Group Analysis
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Group Analysis 2012 45: 450
DOI: 10.1177/0533316412461725

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://gaq.sagepub.com/content/45/4/450

Published by:
SAGE
http://www.sagepublications.com

On behalf of:
The Group-Analytic Society International

Response

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This response is inspired by Farhad Dalal's brilliant Foulkes Lecture about *Specialists without Spirit, Sensualists without Heart—Psychotherapy as a Moral Endeavour* (2012) and reacts to it in some kind of free association rather than commenting it systematically. Dalal's lecture could be taken on a superficial level to be simply about the therapist showing his or her emotions—which is in itself a question that is important enough to muse on. But it is in fact about something much deeper than that, it is about authenticity, trustworthiness—and thinking along these lines we can draw closer to a dearly needed group analytical theory of subjectivity.

Such an endeavour is of course not without theoretical and historical presuppositions. The self-imposed task of this response is to step back and to highlight some of these hidden treasures of Foulkesian thinking and to outline some consequences.

Let me point in a first step to the fundamental philosophical premises that lay at the bottom of (not only) group analysis (see Mies 2012) and that are tackled by Dalal: it is the juxtaposition of feelings and thoughts, individual(s) and group(s), socialization and individuation, the private and the public, the inside and the outside, body and mind, cause and effect, sender and receiver—just to mention some.

Foulkes—whose connections to German philosophical thinking that places the individual into the large group context, and historical conditions as laid down by Wilhelm Wundt and Hermann Dilthey, and are thoroughly traced by Malcolm Pines (Pines 1990)—was very much aware of the above mentioned dualistic philosophical heritage; in European thinking, this dates back to Renée Descartes in the 17th-

Vol 45(4): 450–458; DOI: 10.1177/0533316412461725

century, and he considered it inadequate for a group analytic understanding of the individual:

> . . . a configuration has arisen which created the idea of an individual person as if existing in isolation. He then is confronted with the community, the world, as if they were outside him. The philosophy of Descartes starts from this premise and its strict subject–object juxtaposition is still responsible for many pseudoproblems of our time. (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965 [1984]: 23)

Foulkes' contribution to overcome this heritage is the concept of matrix, in which he puts the individual in the middle of society, being in conflictual yet inseparable unity with its environment, carrying the legacy of all the groups s/he ever was a member of.

In an early interdisciplinary attempt, influenced by neuroscience and Gestalt psychology (Goldstein) as well as by sociology (Elias) Foulkes paralleled the neuronal network of the brain with the social networks.

It is basic group analytic knowledge that within these networks individuals are considered as knots—and the threads are made of communication. Foulkes considered the discussion in a group equivalent to free association in psychoanalysis. Thus he linked the concept of matrix to a theory of unconscious processes, saying ' . . . we accept that ideas and comments expressed by different members have the value of *unconscious interpretations'* (Foulkes and Anthony (1965 [1984]: 29). That is what he saw to be a decisive step regarding method as well as theory. Today we can clearly see this achievement, when, e.g. in relational psychoanalysis referring to attunement the juxtaposition sender and receiver becomes meaningless. In groups mind becomes visible as a multi-personal co-creation and not as something locked into the brain of individuals. Instead the brains themselves are understood as being shaped by the surrounding. Or, as the famous Canadian psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Merlin Donald puts it '. . . the human cognitive system, *down to the level of its internal modular organization*, is affected not only by its genetic inheritance, but also by its own peculiar cultural history' (Donald, 1997: 362). And this cultural shaping is understood to be a still ongoing process; again Donald writes,

> Modern electronic media are combined with the personal-memory systems of individual brains in very large distributed networks. This has altered the structure of the wider social-cognitive systems that govern cultural evolution, making 'distributed' cognition a dominant presence in the cognitive governance of human society. (Donald, 2010: 76)

But the topic of this response is neither the notion of the matrix in general nor specifically that of the foundation matrix. This introduction is meant to remind us of the revolutionary and modern character of group analysis and its philosophical impact. And its aim is to mark a point from where we can enter further debate—in the clinical field and moreover in the field of society and in intellectual and philosophical debate—hopefully reentering into the interdisciplinary discourse from which group analysis started and thus working against a marginalized position.

The main subject here is the world / the matrix from which group analysis emerged and in which it has to prove itself.

Dalal starts his presentation with the assertion that the psyche is constituted and patterned by power relations, which implies moral relations, tracing morals back to the attunement situation between mother and baby, thus giving moral behaviour a base in our innate capacity and necessity to relate. He focuses on love, and I, instead, want to focus on conflict, because morals, values and ethics usually become relevant when conflict arises, and might it be that they are generated by differing values or the explanation of rules is an attempt to mitigate or to solve a conflict.

