

## CONTENTS

Editorial		1
GAS Issues Committee Matters		2
Reduced Subscriptions for Retired Members.	Bryan Boswood, President	3
Report from the International Development Committee	Werner Knauss	4
GAS Theatre Group		5
Copenhagen Symposium Destruction and Desire: The Blank Page; Reflections: Anne Lindhardt		6
The Large Group	Kevin Power	14
Concerning the Symposium	Lauren E. Storck	16
What happened to me in the Large group		18
Poem 'Surgeon'		
May Weekend- The Meaning of Offending	Teresa Howard	20
South West Spring Workshop: 'Love Hate and the Growth of Intimacy	C.D. Montgomery	21
Report on Scientific meeting 'The Body in the Group'	Annie Hershkowitz	23
A Framed Childhood Memory.	Josephine Lomax-Simpson	24
Group Analysis in the Soviet Bloc from 'The European'		25
Research Section Outcome Research in Group Analytic Psychotherapy	Werner Knauss	26
Study Day for Research groups		27
Correspondence	Pat de Mare	28
Obituary To Daniel Sladek's Memory Rita Kritikou. Vassilis Menoutis		31
Video Review 'The Recovery of Childhood'	Anne Harrow	33
Notices and Forthcoming Events		

## EDITORIAL

The main event since the last edition of 'Contexts' has been the European Symposium in Copenhagen. This was attended by over 400 people from 28 different countries. It was a very professionally organised event reflecting the hard work and generous hospitality of the Danish Organising Committee. We hope you will enjoy the pictures in this *issue*, which remind us of a successful thought provoking experience culminating in dinner and fireworks at the Tivoli Gardens.

Each symposium seems to have its own particular quality, Oxford..Heidelberg... and now Copenhagen. Connections are made in each symposium, echoes of both Oxford and Heidelberg reverberated in Copenhagen adding another level to the matrix of the Society.

We are still hoping to hear from participants who *said* they might contribute some thoughts to 'Contexts'- the next *issue is* waiting!

We are pleased to publish in this *issue*, an article which first appeared in 'The European' and thank the Editors for their kind permission to reproduce it.

We still feel there *is* room for more response to *issues raised* in the news letter. Please use our fax number to

The Seasons Greetings to you all!

Anne Harrow

Sheila Thompson.

## COMMITTEE MATTERS

We welcome new committee members; Gerda Winter who *is* now co-opted as her role as co-ordinator of the Copenhagen symposium has now ended. Gerda now *is* a European member of the committee from outside London, and thus increases representation from outside the UK on the committee. Brenda Foguel has become the new Honorary Treasurer for the Society. The committee expressed gratitude to Brenda for taking on this important but also arduous, role. There has been some useful networking within the UK with a meeting between representatives of Group Analysis North, The Yorkshire Association for Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and The Group Analytic Society. This was in relation to the GAS January Workshop and how it could travel North, sometimes in the East, with YAPP. and sometimes in the West with GAN. In the continuing discussions about the restructuring of administrative support for the GAS, alternative accommodation has been on the agenda. At present the *possibility* of a designated room within Daleham Gardens *is* being explored with the Institute.

An administrative post for the GAS has been offered to Mrs. Ling, who has accepted. This now makes the administration of the Society clearly separate from that of the Institute. The next Foulkes lecture will be given by Earl Hopper on May 16th. 1997.

The next January workshop *is* publicised in this issue. The title *is* 'On Being Displaced'.

Raymond Blake reported that following the Copenhagen Symposium the Moscow Research Centre for Psychiatry Forensic Social and Personality Disorders has asked for a training course in Group Analysis. There will be a joint application for Euro funding.

Reduced Subscriptions for Retired Members.

Members enquire from time to time whether there is a reduced annual membership subscription for people who have retired from remunerated work.

There is not. Our Constitution does however allow the Hon. Treasurer (in consultation with the President) to reduce or waive altogether the annual subscription of any member who cannot afford to pay it.

Members who have retired, or who are temporarily out of work, who wish to avail themselves of this rule, should write to the Hon. Treasurer giving details of their financial circumstances and specifying the subscription which they can afford.

The Society is keen to retain the interest and support of its senior members and hopes that any who are in difficulties with their subscription will make use of this facility.

Bryan Boswood

President

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### Report from the International Development Committee

The aim and objectives of the International Development Committee are to invite members of our Society to use this Committee as a pool for information of group analytic developments in the different centres. The task of this Committee will then be to link with other international organisations (EGATIN, Overseas Training Subcommittee (IGA London), Group Analytic Section in the International Association of Group Psychotherapy (IAGP), Group Analytic Section of the European Federation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies (EFPP), and the Group Analytic Section in the European Association of Psychotherapists (EAP)). Please let us know whether there are other international bodies to whom we should have a link. We also discussed the needs and the unavoidable conflicts which arise from the international membership of our Society. This means a mediating function when conflicts arise. We also try to restructure the committee structure of our Society in order to meet the needs of our international membership. Last but not least, the task will also be to organize introductory workshops in group analysis if local organizing committees ask us to do so. The North-East Section as a part of this committee is successfully working in different cities of the former Soviet Union by establishing introductory workshops and promoting group analysis, which already led to a qualifying course in St. Petersburg.

In our last meeting in mid October 1996 we also discussed two new projects. One is a video project on "Encounters with Foulkes" (by Werner Knauss and Louisa Brunori) in which we try to document oral history by those senior members of our Society who had personal encounters with Foulkes.

The second project initiated by Volker Tschuschke and Werner Knauss will be an outcome research of outpatient group analytic psychotherapy. A necessary project for proving the effectiveness of the group analytic method and approach in group psychotherapy. I would like to encourage all members of the Society to contribute to the work of this committee by letting us know what you expect from us and how you work in your centre and which conflicts you have to deal with. We are open to all your suggestions and are looking forward to hearing from you.

Werner Knauss  
Chair: International Development Committee

## GAS THEATRE GROUP

In the last edition of Contexts, Bryan Boswood suggested that some GAS members might be interested in seeing plays together and meeting afterwards for a discussion.

A number of people were interested, and as a first venture tickets have been taken for the following play:

The Homecoming by Harold Pinter.  
Lyttleton Theatre. Saturday January  
25 2.15 Matinee

For tickets at a group rate of £15 for a top price seat contact Bryan Boswood. Partners welcome.

We would be glad to hear from any members who would like to join in future theatre visits, and who have suggestions about the plays we might see.

Bryan Boswood. Irene Bloomfield. Sheila Thompson

## THE BLANK PAGE

*Reflections on the main theme*

*Anne Lindhardt*

My task at this closing ceremony is to convey to you some reflections on the theme *Destruction and desire*, by telling you a story of the Symposium itself.

Thus I'll try to tie the knot of Copenhagen, which by now has become one more nodal point in the matrix of Group Analysis. I'm telling you the story from the point of view of the *one* eye, which was passed to us in one of the large groups by Malcolm Pines, who there told us the story from the Greek myths, about the three goddesses, who together only possessed one eye, and who took it in turns thus only being able to see, when they had their turn. I remembered how in the following discussion, it was questioned whether they would see the same, when the eye was theirs. I'm positive they didn't, and thus my story will be different from everybody else's.

It all however started with the blank page.

A story

In the story by Karen Blixen, from *LAST TALES* titled *The blank page* she tells the ultimate story about all stories. And she lets the roots of all stories derive from *desire*.

