From <http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Group-Analytic-Dictionary-.9.aspx>

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## [KEY CONCEPTS FROM PATRICK DE MARÉ DEVELOPED BY TERESA VON SOMMARUGA HOWARD](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Key-Concepts-from-Patrick-de-Mar%C3%A9-developed-by-Teresa-von-Sommaruga-Howard.25.aspx)

29-03-2016 at 19:26

KEY CONCEPTS FROM PATRICK DE MARÉ DEVELOPED BY TERESA VON SOMMARUGA HOWARD

Teresa von Sommaruga Howard

In this text you will see key concepts from Patrick de Maré developed by Tereasa von Sommaruga Howard: Outsight - Transposition - Median group - Culture - Mind and Dialogue.

Outsight: “Whereas insight is the inwardly oriented expansion of consciousness, outsight refers to the outward expansion of social consciousness and thoughtfulness” ….

Outsight: “Whereas insight is the inwardly oriented expansion of consciousness, outsight refers to the outward expansion of social consciousness and thoughtfulness” (de Maré in Lenn and Stefano, Karnac, 2012, p.129).

Transposition: replaces transference as it involves cultural situations and contexts as distinct from referring to individual people.  Transposition refers to the Gestalt background that is brought to the fore against which the multi personal network operates. Transposition also occurs when people in groups create subcultural climates consisting of unconscious rejected fantasies and frustrated parts of themselves and produce atmospheres that are neither realistic or gratifying” (de Maré, 1991, pp.103 – 4).

Median Group: Definitely not medium or medium sized!  The term Median Group comes from the word Median in English meaning ‘in the middle' or 'space between'.  In Group Analytic terms it refers to the group between the large group and the small group or between society and the family; the community, where it is possible to get a word in edgeways and practise being able to speak in the social domain.  My view is that the distinction between these three groups comes from the size of the circle and the room in which the circle is located rather then the number of people in the group is my idea and experience

Culture: From de Maré: “Culture is the outcome of a dialectical conflict between the individual system and environmental ‘reality’” (p. 79).  Culture refers to the context that human beings create in contrast to nature, which is natural (p. 75).  "It is not the individual that is unconscious but the culture that does not allow the thought to be voiced" (p. 77).  The median group and the large group "sets out to discover the very essence of thought, mind and culture" (p. 77). Thinking is cultural rather than natural.  It needs to be learned.

Mind: comes from the Norse word (mynde, which is equivalent to ‘vote’).  Culture is the ‘group mind’ meaning grouping of minds.  Social and cultural are “polar opposites in a state of dialectical tension.  It is this tension (hate) that activates dialogue”.  “It lies in the encounter between mental processes and society of which culture is the outcome, a multipolar network as distinct from a triadic dialectic” (de Maré, 1991, p. 81).

Dialogue: means through the word.  “Dialogue is a continuous critique of language” (p. 44).  “It has the following properties: It has the fullness and precision of the analog as distinct from the binary digital form; it functions without final truths; it has the continuous evolvement of a totalizing system; it is a general way of interacting; it concerns connection, relatedness, wholes, both structures and systems, and it Is not only dependent on dialectic process of thesis and antithesis; it is tangential with nuances of relation and meaning, including pauses and silences; it is concerned with continuum, not simply with boundaries; it allows for different communications taking place simultaneously; it both influences and is influenced by atmosphere and cultural context; it can be open, free-floating, untamed, evocative, and proactive, empathic and rich in ambiguities, full of non-verbal meanings, with poetry, timing, style, quality, complexity” (p. 47).  “Like dreams dialogue often appears disconnected, accepting the most violent contradictions without objection and disregarding knowledge that carries great weight in other situation” (p. 149).

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## [THE GROUP MONOPOLIZER. A SERIOUS CHALLENGE IN GROUP THERAPY.](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/The-Group-Monopolizer.-A-serious-challenge-in-group-therapy.24.aspx)

6-07-2015 at 13:50

THE GROUP MONOPOLIZER. A SERIOUS CHALLENGE IN GROUP THERAPY.

Henrik Lund- Jacobsen

The Group Monopolizer. A serious challenge in group therapy by Henrik Lund-Jacobsen, physician, Specialist in family medicine, Group analyst (iga/cph).

Tensions and conflicts between group members can usually be improved by the conjoint effort of the conductor and the group.

However with a monopolist in the group, it is the task of the conductor to interrupt the behavioral pattern, to avoid isolation and eventually scapegoating of the monopolist.

The Monopolist is the name of a group member, who speaks constantly, and accordingly inhibits work in the group. It was Yalom, who in 1970 introduced “The Monopolist”, as one of eight problem patients. Yalom describes the monopolist by three distinctive traits:

1.       A behavior. The monopolist speaks constantly, responding to every statement in the group, and is very difficult to silence.

2.       The behavior is pervasive, repeating itself meeting after meeting, irrespective of the focus of the group.

3.       Working in the group is severely inhibited, partly because the monopolist is blocking free speech with words, partly because of the strong emotions elicited in group members and/or therapist.

Al three traits must be present.  Yalom emphasizes, that it is important for the therapist to interrupt the behavioral pattern of the monopolist, before he or she is getting isolated in the group. After the initial intervention, the cause of monopolistic behavior is explored, and therapy is refocused.

Behr and Hearst introduces the concept of Monopolizing behavior into group analysis in their text book: ”Group-analytic psychotherapy”, “a meeting of minds” from 2005. Behr and Hearst describes the monopolist by the same three traits as used by Yalom, but they exclude attention-seeking behavior from monopolizing behavior, mainly because attention-seeking behavior is more accessible to consciousness, and therefor can be more easily handled.

The need of attention, present in most group members, have been covered by Sigmund Karterud in his text book on group-analysis from 1999. He refers to Kohuts theori  of narcissism and selfobject transference, and especially to the universal need of mirror transference. Karterud describes how, the mirror transference of a single group member, can take such proportions, that group work is impeded. Mirror transference lies within Yaloms broad definition of the monopolist, but outside the narrow definition of Behr and Hearst. The encouraging intervention proposed by Karterud is different from the intervention proposed by Yalom, emphasizing the importance of using the correct definition.

Monopolizing behavior can be provoked in certain group members in special situations. In this case you can talk about occasional monopolizing behavior. The word monopolist however, is linked to a profound characteristic of a person.

Irrespective of the cause of monopolizing behavior, the monopolist will be very susceptible to any attempt to restrict his or her behavior, and strong emotions may be released. If the conductor and/or group members have had time to build up resentment, a clash of emotions will take place. It is therefore important, how the conductor presents the intervention. The conductor has to avoid showing irritation or sounding forbidding when trying to bring the avalanche of words to a halt. This is not easy. Can the conductor identify with the needs of the monopolist, the negative emotions directed at the monopolist are much more easily controlled and concealed. By identification with the monopolist, also the conductor will be able to help the monopolist adjust and down regulate negative emotions resulting from the intervention, and help the group members understanding the position of the monopolist, eventually helping both sides to gain insight.

Ex, conductor to monopolist: Yes, it is important to get many views in this case, and you did make your contribution, - but I sense the group now need a pause for thought, in which everybody try to reflect on their own position in this matter.

References:

Yalom 1970

Behr and Hearst 2005

Karterud 1999

## [DREAMS IN GROUP ANALYSIS; A REVIEW AND A DOUBTFUL REFLECTION](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Dreams-in-Group-Analysis;-a-Review-and-a-Doubtful-Reflection.23.aspx)

15-07-2015 at 22:13

DREAMS IN GROUP ANALYSIS; A REVIEW AND A DOUBTFUL REFLECTION

Søren Aagaard

Dreams in Group Analysis; a Review and a Doubtful Reflection by  Søren Aagaard, Clinical psychologist, Group analyst (iga/cph, gasi), Psychoanalyst /dpas/cph, iga)

To whom does one relate one´s dreams?  (Ferenczi 1912)

Intro:

Dreaming, dreams, dream telling and dream-work is most valued in Group Analysis (GA). But also dreams, due to their  ”nature”, bring with them both theoretical and therapeutically most intriguing   challenges and perspectives.

Dreaming, dreams, dream telling and dream-work is most valued in Group Analysis (GA). But also dreams, due to their  ”nature”, bring with them both theoretical and therapeutically most intriguing   challenges and perspectives.

From a group-analytic group in private practice I shall bring an example, as a case of illustration, of some of the phenomena and dilemmas group analyst meet in dream-work. Foulkes was the first one to do so.

Foulkes

” The dream,”the via Regina to the unconscious” has changed its values in the move from the one person to the two-person situation” (Foulkes, 1964, p. 126), that is from the psychoanalytic setting to the group-analytic situation,” dreams are influenced by the dreamer´s situation, and quite especially by such deep-going ones as the therapeutic transference (T) situation in psychoanalysis or group analysis respectively, and that these two situations show up for study quite different aspects of dreams, dreamers and dreaming”, (ibid, p. 127).

A strong statement: the two situations show up for study quite different aspects of dreams, dreamers and dreaming!  A dream is not just a dream! Dreaming and dream-telling takes place in a context. Foulkes was obviously in search for ways to study dreams in (his) recently formulated and still developing theory of group analysis.

In 1957 he, together with Anthony, he had stated:”Whereas other psychotherapeutic groups work only or mainly with the manifest content of group discussion, group analytic therapy uses this manifest content to arrive by a process of analysis and interpretation at a latent content, in a way similar to that which psychoanalysis uses the manifest content of a dream to discover the latent dream thoughts”, (1957, 1984, p. 37).

In the corresponding passage from 1964 concerning dreams Foulkes explained, that an orthodox psychoanalytic approach to dreams in group analysis is quite impossible, because individual free association cannot take place. He went on to tell that in his ongoing psychoanalytic practice dreams might have the property that”the manifest content has meaning in relation to the ongoing current transference situation. We very often use that aspect as a genuine communication for the purpose of analysis. Now this is exactly where positive use of dreams come into the group situation. We can express it thus: that the dream as told to the group is left to the group to analyze”, (1964, p. 165).

Not to the group-analyst, but to the group!

 Foulkes did not go further into what his thinking or meaning, or may be rather different options, of the term”analysis” were? Out of the texts, and the context in which they are written, in my reading, it stands out pretty clear that”analysis and analysis” in an individual and in a group setting were no exactly the same things. Both contents and processes were different.

Foulkes wrote explicitly from the perspective of a psychoanalyst. The quotations are from texts written 50-55 years ago, at a time where in psychoanalytic circles fierce discussions on the importance of the manifest dream in relation to the latent dream took place. Foulkes mentions these controversies among psychoanalysts, and warns strongly against the mistake, that a group analyst should fall into the trap of analyzing resistances in dreams reported in a group as if the dreams were told and worked with in an individual psychoanalytic relationship. - Foulkes´ use of the concept of resistance refers to the classic Freudian conception of dreams as defensive and disguising.

So what does the group analyst do about a dream in the group? Foulkes again: ”The group analyst in my approach does not reject dreams, of course, but treats them as any other communication according to their dynamic significance. Above all in our view, every dream in the group is the property of the group”, (1964, p.127).

