The Place of Psychodrama in Group Psychotherapy

By R. Diatkine, Paris

(Manuscript not received)


Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis

A Bird’s Eye View of Present Trends

By S. H. Foulkes, London *

Freud's own work in its totality has so decisively influenced the psychological climate of our time that nobody coming after him could - if he would - ignore him. This is certainly true for psychotherapy as soon as it is analytic in orientation, whether this psychotherapy takes place in the individual (two-person) situation or in the multipersonal or group situation. Yet — Freud's own contribution to group psychology notwithstanding - the idea of a psychology or psychotherapy based fundamentally upon the group is anathema to the psychoanalysts. There are a few exceptions, I am glad to say, but they are still very few, and they have made fundamental contributions. Interest is slowly growing, but the vast majority of psychoanalysts to-day ignore or belittle group psychotherapy. Someone familiar with the situation both from inside and outside, with its deeper meaning and complexity, as well as its all too human practical aspects, cannot expect this to be otherwise. If I allow myself a little prophesy: I would say that this opposition of the psychoanalysts to the group movement will come into the open during the next ten years. It will take practical form, too, as it will become increasingly impossible to ignore this unwelcome new arrival and an attempt at wholesale incorporation will only lead to indigestion. It will take another ten or twenty years after that until the inevitable and constructive integration has been achieved. Nor will this integration be a matter between psychoanalysts and group analysts alone.

Leaving the realms of prophesy, what can we do in this situation, we who already now have arrived at, or are on the way to, such an integrated view? Of that I will talk in this paper, though I can only throw out some hints within the time available.

As a psychoanalyst I would myself object at this stage to extending the term “psychoanalysis” to a multi-personal situation. It is doubtful whether psychoanalysis could ever be practised in a group without a severe distortion of its essence, as I hope to show presently. As a group analyst, too, I think it is better to steer clear of concepts borrowed from psychoanalysis - however, useful and meaningful they may sound - if these terms have become an inflated currency: they become confused and meaningless. Keep free to develop such concepts as are born out of the group situation and relevant to it! You may say that I advocate my own approach. But what else can I do? If I did not think it the right one, I would not adopt it. Before I can proceed to say in what sense I do believe that psychoanalytic principles can be applied to groups, it is necessary to consider present trends in psychoanalysis and to outline my own position as a psychoanalyst.

Those of us who responded to the impact of Freud's early work and who lived through its later development in current experience, eventually to become active participants in it, find ourselves in a peculiar situation. We had to find our way to this work, fighting against a sea of resistances outside, and indeed within ourselves. Accepting, under much personal sacrifice, the hazards of a very insecure and uncertain future, we had to resist at every corner the temptation of short cuts or other deviations promising a much more comfortable existence, psychological and otherwise. Now we have to defend this work, to preserve it against some of its own adherents. The many deviant schools outside psychoanalysis set us no new problems, especially as they are often honest enough not to claim any more to be forms of psychoanalysis. One may say that between them they make all the mistakes which Freud's genius has led him and us to avoid. To some extent they are legitimate elaborations and corrections, stimulated by part aspects of psychoanalysis, erring only in mistaking a part for the whole. Sometimes such a part aspect is so much made the central core that one cannot help looking at these systems as quasi-pathological formations, as if they were fixations on certain levels which psychoanalysis had passed in its course, or regressions to them when further developments were too dangerous, or reaction formations
against some intolerable psychoanalytic concepts, e.g. that of castration or the Oedipus complex. What we are more concerned with are cells, cultures and schools within the psychoanalytic movement itself, pulling in different directions. These schools of thought usually attack one or more of the foundations upon which psychoanalysis rests: not by any means the same ones, however. On the contrary, with a beautiful division of labour, each one attacks one of the fundaments which the other has left standing or even proclaimed the most essential. One will declare that psychoanalysis is first and last an instinctual theory, that infantile sexuality and libido-theory are the very foundations; the other that the assumption of instincts in man in the psychoanalytic way is erroneous and untenable, or that the libido theory is redundant and should be replaced by an objectrelation theory (of which there are many brands) — and so forth. These differences inevitably involve all concepts and terms used, and also technical procedure, of special importance in our present context. Some see all relationships in the therapeutic situation as transference and interpret this from the beginning, or even exclusively. Others are impressed by the specific nature of Transference, by contrast with other phenomena, and concentrate on the analysis of the Transference neurosis in a relatively well-defined phase of the psychoanalytic process *. Some start from the surface, as Freud did, others dive into so-called deeper interpretations. Free association seems still basic to many, not so much to others. Therefore, what goes under the name of psychoanalysis to-day includes considerable and often mutually incompatible variations. Enough has been said, I hope, for it to be clear that if someone says he applies psychoanalysis to groups, this means absolutely nothing, unless one knows him, his background and his training very well. Above all, if somebody else says the same, the odds are that he applies something quite different from the first, and if twenty-five psychotherapists say that they apply psychoanalysis to groups, they are as likely as not to apply twenty-five different sets of concepts and procedures. All these new developments make positive contributions and offer sometimes valid criticisms of psychoanalytic theory and practice.