"you want a tale, sweet lady and gentleman? Indeed, I've told many tales, one more than a thousand, since that time when I first let young med tell me myself tales of a red rose, two smooth lily-buds, and four silky, supple deadly entwining snakes."

She goes on attributing a life of its own to the story – and how "where the storyteller is loyal to the story, in the end silence will speak," but "where the story has been betrayed, silence is but emptiness." And she proceeds to tell how the finest tale of them all, the most merry, cruel, sweet and deep is read on the blank page.

Thus goes the story: It tells of a convent for sisters of the Carmelite order, high up in the blue mountains of Portugal. Besides the pleasure they take in meditation, they have one particular task, which has been obtained as a special privilege. "They grow the finest flax, and manufacture the most exquisite linen of Portugal." This linen is used for the bridal sheets of the royal princesses .

In the noble families of Portugal a venerable custom has been preserved. " On the morning after the wedding of a daughter of the house, and before the morning gift has yet been handed over, the Chamberlain or High Steward from a balcony of the palace would hand out the sheet of the night and would solemnly proclaim: *Virginem eam tenemus* - we declare her to have been a virgin. Such a sheet was never afterwards washed or again laid on. "

The second privilege of the convent was afterwards to receive "that central piece of the snow-white sheet which bore witness to the honour of the royal bride." This piece was put into a heavy gilded frame, bearing the name of the princess, and put in a gallery together with all the other canvasses. In their old ages the princesses of Portugal, who were now queens or queen dowagers would make a pilgrimage to the convent to make a recollection of how life actually turned out in light of the omens which were taken from the markings of the bridal canvas. "Each separate canvas with its coronated name-plate has got a story to tell, and each has been set up in loyalty to the story." But amongst the long row of canvasses, there is one with carries no name " and the linen within the frame is snow white from corner to corner - a blank page". And it is in front of this piece that the old princesses "have most often stood still. It is in front of the blank page that the old and young nuns, with the Mother Abbess herself sink into deepest thought"

### The opening

When we started six days ago, many former symposiums were hanging in the gilded frames on our wall. Foremost in our minds the symposium in Heidelberg. While Copenhagen was still a blank page. However as the days were proceeding, more and more frames were filled and placed where they were to belong.

Destruction and desire, desire and destruction.

In the organising committee we discussed a lot, what to put first, when the theme of the symposium was decided. We didn't want it to end with destruction. But it started there. Somehow in the chaos, confusion and anticipation of a beginning it is easier to mobilise and verbalise phantasies of destruction, than of desire, even though as we've heard, desire is the nodal point of an stories.

Kristian Braad Thomsen in his opening lecture, placed the theme of destruction and desire right into focus. He was the only speaker who directly mentioned necrophilia placing it as a main theme in Karen Blixens writings. His argumentation had the effect of the provocateur, but his documentation wasn't totally convincing. He told the story of the young loving couple, who because of the sultans jealousy were buried alive together in a marble coffin. To a clinical mind, what might have happened in that coffin was not necrophilia, nevertheless the connection between destruction and desire was made right from the beginning.

Earl Hopper who was next, gave voice to the feeling of incohesion in the beginning group of the symposium, by defining as an addendum to basic assumption groups of Bion a fourth - the incohesion of social structure- basic assumption group. So neither the individual nor the group can stand alone as concepts but need the expansion to structures of a social kind. The second part of



Hoppers lecture was occupied with reflections on the meaning of assassinations of leaders. From concrete political examples he deduced how inadequate mourning would lead to subsequent idealisation, and thus never to a new mature leader in a mature society. The morale being, that if you want to kill a leader, make sure to kill him properly, otherwise you will never be able to take over, but he will continue to be there, like the ghost in Hamlet. Somehow this was deeply reflected in the large group of the second day, with the topic of taking over from one generation to another.

Use Rafeisen took us to the deathbed of Othello and Desdemona, to a love affair which was perverted through the lack of a good-enough ability to relate to another human being. One more warning of the danger of idealisation as a sign of immaturity and failed dependency. And in the lecture she struck upon another theme, -later to be explored in the large group – of the relation between male and female, and the differences in the relating capacity. Desdemona loved Othello for what he was (as long as he could keep up being the great warrior and hero), and he loved her for her admiration and love of him. Thus neither managed to enter into a mature love relationship, recognising each other as true human beings. That had to have a tragic ending. Jago was introduced as a figure for whom all psychological understanding and explanations failed. He was a puzzle - the evil principle in the mind and in the social life – as a basic inevitable structure in human societies. Thus he represented an open question, a blank page.

This led Lise Rafeisen to put before us a crucial question of whether group-analysis is a confession or a profession and how it is being managed?

### **The large group**

It is an ongoing question, what a large group is? Anticipation beforehand is loaded with fear and persecutory fantasies. The long line of people walking the 10 minutes from the site of the symposium to the site of the large group was perceived in the group as: a snake, a crocodile, a row of prisoners for a KZ-camp, (whereas from the view of the organisers it was seen as a group of sheep being ushered by kind and caring shepherds.)

In the large group all what is going on in the symposium is pooled together, as a kind of common group mind;. even though it consisted of 425 people. It is frightening for the individual who fears to lose individuality, and who for a long time actually in the midst of confusion loses the ability to think. However it is in the large group where the denominators of the common experience is being found. A melting pot - a true field for studies of interactions. Powerful and frightening for some, powerful and stimulating for most.

As the days went by in the large group the open square in the middle of the room, which we all were facing, was perceived in many different ways: a church, a market place, a playing field, a dancing place, a battle field – thus symbolising the many meanings given by the members of the large group to the group itself.

Among the many *themes and meanings* put into the large group I will try to outline a few:

\* Initiation rites for newcomers.

I can only describe it in a Danish term - J ANTELOVEN - an unwritten, but very powerful "law" lying firmly rooted in Danish minds. It goes: Don't think you are anybody of any importance. If you do we'll teach you different.

\* The struggle to belong.

Many subgroups emerged. The old ones and the newcomers. Those who had participated in the symposium in Heidelberg, and those who hadn't. Those few who had a remembrance of all the group analytic symposiums since the dawn of light Those who considered themselves to be true group analysts, and those who were considered by others to be so. Those who were supporters, and those who were just curious, Those who loved what they got, and those who hated it. Somewhere everybody belonged.

"The sense of incohesion.. and how to overcome it.

The point made in the opening lecture by Earl Hopper about incohesion as a basic assumption was often and clearly demonstrated inside the large group. However the importance of the role of the conductor in helping the group with the struggle to work and to obtain meaning was equally often demonstrated. How it was possible to establish a cohesion through clarifications, interpretations, and integrative interventions - and maybe most of all by the pure existence of the conductor in focus, visible and caring.

\* Attack on the conductor

Often in the large group the conductor was attacked - with the hidden wish, that if he could survive the attacks of the group, the group itself would survive, and so would the individuals of the group.

"The working through of the large group of the Heidelberg Symposium.

For many it was a surprise, how the large group from Heidelberg put its firm stamp on the large group of Copenhagen. Maybe because the symposium in Heidelberg in many ways was a breaking through many myths, conflicts and repressions, and maybe also because the conducting of the large group in Heidelberg gave room for more frustration than integration and thus the need later to work it through.

\*Defensive measures.

For a long time in the first two sessions of the large group, the group seemed to unite at something which its individuals felt themselves to be really good at - namely to create a patient and to try to cure

him. Somehow it was less painful to make a displacement of the patient for the group struggle, than to fight with the real issues at hand.