What does this statement exactly means?  Foulkes described how narratives in the dream might, consciously and unconsciously, shed light on the dreamer’s particular relations in the group, on the group-as-a-whole, on events in the group, on reflections and occurrences in the group. He brings a long example, which clearly illuminates that he, the conductor, is part of the group that analyses a dream. In addition, that he is more active if the group does not participate or contribute too much; (see also Pines 2002, p. 26-27).

This was in 1964. In his last book from 1975, Foulkes only brings the same example as in 1964 and does not go further into dreams. In Selected Papers from 1990, there are no specific entries to dreams; they only appear in connection with the theme of resonance.

As I read these central passages on dreams in group analysis, it seems as if Foulkes gradually changed his mind-set about work with dreams in group analysis. He left (or possibly partly left) his original psychoanalytic stance concerning the value of manifest and latent contents of dreams, and thus the opinion that dreams are by definition disguising and defensive. Implicitly Foulkes, in his group analytic practice, stepped down from the interpreting prerogative of the psychoanalyst; now he left it open to the group-as-a-whole”to analyze” the dreams told in the group.

Dream and interpretation

What about the”via Regina”? Dreams are”the royal road to the unconscious”, Foulkes wrote.  However, are dreams in themselves enough? Is it not the interpretation of dreams that is the”royal road” - work with and interpretations of dreams that may pave the way to a deeper and fuller understanding of a dream?

Freud (1900) did not invent dream interpretation (Deutung) that is as old as humankind is. Freud invented a specific theory and approach to the understanding of dreams, called psychoanalysis. Within that conceptual framework interpretations of dreams was essential:”Dream interpretation is the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious psychic life”, (1900, 1965, p. 481 (Danish edition)). In classic psychoanalysis, the necessary premise to”the royal road” was the dream but it only became sufficient as by way of psychoanalytic interpretation (Deutung).

However, in Foulksian GA, dreams are analyzed in the group processes! By participation of all members and the group analyst. Certainly, a radical change of context in comparison to the psychoanalytic situation, both in respect to working with and understanding of dreams. And”the via Regina”? I think Foulkes left it open. As an innovator, he opened many areas for further exploration and study. That is also the case with dreams. He wrote:”Group analysis must study dreams, dreamers and dreaming on its own terms”, (    ?  ) . His own indications and guidelines were few, not too systematic and a most often optimistic on part of the group.

Dreaming and relation

”To whom does one relate one´s dreams”, Fereczi, the first intersubjectivist in psychoanalysis, asked in 1912, and he gave the answer: ”We analyst know that one feels impelled to relate one´s dreams to the very person to whom the content relates”, (p. 349). - Ferenczi refers both to a context:”we analysts”; and to a relationship:”to the very person  ...”

Transferred to the context of the analytic group:”we group-participants, including the conductor, know  ...” And to the relationship:”we group-participants know that one feels impelled to relate a dream to the very group and its participants to whom the content relates  ...” - But do group members feel that way? Alternatively, do they rather experience their dream as too personal and a private property? Foulkes saw the dream as”particularly an individual creation, not meant for publication, for communication with others”, (1964, p. 126).

A dream is a nocturnal experience, very often difficult to hold on to and remember in waking life. A dreamer may have all sorts of feelings and sentiments about her/his dream. The dreamer may have nobody to tell to (like a motherless child), or the dreamer may have a partner, a family-member, a friend, a psychotherapist, an analytic group, a social dreaming matrix, etc.

We know that it means a lot, both for the formation of dreaming-processes and for affects and narratives in the dreams in which context the individual, the dreamer, finds her/himself, and how the context, the situation and relation is experienced.

The dream not told in the analytic group belongs to the dreamer. The dream told in the analytic group is the property of the group! Again an either/or. I think it is closer to the truth that a dream told to somebody else does not any longer belong  to the dreamer only, I stress ”only”. It belongs to

The dyad, triad, the group, the society in which it is both generated and told. But”belong”, of course, does not mean the same thing for dreamer and listener. All group analytic literature I know of accepts and respects this fundamental point of departure. I think Foulkes´ expression”property of the group” is questionable.

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Ferenczi 1912,

Freud 1900,

Foulkes & Anthony 1957,

Foulkes 1964, 1975, 1990,

Pines 2002

## [MELANIE KLEIN'S POSITIONS IN THE ANALYTICAL GROUP](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Melanie-Klein--39;s-positions-in-the-analytical-group.22.aspx)

5-10-2014 at 11:30

MELANIE KLEIN'S POSITIONS IN THE ANALYTICAL GROUP

Peter Gottlieb

With its fixed boundaries in time and space and its infinite room for thoughts and

emotions the analytical group may be understood as functioning on several levels, one

of which is the socalled projective level (Foulkes 1964, p 115). On this level the other

members unconsciously may be perceived as representations of one's inner objects,

including the concepts of the good and evil breast (Klein 1952), so that the analytical

work makes it possible to reach the primitive feelings belonging to the so-called

paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Klein 1946)

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The members of the group

In the new group member fantasies of either a totally good and or totally bad group can often be identified and the absoluteness of these ideas may be compared to those of the good or bad objects of the paranoid-schizoid position of the infant. Eventually, members may proceed to the depressive position, in which there is mourning of the loss of the absoluteness of the good part, but also relief of leaving behind the fear of annihilation by strong persecutors. Instead of unconscious anxiety of one's own death concern for others may grow, making way for guilt and fear of hurting.

By way of projective identification difficult parts of the member's self become accessible for processes of breaking down into more digestionable units that are offered back for reintrojection, just as the mother may help her infant to maturity.

In the early days of the group splitting may reveal itself by totally positive or negative

statements like "My father never said a kind word to me". Hopefully, in due time these same feelings are expressed between the new member and some other(s) in the group. Now the feelings may be analysed and thereby modified to e.g. "I guess my father did not have a very easy life". Thus, black-and-white illusions may be lost, and probably mourned, but replaced by more mature views. Inner part object parents may be exchanged with whole and complex human, real parents.

Vignette: A was very prone to read the therapist as all negative and critical in his attitude towards her. It was only after she told the group of how one particular remark from him had made her feel completely wrong that she – with the help of the group, including the therapist who disclosed some of his countertransferential feelings and thoughts - acknowledged her irrationality and became able to find the root of her feelings of worthlessness in early childhood. After this incidence her self confidence continued to grow and 18 months later she went through a very moving termination process.

The healthy outcome of therapy in a group can on the deep level of the Kleinian positions be said to be to learn how to melt the good and the bad part objects in it together in a positive frame, thereby learning that also the world outside - including its inhabitants - is a benign mixture of good and bad, and that this even applies to the member him- or herself. For this to happen it is necessary that the inevitable lacks of perfection in others are empathically tolerated and those of oneself better integrated.

Whenever life gets tough, there is always a possibility of regression back to innocence – from the more mature, realistisic and responsible, depressive position back to the more primitive or psychotic, black-and-white, paranoid-schizoid position (Billow 2012). Thus, the moves between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position can go both ways.

The-group-as-a-whole

In the same way as individuals move back and forward between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions, groups are according to Wilfred Bion (1961) always changing between shared unrealistic fantasies - constellations of one of the three basic assumption groups – and the rational, so called work group. It seems that without the fluctuation of recurring periods of getting into a basic assumption group, ie to the paranoid-schizoid position, there is no passion and therefore no energy at hand to propel the life of a group.

The therapist

For the therapist who is keeping the ideas of Melanie Klein in mind, it can be understood that a group or a group member dominated by thinking and feeling belonging in the paranoidschizoid position has therapeutic needs different from one who is closer to the depressive position. This increases his or her possibility to conduct in the best interesst of the members of the group.

Concerning the therapist, it has been suggested that his or her shame-feeling may stem from too high expectations of the ego ideal (Weber & Gans 2010). And to keep their own grandiose ego ideals intact, several maladaptive defence mechanisms may be used by therapists. The wiser alternative, the authors write, "is to accept that the grandiose ideal is an illusion and untenable; to grieve its loss; and to rebuild a more realistic professional ego ideal that accepts the limits of our power, knowledge and love".

Also for the therapist, the working through from the paranoid-schizoid position towards the more realistic depressive position is a never ending issue.

Conclusion

Thus, the theories of the positions of Melanie Klein can be used to increase the quality of the life of the group.

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## [TRANSLATION IN GA](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Translation-in-GA-.21.aspx)

15-10-2014 at 11:25

TRANSLATION IN GA

Svein Tjelta

Translation in GA by Svein Tjelta, - training and supervising group analyst and lecturer

The roots of the term consists of the word trans that is a Latin noun or prefix, meaning "across", "beyond" or "on the opposite side", and Lation that is latin for “state or quality”. Translation has a number of possible meanings:

1. To turn from one language into another or from a foreign language into one's own:

2. To change the form, condition, nature, etc., of; transform; convert:

to translate wishes into deeds.

3. To explain in terms that can be more easily understood; interpret.

4. To bear, carry, or move from one place, position, etc., to another; transfer.

5. Mechanics. to cause (a body) to move without rotation or angular displacement; subject to translation(ODE.com)

The roots of the term consists of the word trans that is a Latin noun or prefix, meaning "across", "beyond" or "on the opposite side", and Lation that is latin for “state or quality”. Translation has a number of possible meanings:

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5. Mechanics. to cause (a body) to move without rotation or angular displacement; subject to translation(ODE.com)

In GA translation is often used as an intervention instead of or synonymous with interpretation.  In his first book Foulkes (1948) he uses the term interpretation, not translation at all: “His main function is to direct this process of group formation, to observe and to Interpret events to himself and to the group. He is concerned  predominantly with the present, immediate situation.  He is particularly fortunate, in witnessing a dynamic display, he sees meaning in action.

What needs to be interpreted is: content of communications, behaviour and interpersonal relationships.”(p. 135) In the next book published together with E.J. Anthony (1957), the term translation has taken the place of interpretation that is only used a couple of times: “(p. 75 & 81). In the second edition of this book (1965) this chapter; “Patients and their Background” is rewritten, and the text is much shorter in this edition.  The  sentences are the same however: “We use this material for translation and interpretation, but instead of this being mainly the task of the therapist we further and stimulate the active participation of the whole group….. Or they may be interpretations, members offering  suggestions as to the real meaning of the communications.”(p. 81/p. 56-57).

In the book “Therapeutic Group Analysis” Foulkes defines the term thus: “Translation is the equivalent of making conscious of the repressed unconscious in psycho-analysis. Interpretation refers to a special contribution on the part of the psycho-analyst to this translation ”(p.111). He goes on to state that the whole group participates in this process, which ranges from inarticulate symptom to verbal expression, understanding and insight, from primary process to secondary process, from primitive to logical, rational expression.

“Group-analytic theory recognizes this translation as part of the process of communication”(ibid). Translation for Foulkes is thus tightly connected to the communication processes in the group. It is used as a conceptualisation going much wider than what the term interpretation covers. One might say that they belongs to different categories, but both belongs within the category of GA interventions.

