In two published papers (2011), a cluster of symptoms and behaviours were identified, which I propose be classified as ‘Boarding School Syndrome’. Children sent to boarding school at an early age suffer the sudden and irrevocable, loss of their primary attachments; for many this constitutes a significant trauma. Bullying and sexual abuse may follow, rendering new attachment figures unsafe. To adapt to the system, a defensive and protective encapsulation of the self may be acquired; the true identity of the person then remains hidden. This pattern may continue into adult life, distorting intimate relationships. In psychotherapy the transference dynamics may replay the hidden childhood trauma of repeated losses. This calls for a particular psychotherapeutic approach. This talk includes new developments and is illustrated with clinical vignettes.

Professor Joy Schaverien is a Professional Member of the Society of Analytical Psychology, in private practice in the East Midlands. She is a Training Analyst and Supervisor for the British Association of Psychotherapists, Visiting Professor for the Northern Programme for Art Psychotherapy and a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Analytical Psychology. Her books include: The Dying Patient in Psychotherapy and Gender, Countertransference and the Erotic Transference. Her book on the psychological impact of boarding school is to be published by Routledge in 2014.

William Meredith-Owen, Training Analyst of the Society of Analytical Psychology and Professional Member of WMIP will make a short response to Joy’s paper ‘Boarding School Syndrome’.

His most recent publications are ‘The hero, the anima and the claustrum: anality and idealization’ (JAP February 2012) and ‘Jung’s shadow: negation and narcissism of the Self’ (JAP November 2011).