#### The idealisation of the Danes.

There was a tendency to idealise the Danes, which for the Danes was felt as a way not to be taking serious. Fortunately however this didn't last for long.

All together the hours spend in the large group were filled 'With intensity, emotions and meaning which stretched out to reflect what was going on in other parts of the symposium. It was impressive to see the very large rate of participation in the large group, because it was felt by most to be an important space .

#### The plenary sessions

In the plenary of the second day of the symposium Wemer Knauss expanded upon the the topic of destruction by making the link to creativity. The question being, what comes after the evil principle of Jago - because nothing stops there.

Geran Ahlin yearned for the matrix recalling former themes for group analytic symposiums like

- Mistrust in the matrix - Oxford, 1990
- Boundaries and barriers - Heidelberg, 1993 and now
- Destruction and desire - Copenhagen, 1996 at the second half of the last decennium of the millennium.

This led on to Morris Nitsuns introduction of the antigroup thus placing the forces of destruction as a part of the mother womb of the group itself. As he put it to us, the group in itself can be destructive, not just as a defence mechanism, but because it gives the members an underlying fear of the forces of the group, which indeed are powerful, it frustrates the narcissistic needs of the individual, and it nurtures the inborn rivalry and aggression between the members.

In the plenary session of day three was:finally introduced the concept of desire - to no ones surprise mediated by Malcolm Pines. He defined desire as a way to be aware of wishes and needs . And he returned to the topic of relating and how the inability to relate can lead to destruction. As another example of a perverted love- relationship the myth of Echo and Narcissus was told. But Pines contrasted this to the desire of parents to see their child develop to individuality and maturity.

Estella Weldon has a great love for those who are worst. She told of her work at the Portman clinic with groups where sex offenders and victims were in the same group thus confronting each other, and how this gave way for an interchange which truly gave new life to both. As a witch-like

representation of H C Andersen she told how the ugly, unintelligent, non-verbalising male offenders were transformed – just like the fairy tale of the Ugly duckling.

Colin James who years ago has worked and been a trainer in group analysis in Denmark, returned with Winnicott and the use of an object And he retold the story about how life comes right out from the destruction by the subject of the object and how the object by surviving, sets the subject free. Colin James gave us the beautiful fantasy of how it would have been if Bion writing "A theory of thinking" and Winnicott writing "The theory of the infant-mother relationship" both in the same year of 1962, had known each other and actually had spoken and shared their thoughts. And I came to think of whom right now in 1996, that none of us know, is sitting somewhere writing and talking of issues, which later will bring our thinking much further! Colin James finished by broadening Winnicott's issue onto groups saying how the group must survive attacks in order to facilitate learning. As I see it Colin James and Morris Nitsun has a meeting place here.

In the large group of day three an image was brought forward of defenestration. And thus we almost witnessed the producing of one of the bridal sheets, to be hung in the gallery of our symposium. Desire finally found its way into the large group, and found its true voice on the fourth day of that group. I speculated why desire is so slow in appearing and in being given a voice. I think that a sense of group-cohesion is a necessary prerequisite, because desire is often associated with shame, and thus much more difficult to exhibit in a large gathering than guilt. On the contrary the public exposition of guilt actually seems to be connected to feelings of deep satisfaction.

In the plenary of day four Steen Visholm provokingly put a question mark on the concept of the group itself and suggested it was only a social abstraction. But he went on and made a cross fertilisation between Group Analytic Theory and General Systems Theory, placing the group as just one concept along with others like individual, family, organisations and society. Thus at the same time diminishing and broadening the importance of the group.

Steinar Lorentzen and Volker Tschuschke later took us into the world of research according to medical scientific principles. Lorentzen by demonstration convincingly a very thorough study evaluating outcome of a long term analytic group psychotherapy. Tschuschke had made a critical investigation of a meta analysis on outcome studies of psychotherapy. His main point being, that if group analysis shall stand a chance in medical psychiatric institutions of today, where the quest for documentation of efficacy is very high, research is very much needed. Furthermore he pointed out that the seemingly scientific superiority proving good outcome for cognitive therapies compared to analytic therapies, are based on studies which are not altogether solid The main problem actually being, that there is a lot of interest in scientific research in the cognitive field, and not very much in the analytical field. 'This is understandable from the point of view of different theories and techniques, but it serves the area of analytic psychotherapy badly.

The plenary of day five gave us Christer Sandahl and Hjordis Nilsson-Ahlin, who discussed the place for group analysis in facilitating democratic processes in modern organisations. Thus took us even further away from the therapeutic room. And Gabor Szenyi proposed a model for structuring our

thinking around the built-in dynamics of the treatment institutions. Finally Luc Michel ventured to stress the importance of differences, not only between individuals but even more between cultures.

Naturally this topic entered the large group with the question of whether we dared to acknowledge our differences, and whether it was possible- with that in mind -to find between us companionship and platonic love in a mature relationship.

The sub plenaries and small groups.

In the sub plenaries many presentations were focused on actual therapeutic work – and to some extent also work with organisations. And in the experiential room of the small groups everyone had a chance to get personally involved in the process of group analytic work.

Summing up.

The central story of this symposium has been the story of Group Analysis and the struggle for and fantasies of its fate in the new millennium we are approaching. Which is the future for Group Analysis?

It was born in a specific cultural context – out of the massive destructiveness of world war two by a German Jew immigrated to England. After the war there was a great desire everywhere to believe that the evil spirit of Jago could be fought and overcome. It was shown in political and cultural movements, in philosophy and in psychotherapy. The dialogue, the space for reflection, the willingness to share ideas and beliefs, to care, to be curious, to explore was to be the centre from which it all generated. If we could speak about emotions, about unconscious wishes, about the forces behind our actions then it was believed the world would be a better place to live. In a way the concept was simple – to teach the individual from learning by the group

Today we may perceive this as a bit naive – or rather we acknowledge that it is not sufficient.

Group Analysis has a lot to offer and a lot to overcome in the future.

A change of generations is on its way. It challenges the struggle to change itself: the fear of withdrawing, close to the fear of annihilation, but also the fear to take over, which is the fear of taking true responsibility. The desire for destruction and the desire for desire both have to be faced in this process.

. This change of generations may for some of the participants of this symposium have seemed to be a very internal and thus rather uninteresting problem. But there I may remind you of the universality of this problem. To change means to give up something in order to get something new – but it also means to preserve something. Close to this is the eternal struggle for power, one of the most important drives of mankind.

Then it has been questioned whether there is such a thing as a group - or whether it is just a social abstraction. If the last point holds true – I may add that it is a very lively and powerful abstraction.

The male-female issue has been brought forward. The powerful voices of the women, not only in the therapeutic room, but also amongst the speakers and organisers. The women are coming out into the public sphere, and are there to stay.

Confession or profession was a question put forward to the participants. My point is that if we stop being mainly professionals in working with groups we should not do it at all. There is a task to carry out, and theories and techniques to develop, and that must be the foremost issues.

The anti-group concept is one way of developing Group Analysis. It is a way to move forward from perceiving the group as only good and beneficial, and recognising the destructive forces right within the group. Thus it will give space for the group to view itself from the inside, and setting free some more of the creative potentials.

The problem of relating and belonging of the rich and the poor and of east and west were important. The honeymoon after the breaking down of the wall is over, and the real sociability and willingness to include the east in the west is now at challenge. Do we want the dialogue, do we want truly to extend the boundaries? Many people belong to the "second generation", many are of mixed nationalities and with a multi-ethnic background. While old boundaries still exist, new are developing. To belong to a nation, to a society has another connotation today than it did formerly. Group Analysis provides here a tool for exploration.