In his “Selected Papers” he writes about translation in chapter eighteen about “Group dynamic processes and group analysis”(1968), after pointing out the importance of establishing the group context as a frame of reference and encouraging free group association: “This opens up the possibility of ‘translation` , i.e. for transforming symptoms, dreams or other manifestations through a process of progressive communication into meaningful language. Translation, the move from ‘symptom to problem, remains one of the constant aims in the analytic group. This move is considered progressive for therapeutic, analytic reasons, but at the same time corresponds to progress in inner articulation in each individual” (p. 181).  He states that it is a therapeutic exercise in its own right. That it promotes awareness in each individual of himself and the other person(s), as well as the world of objects, and thus the capacity for (analytic) insight and integration in each individual (‘Ego training in action`). In his last work (1975), that maybe is his most technical work, interpretation is again given much more attention than translation, as in his first book. In this work he is giving a clarification of the difference between the German ‘Deutung´ and the English ‘interpretation´. He states that interpretation signify and connotes meaning more in a rational here and now as in pointing; ‘look here´ ‘do you understand/see´. The German ‘Deutung´ goes deeper and is more authoritative according to Foulkes, whereas  ‘interpretation´is more superficial, more on the surface of phenomena. In the chapter on “The Conductor in Action” (1975, p.111) we find a description that is somewhat clarifying concerning the two terms: “On the whole we may say that we proceed from the symptom in the widest sense of term to the underlying conflict or problem. This process, proceeding from the one to the other, contains many steps all of which together constitute an analysis. Interpretation is only one of the means in the service of this  analysis, thought an important one.

Analysis is work done in the service of making unconscious meaning or expression conscious. There is a double process going on from below upwards, as it were, and from the surface downwards….

All these processes can be looked upon as if they were translations from one type of expression, from one language to another, from symptomatic and symbolic meaning to a clear understanding of what is at stake. In referring to the total processes we sometimes speak of ‘translation´.”

In GA after Foulkes it is rare to come across the use of translation as a technical expression. The first edition of Kennard et.al. does not index it altogether, but have a lot of discussion about interpretation. There is no mention to it neither in the books of Dalal (1998, ??) nor Stacey (2005).  Behr and Hurst (2005) stay true to the original connotation of the term, linking it to symptom inclusion into open communication. Roberts and Pines (1991) define translation as: “The move from less to more articulate communication, from unconscious to conscious awareness, from symptomatic and symbolic meaning to a clearer understanding of unconscious processes” (p.75). Translation in effect is a way of bringing symptom material into a problem by using the group process. That often has to do with the group coming into awareness of what was unconscious in the group becoming conscious and thus a focus of problem definition, understanding, elaboration  and work. Lorentzen (2014) in his discussion of interpretation based on Roberts (2000) writes: “In group analysis, where the therapy process consists of an ever - increasing expansion and deepening of communication, the term ‘translation` is often used instead of ‘interpretation´. ‘Translation ´ of  behavioural and interactional events is a more tentative approach, working from ‘the surface´, and keeping open other possibilities for the understanding of phenomena, whilst avoiding asserting oneself as an unilateral authoritative specialist on the unconscious  mental life of others, which could adversely interfere with the development of a group- analytic culture.”(p.9).  This could be understood as a underlining in the important of the groups participation of the process related to translation, whilst interpretation is more associated to the analyst. Still there is some overlapping and both identical and different aspects of the two. One could see them as a parallel  to Freud´s attempt at differentiating between interpretation and re-construction. The term translation in the end seem to be extending much wider both horizontal and vertical implicating much more of the total process of the group. Interpretation on the other hand is included in this and aims at helping in bringing analysis forward when it is needed.

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See also: Interpretation, communication, unconscious – conscious symptom – problem.

Svein Tjelta

Elaboration of the text. 1.My definition to be located on top. Then 2. continuation at the end of the text

24-10-2014, 11:51

1.Translation is way of analyzing, understanding and describing a larger process in GA, and could include several levels, both primordial, projective, transference and the here and now, relating both to the vertical and horizontal dimension of existence of the group as a whole. This would include elements of contextual relations. As a technical term Translation often includes both (re)construction and interpretation.

2.It is a technical term and is mostly used when bringing on a new gestalt to the group including some here and now contextual aspect. It is an intervention that could uses interpretation, but has wider and deeper implications including the group as a whole. Using an analogue from literature, it would not just include the translation of the visible text, but also the subtext, the palimpsest, that often is tangible as affects or emotional qualities often primordial or proto-mental.

## [SOCIALIZATION – IS THIS A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT IN GROUP THEORY AND PRACTICE?](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Socialization-%E2%80%93-is-this-a-fundamental-concept-in-Group-Theory-and-Practice--.20.aspx)

08-09-2014 at 23:10

SOCIALIZATION – IS THIS A FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT IN GROUP THEORY AND PRACTICE?

Per Sørensen

Socializing is a force working in society and cultivated in therapeutic groups, which can be seen as the individual drift towards the collective norm, as a translation in the group of unconscious to conscious and the autistic to the social, where in Foulkes expression “the accumulated soot in the ivory towers is swept clean”.

In Group Psychotherapy: The Psychoanalytic Approach (1) Foulkes writes about group specific factors under the heading “socialization through the group”:   Socialization is a factor in human environment that operates through life. No one can escape modifying influence of the society in which he lives. Because of deep psycholocial disturbances an individual may feel isolated and inadequate in group situations and may constantly seek to evade it. A circular response is established the more inadequate he behaves the more inadequate he feels, and the more inadequate he becomes. Society shows it self intolerant of his neurotic shortcomings and may refuse to accept him all together. He may then reject society and become a recluse, and the lack of social integration may lead to egocentric thinking and eccentric standards, which may finally necessitate his admission to a mental hospital.

So Foulkes see socialization as an important factor in the social realm which shapes the individual, which have a profound impact and can go wrong through a circular response which lead to rejection, egocentric thinking and admission to a mental hospital.  Society shapes the mad.  Dieter Nitzgen writes in The Social Unconscoiuss, Groups and Society (2) “Foulkes never write how social facts impinge on the individual psyche. Although he hinted at their double nature as inhibiting and facilitating forces, he did not elucidate the process of their psychic representation. Unlike the repressed unconscious, which was based on specific mechanism of defense, he did not outline the defensive process associated with unconscious social facts”. So socialization as an idea is connected to concept of the social unconscious, cultural development and transmission and a psychoanalytic understanding of development of personality structure in a specific society.

Foulkes continues in In Group Psychotherapy:  “In the therapeutic group acceptance is the keyword. The rejected and isolated are brought in on equal terms. The cardinal lesson of social living is gradually learned – the reciprocal need to understand and be understood. The group listens with patience to the articulate, and helps with a clearer formulation of his problem. It brings him to realize that he is not alone in the absurd, obsence or incongruous impulse or thought. Much anxiety and guilt are alleviated and long bottled-up feelings find release. With increasing socializing, the character of intercommunication changes. What was egocentric and leader-centered become altruistic and group-centered... The value of talking for the sake of communication is realized. One of Freuds patients referred to it as “chimney-sweeping”, the accumulated soot in the ivory towers is swept clean.”

It is not clear what Foulkes understand by socialization in this text, but a more benign circular response is possible because of the acceptance in the therapeutic group. So in this way there is a difference between society and the group. A cardinal lesson of social living is learned gradually – the reciprocal need to understand and be understood.

A key understanding in group analytic thinking is the idea of adjustment and change. People is part of a system - in a therapeutic setting the group, which is in dynamic balance. It is not at rest but adjust constantly to the given conditions. This adjustment contains creative elements. The members of the therapeutic group have problems which make them deviate in a certain degree from the group norm. The group contains healthy forces, which challenge this deviation and forces the individual to participate in a discussion of the symptoms that is an expression of the deviation, so the group collectively can understand, help and share difficulties. This process where the individuals’ isolation is broken and the participants of the group meet and change under a common norm is socialization. There is a balance between destructive forces which lead to fragmentation and forces which stimulates commitment and constructive processes. Is there an inherent process in analytic groups which supports a constructive development and lead to adjustment that slowly develops the group toward the norms of the society? And are the group more normal than the individual members and does this promote healthy and constructive values and relations and integration in society?

It is Foulkes understanding that we as human beings have a fundamental need to communicate and the group is the tool where this need emerge and is expressed both conscious and unconscious. The mind should be seen as an interpersonal phenomenon and the group in a therapeutic setting a place where intrapsychic problems become interpersonal problems - and the interpersonal problem become intrapsychic problems. Communication is an expression of all processes in the group both verbally and nonverbally. There are different levels of communication some conscious, some outside the conscious realm. The therapeutic process is - in a more superficial impression- verbally, where the free discussion takes different associative patterns in the group. Foulkes speaks of translation, as an essential part of the therapeutic process, a translation from a more primitive level to a conscious level, where the group members verbally expresses their difficulties and conflicts. There is a movement from the latent to the manifest. In Foulkes understanding this process is like a dream analysis, where latent parts of the dream are made conscious. Communication crystallizes certain mind patterns and communication connects the group in a fluctuating network. Therapy is a shift in communication where the unconscious are made conscious in the group. This translation does not take place between the therapist and the patient, but by the use of the whole group, and depend of the group’s ability to allow free discussion. Symptoms are autistic which stays fixated when not communicated. If the symptom is articulated in the group it receives a social meaning which deepens the understanding of the symptom through reflection and resonance in the group. This shift from the autistic to the social did Foulkes conceive as liberating.

Foulkes continues”therapy lies in both ends of the communication process. At the receiving end, the listener’s threshold for reception is variable… based on the individual’s  “framework of reference”(he) may conduce to a personal manipulation of the group material to the bewilderment to the others in the group. The amount of distorsion is related to the individual’s adaption to reality (1).

Karterud and Nitsun (3, 4) has criticized Foulkes model for socializing in group. The model is based on the assumption that dissocial and deviant sides are normalized and the group is the normalizing factor. But the group norm can in itself be deviant and dissocial and there is a risk for a fragmented and alienated group especially with more disturbed patients. It can be seen as part of development in society, where an earlier assumption of the group as a mirror for the surrounding society is no longer a reality as the society in itself can be fragmented. More fundamental Karterud and Nitsun question that the group inherently is a harmonizing and synthesizing factor which modify aggressive and disturbed aspects in people.

This is a problem which Foulkes addresses in the text from 1965 where he states that the listeners reception can be distorted related to his adaption to reality and conduce personal manipulation of the group material. But it does not seem to affect Foulkes idealized concept of socializing in groups.

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2.       Nizgen, D. (2011) The concept of the social unconscious in the work of S.H. Foulkes. In Hopper. E. & Weinberg H. (Eds.) The Social Unconscious in Persons, Groups, and Society (pp. 3-23). London: Karnac.

3.       Karterud, S. (1989). The Influence of Task Defintion, Leadership and Therapeutic Style on Inpatient Group Culture. Therapeutic Communities, 9, 231-247.

4.       Nitsun, M. (1996). The Anti-Group. London: Routledge.

## [GROUP - AS – A - WHOLE?](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Group---as-%E2%80%93-a---whole-.19.aspx)

08-09-2014 at 23:05

GROUP - AS – A - WHOLE?

