

The Australian Psychoanalytical Society: The evolving relationship with the International Psychoanalytic Society

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'I hope to become in eighteen months or two years a doctor in whom people can have confidence and will first try my luck in my native town. If I don't get on here quickly enough, which is likely seeing that a young doctor needs capital and I have none, I will emigrate to England, or perhaps to America or Australia.' (Freud to Martha Bernays, 1882 (cited in Jones, 1972: 196).

In the light of what *might* have happened, let us see what did happen. Interest in psychoanalysis grew in Australia in the period before the Second World War when there was a 'fertile intellectual climate of discussion and debate' about Freud and psychoanalytic theories which, in becoming part of the cultural discourse, helped shape it (Damousi, 2005: 180). In the early days psychoanalysts whose training in Europe had been recognised by the

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International Psychoanalytic Society (IPA) moved to Australia but it was not until the 1960s that relations with the IPA became more formalised.

Arriving in Australia

Psychoanalytic practice in Australia did not begin until the 1930s, but as early as 1909 Freud reported learning that a group established in Sydney by Dr Donald Fraser was eagerly studying his work. Freud was subsequently invited by Dr Andrew Davidson, the Secretary of the Neurological Section of the Australian Branch of the British Medical Association, to read a paper at the Australian Medical Congress in Sydney in 1911. He was unable to attend but his paper 'On Psycho-analysis' was read there.

Dr Roy Winn, returning to Australia after he had become interested in using psychoanalysis with soldiers suffering from shell shock in the First World War, was the first psychoanalyst to practice fulltime. He had trained in the British Society, and from 1931 worked in Sydney as a psychoanalyst for about 30 years. For most of the interwar years he was the only trained psychoanalyst in Australia. He published a number of papers in the Medical Journal of Australia, including a 1936 paper, 'Psychoanalysis and General Practice', which emphasised psychoanalysis as the therapy most likely to prove effective in cases of psychogenic illness. While there were some scathing criticisms, other psychiatrists published in support of psychoanalysis. In 1938, with World War II imminent, Ernest Jones raised the possibility of six psychoanalysts emigrating to Australia. Winn together with Dr Paul Dane in Melbourne, who had been analysed by Joan Riviere, backed Jones' efforts. There was, however, considerable difficulty in getting government support for displaced European psychoanalysts to emigrate to Australia. Only Dr Clara Lazar-Geroe, who had been trained in Budapest with Balint and Ferenczi, was approved. To support her migration Jones, without formally involving the IPA, and although she had only completed training two years earlier, appointed her a Training analyst of the British Society, and Melbourne was authorised to function as a

Branch of the Society. Candidates trained and recommended by Geroe would, after writing a clinical paper, be elected an Associate Member of the British Society.

In 1940 Geroe, who quickly had to learn English, was appointed Director of the Melbourne Institute of Psychoanalysis which had been established that year with the support of Dane and other psychiatrists. In Deirdre Moore's memoir of her analysis Geroe was described as 'little and plump like Queen Victoria', her office had brightly coloured, heavily embossed embroideries, Persian carpet and a brown leather-buttoned couch (1999: 76). A number of émigrés found that the promised beautiful land was harsher in reality than they had dreamt and never overcame their homesickness for the faraway shores of Europe. Geroe, however, worked tirelessly for the Institute, promoting psychoanalysis to a wide audience interested in mental health. For many years she taught seminars for psychiatrists, teachers and parents and established a child guidance clinic to provide psychoanalytic services for those who could not afford them. In recognition of her contribution, she was appointed the first Honorary Psychoanalyst in Australia at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. To get training started, Geroe, in conditions of relative isolation had to function as a Training analyst solely responsible for selection, analysis, teaching, supervision and recommending for qualification, similar to other psychoanalysts around the world. She was, however, familiar with the Hungarian model where the psychoanalyst was the first supervisor because they would be more aware of the candidate's transferences.

Two other Hungarian psychoanalysts followed Geroe as part of an influx of European-trained psychoanalysts. In 1949 Dr Andrew Peto, a respected Training analyst of the British Society, moved to Sydney and two years later, when the Sydney Institute of Psychoanalysis was established, he became a Director. One of Peto's analysands was trained in Sydney before he moved to the United States six years later, delaying psychoanalytic training in Sydney until the 1960s. Mrs Vera Roboz, however, who joined Geroe in Melbourne in 1957 was influential in the practice and teaching of analysis in Australia for 30 years.