Finally Group Analysis as a therapeutic tool is still the most important feature, and as has been demonstrated in the past years it has extended its potential use into groups of more disturbed patients. I think this development will be crucial in the years to come, as the problem and ability of relating is in the core of most psychic disturbances.

#### Conclusion.

I want to conclude with a few remarks on *Nachtraglichkeit*. It can be defined (Laplanche and Pontalis) such that experiences, impressions and memory traces at a later date may be received to fit in with fresh experiences or with the attainment of a new stage of development. They may in that event be endowed not only with new meaning but also with a new psychical effectiveness. This is what I think will happen to you all thinking back on the days spent at this symposium. It started as a *blank page*. Now it is filled with meaning and experiences. Ahead of us are more stories to be told.

## THE LARGE GROUP AT THE COPENHAGEN SYMPOSIUM 1996.

This is one of the most unique of human gatherings in the world. Every three years about 400 people sit together for five sessions of ninety"

minutes on chairs arranged as a square of five rows In depth, and raked so that each can see most of those others attending. This has been going on since the first symposium in 1972. This is a slow-open group where no-one is interviewed prior to the sessions, a group for the world, or at least the world's group-analysts. Some participants have been attending since 1972, while most of us are relative newcomers. What might it be with a good dash of scientists and poets - or would they all start squabbling?

What is its purpose? Who knows? Talking to one another in a large group context seems to be a unifying theme, together with its corollary of how difficult this is. Foulkes wrote that the group-analytic group is actually "a group without a task". So this group is the largest free associative gathering in the world. It may not have a task, but the situation provokes experiential learning in how to manage internal and external reactions; how talk with one another in this context, with humanity yet without sentimentality, avoiding speech-making while engaging as closely as possible with the body In the hall, and maintaining intra-psychic integrity.

Contributions are often rushed and follow quickly one after the other, with barely a pause for collective thought, though I feel that thought continues as the individual ponders what is said; some responses just will not be heard. Two schools of thought which now struggle over the living body of the large group in Europe seem each to be missing the point, to be polarising themselves. One is intent on making the total experience of the large group into a terrifying one, of putting participants in touch with terror and their own primal selves. The other, the thinking person's approach, may at times deride the other camp as the "feelers". With such a polarised split, the possibility of having a context where all can meet and hear one another seems at times remote. A forum where feeling brings forth thought and then, in a loop, thought informs feeling again. T. S. Eliot's "Undisciplined squads of emotion" can at times be the whole experience. Yet, when contained, the membership does manage to organise its terror

and its hate into something which is quite unique, a situation where 400 people speak to one another clearly and with thought and feeling and sensitivity and tolerance.

There is a great deal of talk and plenty of misunderstanding. Assumptions are checked out and found wanting. I thought that the presence of an Australian surgeon, openly sceptical of what the group was, really stirred the group on the first session, yet in his absence the next (day, when he was actually involved in surgery elsewhere in the city, the experience of being a surgeon was explored by the group. Another Australian, an analyst this time, spoke of the pain and anguish which surgeons (who had spoken with him) go through when operating on children, knowing that 1 in 3 will not survive. All this arose from an appeal by a mother that the surgeon who had attended to her daughter had been more humane, as she saw it. Yet the group's analysis was that the surgeon has to be detached; the operation and the management of the patient's pain, cannot be done if the surgeon is emotionally involved at the time of his work.

Gerhard Wilke was the group's convener/surgeon, involved yet detached from rest of the group's involvement. He steered us through possibly tempestuous waters managing to stay with the group while avoiding being swamped by it. Had he once worked as a butcher?" was asked, or "Had his father been a butcher?" this connecting strongly with the theme of a surgeon's work. And it was the surgeon side of him that was emphasised, his skill with verbal and analytic scalpel. After the final group someone said to me that she had been reminded of how a butcher is said to "sit and wait for the good meat to turn up". The interconnectedness of the joint themes for the symposium, desire and destruction, was acknowledged and integrated. Those whose first experience of such a group it was, were able to speak up and be known to the group. Those from Russia, from Georgia, from the Baltic states, from America and from the Pacific. In these large groups, something is forming, and it does not have the creeping menace of Yeats'

....rough beast, its hour come round at last  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"

. from "The Second Coming",  
W B Yeats, "Collected Poems" p.210. Macmillan

Kevin Power



LAUREN E. STORCK, PHD, C.G.P. *LICENSED*  
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5th of September, 1996

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Dear Contexts, and concerning the Copenhagen European Symposium,

Perhaps I should allow jet lag to subside further before I put my thoughts in writing, but I cannot wait. The 10th European Symposium was special and fading quickly, as I return to everyday work, family, and self. If there is room in the newsletter, perhaps some of these observations might be of interest to those who were there, or not there.

The week was containing, exciting, depressing, frustrating, enriching, and, in sum, a truly healthy experience. It was clarifying, confusing, cohesive and incohesive, rejuvenating and maturing. In other words, it was more than I expected, and just what I deserved.

The group process during my paper presentation was alive and well although none of us attended to it overtly, at the time. My topic (social class divisions in the consulting room) was invited, but little discussion was possible, largely because the other paper, a beautiful and powerful paper read by two people together, on collective shame, absorbed the group. It had been unclear how many presenters there would be, or how the time would be shared. This process helps me understand more about myself and the topic, for example, the complex and subtle forces which perpetuate psychosocial class dynamics and power structures, such as collective shame, violence, and the use of ethnic stereotypes. It helps me be brave. Thank you to everyone in the group, and to those who discussed the paper with me later in the week, especially to the people from Georgia and Taiwan.

As a conductor of a small group of 12 people from six countries, as a participant in a smaller group of six conductors from six other countries, and as one of 400 in the large group, and also in what I call the "other" large group between and betwixt all the events (coffee subgroups, breakfast, dinner, etc.), I re-experienced how language of birth gets in the way of communication. Although I lived abroad for twelve years, speak other languages, and thought I knew Denmark, I learned that I understand very little about Denmark, want to stay connected to Europe, and wonder if I can stretch around the world to places I have never been. Group Analysis seems to stretch us in so many meaningful ways.

From the beginning of the large group, there arose a tension leftover from Heidelberg three years ago, which was certainly not resolved during the sessions of the large group. Much was left unsaid. A constricted atmosphere kept dampening possibilities, at least from where I sat. One brave person spoke out in the large group about "not liking Americans." I had been quite aware that this might be a dynamic in my small group, but was slightly surprised that this particular ethnic feeling at a European symposium came out in the large group. I went to the person afterwards, with mixed feelings, and wound up only being able to support her, not myself. I hope we can continue the dialogue, because it is painful to hear such a stereotype being applied to my country, a country with

such enormous diversity. How can any educated person not like a whole country? (Can a therapist not like a whole person?) Perhaps we are all wondering if the other one is truly interested in trying to make our acquaintance, or form a meaningful relationship? Our passions can so easily overtake our thoughts. Yet I do thank her for talking. I was not brave enough, or perhaps anxious enough, to open my mouth in the large group. I have crossed many bridges in the nine years since I last participated in such a large group, and instead of extreme discomfort, this time I was quite comfortable enough throughout, and able to think and feel quite a lot of things, and pleased that I could.