Every day experience tells us, that people can be loving, friendly, nice and helpful as well as hateful, mean, destructive and nasty. In the middle of the 17th century the famous French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal put it like this: 'Man is neither angel nor beast' (*L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête, et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête, Pensées VI, 358).*

Assuming a biological base and furthermore, assuming a cultural shaping of these basic affects, one might ask for the conditions of their occurrence.

As for aggression and conflict, which is the complement of affiliation and cooperation, I would tentatively suggest a line of thought that is based on Norbert Elias' teacher Karl Mannheim, who introduced the term group analysis independently from Foulkes (Mannheim, 1943). Mannheim, whose wife Julia was a psychoanalyst was a sociologist of knowledge, and at first glance more concerned about conscious than about unconscious processes.

In his thinking, a growing potential for conflict is linked to the growing complexity and differentiation of societies. This potential results from the fact that complex societies consist of many subgroups, which, because of their different social practices, no longer share a common understanding of the world, e.g. who they are,

where they came from and where they go. These interpretations and the inherent knowledge of the world are distributed into different groups and institutions, each with its own desires and aspirations that cause a unique perspective on the world. This perspective, resulting from practical knowledge and experience more than from reasoning, appear to the actors to be natural, i.e. it is unconscious; it only can be seen from members of another group. According to Mannheim—to get to the optimum of consciousness at a given time—it is necessary to bring members of different groups together revealing to each other the other's hidden aspirations and exchanging their knowledge. That is what he did at the end of the 1920s in Frankfurt and what he called group analysis (see Mannheim, 1943, chapter 5), which only later came to Foulkes' knowledge (see Foulkes, 1946 in Foulkes, E.1990: 131).

This notion of civilization implies that the more differentiated (i.e. richer) a society becomes, the more possibly opposing desires and therefore conflicts arise and have to be negotiated. Conflicts are born within society/civilization and not outside, they are part of it. Whether this notion of civilization and conflict is more optimistic than the late Freudian one of the death instinct (Freud, 1920) is difficult to say. But it offers a more inquisitive look on conflicts, investigating the forces that create violence, and not closing the question before addressing it. It opens up the possibility for real group analytic understanding of conflicts.

Foulkes' and Mannheim's views were forged in the fire of post war Hungary and Germany and show more than traces of reacting to pre-fascist and later fascist Germany. After the Great War it was a time when everything had to be thought and felt anew. An incredibly fruitful and intellectual live to place, not only in Frankfurt, where Foulkes worked directly with Karl Landauer, Heinrich Meng, Erich Fromm and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, and the Institute of Social Research (Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, founded in 1923/24) had their department in the same building as well as the Institute of Sociology, where Karl Mannheim and his assistant Norbert Elias did their research.

There was an overall feeling, that psychoanalysis was an excellent clinical method, but that it was far more than that. In Vienna Otto Fenichel wrote in 1932:

> It is easy to understand, why the topic 'Psychoanalysis and Politics' is in the air nowadays. The political and connected economical facts cannot be denied

> anymore, when they interfere so obviously and so harshly into the lives of every single person. (Fenichel, 1932: 256; after Fallend, 1988, p.215, translation R.S.)

From this direct political approach Foulkes kept aside, but he undoubtedly had his share in and was part of the whole atmosphere.

Sometimes Foulkes is considered as being naive, not knowing about how malicious groups can be, when he gave the advice to group conductors, to follow the group, to trust the group. I guess that is a misunderstanding. Why should a soldier of the Great War, a medical doctor who, as an assistant of Kurt Goldstein, treated brain injured combatants, a liberal Jew in prefascist Germany, an immigrant to the UK, why should he be naive about what humans can do to humans? The only—not minor—empty space I can see is his reluctance to cover theoretically the intense feelings involved in group processes. Perhaps that might be understood as some kind of defence.

My idea, in contrast to the attitude mentioned above, is that group analysis in itself is a comment to fascism. Group analysis definitely was born in the liberal climate of the UK, but it was conceived in prefascist Germany. The Nazis did not operate only with terror. They had a clear and genuine feeling, how much people need people, they exploited the human needs for affiliation and guidance—and offered their model of leader and group, where the individual is nothing, the group (or moreover the idea of the group) is everything, and the leader as idealized representative of the group is beyond human measurement and deserves unconditional love and obedience.

Foulkes was very much aware of the archaic heritage of longing for strong leadership, a desire that is so easily to be evoked and exploited. But he considered it the task of a good leader to contain these transferences and not to collude with them, aiming to gradually wean the participants from their desire for authoritarian leadership (see Foulkes, 1964: 59).