* In order to avoid confusion between the two distinct phenomena, I use the symbol “t” for the therapeutic situation, which corresponds to the non-specific transference situation in its totality, and reserve the term Transference (capital T) for its specific meaning in the classical sense. The same distinction holds good for
counter-transference.

16 Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis

Nobody can predict what will eventually emerge from the concert of all these activities, what they will contribute to the edifice of a future psychotherapy. But it seems certain that they will never become integrated into a harmonious scientific psychoanalytical discipline consistent with Freud's work and its spirit. With all that I do not wish to give you the wrong impression that psychoanalysis consists of nothing but contradictions. There is quite a solid centre core. Psychoanalysts still speak on the whole a common language and share certain basic convictions. They have, moreover, at least a degree of uniformity in their standards of training, qualification, practice and ethics. If and when they turn to group psychotherapy, all these are valuable assets, and even indispensable, if they are to become group analysts. But just as knowing psychoanalytic literature and having been psychoanalysed does not make anyone into a psychoanalyst, so being a psychoanalyst does not qualify anyone as a group analyst. In our experience in the Group Analytic Society in London, the intensive participation as an analysand in a group-analytic group is of the greatest importance for all who wish to qualify as group analysts, not least for those who have often had intensive individual psychoanalytic experience over a number of years with one or more psychoanalysts.

It will have become clear that as a psychoanalyst I adhere to the classical line of development from Freud's work, which in itself is not a solid structure but a dynamic organism, for ever on the move. This work, like everything else, is bound up with its time and it is possible that nothing in it can remain unaltered in the course of time, neither its theory nor its practice, nor its metapsychology. Future generations may have to translate psychoanalytic concepts into their own language, may have to rediscover them. Those who wish to understand the original will have to study Freud's work in historical perspective, with a gift for the flavour of its time and the man and his language, if they are to rediscover its true meaning. Psychoanalysis as a method of treatment may in time lose in importance and in its pure form become restricted in application to very special circumstances. From this central position which I thus maintain inside psychoanalysis, it follows that I use psychoanalytic concepts in their classical, in a sense their only correct, significance. In their pure form these phenomena can only be observed in the classical psychoanalytic
situation, which in turn is strictly applicable only in the treatment of a “Transference neurosis”, i.e. a patient suffering from hysteric,

Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis 17

phobic or obsessional manifestations. The extension of psychoanalytic treatment to other forms of neuroses or psychoses necessitates already considerable modifications. The position of the psychoanalyst behind the couch, maintaining his well-known attitude of accepting the patient’s transference, confining himself to interpretations, that of the patient lying on the couch, given to free association, are essential features. The situation still bears the imprint of the hypnoticcathartic one from which it has developed. It encourages the development of a regressive Transference action with its early, primitive and psychotic character, which is so essential for the elucidation of the patient’s early conflict situations. The psychoanalysts’ use of this situation, in which the long past and the present are as one in the consulting room, is quite specific for psychoanalysis. Deliberate manipulations, influencing, role playing are not psychoanalytic. It is understood that I am speaking of a model in a standard situation. The experienced and gifted psychoanalyst learns to apply these principles with a great degree of elasticity and flexibility, but he will always remain on psychoanalytic grounds and know when he has abandoned them and reverted to some other form of psychotherapy.

This psychoanalytic situation has developed over half a century of trial and error, as if guided by one aim, the essential aim of psychoanalytic procedure: the uncovering of the original, usually early and very early, primitive conflict situations. So emphatic is the historical, genetic orientation in psychoanalysis that it unhesitatingly evokes hypotheses of prehistorical events, concerning race and species, where individual, ontogenetic sources fail to give an account. It is therefore incorrect to equate an experimental “a-historic” situation with the psychoanalytical situation, rather is it an existential-analytic one. Psychoanalysis may lead to the radical cure of symptoms and modify neurotic developments, but its greater contribution is the exploration of the development and functioning of the human mind in its normal as well as abnormal aspects. It is based on the individual in Cartesian isolation: one body, one brain, one mind. The world is built up from bodily needs and sensations, although an outside reality, impersonal and objective, is recognised. Social relationships are secondary, the primary relationship or even unity with the mother is understood to start with only as a relationship between two erotogenic zones: the
mouth and the nipple. Psychoanalysis began as a study of one person by himself alone in isolation. This person had to split himself into two parts: the one observing and the other to be observed. This latter, the

2 Acta psychother., Vol. 7, No. 2/3 (1959)

18 Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis

observed, had to be both: clearly detached from the first, the observing part, and yet undoubtedly belonging to the same person. The dream fulfilled this conditions ideally. Another human being could also be made the object of study in exactly the same way; it made no difference because both were equally subject to determinism. How difficult a step it was to proceed to the recognition of a relationship between the two persons, the physician and the patient, as a new determinant! Transference thus was first only a nuisance, a resistance, and only very slowly emerged as the essential dynamic force in the field. Many psychoanalytical concepts have clearly retained the stamp of this self-analytic phase, others have moved on to the two person psychology or could only be coined in this later phase, some have a number of recognisable imprints according to different stages.

At first sight: could there be a greater contrast between this and the group situation? The patients are many, the therapist sits with them in a circle, the emphasis shifts from the pronounced inequality of psychoanalysis to a much greater degree of equality of contribution: everybody and nobody is a therapist, everybody and nobody a patient. Transferences are not received by trained impartial technicians, but reacted to by other emotionally disturbed people, met by countertransferences of considerable charge. The same is true for all other processes: there is no consideration or timing in interpretations or in any other reactions. Do we wonder that psychoanalysts shudder?

One of the assumptions we implicitly make is the basic and not the secondary character of the social nature of man, the existence of a constant stream of communication, verbal and non-verbal, conscious and unconscious, indeed of a community of experience.

Some authors find it difficult to agree that the group situation changes all processes radically, apart from the new dynamic forces and dimensions which are particularly its own. Let us therefore demonstrate this on two simple examples.

(1) Free association, as understood in psychoanalysis is of course impossible in a group. Everybody would have to talk simultaneously. In any case, nobody could understand what the other is talking about
if he were even silently engaged in free association of his own. Free association, by the way, in its pure form is a typical produce of the first, one-person phase and becomes modified in the model two-person situation. My first groups, probably the first anywhere to be asked to associate freely, “as fas as possible”, had had individual psychoanalytical experience. What then developed I described as “free

Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis 19

floating discussion”. Soon I recognised that the group analyst is entitled to treat all the spontaneous contributions as the equivalent of free associations on the part of the group as a whole. This collective association is totally different from its equivalent in the individual situation and could not even by perceived without the introduction of a completely new frame of reference: the group as a whole or what we now call the group matrix.