The large group, as far as I could see at least, talked about cultures, genders, and the ins and outs of group analysis, passions and thoughts. Missing from the discussion was that taboo topic, psychosocial class. No mention of our middle or upper-middle class positions. Or was this my illusion? It cost me quite a lot of money to attend this conference, every penny of it very worthwhile, yet I am privileged, I know, to be able to travel and participate. What about so many of my neighbours and others around the world who could never afford to be with us? What holds us back from speaking about psychosocial class dynamics? What powerful destructive or desirous urges in our profession are being ignored? It was delightful to hear about Othello and Desdemona (from different psychosocial classes), and about Karen Blixen, and her psychosocial class psychology. Perhaps some day we can bring the topic to ourselves, as group analysts, for class dynamics determine our philosophy of life, our psychology and our relationships, just as importantly as culture or gender.

Something developed in the large group which was not put into words. The theme structured a duality (destruction and desire), and there was this bipolar tension in the large group: the conductor with part of the group who wished to destroy the destruction, and the other part of the group who wished to create the desire. But it occurred to me that something else was happening, that a third (new?) dimension was seeking expression beyond the confines of the structured duality. This third dimension felt and sounded more tripolar, or cyclical. Someone said we need a warmer beginning, before working on aggression and diversity, and not fearing diverse desires. Perhaps a tripolar model would include other cultures which have traditionally been outside of psychoanalysis, such as non Western Europeans, diverse sexualities, the less educated and less wealthy of the world. The conductor at the close of the large group offered himself as a second mother, if I heard him correctly, rather than as a father. The large group seemed to deny the positive side of power. The women seemed to search for this more comfortably than the men.

The summing up by a member of the organizing committee was particularly brilliant. She combined insight, analysis, power, and humour in a clear summing up of the week.

I realized how strenuous it was communicating in English. My reaction, at midweek during my paper presentation (wouldn't you know!) was to lose my voice almost completely. I heard myself trying to understand my English?! even though I have spoken to many other audiences about the topic. On the other hand, the group analytic process gave me a wonderful gift to hear my voice as the sort of group conductor I wish to be, and to hear all your voices in new and fruitful ways.

I am not sure if *New England* is ready for Group Analysis, or if Group Analysis is ready for us, but I would love to keep trying. Here in Boston, the New England Society for Group Psychotherapy (NSGP) holds its annual conference each June, a beautiful time of the year, with experiential sections, workshops, and group events, over three days. If you are interested in attending or presenting, let me know. Our national group conference (The American Group Psychotherapy Association) meets each February in different locations, this February 1997 in New York City.

Regards,

Lauren

Tenth European Symposium, Destruction and Desire, Copenhagen 1996.  
What happened for me in the Large Group. Andrea Foxwell.

I was vocal. The prompts were connected references; to concentration camps, of us going into the large group like lambs to the slaughter, comments made about butchers and surgeons. It was pointed out that analysis and therapy is akin to surgery ...and that was enough.

I gave a version of my relationship to the surgeon who operated on my second daughter, twice, during her childhood. The enclosed poem tells the story. In adolescence her pain and family distress led to her slow descent into sadness and despair, which eventually took the form of complete paralysis, for eighteen months. Hysterical conversion was not a term that I was familiar with. I began a steady looking into the negative, I am fortunate as an artist I am trained to identify negatives; that is what holds in place the spaces in-between.

As I spoke out the outrageous weight of knowledge which I have carried, seemingly alone, was eased. I found myself held in what I can only describe as a prayer, for it was a very vast feeling and I felt cared about through being heard. Maybe that was what had drawn me to the Symposium, the large group in the first place, perhaps it takes a large group to complete a kill or cure. The week unfolded. A field of understanding opened up. Anger surfaced, individuals spoke of feeling raped by my story, some received my voice as controlling. And all the time the weight of a lifetime of isolation within me was being relieved as I was accepted as a person, so I became myself. What had been released in others, by my speaking out of the shameful mess of middle class family history, alive and unashamedly as a mother, helped. I am four hundred times enriched.

surgeon

Did it draw a line across your soul  
When your scalpel drew blood from her limb  
What did you feel as you sawed and drilled Into  
her form  
Correcting the legacy of deformity  
With the precision of a scientist  
It was not her soul that was wrong  
But you wronged her soul

I saw it happen I  
saw her break  
I sat with her pain and misery It  
hurt

But you never once said sorry to her  
Not once  
You never once told her  
that her tears would heal the wound  
That you so clumsily stitched  
Surgeons should learn how to sew with care To  
incise precisely  
With love and respect  
For the forms that receive their work

It was years later that the repressed effect Her  
sorrow  
Of friendships lost  
Of a childhood cut off  
Cut out  
Made itself manifest

She lay dead in her life  
Not knowing that you had merely added to  
the contempt  
heaped upon Her by others who Could also  
not hear her pain

And I  
Her mother  
Her witness  
Went to other doctors  
Can you listen to her pain? can you hear it? For  
it is loud in my ears  
And it is not me to whom it belongs  
It is hers  
But can you help her hear it  
Please?

And the word came back,  
Hidden in code  
That such a request was impossible  
For surely such sorrow as hers  
Was more than the surgeons knife  
Was not audible  
In its deep silence  
Its refusal  
And their refusal to hear doubly condemned  
There was no help for her  
There was no receiver  
Other than the ears of her mother  
Who was insidiously responsible

For was it not she who had given birth to the deformity.

This her mother knew  
For she had read it in their eyes  
There had to be a deficiency And  
she was the deficient one For she  
was mother

Now that the work is done  
And we step day by day into life  
I can hardly believe that it happened

That such cruelty could be acted out So  
unknowingly  
On the body of a small girl  
Asleep

Had she been awake it would have been a different matter You  
would not have been able to meet her eye  
To do what you did  
Without reference  
To the pain that you inflicted on her

And I have lived with that knowledge Unable  
until now to address you  
In your superiority  
Your professional mask  
And all that was required was that you Allowed  
your heart  
To break  
Just a little  
For her  
That your soul could touch hers  
Just a little  
So she knew that it was not her fault  
that she was not brave enough for you that she  
cried out  
But you could not hear her sorrow, her tears And  
you silenced her  
In her trust  
And that was unforgivable.

Andrea Foxwell  
9.8.95

## **May Weekend Study Day: An Exploration of the Meaning of Offending from a Group-Analytic Perspective.**

### **An epilogue**

Many found the large group off task, bewildering and upsetting.

Paradoxically this opportunity to think and feel through what it means to seek to understand both, "the unconscious and the conscious motivations for particular offending behaviour" without developing the unconscious need to punish was the task we had set ourselves. It turned out to be an extremely discomforting experience. We did more than talk about the difficulties of working in this area. We experienced how *it* felt to go with Innana into the underworld to meet her evil and destructive sister. We discovered how it felt to have to stay with fear, terror and destructiveness. We discovered how it felt to go down into the bottomless well and risk not finding the wellspring of healing replenishment. It is one thing talk about not knowing who is the victim and who is the perpetrator, who is the abuser and who the abused; it is quite another to have to experience the confusion of not knowing. We discovered that we can feel very lost when there is no clear boundary between the perpetrator and the victim.

We were reminded that when a psyche is damaged it turns to violent rage. A bandage cannot be put on as with a physical wound. This is the unthinkable thought that cannot be tolerated. What can we do about this? All we could do was to stay with the pain, the confusion and the not knowing, full of feeling, distress, horror, pain and shock. As if this wasn't enough we were asked to think about the historical context of a whole nation engaged in mass murder. What does this do to the psyches of the children? How can this be treated?