Helle Østerby Andersen

The group is more than a group of individuals and at the same time a collection of individuals is an understanding that pervades the group analytic theory. We are talking about the group- as – a-whole and emphasising the whole is more than the sum of its parts. But what do we mean when we say greater than and different from the sum of individuals what composes the-group-as –a-whole. And what makes the transformation - what kind of energy from one to whole? How to describe from parts to whole from individual relating to grouping relating. Individuality to Grouping and reversed?

In the literature there are many different manifestations of the phenomenon: the group- as-a- whole; For instance Burrows calls it The group as a unit, Bion: Basic Assumptions, Foulkes Matrix, or network communications, Nitzun's anti group theorizing (shadow descriptions of the group- as - whole) Karterud's idea of ​​group self, de Maré’s Koinonia, and many more.

The first references to what could be understood as the group-as-a-whole, I have come across are from 1928. It is the American Trignant Burrows who wrote from his clinical experience as a group therapist. His concept could be seen as  “group- as – a- unit (not whole) understanding, as he wrote about "The immediate group in the immediate moment. " a moment that defines the group as one unit at one point.

Foulkes inspired by Gestalt psychology wrote about the group- as – a-whole. An idea of the group fluctuating between two separated entities  - a collection of individuals and a group- as- a-whole.  A movement is seen as fluctuation between figure and background, the fluctuation between the individual and the group.

Foulkes writes in 1964 that group-analytic psychotherapy … is a form of psycho-analytic therapy, and its frame of reference is the group-as-a-whole. (Foulkes 1964)

He also wrote that-“ each individual – itself an artefact though plausible, abstraction – is basically and centrally determined, inevitably by the world in which he lives, by the community, the group, of which he forms a part… the old juxtaposition of an inside and outside world, constitution and environment, individual and society phantasy and reality, body and mind and so on are untenable”.

(Foulkes 1983 p. 10)

 Dalal sums Foulkes main thinking - about parts and whole- up in his book about Taking the Group Seriously (1998):

1.The part is always connected to the whole

2. The “ whole” determines what takes place in the part

3. The “ whole” is always an artefact, an abstraction that is carved out of a greater complexity.

Then Dalal concludes that the individual is a level of the group (with Elias) a fluid unity as opposed to a former dichotomy.

Group - as - a whole is comparable to basic ideas / theory in psychoanalysis. The idea of ​​the Unconscious and Free Association. In group analysis the understanding is not that it is a collection of people who receives treatment individually in a group, but the group of individuals who is a group and by being a group treated by the group. Between the group and individual is where the possibility of transformation occurs.

The total group has been experimentally investigated for example, Bion's work with basic assumptions as something present in all groups. As if group culture is a thing in it self, or as Victor Schremer (2012) has it  -“ It is  realities that are an investable aspect of grouping “(p. 483). Bions used Melanie Klein’s notion of Projective Identification as the motor for how the individual and group interacted and regressed. The group fluctuation between stability and what Turquet named dissaroy (Turquet 1975) explained by Projective Identification.  Bion’s idea of how the group becomes the The-group-as-a-whole presuppose some kind of inside in the group-as-a-whole that can project and identify  - some kind of group mind? It is argued by G. Ahlin and  C. Sandahl that group process research foremost should concern the group-as-a-whole using observation methods. They have worked with this and published.

In two articles in the autumn  of 2012 Sept and Dec in Group Analysis Schermer writes that the concept of the group-as-a-whole is not a new phenomenon. It has been part of group theory since the beginning. Schremer points out that what is new is that we may have is a new possibility of explaining, or developing a language about what we really mean when we say the group-as-a-whole. He puts forward the point that complexity theories developed within quantum physics and chaos theory which has gained ground over the last 20 years is an opportunity to leave Newton's paradigm of linear causality and use a new scientific paradigm to understand some of the phenomena in groups, such as the concept of Bion's Basic Assumption, Nitzun’s anti group phenomena and the radical part of Foulkes theorizing in particular Matrix concept and the idea of ​​group - as - a whole. Schremer describes how it is group phenomenon’s that occurs on the edge between order and disorder. Complexity theory is a scientific paradigm that attempts to describe the way in which order and disorder are constantly fluctuating and combine with the objective of producing a higher order of living organisms. Disorder in the sense of unpredictability - turbulence – chaos  - but also an new/ another order.

This understanding is the group- as - a whole - for a moment - where the interaction between the individuals in the group forming meaningful whole, which in turn was not there before and sometimes does not come back yet can be captured by example. A comprehensive interpretation of the moment.

Schremer draws our attention to complexity theory as a biosocial phenomenon. Self -organizing processes that bring a higher order system forward. A higher order interacting and born out of a previous order. Randomness and turbulence re-configure phenomena into new patterns. Patterns are a " lucky " coincidences and complex contexts so to speak, stepping forward again to change.

There is not a universal theory of group - as – a - whole. There are theories about how the group- as - a whole becomes the group-as-a-whole or are the-group as-a-whole, the group therapists hypothesis case formulations (working assumptions) and the Common Understanding (generic model) where the emphasis is on the comparison of the group- as-a - whole against the individual as part which is reflected in the descriptions of the work with the whole group. The–group-as a-whole is a notion that must defined simultaneously as part being whole and whole being part and as being there to be seen to disappear to reappear in new shapes and orders to from order to disorder to order and so on.

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## [POTENTIAL SPACE](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Potential-Space--.17.aspx)

25-07-2014 at 13:30

POTENTIAL SPACE

Paul Bèner

Foulkes stated that we are and become who we are through communication or failure of communication. He said that the individual is an abstraction and the basis for the individual self is group relations. The work of Winnicott is all the way permeated and based on relationships. He concluded that we from birth are dependent and need the other to become a subject. Ormay (2012) reminds us of that “one person is no person” and introduces the concept of “nos” for us to be able to think about what drives us to relate, need and help others, compared to “ego”, that preserves and protects our borders. In group analytic theory there are references to Winnicott, conceptualizing phenomena in the life of a therapy group with Winnicotts understanding of, for instance, concepts as potential space, transitional objects and holding (James 1982, 2000. Nitsun (1989, 1996). The analytic therapeutic group is gathered to try to develop and change the object relations for the group and individuals through the process of communication in the matrix (Aagaard 1999, Dahlin 1979).  My interest has been focused on the relationship between the group, the individual and the self and in my paper at the 16th European Symposium regarding GAD, I will suggest a definition and present how the group functions as a potential space, a transitional area where feelings creatively can be used for experiencing the self in relationship to others and therefore to oneself.

The group as potential space

From a session

*”Two members talk about relationships to partners and difficulties of feeling honest and close, to be afraid. A woman wonders if the other wants both to have the cookie and eat it. She answers, I want more, I will never be full!*

*(C: you talk about longing and fear, and you sense a lack, a scarcity.) Can you as a therapist tell me what I am missing, so I can do something about it!? (Now the lack is present here…)*

*Several smiles and another talk about her fear to make a mistake if she goes into a relationship again with a man, or if she should give it up, because they hurt each other last time. She starts crying. One thinks she should watch herself, another that she should dare engage, go for it! The group is busy with how she feels.*

*(You can hear both sides now)*

*Yes, they are both inside me!”*

The group functions here as a potential space, a transitional area where feelings creatively can be used for experiencing the self in relationship to others and therefore to oneself. In the session there are self-experiences and longing/deficit/missing are symbolized – the words are “full”, “eat the cookie and still have it”, “right and wrong”. This takes place in an intermediate area, a space between the inner life and outer reality. At the same time something else and at the same time part of myself. Otherness and sameness. The driving forces are affects as interest and joy, anger and pain, distress.

The relationship with the transitional object is a sign of that a potential space is at hand.  The space is potential in giving meaning to experiences, although it must be experienced without questioning or being tested according to what is what - internal or external, true or false, individual or group. It is an area of the symbol, both internal and external, an interpreting action compared to an actual phenomenon, external object. This space between the inner world and outer reality contains the illusion where we in a dialectical co-existence both are united with and separated from the other. Significant for transitional phenomena in the potential space is that the question whether it already was there to be found, or if it is a creation of our self, never is present. This question is simply not part of this mode of experiencing.  A little girl with her doll playing she is feeding the doll, is in a mode of experiencing where she both is a little girl in her room and a mother feeding her baby. If someone should get the idea of asking her about whom she is, the play is interrupted. The member in the group who are talking and communicating can do so without having to decide whether it is the own self or the group.

The intermediate area can also collapse.

From a later session:

*“When the summer break is mentioned, a member tells the group he is going to stop. The group talks about being unsure about what slow-open means and that the group and space always exists, compared to that you can lose something and the group might come to an end when someone leaves. The member says he wants to stop because he doesn’t want to be with others and it´s meaningless to be among people. Relationships are difficult and meaningless. The group reacts and a woman says irritated, he can leave immediately! Another says that he has contributed to the group with his sincerity and others mean that he is unfair to himself. One member repeats that she can´t let go of the thought that she wishes he would understand he diminishes himself.*

*(C: propose she recognizes that she also diminishes herself, when she often seeks permission to speak in the group.)*

*She nods, calms down and the group talk and wonder about why the member want to stop coming and the woman repeats that he can leave immediately, instead of taking time from the group with this subject.*

*(C: Says she might be sad and angry due to something she needs time to speak about in the group and maybe she wants to share with us?) She replies it was a difficult weekend. Silence.*

*(C: We are insecure and uneasy now, in that we both want to make a difference, but also allow freedom.)*

*The man who wants to stop coming is quite open with his anger against the woman and says they are different and annoy each other. He rises from his chair and says; I will leave now.*

*(C: do you leave now?)  Yes. He leaves the room.”*

As conductor I could have focused on the emotions in the group; the group’s image of the member leaving; or the individual’s image of the group or still the group’s feelings for the group.  We can also look at this interaction in the group as a means of difficulties of mentalizing or it might be anti-group phenomenon, destructive processes due to anxiety, frustration of needs for confirmation or handling conflicts and anger. We might also see it as selfobject failure, where the group as a selfobject is failing in its function to develop, preserve and repair the self. The group is rejected when it is not able to be dependent of, or able to be seen as an equal or still to be admired and idealized as important.

But I propose here the possibility that the session is an example of where the intermediate area collapses and the playing is interrupted, as the paradox and illusion comes to the foreground, when the question if the group exists or can be created by communicating and relating, because the group is facing a summer breaks and separation. The playing now becomes bloody serious and action is taken for protection. The interpreting subject, the ability to symbolize where something can represent something else, has vanished and things are just what they are. A spade is a spade is a spade.

A dialectical process is when two opposing concepts creates, negates and preserves the meaning of each other. This is because the concepts stand in a dynamic shifting relationship to each other. One concept has meaning in relation to the other. The word “day” has meaning because we can relate it to the word “night”. Therapist and patient create each other; the one cannot exist without the other and they might create a therapeutic process. The individual creates the group and the group the individual.

Thomas Ogden uses Winnicott to describe how the self is created in a dialectical process. First is the dialectics of oneness/separateness within a primary maternal preoccupation. The otherness of the parent is noted but not stated, an invisible presence. This form of relating is a state of going-on-being. Then follows a dialectics of I/me in a mirroring relationship, meaning that when the baby looks at the parent, what the parent looks like   has to do with what the parent sees there. The child´s experiences of itself in the parents mirroring, as Other to itself, creates the basis for the ability of self experience, consciousness of self.