(2) The dream, the “via regia to the unconscious”, has also changed its values in the move from the one person to the two person situation to which move I draw your attention. Freud's “Interpretation of Dreams” is essentially written from the one person point of view. The dream has further changed in its significance for us with the shift of emphasis in psychoanalysis from unconscious content to resistance and character analysis and to the analysis of the Transference neurosis in the here and now of the therapeutic (T) situation. Classical analysis of the dream, from the manifest facade to the latent meaning, with the help of free association, is in current practice more in the nature of an occasional episode within the total context of the psychoanalytical process. The manifest content, in spite of its character of disguise and distortion of the latent dream thoughts, has gained in significance in its own right, especially as a mirror of the transference situation. Perhaps our schooled eye has also made its manifestation more transparent. Observations such as the foregoing do not, however, receive the attention which they deserve in psychoanalysis. Yet, it has to be underlined, the distinction between the manifest and the repressed, latent dream, and all that corresponds to it, is fundamental for Freudian psychoanalysis and if we gave it up, we should no longer talk of practising psychoanalysis. On this occasion I am concerned with the impact of the group therapeutic or group analytic situation upon the dream. The dream is particularly an individual creation, not meant for publication, for communication to others. The self, as Freud has shown us, refuses to accept it even as an internal, intra-individual communication. If patients recount their dreams in the setting of a
therapeutic group - and with unskilled handling they tend to develop little epidemics of that — this is by and large the expression of a resistance! The analysis of this — the resistance - aspect becomes of paramount importance. The temptation for the therapist to fall in with this resistance, to feed on dreams as it were, is considerable, with the inevitable consequence that the group will produce dreams as material for analysis and everybody is happy. Such a quasi-psychoanalytical approach makes, therefore, two mistakes: (1) it rests on an inadequate understanding of the dynamics of the individual psychoanalytical situation and (2) transports this wrongly to the group situation. The group analyst, in my approach, does not reject dreams, of course, but treats them like any other communication according to their dynamic significance. Above all, in our view every dream told in a group is the property of that group. Groups discern with fine intuition between what they call “group dreams” and other dreams. These group dreams are sometimes communications of relevance, especially in regard to current inter-personal dynamics, the conductor, insights into shared but unconscious resistances. Other dreams are sometimes ignored by the group, sometimes taken up on the dreamer’s own grounds for a little way, in any case they become soon absorbed into the group context as it develops from its matrix.

It is clear that all we have learned about the dream, if true, must still be true even if the dreamer is in group analysis; but it should be equally clear now, that 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. The same is true for psychoanalysis as a whole. All that psychoanalysis teaches us enters in principle fully into group analysis. Structural, economic and dynamic aspects of unconscious mental processes, the concepts of primary and secondary processes, of basic conflict, the emphasis on insightful revision of pathogenic reactions in the therapeutic situation. The experienced psychoanalyst will be able in direct observation to penetrate the presenting surface of the material and he will operate with interactions as yet not in the group’s consciousness. In operational terms: the patients determine the subject matter of each session, the group analyst is concerned with the translations of ucs. material into cs. * thought and with the analysis of resistances and defences. He uses
selective interpretation, confrontation, etc., in this work, refraining
from any other influence. Above all he maintains the characteristic
attitude of the psychoanalyst as to transference and counter-transference,
using these phenomena solely for the purpose of analysis. For
this later task quite in particular the group analyst’s own psychoanalytic
training is of the greatest moment, but as he meets now
* ucs. and cs. respectively denote unconscious and conscious processes in a
systematic sense.

Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis 21

equivalents of the phenomena known to him from the individual
situation with a character all their own and the group is now his
elementary frame of reference, only renewed and intensive training
and experience can enable the psychoanalyst to function adequately
in a group.

