

Bion and Foulkes:
Building on Bion, following Foulkes¹

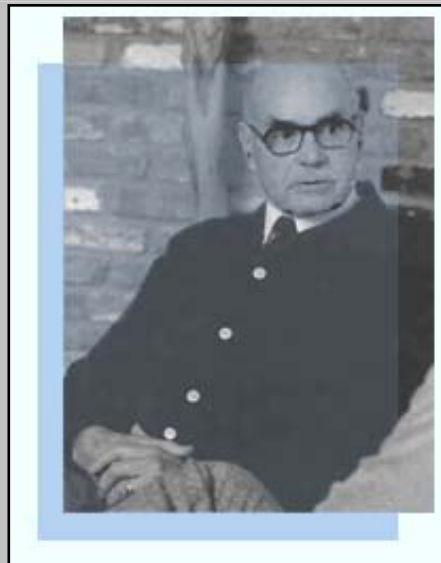
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↑ FOULKES

BION ↓



¹ Pines, Malcolm (2003). Bion and Foulkes: Building on Bion, following Foulkes. Unpublished paper

I write to begin a talk with quotations to express better than I can the spirit of my enterprise:

- From Alan Fogel, a developmental psychologist *"The life of the mind is a dialogue, most typically a dialogue between imagined points of view"*.
- The second from R.A. Schweger, a "post-modern humanist", for whom *"the whole world is incomplete if seen from any one point of view, incoherent if seen from all points of view at once and empty if seen from nowhere in particular"*.

Well, a paper that attempts to establish a dialogue between Bion and Foulkes, one that never actually took place, cannot possibly be empty! The facts of their cultural backgrounds are inescapably significant. Foulkes was a child in a large prosperous assimilated German Jewish family, educated in the advanced school system. Deeply literate, he had to choose between a career as a theatre director and medicine. He refers to Maxim Gorky, to Pirandello frequently.

Quotation from Pirandello's *"Six Characters in Search of..."*: *"My drama lies entirely in this one thing. In my being conscious that each of us believes himself to be a single person. That each of us is many people, many people —according to all the possibilities of being that are within us. For with some people we are one person, and with others we are somebody entirely different. That we always have the illusion of being one and the same person with everyone we meet. But it is not true. It is not true. And we find this out very clearly when we are, by some terrible chance, caught in the middle of doing something we should not be doing. And we are left dangling, suspended in mid-air. And then we see that every part of us was not involved in what we were doing and it would be a dreadful injustice for people to judge us by this one act, as we are held there, as if we were suspended to eternity, with one's personality summed up in a single, uninterrupted action."* Possibly Pirandello's exploration of the complexity of character set him thinking.

During World War I he served behind the lines as a telephone operator, then studied medicine in Heidelberg and Frankfurt, psychoanalysis in Vienna in the late 1920s, then sociology in Frankfurt. Displaced to the United Kingdom in the 1930s, he made a successful re-adaptation, which however involved a change of name, anglicised to Michael Foulkes.

Now, to Wilfred Ruprecht Bion. Anglo-Indian parentage, displaced at the age of 8 from the warmth of India and the care of his ayah, to a bleak, British public school. In his autobiography he openly describes severe mental conflicts and confusions in his early childhood, in particular his fears of a fantasised, persecutory father. Incidentally, Foulkes did not write an autobiography and we have problems in reconstructing his personal development, in penetrating beneath his urbane appearance. You will know Bion's experiences in World War I and II, his education in history and philosophy at Oxford after World War I, his deep interest in mathematics. He spent many years of unproductive psychotherapy with Hatfield before meeting with John Rickman, a brief analysis which released him from isolation and enabled him to marry but soon tragically to lose his wife in childbirth. His post-war analytic training was with Melanie Klein, who discouraged his involvement with groups, but who must have fostered his exploration of the early development of mind and of psychotic disorder.

I want now to bring out some commonalities in these apparently very different intellectual developments: they both acknowledge their debts to their mentors in neurobiology.

Kurt Goldstein's impact on Foulkes is well known. Foulkes spent two years as a neurological assistant in a hospital for the brain injured and Goldstein's neurological expertise and Gestalt psychological approach set him on the path to his concepts of network, matrix, to use Gestalt psychological concepts of figure ground, dynamic equilibrium of organism and environment and the basic biological principle of adaptation: to holism, to the group as a whole. Even the therapeutic community concept can perhaps relate to the therapeutic atmosphere of Goldstein's hospital, where

patients were encouraged to overcome their disabilities, to mobilise creative and reparative forces within themselves and in their environment.