It is a kind of soft but nevertheless strong opposition when Foulkes insists in the value of the individual, when he says ‘Its [the treatment’s] aim and its result should be the greater inner freedom of the individual . . . ’ (Foulkes, 1968 in Foulkes, E. 1990: 185). He emphasizes the basic equality of all humans by the circle of chairs and by his nondirective style of leadership.

What is often overlooked is, how much he paid attention to the frame, the setting, and how thoroughly he was about the question of leadership: ‘the therapist is the leader in the sense, that he lays down certain conditions, makes the decisions and has the responsibility’

(Foulkes, 1975: 289). Non-directive leadership is leadership— and it is inseparable connected to a secure frame/setting, which is its precondition.

To mistake this way to conduct a group for laissez faire or (worse) shying away from taking responsibility, may be—at least in Germany after the Second World War—a problem of the following generation that brought into the field their fear to be abused by authoritarian figures and/or to be perceived as authoritarian and abuse themselves (see Wilke, 2007).

The setting of the group creates the space, where the more constructive forces can unfold—or not. The conductor has to bear in mind that s/he is the one that creates the opportunities for the good and the bad development and has to intervene accordingly. In other words: The idea of the frame / the setting implies a theory of the conditions a group needs to unfold its constructive potential of self-regulation. A theory of interventions then is a theory how to evoke and maintain this capacity.

If we prolong this situation to a wider scale we meet—e.g. the question of nation building and good government—how a nation, i.e. those in charge—can provide basic security, food, education and infrastructure to its inhabitants.

What is done here is to place Foulkes' achievements and group analysis clearly in the context of a democrat opposing fascism. But if there is some truth in this, the question still remains, is there some relevance in this history for today?

The world has fundamentally changed since the 1930s and the end of Second World War in 1945. We witness at the moment the end of the order, as it was established in the aftermath of the Second World War. We live more and more in a multipolar world—as Charles Kupchan wrote in *Foreign Policy* (6th February 2012) addressing Mitt Romney: 'Sorry Mitt: It Won' Be an American Century'. We may like it or not, but no single superpower is going to follow (see Khanna, 2008). Non-western countries claim their share and become—often in alliances—major players, e.g. the Emirates and/or the BRICS States (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). These situations in combination with modern technologies create immense possibilities, yet at the same time fragile situations and uncertainties. The emotional reactions to the latter often are fear, rage and/or despair. Fundamentalist movements of all religions—Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu—but also modern right wing and populist parties, which display a growing influence all over

Europe—as seen in their electoral success, e.g. in Hungary, Romania, Austria, Denmark, UK, the Netherlands and Greece—profit from this situation. Though there is some evidence that—seen from a long perspective from prehistoric times—until today— violence has declined significantly (Pinker, 2011), shape and number of conflicts have changed recently compared to the time before the end of the Cold War.

That is, coming back to our topic of moral and values, in this multipolar, globalized world we witness at all levels, not only competition around resources and influence, moreover we already have and shall have a growing competition concerning values, e. g. seen in the debate about the meaning of women wearing scarves and/or, if human rights are an European concept or universal (see Brown, 1997).

Returning to Mannheim, we can now see on a broad international scale how values 'work' as the embodied history of a group, and as tools to fulfill the tasks of life—some would say also to secure privileges. Following Mannheim every value is part of an ideology, also the value not to have an ideology. These values appear to the actors—to us—to be natural, i.e. they are widely unconscious and can only be seen from members of another group. In a Foulkesian language we might say—as I put it elsewhere—they only become visible when different foundation matrices meet (Scholz, 2004). If that holds true, we are to expect more conflict and a growing need to negotiate extremely different perspectives to the world, because it is one world in which we live, but there will not be (and in fact never has been) one understanding of this world. And because values are anything but predominantly cognitive—just to tackle on another basic Cartesian split, that between cognition and emotion—these conflicts are and will be highly emotional as they are based in the affiliation to a group, of which our personal identity is part of. Challenging values easily turns around to be experienced as a threat to personal and to group identity, it can be experienced as life threatening, with the intense reactions that are then to be expected.

It is this surrounding in which group analysis and its implicit values challenged and has to renew itself by the views from the outside. Group analysis (quoting again Dalal) that takes itself seriously and does not close its eyes to the wider world, has a lot to say to the questions at stake, and I am optimistic that, if we rely on the intellectual heritage of group analysis and work out its essentials in the light of

today's interdisciplinary research, it has much to offer to the understanding of modern world, its options and its frictions, a world whose values are negotiated and re-negotiated in every group—clinical or non-clinical—where we are in.

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