

*Psychodynamic Practice*  
in association with  
*The Institute of Group Analysis*

*Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009 - 1.30pm to 5.15pm*

## *The Perverse Dynamic of Greed in Organisational Life*

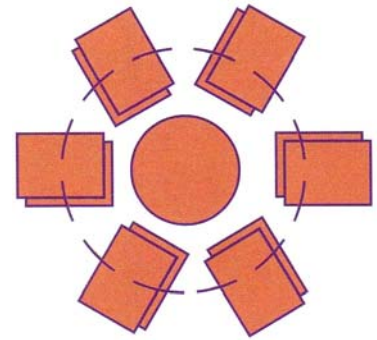
The journal *Psychodynamic Practice* in association with the Institute of Group Analysis invites you to a presentation of a paper, discussion and large group to reflect upon the financial crisis.

The idea of perversion conjures up many images of dark and sinister practices; evil and sadistic; masochistic and filled with secret lust; trespass into forbidden places, dungeons and hidden lairs; not a part of everyday life. Yet, small perverse acts and intentions are a constant part of the social psychological landscape. There is the sadism of the office bully who gains pleasure from the discomfort of others; the fetishistic attraction of consumerism and commodification, with their endless quest for more, never quite satisfying so rapaciously creating new and better markets; the suicidal backdrop of substance abuse and workaholism, out of control; and the voyeuristic pleasures found in the culture of celebrity which acts as a substitute for real intimacy. Good and bad, the presence and effects of perverse dynamics are an integral part of our culture and imbued within our working lives. At an organisational level, this may be evidenced through such dynamics as arrogance, greed, neglect and abuse of authority institutionalised into the culture.

When thinking of big multinational corporations and corruption the idea of greed is often foremost in our minds. Media stories of Enron, Worldcorp (in USA), Pamalat (in Italy) and HIH (in Australia) for instance, often focus on what seems to be the intent of senior executives who have huge salaries plus shares and other financial interests in the company or its future. Stories of fraud, lies and cover-ups, where the company's true financial status is hidden from the market, abound and confirm our cynicism about big business being a potential breeding ground for greedy and exploitative executives and board members.

Of course, the stories are more complex than the image that 'pure greed' conveys. Issues of pride and arrogance are present. A blind eye is turned, at times, to obvious incompetence in people with power and influence and to information that runs counter to what is desired. Checks and balances in risk assessment are overstepped and ignored in a flush of confidence and single mindedness. There is a belief in being right; even in being righteous. Hubristic decisions are made that over-reach or over-extend the resources of the company. Then, when mistakes are gradually recognised because the reality of their effects can no longer be ignored, frantic attempts to bail out or cover-up come into play. Greed is but one factor in the whole picture.

But, it is an important factor. The talk will explore the nature of greed and how it comes into play in organisational life. Less forgivable than pride or hubris in the popular mind, greed seems to epitomise an ignoble, rampant self-indulgence. It implies taking more than you need from the common pot, leaving others, often employees, shareholders and customers, with less. Pride, when positive and on the side of the life forces can be seen as a form of self-respect and generativity. Greed has little to recommend itself. It is often hidden and secretive, hoarding and anal. Avarice is the term in the parlance of deadly sins. And when not hidden, its overt display has overtones of indecency and obscene sensuality.



**At:**

The Institute of Group Analysis  
1 Daleham Gardens  
London NW3 5BY

**Cost:** £45

**Presenter:**

Professor Susan Long

**Large Group Conductor:**

Gerhard Wilke

**Convenor:**

Paul Terry

**Programme:**

1.30pm Registration

2.00pm – 3.15pm Presentation:

**The Perverse Dynamic of Greed in Organisational Life**

3.15pm - 3.45pm Tea & Coffee

3.45pm - 5.15pm Large Group

**To book:** Send your name, address and contact details, including your email address (please state your occupation) with a cheque for £45.00 to The Administrator, IGA, 1 Daleham Gardens, London NW3 5BY. You can also book by phone using your credit card (2% fee) or debit card (£0.50). Phone 020 7431 2693. or online at [www.groupanalysis.org](http://www.groupanalysis.org)

**Contact**

IGA, 1 Daleham Gardens  
London NW3 5BY

Tel: 020 7431 2693

Fax: 020 7431 7246

[iga@igalondon.org.uk](mailto:iga@igalondon.org.uk)  
[www.groupanalysis.org](http://www.groupanalysis.org)

**Susan Long** is an organisational researcher and consultant. She is an adjunct Professor at RMIT University in Melbourne Australia where she supervises research students and conducts organisational research.

Originally trained as a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, she has worked as a group and organisation consultant and researcher for over twenty-five years. As an organisational consultant she works with organisational change, executive coaching, role analysis, team development and management training. She has worked with government departments, hospitals, prisons, professional associations, financial institutions, insurance companies, airlines and the travel industry and a wide range of service industries.

She is currently President of the Psychoanalytic Studies Association of Australasia, Past President of Group Relations Australia, a past President of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organisations (ISPSO), past Executive member of the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management and past member of the clinical college of the APsS. Her research interests involve participatory action research projects in industry, government organizations, health, education and correctional services and have attracted grants through the Australian research Council and industry. She has published five books and many journal articles.

**Gerhard Wilke** studied anthropology at King's College, Cambridge and trained as a group analyst at the Institute of Group Analysis in London. He conducts the large group on the MA Course in Group Analysis at the Institute of Group Analysis and Birkbeck College in London. Gerhard has also published papers about the large group in British, Scandinavian and German Journals and he wrote '*How to be a Good Enough GP*', (Radcliffe Medical Press, Oxford. He is the co-author of '*Living Leadership – a practical guide for ordinary heroes*', published by the Financial Times.

**Paul Terry** is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist in the NHS and Lecturer in Counselling at Birkbeck College, and Consultant Editor for *Psychodynamic Practice*.