What has so far been described is not more and not less than a
legitimate application of psychoanalytic principles to the group. If
group analysis were not more than that, it could be called group
psychoanalysis, but as a method would fall short of psychoanalysis in
some essential respects, as I have tried to make clear. If one believes,
as I do, that the reductive analysis in terms of an infantile neurosis,
infantile sexuality, early object relations by the working through of
regressive Transference levels, recollections and reconstructions of
actual childhood experiences, if someone believes that these are of the
essence of Freudian psychoanalysis, he must find the term psychoanalysis
of or in a group misleading and would rather confine this
term to a two person situation.

Group analysis as practised and taught by me, however, is far more
than merely an application of psychoanalytic principles to the group.
Elements enter into it which far exceed the individual psychoanalytic
proposition. To this aspect I will devote the rest of this paper. The
consistent use of psychoanalytical principles makes this form of group
psychotherapy, group analysis, a blood relation of psychoanalysis. It
is time now to look at the features which derive from its blood relationship
on the other side, the mother’s side, if you like, to the family of
groups. It shares the properties of groups, especially of groups of its
kind, size, psychotherapeutic nature, etc.

All psychotherapy can be said to depend on three sets of factors:
(1) What the therapist brings with him: his attitude, personality,
experience, the nature of his interventions, interpretations.
(2) What the patient brings into the situation, not merely in terms
of his conventional diagnosis, and:

(3) The conditions in which they meet: formality, regularity and their counterpart, spontaneous or directed nature of communication and many, many other features influence decisively the material and the therapeutic dynamics. I had often studied by experiment and in supervising individual psychoanalysis how any change in any detail alters all processes.
The change from the individual — to a group - situation has naturally far reaching consequences. For the correct appreciation and handling

22 Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis

of the latter the psychotherapist’s individual school seems to be less relevant than his training as a group psychotherapist. Two group psychotherapists of skill and experience can be in substantial operational agreement though their psychological persuasion in terms of individual schools may differ considerably.
The existence of the group therapeutic situation itself accounts for specific features, which the group analytic approach studies. We speak of the importance of the communicational process, of ego training in action (intra-psychic action). Group analytic psychotherapy has a much wider range of application than individual psychoanalysis. It acquires features of an action method, so foreign to psychoanalysis. Some psychoanalysts recognise that a number of conditions need other than psychoanalytic treatment. Where psychoanalytic treatment is disappointing, collective and action methods may prove more effective. For instance, in psychoanalysis character resistances have to be changed into Transference resistances, in group analysis they can, through comparison and contrast, be analysed in the immediate interactional situation. There is much need for a differential indication as to method in various conditions and for different personalities.

Group analysis with its emphasis on the immediate T situation in action lends itself to "action research". It can teach us less about development, mental mechanisms, intra-individual conflict, the biological, bodily basis of the energies involved. It can teach us more about the conditions of therapeutic change, the inter-personal communication, the dynamics of the group and of the particular community to which they belong, the physiognomy of syndromes by similarity and contrast amongst other problems.

Thus the individual school of the therapist is one thing: it will colour his approach. His approach to the group is another. If we use operational terms, describing the relevant processes accurately, we can
create a common ground on which to exchange experiences and a common platform, over and above the schisms of individual schools. From this vantage point we shall be in a better position to judge different theories and claims more objectively and shall be brought nearer to a scientific validation of our work.