What now of Bion: though he did not have Foulkes' first-hand experiences in neurology, he was greatly influenced by the great British neurologist and brain surgeon Wilfred Trotter. Both Goldstein and Trotter were in line of descent from Hughlings Jackson, his dynamic concept of the hierarchy of central nervous system functions, the "doctrine of levels". Trotter's influence on Bion had been amply substantiated by Nuno Torres in his illuminating chapter "Gregariousness and the mind: Wilfred Trotter and Wilfred Bion". Can these two Wilfreds have set the scene for Bion's imaginary twins? Later, Bion and Becket?

Torres clearly shows the influence of Trotter as a sociologist on Bion's mental models. Trotter's influential monograph "The instincts of the herd in peace and war" was well-known in the 1920s, even referred to by Freud. Scarcely read nowadays. Torres has brought out the significance of Trotter's ideas and how they anticipated Bion's, though the latter scarcely refers to the former. Trotter was brother-in-law to Ernest Jones, and in fact had led Jones to read Freud in the first place. Together Jones and Trotter went to the 1908 Salzburg Congress, but Trotter, bored by the discussion, re-invigorated himself with the thought that amongst all the participants, he was the only one who would know how to amputate a leg!

Before I explicate more of Trotter's influence on Bion, I want to point to another similarity between Bion and Foulkes. Foulkes' contact with the sociological-historical approach of Norbert Elias and the Frankfurt Sociological School is well known. Less well-known and appreciated are the sociological ideas of Trotter and of Bion's later mentor and analyst, John Rickman. Of all the British psychoanalysts of the 1920s and 30s, Rickman was the most advanced in his understanding of social dynamics. This arose from his Quaker ancestry and upbringing, his service in Russia with a Quaker relief unit between World War I, during which he observed the social dynamics of a Russian village. Rickman acknowledged the importance of Kurt Lewin and field theory and letters exchanged between Bion and Rickman clearly show how much Bion learnt from Rickman, informing his ideas about leaderless groups, a concept which Trotter had already written about 30 years previously.

What are the contributions of Trotter, from which Bion drew inspiration: Man as a gregarious animal; Group mentality; Social valence; The drive to search for truth, for certainty, intolerance of uncertainty; Learning by experience; The conflict of new ideas and established ideas (*"It would not perhaps be too fanciful to say that a new idea is the most quickly acting antigen known to science"*); Mental turbulence; The mind digesting food for thought; Mind as muscle.

Written during World War I, Trotter was viewing the powerful primitive forces dominating mentalities. How to reconcile the rational mind with the enormous forces of the herd mind is the great struggle. In order to survive groups have to establish and maintain high morale and good group spirit. The herd will blindly follow the leader who presents them with simplified ideas. The more complex the mind, the less it will be inclined to adopt the simplified viewpoint of those who want to establish leadership.

Trotter, writing during World War I, wrote that the British had developed their powers of cooperation and did not follow aggressive leadership in the way that the Germans had done. For him, the British were more like bees, the Germans like wolves! Trotter stresses the need to see through idealisations and to develop mature cooperation. The voice of the herd would produce mindlessness. We can see clearly that Bion's concept of basic assumptions leads us in the same direction as Trotter had already outlined. You well know Bion's ideas about the genius and the establishment, the struggle that new ideas had to survive. Trotter had already written how the herd will choose stability and the maintenance of old ideas rather than face the uncertainties of new ideas.

I can even see some connection between Trotter's ideas and those of Triggant Burrow, the radical American psychoanalyst. Burrow had tried to get the psychoanalytic community to see that unless they studied their own dynamics, they were simply replicating the dynamics of neurosis. Bion wrote that if we equate psychoanalysis with "treatment" and "cure", this is a warning that psychoanalysis is becoming restricted; a limitation is being placed on the analysand's growth in the interest of keeping the group undisturbed. If the psychoanalysts are unaware of the expanding nature of their universe, difficulties will arise between analysand and analyst: the container restricts the growth of the contained.

EXPANDING WORLDS

Fifty years on, let us re-view what we have done with the legacies of Foulkes and Bion. Irwin Yalom was dismissive of Bion and the Tavistock approach in his book, which is the most widely read and influential text in the field, lesser in Europe than in North America.