A realisation that criminality arises out of the context of being human, and the failures associated with being human, was difficult to take in and accept. We got in touch with forces beyond ourselves and beyond our comprehension. What can we do in the face of these forces? Staying with our ordinary humanity barely able to hold on to the tension of these terrible opposites and hoping that if we can stay with it long enough some transformation to occur, seems inadequate. And yet.....

We were reminded that one way of coping with all these feelings is to be clear about what is wrong and to punish it and insist on responsibility being taken. But, maybe this way represented a longed for hope for the simple solution. A realisation that silencing others in the group didn't matter to one person brought with it the discovery of the offender within. A mother felt the guilt of offending against her children by not having been there for them while taking care of her patients demonstrating that life is not as straightforward as we would like it to be.

At the beginning of the second large group we were reminded of the way in which powerful cultural forces can be silencing. With the reminder of the holocaust in the first session came the immediate story of the crucifixion without a second to breath. The mass murder was in the room. The tension of these two opposites, the victim and murderer became almost unbearable. How can the shame of having been a victim be lived with? How can the shame of having been a murderer be lived with? Is retaliation and rage the only way to regain a sense of inner power? Are we stuck with being unable to understand the pain in each other, at the same time as not wanting to be understood, in order to maintain our identity based on suffering or offending?

There were so many questions with so few ready answers. It was a relief to be reminded at the end of the day that Estela had told us that it takes many years to get to a position of understanding. We only had one day which was a lot to ask even for seasoned campaigners like us. But, somewhere in all of this confusion and distress. many of us gained even more respect for Estela, and people like her, who work with offenders.

**Group Analysis South West Spring Workshop 1996.**  
**“Love, Hate and the Growth of Intimacy”**

Two days after the body of a counsellor had been found in her home in Exeter, raped and murdered, the Spring Weekend Conference of Group Analysis South west took place at the Bishop's Palace; the title was "Love, Hate and the Growth of Intimacy". Many of the participants in the course knew Ruth; all of us were deeply shocked and saddened by her death; it is thought her murderer was a client.

The keynote speech given by Dr. Jeremy Holmes, Consultant Psychiatrist/Psychotherapist, was an elegant exposition and extension of John Bowlby's Attachment Theory. Positive and negative aspects of both hate and love were related to different attachment experiences which in turn were related to narrative style and imaginative competence in adults. The horror of the counsellor's death moved in and out of the foreground throughout the weekend along with the bright spring sunshine, the birdsong, the Cathedral bells. Later in the group the association of the large group as a placenta from which we are all emerging, arose. . There is a tradition of eating the placenta (a problem for vegetarians!). The placenta as a living organism which has to die; the placenta as a symbol for mother (what is the symbol for father?). How can we nourish each other without eating each other? What is the symbol for attachment, detachment and re-attachment which spirals endlessly through our lives but sometimes is torn and broken. And then how painful the loss, how lonely the gap. Is this lacking the emptiness which leads to the passion of murder? The most desperate re-uniting. Lost and found.

There are three sculptures of the Trinity in the Palace Gardens and they are weathered and cracked with their hands open, accepting, holding and giving.

There are spaces opening between the trees and there is silence spreading between our words. How does speaking seem like making a mess? Get off my mess. Mess and movement. Mess and creation; the dance. Men leave their mess with women and sometimes penises and guns get mixed up.

The small group becomes the large group which becomes the small group. Birdsong and the Cathedral bells. Sunlight floods the room and fades. The slow invocation of fantasy.

The rug. The unchanging (but fading) rug is. always there: we gaze into its different patterns. It passes from year to year. Someone could dance on the rug; we could all dance on the rug, weave in and out and tread on each other's toes. Whose toes would we tread on? Would it be alright? Could we brush against each other? Bells and sunlight. The calling of birds, soft and frantic.

It feels as though we are in a restaurant and we are noticing the surroundings, the walls and the carpets, but we are not risking looking each other in the eye. Can we look each other in the eye and what would we see and what would we say?

Words. We must intoxicate ourselves on truly spoken words.

The group is an airport lounge.

The group is my thirty-three cousins.

The group is not my close and intimate family but is all those other people; the people with whom I am indifferent whose potential I do not know, whose ways are unexplored.

The weekend provided a wonderful opportunity to participate in this ongoing, ever shifting, exploring. The quality of work from the small group conductors, Ewa Gottesman, Tom Hamrogue, Nancy McKenzie, Joy Thompson, was profound. The reverberations I still feel from time to time. All in all a deeply enriching experience.

**C. D. MONTGOMERY**

**Exeter**

## Report on GAS Scientific meeting 28.10.1996

## The Body In The Group

It took the highly motivated to come out on the night of 28th October, with the renewed threat of gales and bad weather. It was refreshing to hear about group analysis from a body perspective.

John Andrew Hiller is an Associate Member of the Group-Analytic Society, a founder member of the British Association for Psychoanalytic Body Psychotherapy, and a certified Bioenergetic Therapist of the International Institute of Bioenergetic Analysis. He is in private practice in London for both individual and group Work.

We talk about the group head, group members, the group as a womb or breast. Body holding patterns can locate trauma, like looking at a cross-section of a tree, which tells us about the history of the tree and its interaction with the environment. By unpacking holding patterns (a kind of somatic defence), the individual can then move with grace and elegance. The body holds memories of all trauma bioenergetics brings it back into consciousness. Trauma can be traced as far back as the moment of conception and is recommended for *pre-verbal* material.

Bioenergetics has its roots in Freudian and Reichian tradition. Freud stated that the ego is essentially a body ego: you are your body and the body never lies. We start out in unity with the body, we experience the world through our bodies then the mind is emphasized. The split between the psyche and the soma is promoted in Western culture. Bioenergetics bridges the split.

We know the power of body language which overrides verbal communication. Awareness of body sensations can be a powerful tool for the therapist, a somatic countertransference.

The talk began with a few preliminary body awareness exercises, and concluded with clinical examples. The evening was altogether an enriching and illuminating experience.

Annie Hershkowitz



## A FRAMED CHILDHOOD MEMORY.

What does one retired psycho-analyst do? Surround herself with teddy bears. Yes whether they belong to the elderly or the young, these transitional love objects have tales to tell about their owners lives.

My latest godchild, Zoe owns Canterbury. She brought him and her feeding mug to see me on Sunday. Her father has told me I can die once I have seen his daughter married. Zoe's mother had decided to leave her with father whilst she took a day off to visit Canterbury – the first occasion for over a year. But suddenly she found herself buying a teddy bear and obviously as she was in Canterbury that was to be its name. Already Zoe has decided that Canterbury is to be a favourite toy. Will it lose an ear? - or be lost? But there will always be the watercolour I have painted of the teddy bear in the arms of a knitted Father Christmas.

This is a story about 'continuity of concern'. As a young child psychiatrist I originally met Zoe's father age 7 years, at a Reception Centre in Blackheath. I recommended that he be transferred to a Childrens Home which I visited once a week. In due course he grew up and married with a successful career.

Amanda's father was also someone I met in my professional role 42 years ago. His eldest daughter is another godchild and in August I was present at her wedding. The following day I painted Amanda's white polar bear embracing husband Jeffs monkey – the latter wearing a wedding carnation. A cuddly Australian custard cockatoo benevolently surveys the toys.