Then the transitional object-relating and the dialectics of creating/discovering the object can be possible. A subjective object, an omnipotent creation and at the same time our first “not-me possession” is possible. The transitional object is the first confrontation with something that cannot be changed, the real world outside our selves. This is possible because the object at the same time is a creation of our selves, a mirroring of the self in the world outside. An image of comparison is if there are just two dots - we can only draw a line between the two. When a third position is possible, a subjective self, we can create a triangle. A triangle, compared to a line, has a space within it which makes interpretation, symbols and experiencing possible. This is the area where we live and can be creative, the potential space. In the group the matrix is a creation of communications and makes a lot of lines forming triangles, spaces where meaning can be created.

Now a dialectics of the creative destruction of the object becomes a new paradox. The parent is destroyed while surviving and this is how we create the possibility of the parent becoming a subject, a person other-then-myself, which I can use as a person independent of me outside myself. The other survives through being emotionally present over time. A new kind of intersubjective experience is created within a dialectics of subjects creating each other through seeing each other as subjects. I become a subject in the group while denying its difference or importance, the group as subjective object, and the group survives this, being present over time, mirroring me and me mirroring the others. Through surviving my ruthless love the group becomes group as subject and in the matrix there is a dialectics between subjects creating each other, able to see and being seen as subjects.

An attempt to define the concept of the group as potential space: The space is potential in giving meaning to experiences, although it must be experienced without questioning or being tested according to whether it is true or false, individual or group. Compared to a relation between two dots, as a straight line between symbol and that which it symbolizes, the entering of the interpreting self is a third point making a triangle, compared to a straight line. This then is a space, made of and making my interpreting self and my symbols and my sense impressions possible. This is the area where we live and can be creative, the potential space. In the group matrix is communication – lines between individuals - and a lot of lines are forming triangles, spaces where meaning is created and found. The group as potential space is simultaneously me and an omnipotent extension of me and at the same time not me, but an object for use, a group of other selves outside my omnipotence.

Now it is time to say that the question of what belongs to the group and what belongs to the individual is not allowed! The group as transitional object and   intermediate area is me, the others and the conductor, all the bodies, the groups communication of themes and feelings and it is both inside and outside me and part of matrix. The group creates and is created in a potential space, where I can interpret and experience me and not-me, be a subject. To ask what is what, if it is me or the group, interrupts the playing in matrix.

## [WHEN USING WINNICOTT AS CONDUCTOR.](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/When-using-Winnicott-as-conductor.16.aspx)

18-05-2014 at 19:54

WHEN USING WINNICOTT AS CONDUCTOR.

Paul Bèner

As conductor of a slow open analytic group for more than four years now, I find it helpful to think “Winnicotian”. In a thesis I propose that the work and process of the analytic group can be understood and conducted with the help of Winnicott. Clinical examples of what I interpret as manifestations of potential space, true and false self, and the capacity to be alone, fear of breakdown and incommunicado are be presented there.
In group analytic theory there are references to Winnicott, conceptualizing phenomena in the life of a therapy group with Winnicotts understanding of, for instance, potential space, transitional object and holding (James 1982, 2000. Nitsun (1989, 1996). The analytic therapeutic group is gathered to try to develop and change the object relations for the group and individuals through the process of communication in the matrix (Aagaard 1999, Dahlin 1979). My interest has been focused on the relationship between the group, the individual and the self and also of thinking of the matrix as a form of potential space. T H Ogden’s (Ogden 1989, 1992, 1994) understanding of Winnicotts concepts has been valuable.
In contrast to theoretical work in group analysis where the work of Winnicott is referred to, I try to investigate the clinical implications if Winnicott had been conductor, so to say. Here I would like to discuss Winnicotts formulations of his understanding of phenomena such as True and False Self, the capacity to be alone and fear of breakdown.

True and False Self
The concept of False Self refers to the handling of experiences of failing attunement to our basic needs. To protect a sense of unity and consistency of the self, we are dependent of the other and we strive to attach and secure attachment, otherwise we are flooded with uncontainable emotions and will fear breakdown and extinction. This deficit in the experience of a holding environment calls for adjustment and defense, a False Self, with which we present ourselves and tries to keep in touch with the other. We understand this as a way of protecting our genuine, spontaneous self, the True Self. The True Self is a concept for our capacity to creatively become what we potentially can be, according to our abilities and experiences. The True Self can be seen as representing hope and relate to therapy goals.
The psychodynamic theory states that symptoms are a consequence of defense and anxiety as a response to unconscious feelings that we unconsciously perceive as threatening to attachment. The meeting with the other, holding and confirming our self, in relationships and in therapy, contains a potential that we can become who we are. Our True Self can be lived. As a consequence of our dependence of the other early on in life, it can be presupposed that in group therapy, working and meeting with actual several others, there is a heightened potential for working with the False and True Self. “Ego-training in action” is referring to this also.
Working with aspects of the True and False Self in mind, would refer to working in group therapy with how and why the group in the matrix defends against communication, signs of anxiety and also experiences of moments of meeting, where the group becomes the group it can become potentially. As part of the group, the conductor - although not there for his/her own needs, compared to the other members - also has the need for a False Self, protecting his True Self. Countertransference is a help in identifying processes in the matrix that strengthens the need for a False Group Self and trying to work in the matrix that supports genuine affective moments of meetings, making it possible for the group to experience a True Group Self. The individual has an opportunity in group therapy to preserve, repair and develop the sense of self, within the matrix of communicating other selves.

Capacity to be alone
Internalizing a good-enough care for the development of the self, means that one can be alone without feeling lonely and deserted. The capacity to be alone requires the experience of being alone in someone’s presence. This presupposes a good-enough parental presence, sense of security and potential space. The lack of maturity in the beginning of our lives is compensated by ego-support, the presence of the other, the group and the conductor. In the beginning the member can feel the other members and the conductor’s presence as a preoccupation, and this represent good-enough environment in the group matrix. This can also be felt as frightening, due to intrusion or fear of self-disclosure. The group´s primary preoccupation as a holding environment is a representation of attachment and functions as holding, care of the group and its member’s security, and presentation of objects, which is material for symbolic work in the matrix. The conductor represents a parental function as “the first servant of the group” and follows the exchanges in the group. Members come in contact with the individual self and can develop the capacity to be alone in the presence of others through exchanges in matrix.

Fear of break-down
Refers to the fear that the communication will cease and that the group dissolves.
The fear of break-down is understood as a fear, which has to do with a break-down that has already taken place. This break-down was not possible to experience, due to that the subject was not there yet to be able to experience it. When one becomes a subject later in the development of the self, the experience is that the break-down has not yet taken place, but only can be felt as something that might happen. This shows as panic-feelings, dependency needs and clinging behavior. Experiences of unsecure holding, traumatic separation, and insecure attachment come forth in the relationship with others and in group therapy. As conductor the thoughts and feelings, e.g. that the group might dissolve, member’s cancellations, fear of conflicts between members in the group, all are possible signs of the fear of break-down. This calls for need to work in the matrix with insecure attachment and holding experiences.

## [EXCHANGE](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Exchange.15.aspx)

14-05-2014 at 22:16

EXCHANGE

Orit Mass-Goldman

Introduction:
Foulkes regarded exchange as an important therapeutic factor which was specific to his model of group analysis. He wrote:
'Explanations and information, for which there is a great demand and surprising interest, are of course not peculiar to the group situation, but in one respect there is a significant difference: that is the element of exchange. This not only makes discussion more lively and full, but alters the emotional situation, just as children accept many things from each other which they would oppose if they came from their parents…..'

Foulkes regarded exchange as an important therapeutic factor which was specific to his model of group analysis. He wrote:
'Explanations and information, for which there is a great demand and surprising interest, are of course not peculiar to the group situation, but in one respect there is a significant difference: that is the element of exchange. This not only makes discussion more lively and full, but alters the emotional situation, just as children accept many things from each other which they would oppose if they came from their parents. The factors we have singled out are therefore:
1. The group situation fosters social integration and relieves isolation
2. Mirror reaction
3. Activation of the collective unconscious condenser phenomena
4. Exchange
( foulkes, 1964, p 34 )

What is meant by explanations and information?

Christine thornton (2004) writes:'Foulkes speaks of the exchange of 'information'. If following Bateson, information is 'news of difference ' foulkes's view of the importance of exchange becomes comprehensible and is greatly enriched.

The differing problems of group members allowed an exchange of perspectives from each all gains. Understanding 'information' as 'news of
difference', we can find thus see exchange at all four levels of group interaction. (thornton p 309) "at its most basic, the thing that is being communicated is information. Not information in the passive sense of description, but information in a more active sense of
precipitating change."(dalal, 1998,p 223) .according to foulkes, The perceived level of exchange is unimportant , since the every day may stand for the most profound of encounters. "depth is always there it is always possible to get hold of it on the surface, it is there all through, visible and tangible. It depends who is looking, who is listening, one need not jump from what is going on to what is behind it.(foulkes,1990,p.280) relationships within the family are the earliest through which information is encountered, in group analyisis, the encounter with others' new information gives an alternative to what was originally transmitted within the birth family, exchange is the medium of the experience of difference. Explanation like information in batson's sense, may stand for an experience of another sense of seeing( thornton 2004,p.310) zinkin(1994) also tries to interperate foulkes's saying: ' psychoanalysts might first consider the case of sexual information or explenations in the form of phantasy –based theories of sexual intercourse and birth. This will readily account for the liveliness, the great interest and the alteration of emotional tone. But of course children do excitedly
exchange all sorts of other information in a way that is different from the way they talk to adults, and this includes the playground and perhaps embraces the whole area of learning which comes through children playing together –the serious aspect of play. And children accept one another's explanations in serious discussion of matters other than sex, including death. I imagine that foulkes had all this in mind. If he had been thinking specifically of sexuall phantasies he would probably have said so. To make sense of the passage, then, I take it that foulkes is comparing group patients with children in that they communicate in special ways because of their equal status.... it is not that one child gives something to
another but that this is done resipocally'. (zinkin 1994,p.30-3)
One can think as foulkes did, of explanations and information on various matters being exchanged, but again is this really the currency? Or rather surly it can not be the only currency. it is obviously not primarily an educational group. Is it interpretations, insight moving experiences, perceptions, intuitions, phantasies. Or memories? (zinkin 1994,p. 35)