Towards IPA recognition

The arrangement in the 1940s that had enabled psychoanalytic training to begin in Australia had been the only feasible solution since there was only one Training analyst. In the 20 years from 1941 when Geroe first began training, only three psychoanalysts qualified as Associate members: Frank Graham in 1952, Harry Southwood in 1953 and Rose Rothfield in 1956. While they were all medical psychoanalysts, non-medicals had been equally accepted for training. But despite the earlier acceptance of psychoanalysis in the culture, and a lively scientific life, training only grew slowly. One can wonder about processes that were not fully resolved for Geroe and the Society, among them mourning in the face of trauma and considerable losses. Perhaps for Geroe to yield control was felt as too dangerous, after the situation in Europe which she had to leave? One can wonder what had been deposited in the unconscious group life as well as later the ‘bitter wrangling, the suspicions and accusations’ in London that Steiner (1985 39) describes (Frisch, 2009). Was an experience to do with training that for the early psychoanalysts was profoundly difficult transmitted within the Society so that in subsequent years training was experienced as ‘traumatic’ for some psychoanalysts? That there are no centrally held archives and documents are scattered among members and Institutes suggests there may be still some memories to be integrated.² And on the wider scene, of note is the parallel existence of the White Australia policy that intentionally restricted ‘non-white’ immigration, from about the start of the growth of interest in psychoanalysis in Australia, throughout this time.

In 1958 after gaining full membership in the British Society, Southwood initiated psychoanalytic training in Adelaide in conjunction with the Melbourne Institute. From the early 1960s the progressive increase in the number of analysts was accompanied by growing dissension over the training model. Geroe had trained in a Society that, similarly to the

² This account while drawing on the writings of Prof Reginald Martin (1995), who acted as the official historian, is inevitably selective because of minor discrepancies in the early papers.

British Society, emphasized countertransference and early mother-infant relations. However, the Hungarian approach where the function of psychoanalyst and supervisor to the candidate were combined in comparison to the greater separation of function in the British approach evoked strongly felt differences among psychoanalysts. (Although over time Geroe was noted to observe stricter boundaries in this regard.) There were tensions between those who trained in Australia and those who trained in London: Graham, who went to London for firsthand experience of the Kleinian approach, felt that there was a 'simmering jealousy' in those who did not go overseas (Graham & Brumley, 1995).

The model of analysis, supervision and clinical seminars by the same psychoanalyst had become increasingly at odds with IPA standards and the British Society in consultation with a number of Australian psychoanalysts approached the IPA to take responsibility for training in Australia. In 1967, at the Copenhagen Congress, the IPA established the Australian Study Group and assumed responsibility for training, appointing a Sponsoring Committee of seven psychoanalysts, chaired by Dr Fanny Wride. In 1968 Dr Adam Limentani and Dr Leo Rangell, members of the Sponsoring Committee, visited Australia and appointed four Training analysts. The committee and the Australian group worked towards Provisional Society status, which involved broadening the training arrangements and developing a constitution. The Sponsoring Committee appointed a Training Committee in Australia (TCIA), responsible for training and answerable through them to the IPA; the initial TCIA members were Geroe, Graham, Rothfield, Roboz, Southwood and R Martin.

In 1971 at the 27th Congress in Vienna the Australian Provisional Society was formally approved with Prof. Martin as Foundation President. At the 1973 Paris Congress, the same year as the Sydney Opera House was opened by Queen Elizabeth II, and the 'White Australia' policy ceased, the Australian Psychoanalytical Society was approved as a Component Society of the IPA.