However, *Experiences in Groups* has remained a seminal, even inspirational text, though often misunderstood and misapplied. Robert Lipgar has illuminated Bion's intentions and style in *Re-discovering Bion's Experiences in Groups* in vol. 1, *Roots, of Building on Bion*. He writes that Bion's interventions are aimed towards promoting "learning from experience" in the context of the group experience. Here, his work is fundamentally psychotherapeutic, taking psychotherapy as that enterprise which is directed towards individual and at self-definition, interdependency and capacity for intimacy. His commitment is to searching for insight and truth. Bion's writings on binocular vision, container and contained, narcissism and socialism, show that he remained deeply aware of our need to retain the vision of mankind and society as inseparable with constant tensions arising between narcissism and socialism. The legacy of his work has been most productive in the study of institutions, ideas which social scientists have used in studying the dynamics of societies. Basic assumption theory has shed light on ethnic and national conflicts, though he had not explored the dynamics of power in groups, a notion central to Elias' view on the dynamics of group relations. In the field of small group therapy and the part that group therapy can play in mental health services, Bion's ideas, it can be argued, have had somewhat negative effects. Novices attempting to take their first groups who use *Experiences in Groups* as their compass, have been discomfited, finding that it is not a guide to effective therapy. The original enthusiasm to group therapy at the Tavistock and other such centres post-World War II quickly waned, and David Malan's follow-up study, which showed how unpopular group therapy was for the patients, gave no encouragement.

Contrasting the legacy of Bion and Foulkes, we can perhaps use the story of the hare and the tortoise. Bion's early work makes a tremendous start, but Foulkes processes slowly and steadily. His experience in running a successful outpatient unit at the Maudsley set the model for many later developments in the application of small and large group therapies in outpatient units, day hospitals, and community psychiatry. There are impressive examples in the Scandinavian mental health services, out of which I particularly note the network of

Norwegian day units for the apparently successful treatment of borderline patients. In this regime extensive use is made of group-analytic small and large groups. Another most impressive example is that of the University Department of Psychiatry in Geneva where Professor Jose Guimon, whose conference I recently attended, was using a group-analytic model as his basic framework, 200 mental health professionals from Geneva and other cantons had taken part in a training programme which covers a 1, 2 or 3 year period, taking the form of seminars lasting 4 days each.

Free-floating communication, free-floating conversation, facilitating communication; holding in mind the concept of group matrix and network, processes of universalisation, socialisation, group-specific features of mirroring and resonance; the belief in the fundamental rule that a group will gradually move towards a healthier set of norms, to which each person, though themselves deviant from that norm, can recognise and contribute to.

I quote here from Ralph Stace's recent book *Complexity and Group Processes*, Brunner-Routledge 2002: "Healthy minds and healthy social relating are characterised by the paradox of continuity and transformation at the same time, where health is a paradox of dynamic stability and instability at the same time and illness is a repetition of thematic patterning with very little potential for transformation...". Health and illness are always reflected simultaneously in individual minds and in social relations. The move from illness to health is emotional stability to more complex, variable patterns of relating of a body to itself and of bodies to each other. Therapeutic change can never be either individual or social, but it is always both individual and social at the same time. The medium of the therapy in the group, understood its processes of individuals relating to and communicating with each other. This relating and communicating is individual and social at the same time. What Stacey adds to Foulkes' original account, here drawing on Elias, is that we focus attention on emerging narrative themes and power relations in the group and the inevitable dynamics of inclusion and exclusion as an aspect of power relating. He suggests that we should focus attention on the vicissitudes of attachment and separation rather than on the vicissitudes of the drives.

Foulkes drew our attention to the importance of mirroring and resonance as group-specific factors. It is most satisfying that developments in neuroscience are bringing out the significance of these factors in a way that could not possibly have been envisaged previously. In another paper entitled "Social Brain and Social Group: How Mirroring Connects people", I refer firstly to what I found in the writings of Adam Smith, who in 1797 wrote of society as a mirror for the person, that without this mirror the person would never come to know him or herself. Mankind is a social animal and without the society of his fellows the individual would have no mirror of his own actions. Growing up in solitude he cannot know himself, but bring him into society and he will find out that he knows himself from the way society views him and the self-reflection that this gives birth to. Then we can jump to the 21st century, where neuroscientists led by Giacomo Rizzolatti of the University of Parma identified what they call mirror neurones. These multinodal cells located in broker's area are activated both by the animal or the person's own actions, but also by viewing similar actions performed by another organism. It even seems that the animal understands the intent of the other to perform an action, because the action pattern is known to oneself: I know what is your intent, what is in your mind, because I know if I make that same gesture what my intent is towards you. This is the neurobiology of intercommunication, intersubjectivity, the meaningful communication of gestures, which George Herbert Mead convincingly showed us that the development and the emergence itself is inseparable from the recognition of the existence of the other. As for resonance, this is also a feature of current neuroscientific interest. Damasio states that our experience of ourselves arises from the brain activity which is registering the internal state of the body and these body states constitute the background to the sense of self. This self is repeatedly reconstructed by activities: mind arises when bodies interact with each other; changes in body rhythms constantly affect mental states and the sense of self. It seems likely that knowledge of our own self states also gives us knowledge of the body state of the other. Here both mirroring and resonance contribute to our sense of being in the world and being in the world with others. We should also remember the emergence of much greater knowledge of the significance of attunement and empathy in early infant-caregiver connections, which to my mind go in a different direction to and beyond Bion's model of container and containment, which presuppose the processes of projection and introjection. Within psychoanalysis I am more drawn to the model that Loewald made out many years ago that infant and caregiver together create needs and satisfactions. Loewald posited an original psychic field or matrix, the mother-infant

unit, within which individuation processes start. Instinctual drives, as psychic forces, are processes taking place within a field —the mother-infant psychic matrix and their character's instincts, as well as the character of the emerging individual psyche, are determined by the changing characteristics of that matrix-field and the evolution into differentiated but related separate psychic fields.