Unspoken exchange
The unspoken exchange is an important part of the therapeutic process, as some patients experience chronic difficulty in 'putting it into words' (rogers ,1987 in thorenton 2004, p. 311). The concept of exchange can give us a language for patients' unspoken use of the group and the therapist for healing. Zinkin (Zinkin and Haynes, 1998, p.218) notes: ' the best moments of a group are when people respond to the speech of the other, even when no words are uttered. There are innumerable examples of this in the life of a group, weeks later something said previously may be mentioned together with the thoghts it has provoked.
In the dyadic interaction the reciprocal patterning is largly non-verbal. Padal (1985) notes that:
'Exchange in that first relationship is of far more than milk and bodily contacts there is acknowledgement of feelings and of mutuality in feeling, and there is reciprocal observation. '(p. 275) exchange is of value in itself to both adult and infant, independent of any content (trevarthen, 1977, p 238). Trevarthe remarks that you cannot talk about anything to babies – the communication is only about the relationship. 'however rich and satisfying in itself, communication with an infant under six months ….is preoccupied with intrsubjectivity itself. (1977, p.254) this sheds light on those patients for whom our beautifully turned interpretations are relevant only in their expression, and what is conveys of our intentions towards them. The content, at this stage, is not at all the point we might as well talk 'baby talk' (thornton 2004 p.312)
'Attunement between mother and baby, taking the form of each imitating the other, is the condition for exchange as stern and others have shown just as the instruments of an orchestra have to be in tune before they can begin their exchange with one another. (stern 1985 in zinkin,1994 p. 29)

The development of verbal communication
In an interesting parallel to foulkes's understanding of the group, yigotzky (1962, in thornton 2004) drew attention to the relation of thought and word –' not a thing but a process' (p,314), and noted the changes thought undergoes as it turns into speech. It does not merely find expression in speech, it finds in it reality and form'(314) the development of a language for what has never before been able to be shared can sometimes be seen in group exchanges. As feeling states are recognized and put into words, the sharble inner universe expends. (315)

Exchange and mirroring as related concepts
One such opposed or complementary pair is the relationship of exchange with mirroring. The key to combining these concepts is that mirroring implies sameness between members and exchange implies difference. People are helped both by identifying with others and by recognizing their differences. Exchange is only worthwhile between people if each has something which the other lacks.(zinkin 1994 p.29)
Foulkes says: I can only exchange something with you if there is some degree of sameness some matching between what I give you and what you give me. The transformational potential of a group experience depends on optimum balance of mirroring (recognition of sameness) and exchange (recognition of difference) at the deepest levels of the psyche, the greater tolerance of difference shifting the balance as the group matures. The cumulative 'specificity' and interlocking' of these processes produce resonances at unconscious levels. (foulkes',1990,)

The private property becomes a shared property
One can begin ………..seeing the group as one which values sharing more than private property. Taking explanation as the currency, the exchange of explanations can be seen to lead to a shared explanation form which every one gains, everyone knows more than they did before. Explanation it is easy to acknowledge, is not to be hoarded as private property.it is not usually something to hold on to and be afraid of parting with.it is often considered that everyone in the group will benefit if the members are helped to disclose, to make public what they are holding onto rather than to think that, because it is their private property, it must be kept private and nobody else is entitled to it. If the group goes well, these ideas change. It is realized that nothing is lost by making the private public and that what is disclosed remains private property, but of the group rather than as the sole possession of the individual. Perhaps it is this communality of property which led foulkes to choose exchange as a therapuitic factor specific to the group. (zinkin 1994)

Exchange in the unconscious levels
Zinkin is talking of exchanges that are not voluntary because they are not conscious. exploitation and unfair exchanges take place when the degree of voluntariness and awareness of what is happening is not the same for both parties. At times people exploit one another without either of them being aware of it.
Level three is characterized by projective identification which, in turn involves splitting. Could this be seen as primitive form of exchange ?there are two senses in which thus could be so, even though not originally described as such by Melanie klein. One is that what is projected is lost to the projector but if the lost part of the self is felt to be 'bad', there may be a gain for the projector. he or she has lost part of the self but feels better off without it. the recipient loses there previous sense of self and has (unwillingly) exchanged it for the
bad bit put into them. The other, more systemic , way is the frequently seen case of mutual projective identifications, as is commonly described in mariges. these exchanges are deeply unconscious……………... These exchanges seem to be of such a different kind from that in foulkes' example (which seem to belong more to level one, the current level) that they can hardly be called therapeutic factor in the same breath. To see the exchange as therapeutic , it is more productive to consider that even if both partners do take their projections back, both gain in the process by acquiring something which did not exist previously except in another person. Each has gained in no longer being split off from what only the other seem to have possessed.
Level four is the primordial level. At this level exchanges are a long way from the civilized, polite rules of level one but take on the nature of sacrifice .scapegoating would be only one example. Nevertheless, however primitive and barbarous such processes may appear, it is still important to regard them as at least potentially therapeutic factors. Maybe in this level when a patient leaves to be replaced by another, in a sense, it is necessary for the leaving one to be destroyed to make way for the new one ,even though the group at a higher level may be doing the opposite. For example, in level one, the group may wish the departing member well and welcome the new one. Using this framework one would no longer talk easily about what is defensively being avoided. It becomes possible to see each level as a defence against the other three. (zinkin,1994,p.41-42)

Identity is built by exchange
Identity is formed in each individual by the internalization of innumerable interactions and identifications with others, modifying and clarifying the sense of self. ' a child develops into a human being only by becoming part of a group. For example by learning a language which was there before him. Or by acquiring a civilisatory canon of instinct and affect control. This is not only indispensable for communal life with others, but also for living with oneself, for developing into a human individual and for survival.(Elias, 1992,in thornton,2004,p,316)
'Identity is not fixed, but a phenomenon that is embedded in a network of social interactions and relations' (dalal,1998, in thornton,p.317) exchange (the encounter with difference) is the central mechanism of this process.

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## [TRANSFERENCE IN GA](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Transference-in-GA.14.aspx)

08-05-2014 at 12:35

TRANSFERENCE IN GA

Robi Friedman

Is there Transference in Groups and if yes: who are the transference objects?
Definition:

Humans transfer their past experiences with parents and other ‘whole objects’ from early life and perhaps as late as adolescence to the here and now of the group. This transfer includes emotions, patterns of relationship that are only partly conscious.

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History of the concept:

Foulkes changed his mind about the possibility of the existence of transference in the group and the work with: after having argued against the possibility of the formation of the transference neurosis In 1957 in Group Psychotherapy: The Psychoanalytic Approach Foulkes and Anthony, in 1964 in Therapeutic Group Analysis he changed his mind.

Individual transference neuroses could be recognized, analysed and worked through in the group analytic situation.
"…oedipal reactions and transference neuroses are less obvious and less concentrated on the therapist in the group than in the individual psychoanalytic situation. Yet they are often clear enough…in three significant areas.

These are:

(1) the area of the immediate treatment situation (or transference in the wider sense);

(2) the immediate current life situation (in married people, often the partner; in younger patients, their parents and their fiancée, etc.) in short, the ramifications and reverberations in the current life network, and

(3) the reminiscences and recollections brought out by the treatment process which allows us a dynamic recognition of the patient's childhood constellation and reaction (personal group matrix)"(p.245)
"as to transference to other members of the group, these can be of particular interest. Other patients react, of course, as themselves, not as trained transference screens and receptors…"(p. 245)
In 1975 in Group Analytic Psychotherapy: Method and Principles, he warned against the potential regression caused by the Kleinian tendency to place transferential interpretations at the centre of the analytical process.

Foulkes and Anthony (made some basic points about transference and countertransference processes in groups.
1. The first point is that transference processes are one of the four ‘levels of communication’ in groups; the other three levels of communication were said to be the ‘real’ or ‘personal’, the ‘projective’ (and the ‘introjective’: EH), and the ‘primordial’. group microcosms are not merely a matter of so-called ‘parallel processes’. . For example, the foundation matrix includes language, social stratification, the norms of gender roles, etc, and implies transgenerational processes (Le Roy, 1994). (connected to the Collective and Social Ucs. ).
2. The second basic point that Foulkes and his colleagues made about transference processes was that from the point of view of each patient in the group, Transference to the Conductor differs from transferences to other patients in the group, to the group as-a-whole, various sub-groups and relationships within the group, various aspects of the context of the group, etc. Thus there is a small t, showing transference Similarly, Countertransference by the conductor differs from countertransferences by any one or more members of the group.

Hopper (2002) adds a third aspect, which is transference and countertransference to general, historical and group-as-a-whole issues, which he called "microcosmos"(Slater,1966). The group's ‘collective’ transference to objects who the group hold in common, such as the conductor, the dynamic matrix of the group, various sub-groups, etc.

Neri (1998) quotes Bejerano (1972, p.17) who specifies four transference objects:
- The therapist (who functions as a father image: at archaic levels (as the infantile Super-ego or Ego Ideal)
- The group which functions as a mother-image (Oedipal level) but even more as an archaic mother (the horde)
- The others (lateral transference) as a fraternal image
- The external world, as a place for the projection of individual destructiveness or productiveness. (In Neri, 1998, p. 20)

TRANSFERENCE or TRANSPOSITION? (Pat de Mare)
When doing Transposition the group-analytic participant is not imagining the analyst to be his father, or unconsciously forcing him to be his father, but perceiving the analyst to be like his father in the domestic setting that has been transposed onto the clinical setting. In a sense, it is the setting or context that has been transferred from the past to the present or from another place to the present clinical place. For example, the group becomes one’s family of origin or even of pro-creation, or becomes a school classroom, sometimes in a fairly concrete way. The difference if a P. perceive the analyst as ‘being his father’, at one extreme, or ‘like his father’, at the opposite extreme. What is Transposition and how is it used?
Countertransference is responsive rather than primary, although this is always a matter for negotiation. Of course, most of the time the Transference is primary, not just in the attention of the group analyst, but also in the attention of others in the group. In fact, Foulkes (1964) described the Transference and the transferences in clinical group analysis as being manifest in what he called a ‘continuously re-integrating network’, which he later called the ‘dynamic matrix’ of the group.

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## [“MIND” IN GROUP ANALYSIS.](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/%E2%80%9CMind%E2%80%9D-in-Group-Analysis.13.aspx)

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“MIND” IN GROUP ANALYSIS.

Rachel A. Chejanovsky

Introduction
There is a lengthy tradition of inquiry into the understanding of mind in philosophy, religion, psychology and cognitive science.
In this paper the concept of mind will be presented from the point of view of Group Analysis.
S. H. Foulkes (1973, 2003) tried to give a definition of mind in the spirit of his theory and practice in Group Analysis. He claimed that mind is a shared property of human beings. In his view, innate potential is put into operation by experiences in relation to things and people and becomes structured by such experiences. So,” all which is mental is a matter of more than one individual person and brain from the beginning” (Foulkes, 2003:320).

