

ABSTRACTS

Jane Campbell

The Group Analyst's Tale

Towards the end of the 14th century Geoffrey Chaucer wrote the story of a pilgrimage; the story of a number of pilgrims from disparate backgrounds who travelled from London to Canterbury and who agreed, in order to pass the time, to tell each other stories along the way. The story Chaucer told was called *The Canterbury Tales* and what is striking is how various the individual stories are, how each fits the character and occupation and history of the pilgrim who tells it, how swiftly rivalries build up, how specific are the personal philosophies of the pilgrims and yet how united they are in their common cause: to travel to Canterbury to pay their respects to the saint enshrined there and, of course, to reap some benefits for themselves from this act of homage.

This paper suggests that whether we examine the processes of a small group, or of a training institute, or of this larger body we call EGATIN, the ageless narrative provided by Chaucer offers us a means of understanding the complex business of remaining individual, of remaining who we are, whether as a person or as an institute or as an organization, and yet managing also to share a goal, a vision, a purpose, and to recognise that to accomplish our goal, we need the company of each other.

Lars Lorentzon

Narratives and Rituals in Search of Truth

My intention is to tell you a personal story about some important experiences that have formed my own perspective of group analysis.

When I was quite a young boy I spent a lot of my time listening to elderly people, sitting in a dayroom, talking to each other. I lived in an institution for elderly people where my father worked as a director. I loved the dayrooms in this elderly home, the light, and the calm atmosphere. I remember the small talks that sometimes became intensive and charged with strong feelings. Men and women sitting in chairs around a table, doing nothing else but telling the stories of their lives day after day, week after week, year after year; the same stories, the same procedures, the same places. I spent lot of time as a participant observer in these groups. Later in life, when I had begun working with groups, I understood how much I learned about group communication - processes, meanings, intentions and utility - from those early experiences.

What I will try to do is to link those early experiences and all the observations I made without knowing it, with later experiences from participation in group analytic and group psychotherapeutic groups. In both of these places, narratives are told to a live audience of other narrators. What fascinates me is that the creation of every personal narrative is a result of the complex and mostly unconscious interplay between the group members. I believe the narrating process and the resulting narrative is quite *different* in a group from a two-personal *context*, and further *more* that a group where all members share the role of audience and narrator have a marvelous capacity to find out and together create, the most important and needed stories, in order to understand what is going on "here and now" for each of the members and the group as a whole.

In my opinion, group analysis is fundamentally a group of people, who through their conversation, become members of a small human community, engaged in only one topic; telling stories of their life experiences. That is what you do in a group, and that is what you have to do in the group, if the group in the long run will be able to meet and hopefully satisfy the participant's more personal needs and desires.

In this sense group analysis is linked to an old tradition - learning about life, and creating communities and cultures - by engaging in sharing narratives in smaller and larger groups. This human activity has been reduced, or split up, in the modern world. We do not spend, and

we do not need to spend time just sharing personal life experiences in order to learn or create communities. When we invite people nowadays to join a group, just for talking and telling, it seems odd, strange and makes no sense at all. In the eyes of most of the presumptive group members, therapy is just an instrument for personal improvement, a seemingly rational way of becoming happier, healthier or richer in one aspect or another. Free-floating conversation does not seem to be the right thing to engage in, in order for these goals to be obtained! It does not live up to our technological expectations. This is a very severe difficulty to overcome, both when we promote group analysis as well as when we try to establish a group analytic culture. Another difficulty is that most group analysts work within a medical tradition and institution which in many ways reduces our capacity to create a culture wherein all the narratives of life can be told and shared, not only those who seem to be relevant in a medico-technological method of therapy.

However, when we overcome these difficulties, we all find that being a member in a group where all the stories of life can be shared - the narratives from the past, the present and the future - is quite an experience, and furthermore this odd activity, now seems quite natural and necessary in our lives. Maybe group analysis put us in contact with an old tradition still living inside ourselves, urging to be realized.

In the "old folk's group" there were no therapist, theory or journals, no objects or intentions other than sharing time, yet I remember it as perhaps the only group I have met, that lived up to all the criteria of an analytic group. They really shared, and examined their life experiences by all the narratives., and the web of all narratives formed a social and psychological matrix - a community - where they belonged. I wonder what had happened if a group analyst had joined them?

Margarita Kritikou

Narratives (Greek myths) in small median and large groups of the Group-Analytic Paideia.

This paper is concerned with the *apxai* (beginnings) and the meanings of Greek Mythology. Mythology is the movement of the mythological material, capable of transformation. The transformation is meaningful in Training and Therapeutic Group Analysis.

Some issues of small (theory, supervision), median and large groups of the Group-Analytic Paideia are presented.

Good (nourishing) and bad (devouring, seductive) Father, Mother and Siblings archetypes.

The circularity of their creative and destructive power is re-experienced as a multified reverberation. Each trainee develops his own *idioprosopia*, through his participation in his personal group-analytic group parallel with the context and process of the Paideutic Groups.

Inge Widlund

The stories that dreams are telling

Concerning dreams, we seem to be trapped in a Freudian tradition without being able to compete with Freuds ability to translate dreams. He was interested in translating the manifest to the latent

content and might have overlooked the meaning of the manifest (as Jung pointed out). 50 years after Freud's Dream Interpretation dream research has shown that we dream regularly each night and not necessarily as a result of conflicts between desires and reality. Working with dreams in group has been introduced by Montague Ullman and has been very successful in given the meaning of the dream back to the dreamer with the help of the group. It should be possible to a greater extent use this way of associating around a dream in Group Analysis. Foulkes seemed to be divided between a Freudian orthodox way of looking at dreams and a more radical way (Dalal) of dealing with dreams. As a way of communication between the unconscious and the conscious dream-work should to a higher degree be used in the training of group-analysts.

Ivan Urlic

Using dream in working with war veterans

Dreams have one of key roles in group-analytic treatment. The author exposes the specific importance of narratives of dreams in understanding inner worlds of psycho-traumatized persons, the psychodynamic evolution of their treatment, as well as that of the psychotherapeutic group. Mirroring of the social and political impacts on the personal and group dynamics in the context of group analytic treatment are pointed out, especially through narratives of dreams.

Dieter Nitzgen

Title: Pilgrims of the Real

Reflecting on the shift from modernism to postmodernism, V. Schermer, an american group analyst, has noted a different understanding of 'theory' in all field of psychotherapy, especially group psychotherapy. According to Schermer we are now well past an age where theory could be undisputedly regarded as a kind of "mental map whose logic captured the phenomena being observed". My paper therefore focuses on the relationship between 'theory' and narration, facts 'about' and fictions beyond. To do so, I will have a look at two core group analytic and/or psychoanalytic concepts, Foulkes s concept of the "matrix" and Bion's "container". Both concepts will be put in perspective to their authors experiences in World War 1, and an attempt is made to tell their story beyond a conventional reading.