Paul is a very special Austrian doll more than eighty years old. He belongs to an elderly psycho-analyst with whom I have been friends for *many* years. She allowed me to paint him holding her grandchild's doll – a thoroughly modern doll by the name of Madelaine. Sadly Paul lost his true partner when his owner was being chased by the Nazis out of France. Perhaps when life is full of so *many* discontinuities, transitional love objects can give some stability for their owners – especially confidentiality. I wonder how important Madelaine will prove to be when Paul's owner eventually dies.

'Beetroot', a dark red dog with pointed ears and tail, was one of Tony's first toys at the new long term foster home in Sussex at the age of 18 months. He remained a hidden but constant companion - accompanying Tony from his foster home to a childrens home at the age of eight years: Moving to Wimbledon when he was seventeen, Beetroot occupied space in Tony's suitcase alongside more recently acquired teddy bears. He helped provide the continuity enabling Tony to create a new life. In 1993 when his owner moved into his own flat 'Beetroot' too found his own space. Emerging from the anonymity of his past existence after 27 years he now occupies pride of place among Tony's possessions. My painting of 'Beetroot' , complete with red tongue and sitting between his teddy bear friends 'Sgt. Lomax' and 'Reginald' hangs on the wall of the sitting room.

Most weeks Tony attends my large group when we sit together in a circle to talk. Other members - having seen Tony's picture have brought their teddy bears to be painted. Anny's 'Freddy', Gladys's doll, Audrey's black dog, or Geoffrey's 'Thingy' alongside my very alive dog Lulu. The painter Elizabeth Blackadder has been described as "investing her pictures, even of inanimate and static forms, with energy and life". I can identify with this feeling.

Tom had always kept his dead sister's pink teddy bear. It was this bear that I placed under a 'rainbow of hoops' with a pink feather duster – recreating the same tableau which I remember my drawing mistress assembling for my drawing examination sixty years ago. Perhaps all teachers should encourage pupils to paint their teddy bears – a reminder of those immortal memories of childhood – a framed memory. Would Bion describe this as a container? .

# The EUROPEAN

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## A Kindly ear from the Group Analytic Society

Group analysis is making a  
comeback in the former  
Soviet bloc

IN THE worse days of the old Soviet Union, psychology and psychiatry were part of the armoury of state repression. Now a specialist group is helping to re-establish the disciplines as useful instruments that help, rather than torment, those they are applied to and that can play their part in the development of democratic institutions in Russia and other former communist states.

Experts in this field will meet for a conference in Copenhagen from 24-29 August for the tenth European Symposium of the Group *Analytic* Society.

Group analysis was developed by Dr S H Foulkes during the Second World War. The Institute of Group Analysis was formed in 1971 and became a charity in 1980. It teaches group-analytic psychotherapy for those who want to practise it professionally and assists in the development of group analysis within the social services.

Eight other institutes or societies have been opened in western Europe. In the former Soviet Union the Association of Group Analysis of St Petersburg was formed in 1992 and six organisations are seeking group analysis training. Its importance has been underlined by education experts in Russia and Georgia. The Georgian minister of education said the training of new professionals in this specialisation is "essential for the development of our fragile democracy".

Many in the former communist countries mistrust psychologists and psychiatrists because dissidents and democracy campaigners were often diagnosed as mentally ill and tortured under the guise of therapy.

During the Brezhnev era, committing dissidents to mental asylums was a way of dealing with political opponents without sending them to labour camps. It attracted protests from the West. Many of the victims were injected with painful sulphur-based "medicines".

The society says that in the transition from a totalitarian to an open society, its work to straighten out the warps in psychotherapy and psychology caused by communism amounts to "education for democracy". It has trained 200 people in former Soviet states so far and the organisation intends to apply to the European Union for a grant of £100,000 (\$150,000) to continue its work there.

*Contact: Raymond Blake, Chair NE European section, International Development Committee Group Analytic Society, 1. Daleham Gardens, London NW3 SBY.*

*Group-Analytic Society (London)*

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IDC of the GAS (London)  
Chair: Werner Knauss.

## Outcome research in group analytic psychotherapy

At the last scientific meeting of the Section Analytic Group Psychotherapy in the German Association for Group Psychotherapy and Group Dynamics (Deutscher Arbeitskreis für Gruppenpsychotherapie und Gruppendynamik / DAGG) in May 1996 Volker Tschuschke and Werner Knauss initiated a working party for planning an outcome research for outpatient analytic group psychotherapy. Until now 40 experienced and qualified analytic group psychotherapists volunteered to work in this project by handing out to their group patients three questionnaires at the beginning, three months after beginning, and at the end of their group psychotherapy. We decided to use questionnaires which are originally in English and translated into German for our German colleagues. We also need patients on the waiting list as a control group. Twenty of our German colleagues have patients on their waiting lists and are willing to hand out to them the same questionnaires at the point of decision to wait for a group psychotherapy, at the beginning of group psychotherapy, and at the end of their group psychotherapy. This is a research design which tries to influence as little as possible the clinical reality of group psychotherapy, but on the other hand to obtain valid data for the scientific community in order to document the effects of outpatient analytic group psychotherapy. With the backing of the main Committee and the International Development Committee of our Society this working group decided at its last meeting mid October 1996 that we would like to invite qualified and experienced members of our Society who work with outpatient groups group analytically to join this research project.

Those of you who are willing to join this project should write immediately to Prof. Dr. V. Tschuschke, Institut und Poliklinik für Psychosomatische Medizin und Psychotherapie der Universität Köln, Josef-Stelzmann-Straße 9, D-50924 Köln, Tel. (0049) 221478 5855, Fax (0049) 221 478 6261. Please let him know if you would like to join this project by handing out questionnaires to your group patients, if you have patients on your waiting list or waiting groups, you will then get immediately from him a description of the project and the questionnaires we decided to work with (Symptom Check List, IIP, Global Assessment Scale, and a questionnaire on the subjective aims which patients formulate for their group psychotherapy). The data will be processed anonymously in the centre of Professor Tschuschke, and all participating group psychotherapists will get the results after the study will be concluded.

I hope that many of you will decide to join, and we are looking forward to hearing from you.

Werner Knauss  
Chair: International Development Committee

*Dr. Patrick B. de Mare, F.R.C. Psych.*

*Telephone: 071-794 31 71*

August 1996

Dear Anne & Sheila,

On Saturday 22nd June, I had the honour of being asked to convene a meeting at the Hellenic Association of Group Analysis and Psychotherapy which lasted a day and consisted of two lecture/seminars during the morning and two experiential Median Groups during the afternoon. I was invited by Dr. Rita Kritikou who is the Director of the Training Department.

Dr. Rita Kritikou and Dr. Vassilis Menoutis, together with other colleagues founded a Group-Analytic Association in 1988 and in 1992 they set up the Hellenic Association of Group Analysis and Psychotherapy. Both are members of the Group-Analytic Society (London) and to its Median Group Section. Vassilis and Rita have been convening a monthly Median Group of prisoners at the Avlonas Naval Prison since 1991.

Vassilis, a medical Commander in the Hellenic Navy, is the Director of Psychiatric Clinic (Therapeutic Community) of Salamina Naval Hospital and has gained the support of medical colleagues and Naval authorities who have been impressed by the effect of median and larger groups on morale, for instance groups of a hundred and another group of up to a thousand membership of newly enlisted men which meets once to three times and appears amongst other features to have reduced the suicide rate to nil.

At the recent congress at Buenos Aires, they gave two papers about Median Groups, and Vassilis has contributed an article to the Bulletin (No. 38 Feb 1993).