“Mind” in Group Analysis.
The Oxford American Dictionary defines Mind as the ability to be aware of things and to think and reason, originating in the brain, and as a person’s thoughts and attention; also as remembrance or opinion.
Another definition of Mind: in the Western Tradition, the complex of faculties involved in perceiving, considering, remembering, evaluating and deciding.
Mind is in some sense reflected in such occurrences as sensations, perceptions, emotions, memory, desires, various types of reasoning, motives, choices, traits of personality, and the unconscious (Britannica).
In his book “Introduction to Group Analytic Psychotherapy”, Foulkes (1948: 15-16) claimed “that the social aspect of human behaviour is basic and central, and not of a peripheral, comparatively superficial nature, not a later coming, additional, conditioning “outside” influence. Indeed the family Group and its influence is precipitated in the innermost core of the human mind, incorporated into the child’s growing ego and superego, forming their very nucleus”.
Foulkes further claimed that the “mind consists of interacting processes between a number of closely linked persons commonly called a group”. In this view, when a group of people come into intimate relations, they create a field of mental happenings between them all. These are ‘transpersonal processes’, that is mental processes which like X-rays in the bodily sphere, go right through the individuals composing such a ‘network’. This totally new phenomenon which they create (he) usually refers to as the ‘context of the group’. He used this term instead of ‘group mind’ which is an unsatisfactory substantivation. So” the mind is not a thing which exists but a series of events, moving and proceeding all the time”. He claimed that the interactional processes play in a unified field of which the individuals composing it are a part. (Foulkes 1973: 224).
In a later paper Foulkes (1974: 278) thought that “the real nature of mind lies in each individual’s need for communication and reception”. He related this need to language, which is indispensable if complete communication on the human level is to proceed. He acknowledged that we are born with this capacity to acquire language in our brains. But he claimed that even when the human being thinks by himself in his own mind, “it is at the same time a shared property of the group, and the individual is forced into it from the beginning by the surrounding culture”. “Language is one of the main and most significant mental phenomena and can only be maintained and be meaningful as a group phenomenon”. .
Foulkes also related to the dilemma between mind and brain, agreeing with Freud’s idea that there is a brain and there “are our acts of consciousness which are immediate data and cannot be further explained by any sort of description”. He added: “our knowledge of the complete dependence of mental processes on bodily sources, and in particular on processes going on in the human brain in no way explains the phenomenon of mind” (Foulkes, 2003:317).
When linking mind and body, Foulkes accepted “that one of the sources of our mental life rests, no doubt in our total inherited admixture; we feel either fundamentally better or not-so-good in our skins, according to the genes we have inherited. Equally, somatic disturbances, oscillations and phases of all sorts continuously influence the basic tone of how we feel in ourselves and in the world. This, our ‘nature’, forms the nucleus of our real ‘self’, of that which is quite unique in any of us, never repeated in the same way. When we live in harmony with this self and live up to its full potential we feel ‘this is really me’” (2003: 318)
Foulkes made a distinction between religious beliefs of what is mind and a scientific approach which does not “question that mind is identical with life, with living, and that its energies are completely dependent on the body, or that bodily processes are inseparable from them; so that what by abstraction we call mind ends with the individual’s death” (Foulkes,2003: 317).
From a therapeutic point of view, Foulkes disputed the idea of an individual mind on the grounds that he pathology of a patient usually is been sustained by a network. When the patient begins to change, the whole network equilibrium is threatened. Accepting this position requires an acceptance of greater responsibility from the community where the patients comes from. So, in his eyes, there is a defensive interest in keeping the mind individual (Foulkes, 1973: 225).

Later authors (de Mare & Schollberger, 2004) wrote “about the mind as playing a primary role in therapy” (2004: 339). They developed their position in accord with Aristotle who established the differentiation mind- body. They disagreed with Foulkes who wrote that mind consists of experience completely socially and culturally conditioned (2003, 318), since for them “the Mind thinks, and is in no way completely conditioned, which denotes a passivity of mind when in fact the mind is the essence of activity in sorting out… discrepancies” (2004, 341).
De Mare & Schollberger , suggested that “the mind starts as a response to the violent revolutionary stress of birth itself. They concluded that “mind is mind is mind explicitly central, single and elemental, not secondary” (2004:342), “the ultimate a priori” (2004: 345).
“Mind starts where matter stops, not as a linear extension or epiphenomenon but as a complete round about turn which reflects matter” (de Mare and Schöllberger, 2004: 343). “It is imperative that we differentiate between the reflected and the process of reflecting” (de Mare and Schöllberger, 2004: 344). As an example “the concrete presence of brain is in sharp contradistinction to the abstract presence of mind, which entails relating of one or more brains” (Schöllberger, 2009: 291).
They propose a triad which “consists of a first body- mind duality followed by a relationship between the dyads which is a dialectical process, and the preserve of the Mind” (2004: 345). The Mind is the third; it is the “specific processes of reflectiveness, disentanglement, choice, meaning, focusing, minding, grace and beauty. The mind is indubitably active- not simply a process of flat mirroring of reflection but a deliberate focusing by consciousness at the world (346).
“As a Rose is a Rose, a Mind is a Mind. Not proven, but indubitable! It introduces a unique mini-philosophy crucial to all philosophy for which psychotherapy is itself responsible” (346).
They stated that “it is the personal mind which is primary…the mind has no vocation, being a pure process of new or creative disentanglement, like mathematics, but far more lively” (de Mare and Schollberger, 2004: 347).
”There is in the world we live in a certain very strange quality which is that of meaning itself, which is extremely elusive and often denied as being random…It is this something or other which opens us to all sorts of imaginings with absolute freedom, from pessimism to optimism, which, since it does not oppress, relieves us from depression” (de Mare and Schollberger, 2004: 347).
“The mutual interaction between social and personal is highly significant, since it constitutes the basis for consciousness, whilst society shapes the mind without the mind being initially aware of what is happening. So the mind cultivates society in a manner that society is at first totally unaware. Consciousness only gradually develops” (de Mare and Schollberger, 2004: 348).
They stated that “groups do not think; it happens only when a single mind meets other minds, it is their reflections that are shared. The mind itself remains clear in order to function freely to disentangle, make choices and arrive at decisions. The group as such is only a passive agent, whilst the mind is active; consciousness therefore is by no means synonymous with mind, since it only reflects the ‘mirror reaction’” (2004: 348). And “the group mind, strictly speaking, is the group culture because the group does not think, it is only the single, unique mind which minds, cares, loves, has visions, and takes decisions de Mare states: there is no doubt about the singleness of every person” ( Schöllberger, 2009:292).
Blackwell summarized the issue by contending “that mind is not definable, yet it would appear to be both immanent and transcendent. Most importantly it is activated through contact with another” (2008: 36).

Mind and Matrix.
“By matrix is meant a psychic network of communication which is the joint property of the group and not only interpersonal but transpersonal” (Foulkes, 1965). “The concept of a shared matrix enables one to envisage theoretically a surprising discovery: that what we were brought up to regard as quite particularly intra-psychic, inner mental reality, intradermic so to speak, is shared property of the group” (Foulkes, 1965)
Foulkes argued that even a group of total strangers, being of the same species, and more narrowly from the same culture, share a fundamental mental matrix (foundation matrix). Their closer acquaintance and intimate exchanges add consistently, so they also form a current, ever moving, ever developing dynamic matrix (1973: 228).

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## [THE SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS IN GROUP ANALYSIS.](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/The-social-unconscious-in-group-analysis.12.aspx)

06-04-2014 at 19:39

## THE SOCIAL UNCONSCIOUS IN GROUP ANALYSIS.

Torben Voigt

What are the origins of the concept; the social unconscious?
How, and in what manner are the concept related to the practice in our work as group analysts?
As a group analyst - both "on the way to become one - or recent graduates," as the more experienced, we sometimes wonder what really are at stake in our groups.

Introduction
What are the origins of the concept; the social unconscious?
How, and in what manner are the concept related to the practice in our work as group analysts?
As a group analyst - both "on the way to become one - or recent graduates," as the more experienced, we sometimes wonder what really are at stake in our groups.
Similarly, as human beings in a dynamic world, we sometimes wonder why our fellow humans react and act in particular - and sometimes unhealthy patterns - and in rare cases even catch ourselves with a thought, perhaps a fleeting reflection on our own behavioral pattern in a given relationship - but immediately feel the motivation to leave the reflection quickly.

My reflections on the social unconscious, understood partly as a culture - and the political dimensions, as well as the manifestations in which the term is unfolding in the group, is that the social unconscious plays a major role in forming the group framework and the creation of group behaviour - and could enhance or constrain the development of, - by and for the group.

The Foulksian approach
A historical perspective of studies, theory development and clinical use on the concept of social unconscious , shows a large number of contributors - a more or less precise meaning of the term - not all be addressed here , but a special focus should be put on Foulkes .

In Foulkes early collaboration with Eve Lewis about therapeutic factors to loosen and stimulate the group, are the activation of the collective unconscious - a term that has Jungian touch which is probably due to Lewis was Jungian analyst.

In a recent publication Foulkes describes various types of transfer patterns in the group - primarily aimed at the head / conductor - including a distinction between family - and not family transference, and conceptually - that a family is a group - but a group not necessarily a family . By establishing this conceptual framework - and maintain that there is not familiar transference at stake in the group - such as the case of the transfer of the community or society as a whole , Foulkes transcend - in current time, the common agreed framework of understanding for a psychoanalytic model of group dynamics and group therapy .

In later literature Foulkes elaborates the concept by explaining that social unconscious consists of social contexts that are generally not detected / identified or is conscious, and emphasizes that the group analytic situation is a particularly good context to explore the social unconscious.
The last reference to the social unconscious - as Foulkes releases - in Problems of the Large Group, where the concept are discussed in relation to mental processes, and he insists that these should not only be considered as intra- psychic, but as such being a multi personnel matter and emphasizes that the group analytical framework for understanding a practice -related translation of the unconscious is the same as the Freudian approach.

Foulkes describes four levels of relationships and communication that exists within the group;
1) currently everyday level, 2) the transfer level, 3) the projective level, and 4) the primordial level

Nitzgen refers, that Foulkes in his career have continually developed the concept of the social unconscious - more or less with an intuitive approach without being able to loosen up the conceptual difficulties that lie associated with using it. As mentioned before, the concept of the collective unconscious was earlier used with the same meaning as the social unconscious, but subsequent literature shows that Foulkes later distinguished more between the two concepts - particularly on the difference in the description of group communication on primordial level, where Foulkes find that the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious is probably more relevant here.

Foulkes is not specific about the social unconscious function in relation to his four levels of communication and relationship , but as he refers to Jung as the primordial level , it could be an approach that social unconscious exists in - and in a special way forms the background for level 1 , 2 and 3.
Throughout the 1960s, there is a movement in group analytic circles, a collaboration centred around Foulkes, - a breakdown in traditional thinking, towards a focus and attention to the unconscious, structuring of the personality, by social - social facts and forces.
The premise of this direction in the development of theory about the social unconscious is thinking of Winnicott, and driven by Earl Hopper - including a dialogue with Foulkes.

Recent development on the social unconscious.
Hopper develops his understanding of the concept of social unconscious and defines this as an existence of social, cultural and communication events as individuals are not aware of.
Events according to Hopper, is understood as a collective term for a society's systems, structures, institutions, organizations, and political, economic and educational systems.

The social unconscious contains both competitive and evolving elements, and it is especially worth noting that Hopper in his dissemination of the social unconscious emphasises that the term implies both a development retardant and an evolutionary perspective in the social, cultural and communicative relationship which the individual is aware or unaware of.

Whether one want to call it a showdown with the traditional Freudian thinking about culture and social only as limiting, or whether one will consider Hoppers mediation as an expansion is probably more of a temperaments case - Hopper describes his contribution as a modification.
Hopper notes that social objects are internalized through both positive processes such as loving and care-giving objects of various kinds, as well as through negative processes involving the identification of the aggressors of various kinds.