Australian Psychoanalytic Society and the IPA: Containing splits during transformation

The difficult task begun by the Study group in 1968 was changing the Hungarian-based training system that had been in existence for 27 years. Much of the difficulty was linked with differences in theoretical orientation. Increasingly the group's backgrounds diverged: some had completed training in Australia, others after training in Australia had travelled to London for further analysis, yet others were overseas trained in Europe or from the British Society. Kleinian theory had a widening influence on training in Australia although this was rarely openly acknowledged. The Adelaide members who had trained under the Hungarian-based system had been relatively isolated from the influence of different theoretical views. Theoretical differences were heightened by problems of communication due to the long distances between the three centres. The transition from one training system to another was at times acrimonious with the Adelaide group often the focus of much of the conflict. Their contribution to the Society's scientific life had lessened as they felt that the group that was changing the previously accepted style of analytic work would be unsympathetic. Decisions unfavourable to some members contributed to the belief that training was prevented from taking place in Adelaide. Training analysts were only appointed if they were 'known and respected' and the Education Committee had not appointed any in Adelaide. The Adelaide group felt 'rightly or wrongly, that they were locked into a colonial position in relation to Sydney and Melbourne' (Blomfield, 1980: 4).

In 1979, as the result of work by Southwood, the Adelaide Institute had been established. New developments followed the passing of the old order – in 1980 Geroe died and that year, in a threatened split from the APAS, the Adelaide psychoanalysts requested Study Group status because of the difficulties about training. The situation had come to a head at a meeting of the Australian Society at the Melbourne airport. 'The tension was so high that there was difficulty in getting the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide groups to meet in the city itself. This was an extremely difficult meeting with feelings running very high.... The whole Society/Institute structure ...seemed to be in flames' (Blomfield, 1990). The IPA appointed a

Site Visiting Committee (SVC) with Dr Edward Joseph, the IPA President, as chair, and Prof R Moses and Dr McLaughlan. Adelaide's request was resented, with the SVC felt to be an 'unwarranted intrusion', and strongly held convictions that a valid assessment of the situation could not be made by a group that included ego-psychologists (Blomfield, 1990). The SVC made considerable efforts for three years to reconcile the differences. They commented on the relatively slow growth of the Society as only two full members had been trained by the Society in the previous 12 years, and they noted the barriers to becoming a candidate. They suggested that the scientific function of the Society had been relatively neglected, in part because some members felt that presentations other than clinical ones would be disparaged and were unwilling to express differing opinions. Some members, perhaps partly responding to the extent of the SVC's negative findings, felt that it had not recognised their efforts to resolve the problems and had concluded too quickly that the Adelaide group had not been treated fairly.

Problems around training and the claim for autonomy continued and the Australian Society requested a second site visit. It argued that the committee should include a member of the British Society as there had been a long association between the two Societies. The IPA agreed, appointing a two-man SVC in 1986: Dr Arnold Cooper (USA) as chair, with Professor Joseph Sandler (Britain). The SVC recommended a federated structure for the Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney groups as more transparently equitable. Incorporating many of the previous SVC's suggestions, it likewise recommended that the relatively minor role of the Society's scientific life be developed, and its Visiting Psychoanalyst scheme broadened to include British and American psychoanalysts who brought a perspective other than a Kleinian one. The SVC offered to hear presentations by Adelaide members in order to appoint new Training analysts, to unblock the training situation. In discussion with Society members, Cooper said that he would pass on the Society's valuable suggestion that the IPA insist that every Component Society set up an Ethics committee. While Sandler commented, 'There's

been nothing but trouble with the Australian Society' (1993, personal communication), the reorganization suggested by the SVC has held without a split.

Under the new Constitution, the Australian Society is a federation of three Branches with the Society assuming overall responsibility for training, while the Branches work within guidelines drawn up by the elected Society Executive committee. This committee alone has the authority to qualify IPA psychoanalysts and is responsible for all national decisions about psychoanalysis, for Society scientific conferences and for the online journal, 'Psychoanalysis Downunder'³. The Society is non-reporting and training follows the Eitingon system: training analysis concurrent with two training cases seen 4 - 5 times a week, each supervised weekly. There is an integrated four-year curriculum, including an observation of an infant parallel with theoretical seminars in the first year of training. Several psychoanalysts have trained as child psychoanalysts. Currently the orientation of the majority of psychoanalysts would be more broadly representative of the British object relations group.

