educational institution in New York City dedicated to teaching group leadership skills to therapists and non-therapists alike.

Dr. Ormont wrote more than 30 professional articles and several books, including “The Group Therapy Experience” in 1992.
Ormont.org: <http://ormont.org/>

IGA/GAS Library Update

Writing at the end of the first term of the new academic year (December 2008), I am looking forward to the start of the next academic 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 known 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 students 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 conduct 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 it 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: 10.45a.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:

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



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 (SPAP) 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 Countertransference 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

European Groupwork Symposium

**2009 Symposium theme: Groups in Communities,
Communities in Groups**

York, September 9th-11th 2009

Join us at this Symposium in exploring the use of groups and groupwork within established communities such as hospitals, day centres, therapeutic communities, prisons, schools, and many others.

How do these ideas, that of the ‘community’ and that of the ‘group’, complement or conflict with each other? Are they compatible? Can we make them work well together? Examples of groupwork practice, where these and other relevant issues can be explained will be most welcome.

Additionally, how can we help groups to become ‘communities’, building a sense of belonging, an identity, and a cause or purpose? How do some groups become communities, able to challenge and campaign for social justice, while providing a ‘place’ for those with similar needs and interests? Again, we hope you will share your experiences and your thinking about the group that becomes a community.

The Symposium Planning Group would like to hear from groupworkers from any setting or background who would like to contribute either:

A workshop. You should provide a plan of how you intend to engage participants and make the workshop interactive. A workshop would usually take about one and a half hours.

A paper. Either a short introductory piece describing an example of groupwork linked to the theme, with your critical reflections – should take about 20 minutes, with some time added for questions at the end. or

A major paper exploring the Symposium themes theoretically or conceptually.

For all of these presentations you should be sensitive to a mixed audience (international, multiprofessional and multidisciplinary) and make sure that your work is accessible and anti-oppressive.

Please send your ideas for papers or workshops via an abstract of up to 250 words, which should be sent (preferably as an email attachment) to:

Carol Lewis
School of Health and Social Care
Bournemouth University
1st Floor Royal London House
Christchurch Road

Bournemouth BH1 3LT
England
e-mail: carollewis@bournemouth.ac.uk

Information About Conference Accommodation in London and Donations to the Society

Please see the GAS Website at:
<http://www.groupanalyticsociety.co.uk/>