The social unconscious can be said to be supported - or maintained if you will, of a complex of defence against getting in touch with his fear there will be a confrontation with or discovery of actual social contexts.

How does the social unconscious show itself?
Weinberg refers Brown for that there are 4 ways in which the social unconscious manifests itself.
1. Assumptions - taken for granted and natural in society
2. Disclaimer of - or knowledge of facts as are unwelcome
3. Social defence - which is defended by projection, denial, repression or avoidance
4. Structural oppression through control of power and information when there are competing interests in society

The defence patterns against the social unconscious can be expressed as:
1. That they – are not perceived (not known)
2. And if they are known – are not recognized (are denied)
3. If they are recognized - but not seen as of importance / problematic (are given as terms)
4. Where they are considered problematic - so not viewed with objectivity and given
appropriate meaning ( lack of conviction / serious approach )

A sequence which runs more or less parallel with the individuals unconscious defence; denunciation, denial, splitting , and oppression more generally.
As mentioned earlier, cultural aspects of the social unconscious can be developing or retardant, some cultural aspects are more diffuse and less obvious than others, but in spite of that the social unconscious has to do with nuances, it implies, that in daily life interactions, it is not just the prevailing norms we are unaware of, that should be found to identify the social unconscious - but very much the meaning behind a hidden cultural norm or veiled behaviour.

As an example of a norm include physical distance in everyday interaction between people - southern Europeans practicing less physical distance - cuddling and touching more to each other than, say, cool distant Scandinavians , although there is a softening on the road. So we find the example of the physical distance that behaviour in a culture is about problems with intimate relationships then this specific distance behaviour included in the social unconscious.

When the exploration of the social unconscious are moved from the clinic’s small group and into the large group, both in the educational context, as in any conference, nationally and internationally, there may be further opportunities to study and explore the social unconscious. It is a known fact that both the median and large group starts with chaos, where participants according to Turquet are looking to find meaning in chaos, in order not to find themselves alone, lost, isolated and on the brink of collapse and being consumed. The dynamics of the group induces strong regressive traits, is identity -threatening and invites to malicious aggression between participants and sometimes against the group conductor. Under these conditions and in the regressive field according to Mare, anxious and shared fantasies often appears very clearly,

This dynamic are later described by Hopper as a form of parallel repetition in the transference at the individual level, Hopper develops the concept of equivalence in the sense of group’s repetition compulsion.

Dear colleagues, I would like to address the following questions to you, - and I hereby invite anyone to share their thoughts.
Are we - as group analysts in clinical practice – as well in group analytic training - or other group analytical context aware of the importance of the "social unconscious" can have for our practice?
Is it the consequence of a deliberate choice of discourse as Dalal relates to, or is the "social unconscious" also at stake in education - and training practices in the group analytic framework?

Torben Voigt
Group Analyst, MPO, MCCR
6. April 2014

Recommended reading
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Thygesen B. & Aagaard S. (2002) Matrix no. 3; On the social and collective unconscious in group analytic perspective
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### **COMMENTS**

Svein Tjelta

Erich Fromm

23-10-2014, 13:16

Hi Torben. Great article, but I miss Eric Fromm. In his foreword in the book on the SU in persons, groups and societies, Hopper gives Fromm the credit for coining the concept(some say it was Trigant Burrows ), but neglects to refer to Fromm's book;" Beyond the Chains of Illusions" where there is a whole chapter called the social unconscious. I would say Fromm is a link between Marx and Freud/Foulkes as he works closer to the concepts of alienation -repression - ideology - indoctrination - false consciousness and underlines that the unconscious is not a place(topographical) within individuals, but belongs to the forces that impinges or imposes themselves(often in political processes and power-use/abuse) on the conditions of being in a specific society. Something that is, not something one has. This also makes Sullivans concept of selective inattention important as a mechanism that can be used in propaganda stimulating what people should be aware of or not thus influencing what is socially conscious and/or socially unconscious.
Svein

Tom

Have we forgotten about Karl Marx?

30-09-2014, 12:18

Torben - a thought - I am wondering if an example of the social unconscious in operation is present in this article as well? How is it possible to write an article like this and not mention Karl Marx? He is surely the key thinker in this area.



Tom Fraser-Conlon

Excellent and timely article!

25-09-2014, 19:49

Torben
Great article...and just in time for my October training in Dublin (IIGA) on this subject.
Regards Tom

## [MIRRORING AND MIRROR REACTIONS IN GROUP ANALYSIS.](http://www.iga-kbh.dk/Blog.120/Mirroring-and-mirror-reactions-in-group-analysis.11.aspx)

19-03-2014 at 12:19

MIRRORING AND MIRROR REACTIONS IN GROUP ANALYSIS.

Lars Bo Jørgensen

Mirroring - mirror reactions - is like a conceptual dynamic matrix. Mirror reactions can be regarded as a web of interconnected processes which take place in dyadic, triadic and on group-as-a whole levels as well as on an individual level in the sense that you can reflect about yourself in the “here and now”, the past history etc.

Mirroring - mirror reactions - is like a conceptual dynamic matrix. Mirror reactions can be regarded as a web of interconnected processes which take place in dyadic, triadic and on group-as-a whole levels as well as on an individual level in the sense that you can reflect about yourself in the “here and now”, the past history etc.

Sensory - perceptual processes are constantly in play, in the way we look - recognize, hear - recall and how one feels and experiences oneself and others in the group consciously as well as unconsciously.

Literature on mirroring and group analysis stems primary from S.H. Foulkes (1948, 1964), Malcolm Pines (1982 ) and L. Zinkin (1983). The latter authors also is inspired from psychoanalytic literature from D.Winnicott ( 1971) and J. Lacan (1966).

1. Mirroring is a specific term that is actively dyadic and triadic - multiple in a group therapeutic context.
2. Mirroring is a general term that has features in common with other group -specific factors and psychological processes as identification, introjection, projection , projective identification, affective atonement, sympathy and empathy etc.
3. Mirroring – negative as well as positive aspects must be seen in a continuum and further more non-existing or absent.
4. Mirroring is a sensory - perceptual process – both non-verbal and verbal.
5. Mirror reactions are constantly present / active - consciously or unconsciously in a group therapeutic context.
6. Mirroring contribute to group cohesion and mirroring is an inevitable part of the matrix ' communicative network.
7. In developmental psychology mirroring is a key concept.

Foulkes has roots in the individual psychoanalysis and the curative factors that are active in individual analysis are also active in group analysis. But he added specific factors and here mirroring / or mirror reactions is one of these – like socialization, condensation and exchange as the main concepts.
The concept turns up twice in Foulkes’ first book from 1948. At first, when he says (p.28 ) that the therapist learns from the (a part of the) neurotic patient , as the patient reflects the therapist's incompetence when he says; “ … Neurotic patients are, after all, like you and me and part of our annoyance is due to the fact that they show us our own incompetence in a mirror, like a caricature”.
And at the end of the book S. Foulkes defines mirror reactions /mirroring as a group-specific phenomenon’s among other concepts like resonance, condensation, socialization and exchange.
He states; “The discussion, interpretation or analysis of such material (problems discussed in a group), is therefore, effective in a number of people, even if they merely listen to it ………. forces of identification and contrast are at work here. This whole set of factors we feel inclined to distinguish by giving them a special name, for which we propose “mirror reaction”. (p.167).

A particular reflection or the reaction is part of the field in where therapeutic- and developmental processes take place.

Mirror and mirror reactions are described by Foulkes in the following way:

*"Mirror reactions are characteristically brought out when a number of persons meet and interact. A person sees himself, or part of himself - often a repressed part of himself - reflected in the interactions of other group members. He sees them reacting in the way he does himself, or in contrast to his own behaviour. He also gets to know himself - and this is a fundamental process in ego -development - by the effect he has upon others and the picture they form of him ". (p.110)*

Mirror reactions and the mirror metaphor imply that each group member can get feedback from other group members, which can correct distorted experiences or perceptions of themselves or the other.
This is a dialectical process in which both reflected similarities (" he sees them self-reacting in the way he does himself ") and differences ("or in contrast to his own behaviour”).
Foulkes perceived mirroring essentially as a benign process in which the individual /group member can learn about themselves and the way others see and perceive him.
Foulkes calls the group "a hall of mirrors." This means that there exist many mirrors in the group. Unlike individual psychotherapy where the therapist acts as a mirror and constantly have to move the mirror. The group is considered as a hall of mirrors.
Pines (1) say that the therapist/conductor is not just a reflective surface, but through his intervention, vocabulary and behaviour, he holds a mirror up to the individual group members and the group- as - a whole.
The dialogue, interaction and mirroring in the group contributes to the individual in the way finds herself in that there is a "(re) establishment of self-unity and coherence” or a changed identity. (Foulkes and Pines). In this process “the group- as - a whole” also change gradually.

Group Analysis is relational and interpersonal in nature but through the group process also a self-developmental process takes place. According to Foulkes mirroring unfolds at all “levels of communication”.

The concept of “malignant mirroring” is outlined and described by Louis Zinkin ( ), in response to a description of "negative reflection” which Pines ( ) briefly describe, as a process that starts when we no longer can "negotiate" and reflect when a conflict is stocked. In such a situation, learning and reflection is no longer possible. ”We are as Perseus without his mirror”in the myth of Medusa meaning there is no "third position" present or space for reflection.

In the article "Malignant Mirroring” by L. Zinkin he points out that mirroring as a concept has not been further developed since Foulkes.

He demonstrates the "paradoxical nature" of mirroring. It can serve as a therapeutic factor and also be a rather destructive element in the group.

The paradox is a result of - " the fact that self-knowledge makes us increasingly aware of our self-knowledge; that knowing ourselves means seeing ourselves and that seeing ourselves means seeing ourselves and that seeing ourselves means ourselves seeing ourselves. This very act of self-knowledge also produces self-estrangement.”
Mirroring has an alienating quality and not only a ”benign" quality as Foulkes proposed. In the quotation from Zinkin the intrapsychic process is highlighted.

As an interpersonal process Zinkin describes how two people are trapped in a "double - mirror reaction" which are fixed by projections that are adjacent to distortions.
The nucleus is - that two group members either see themselves as similar or as opposites to each other. The relationship characterized by a special attraction and repulsion of each other at the same time, while the group is unhooked. And those involved will not /cannot look at their part in the conflict.

Both Zinkin and Pines sees this as early dyadic conflict and to terminate/dissolve the conflict a “third level/third position” is necessary of interaction to which both participant’s similarities and differences can be accommodated.

In a dynamic perspective, challenges or threats to the self, introduces paranoid - schizoid aspects into the fore. Feeling challenged in a non-recognizing/ or in a non- acceptable way, can be solved by a regressive and destructive option, as a defence against anxiety, shame and doubt. These processes are particularly humiliating and shameful when they are played out publicly as in a group.

The concept of mirroring is heavily influenced from diverse developmental perspectives such as D. Winnicott, J. Lacan and in the latest decades from D. Stern and P. Fonagy et all.
Inspirations from individual psychoanalysis especially Kohut has influenced the overall thoughts about mirroring.
These sources are implicit in the making of an group analyst but not specific related to group analysis.

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