At present the National Health psychiatric services are mainly organicist in outlook, but in the near future with the advent of the Association's training programme there is likely to be an increasing involvement with psycho and group dynamic development.

My day's work at the Association's premises consisted of seventy participants at the two morning meetings and twenty at the experiential median groups for trainers and trainees during the afternoon. The response was enormously positive and highly sophisticated. The ancient Greek Koinonia was very much in evidence, so I felt I was rather bringing coals to Newcastle. The outcome of the day was a determination to include a median group in the training programme, to invite me again in a years time, and to translate "Koinonia" into Greek.

A theme that was discussed centred round the importance of intergroup relations as distinct from a decontextualised intragroup technique alone. This involves the development of meta-dialogue between group conveners, since the spin-off effect of larger groups is to generate narcissistic tendencies. What if there had been a meta-dialogue between Athens and Sparta?

Prior to the meeting, the participants had been given a 20 page Greek translation of my paper "Kith, Kin and Koinonia". The language most spoken was Greek, which added to spontaneity. Inviting overseas group analysts is a regular event and occurs several times a year as part of the training programme. Several months ago Prof. Rocco Pisani spent a similar day with the Association and it was through his auspices that I myself had been invited. He has recently translated and had published an Italian edition of 'Koinonia'.

We, Turid and I, were most handsomely entertained by Rita and Vassilis on the evening of our arrival at a splendid restaurant in full view of the Acropolis which was magnificently lit up, and the day after the conference they drove us to ancient Epidauros, the amphitheatre of 5000. Thence to the lovely island of Spetses where Turid and I spent 5 glorious days.

The whole event was an extremely happy and well organised occasion, it was fully reported by the media, both national papers and radio who appreciate the wider implications of larger groups. Clearly the extensive activities of the Hellenic Association are profoundly affecting the development of Group-Analytic Psychotherapy both in Greece and beyond.

Thank you, Rita & Vassilis!

Median Group Section  
The Group-Analytic Society (London)  
1 Dalehom Gardens. London. NW3 5BY

4th November 1996

Dear Anne and Sheila,

I received an invitation to convene two large groups at the symposium to celebrate 25 years of group analysis (2nd and 3rd November) in which it was stated that group analysis has been growing with pleasure and pain from a small family of members to an organisation of approximately 250 members and students. It was anticipated that the event would create a springboard from which we could look at achievements and stimulate thought and involvement for the future. On the Saturday the Speakers would introduce ideas to be planned and developed in the small and large groups whilst on the Sunday a different format would be adopted when members would be invited to sign up for various focused groups which would develop ideas and fictions that could be followed through after the weekend.

I attempted to broach this matter but met with considerable opposition. I soon realised that the signing up for further plans was premature since the large groups had a hidden agenda, members mourning small groups.

In effect I did bring up the matter again at the end, suggesting those interested contact me after the meeting, but only two applied (out of 73).

Should there be others interested in establishing an ongoing membership median group meeting, let us say once a month, would they kindly write to me.

Pat de Mare

**OBITUARY**

TO DANIEL SLADEK'S MEMORY

Daniel Sladek died the night of the 26th of April 1996. He had told us that he was suffering from leukaemia, but we had the feeling that he was going to live for ever.

We would like to express our deep pain for the unexpected loss of one of the most genuine human beings (prosopa), of a real friend and one of the best group analysts.

he used to call us, owe a lot to Daniel Sladek.

Our collaboration started six years ago, on March 1990. We would like to thank him as well as to express our love and gratitude towards him for the encouragement" and the inspiration that he gave us. He participated in the developmental process of the Group-Analytic Training of HAGAP. We were delighted when Daniel accepted our invitation and became a Honorary Member in our Association.

We learned from him, the crucial importance of the Existential Therapeutic Factor in Group Analysis, parallel to what Foulkes said:

"The group analyst should be a truly genuine person.....he must not be afraid to be seen as he is ". Besides, we were fostered by him to struggle for HAGAP more and more and respect ourselves, as he did when he was the Honorary Membership Secretary of the Group-Analytic Society (London).

At last we were happy that Daniel was with us in February of this year. We had one of the best and strongest experiences in this ultimate workshop with him.

On the 29th of April, in a so sad evening, all the 22 professionals of HAGAP, that is trainers, therapists, trainees etc, got together to mourn him. The shock and the deep pain from his loss was all over the atmosphere and we still have the same feelings.

All of us, had been working with him a weekend once or twice a year, or contacting him in workshops, professional and friendly meetings. His charming, passionate, immediate and authentic way of communication has been a great gift to us and our trainees and he is still alive in our hearts, over the time.

We think that what Beatrice Musgrave has written in the obituary of previous issue of Group-Analytic Contexts, July '96 about Daniel: "the tragic loss of close family members both in the past and the present, his late training in group psychotherapy .....must all have contributed to making him impatient with what appears to be formalities and inessentials" is more close to the truth of life and the focusing to it.

Those who knew him will never forget his long and brave fight against leukaemia. In his last day of life, the doctors proposed that the last thing they. could do for him was one more effort, the third dialysis. Then he said" GO ON ". This was a phrase full of longing for life.

Daniel

Everyone here in HAGAP will always remember you.

Rita Kritikou

Vassilis Menoutis



**THE RECOVERY OF CHILDHOOD**

VIDEO REVIEW. Anne Harrow.

This is a video about the Cotswold Community. It is a therapeutic environment organised for the care and treatment of severely disturbed boys. Approximately 40 boys are accommodated in four small group households. Boys are accepted from aged 9 years and can remain until 18 years. Most leave at between 16 and 17 years.

The philosophy of the Community is rooted in the title of the video. These children have missed out on primary good enough care, perhaps from babyhood, and they are offered an opportunity to 'recover' from this lack by careful, thoughtful, graded caring and learning experiences. Winnicott's thinking seems to be a central part of the way children and their needs are understood. This thinking is put into the context of group homes living.

On admission the boys live in a primary household where the care focuses on their emotional level of functioning rather than on expectations related to chronological age. Each boy has a special adult with whom he can form an attachment. He will also receive therapy and a daily experience of a talking group. Paradoxically he can begin to 'recover' what he has never previously experienced.

When he is ready a boy will move into a secondary household, where he will approach adolescent developmental hurdles in a safe holding environment. The staff team are supported by a multi disciplinary group of consultants, with regular meetings for staff and the whole community. The Community has its own farm and all who work in the community also live there. It is indeed a true integrated community. This is called 'Planned Environment Therapy'.

Residential treatment is essential for some of our most damaged children and it is a sad reflection on current trends that such communities are so few and some, for example, Peper Harrow, have been closed down.

This video shows in a refreshingly honest, home spun way, something of the life of the boys and their relationships. It is not a slick advertisement, but a sincere attempt to reflect the difficult, painful work undertaken by staff and boys together. There is a high level of professional skill enabling the children to move from low self worth and shame, to the discovery of pride.

As someone who works with severely damaged children on an outpatient basis I think the work done by the Cotswold Community is invaluable. 'The Recovery of Childhood' demonstrates the central tenet of enabling children to focus on their ability to form meaningful relationships and to function in groups, which is at the heart of Group Analysis. The Principal John Whitwell says 'the whole life of the place is one large exercise in group therapy'. I recommend the video for anyone who dreams of a recovery for damaged children. This is admirable evidence of making the dream possible for some, most importantly, without sentimentality and with tremendous courage.