Summary

Introduction:

Influence of Freud's work in its totality.
Idea of psychology based fundamentally upon the group anathema

Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis 23
to psychoanalysts. Some few psychoanalysts have made pioneer contributions. Prediction of growing opposition from psychoanalysts before eventual integration. Objection to extend the term psychoanalysis to multi-personal situation. Develop concepts born out of the group situation. Early Freudians now have to defend psychoanalysis against its own adherents. Deviant schools of thought inside psychoanalysis as well as outside it. Between them attack in turns all foundations. Will never become integrated. Therefore if psychoanalysis is applied to groups, one does not know which psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysts still speak a common language and have unified standards. Their training indispensable as precondition, but not enough to make them group analysts without further intensive special training. Psychoanalytic concepts used by me in their classical meaning. Modifications of psychoanalytic procedure considerable outside the Transference Neuroses. The psychoanalytic situation characterised: its historical orientation. Psychoanalytic concepts based on individual in isolation. Relationship as a new determinant (Transference). One and two personal psychology and concepts. Group situation by contrast. Implicit assumptions. All processes change radically.

Examples:

(1) Free association and its collective equivalent.
(2) The dream and changes in its dynamic meaning in
(a) the one person situation,
(b) the two person situation,
(c) the multi-person situation.

Dreams in group analytic psychotherapy, resistances, “group dreams” and others.
All that psychoanalysis teaches us enters into group analysis.
Insofar group analysis = group psychoanalysis, but the term is misleading if psychoanalysis is understood in its classical sense.
Group analysis is, however, far more than merely applied psychoanalytic principles.
Relationship to groups. Change in T situation changes all processes.
The therapist's individual persuasion makes less difference in operative terms than his handling of the group therapeutic situation.

24 Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis

The group analytic approach studies the specific features of the group therapeutic situation, uses it in a characteristic fashion and forms corresponding concepts, i.e. group communication, ego training in action. Group analytic psychotherapy has features of an action method and lends itself to action research.
Differential indications in respect of treatment and research.
Operational concepts will create common platform above schisms of schools and open the way towards more scientific validation.

Zusammenfassung

Resume

Dans la premiere partie, l'auteur discute de l'influence de Freud, ensuite-entre autres - de la prediction d'une opposition croissante venant de la part des psychanalystes, en face d'une integration eventuelle; de l'objection quant à l'extension du terme de psychanalyse aux situations multipersonnelles; du fait que les freudiens de la premiere heure doivent defendre la psychanalyse contre ses propres adherents (allusion aux diverses ecoles à l'interieur meme de la psychanalyse). Les psychanalystes parlent encore un langage commun, mais leur formation ne suffit pas, actuellement, pour en faire des psychanalystes de groupe. Les modifications de la technique psychanalytique, en dehors des nevroses de transfert, sont aussi à l'ordre

Foulkes, Psychoanalysis, Group Psychotherapy, Group Analysis 25

du jour. Il en est de meme des concepts psychanalytiques bases sur l'individu isole.
Dans la seconde partie, les thèmes tournent autour des associations libres et de leur equivalent collectif, des reves et des changements de leur signification dans la situation uni-, bi- et multipersonnelle et, finalement, de l'approche en matiere d'analyse de groupe.

Author’s address: Dr. S. H. Foulkes, 22, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W. 1 (England).


A Note on the Impact

of Group Psychotherapy on Psychiatry
By Samuel B. Hadden, Philadelphia, Pa.

It is difficult at close range to perceive the effects of a particular activity upon the whole field of which it is a part. In assaying the impact which group psychotherapy has had upon psychiatry, it must be appreciated that while some of its effects may be readily apparent, others can only be surmised, and many will not be noticed for years to come. For a moment, then, it might be well to survey superficially the impact which earlier innovations have had upon the field of medicine and upon the course of history.
As the nineteenth century came to a close, Queen Victoria was
well past eighty, and the second year of this century was but a month old when her death ended the era she so graciously dominated. Social behavior during her reign was essentially one of conservatism and circumspection; some considered it an era of repression, but no one could regard it as a period of stagnation. At the very hour of her coronation a young man in America was conducting experiments which were to accelerate the pace of the age to a remarkable degree. Samuel Morse was on the verge of developing a practical telegraph. In 1851 England was connected with the continent by telegraph lines to France, and communication with other parts of Europe soon followed.