Growing the Society and outreach

Today in the psychiatric and academic fields and among the general public, there is a wide range of views about psychoanalysis. Previously there had been a relative withdrawal from public sector psychiatry positions. This was viewed, from one perspective, as the Australian Society isolating itself from 'academic and mental health sources from which support might be found, mainly because of an adherence to an unrealistic ideal of the 'purity' of psychoanalysis' (Blomfield, 1980: 5). The withdrawal meant that opportunities for younger professionals to see psychoanalysts at work in the public sector were lost but some psychoanalysts are today again active in mental health institutions. The APAS played a leading role among the mental health professions in the formation of the Section of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies, which joined the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia for self regulation of the profession and protection of the

³ <http://www.psychoanalysisdownunder.com/downunder>

public. In the academic world, psychoanalytic theory has an acknowledged place in many Arts and Social Science university departments but one which is not matched by positions in academic and clinical departments although some Society members contribute to university teaching.

At the beginning of the new millennium, and a time of expansion of psychoanalysis in Australia, the Society, following Maria Teresa Hooke's lead as Chair of the Society Scientific committee and then as President, wished to reach out and reconnect with the roots of their culture and identity. With the indigenous Aboriginal culture as the world's oldest surviving culture, topics such as Aboriginal reconciliation and indigenous Australians' connections with the land in the Dreamtime were presented in an exploration of the 'geography of meanings', at the annual Society conference Open Days for mental health professionals and the public (Hooke, 2007: 5). The three Institutes carry out educational functions, with public relations programs providing a range of activities such as lectures and seminars, and opportunities to study psychoanalytic concepts as applied to literature and film. There are informal links with groups such as the Lacanians and the Jungians, who were invited to the Open Days and the Freud anniversary celebrations, as part of starting a scientific dialogue with other psychoanalytic groups. The recent outreach activities have succeeded in increasing the visibility of the Society and of psychoanalysis, and in counteracting some of the tendency towards negative attitudes in the wider community and the media.

In recent years projected membership figures, in line with those of many Societies, had shown that an increased number of psychoanalysts needed to be trained as numbers had declined due to retirement and death. About 80 psychoanalysts and 20 candidates are mainly concentrated in three major cities on the Eastern seaboard in a country the size of Europe. In 2006, on the anniversary of Freud's birth, the Society made a concerted effort to organise vigorous and imaginative outreach efforts (Thomson-Salo, 2008). This brought immediate results and as

has been demonstrated elsewhere, the number of applicants increases in proportion to outreach activities. In this respect the future of the Society looks somewhat more assured.

Simultaneously, the APAS began a drive to extend the availability of psychoanalytic training in Australia and New Zealand, as it had neither spread outside the original three Branches nor grown in comparison with other Societies. Initiatives in 2008 included establishing a Psychoanalytic Study Centre in Canberra and drawing up guidelines, based on the IPA guidelines for training using condensed analysis. This training possibility is now available for applicants who are not able to relocate from their home town for training.

The changing relationship of the APAS to the IPA

The IPA is seen as playing an increasingly larger part in the life of the Society scientifically and educationally. Over the years the number of members participating in the scientific program of IPA Congresses has grown. APAS psychoanalysts have also become members of IPA committees and initiatives such as, for example, the Committee on China, the Psychoanalytic Perspectives on the Ageing of Patients and Psychoanalyst workgroup, the Committee on Public Information and the Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis.

Lastly, an important development is that the APAS is working with the IPA to explore the contribution that the Society could make in the area, Asia, in which it is situated. The APAS guidelines for training based on concentrated analysis offer an additional possibility for training for applicants from Asia. In this way Australia is linking to its geographical region.

How the APAS has moved from isolation both nationally and internationally can be seen by retracing its path: from the APAS origins in the Hungarian tradition through an identification with the British Society, then taking its place in the scientific endeavours of the European Psychoanalytic Federation, and finally to a forward-looking exploration, in partnership with the IPA, of the contribution that the APAS could make in its geographical region. The

relationship of the APAS with the British Society has evolved from one of dependence to a fruitful exchange. Australia is a country of migrants and the Society has its migrants too, from other Societies as well as the British Society all of whom have greatly contributed, so that the contribution from overseas combined with the energy and talent of the local group have produced an innovative mixture.

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