Motivational psychic forces are relational phenomena and do not presuppose life and death instincts, destructive envy per se: drives are fashioned through the matrix of early relationships. When these processes go "well enough", the separating and separate persons have a sense of being in oneself and being with another, the sense of basic trust and value in oneself and in the relationship to the other and in the representation of the other.

Being "good enough", an internal sense of value becomes part of the core self. There is an inner conversation between asking and responding parts of self, which maintain a sense of a good-enough fit with the world. Russell Mears writes: "The pleasure which generates a sense of value comes from a harmony, or resonance, between inner states and the outer world. This kind of relatedness, which is more than mere congruence, is essential to satisfactory development". But when there has not been a good enough fit, when there has been a failure of matching between inner feelings and outer responses, the sense of inner value is absent. Mears describes this as a state of "non-resonance", which in the group shows itself as the inability to take part in exchange and dialogue. The slow transformational potential of a group-analytic group enables the non-resonating person to begin to find that these resonances can begin in part through the sense of universality of feelings between persons, but much more specifically through dynamic interchanges.

The psychoanalyst Betty Joseph has written that "there are certain patients in whom there appears to be no resonance to interpretations, or to any emotional understanding. Unconsciously there is no expectation of being emotionally understood, no expectation that the object, in analysis the analyst, can stand up, tolerate and contain the patient's anxieties and impulses. To maintain their equilibrium, these patients erect a kind of pseudo-container of a rigid type, which prevents real resonance in the analysis between patient and analyst, and within the personality in their inner world. This is well put, but the possibilities of developing resonance to others are much greater in the dynamic field of the group matrix.

Quote from Tim Radford: *"Are the brains of artists and scientists really so different?"*

What is it that makes the poet and the scientist both so important, and why are the worlds inside their heads so different? A poet or a painter is trying to share with us a unique view, his or her picture of the world. A scientist is doing the other thing: he or she is trying to make us understand what it is that we have in common. When you put it like that, the answer is simple. Here we are in our millions, locked in our own virtual reality headsets, entities trapped inside our own, unique senses of identity. There is no "real world" for us, until we understand that each of us has a different perception of it. And here we are each of us with a different perception, which will be meaningless unless we can understand that there is common ground, some shared platform from which we derive our uniqueness, something which is; which we can agree on. The poet shares his world with me. The scientist lights up our entire world for all of us. If we really had only one way of understanding the world, what kind of understanding would that be? We would not be in touch with each other or our souls at all. So there is only one culture. And there is no restriction to the baggage we carry through life.

Quote from Thomas Soederquist, Professor of History of Medicine, Copenhagen.

Biography of the immunologist and Nobel laureate Nils Kaj Jerne, who won the Nobel Medical Prize in 1984 for his conception of the immune system, the ideotypic network theory, according to which

all antibodies and lymphocyte receptors are conceived as mutually independent parts of a steady-state system.

Inviting his biography, Soederquist found it possible to reconstruct the investigative pathway to his selection theory and to show that the theory was a metaphorical projection of his own self, viz., that he had a repertoire of states of mind which could be mobilised in interactions with other people.

There is an enormous amount of material that Jerne had kept, so the biographer was able to investigate his life and to ask such questions as: what choices did he make in his life, and what consequences these choices have, for himself, for his work and for others? Which life situations attracted him and which did he try to suppress, or flee from? What brought him to pursue science instead of a career in business, or life as a doctor, or writer, or life of caring for family and children? How did he bring together, or separate, his life inside and his life outside science? How did he orchestrate his personal potentialities to create his scientific persona? What intellectual and moral virtues and vices did he develop? And how did he live his life in such a way as to gain the sense of meaning and connectedness?

In trying to answer these questions we enter into the territory of -existential-biography:

Jerne's major achievement was indeed his life, his most important work, as it were, a deed in which he incorporated his public scientific achievement as an integral part. The Greek philosophers posed the question to us "*what does it mean to live a good life?*"

Growth of ideas from World War II: Again the hare and the tortoise.

Bion had been in analysis with Rickman for a year before the war, but quickly the former analyst and analysand formed a creative working couple. Both realised the great psychological problems that faced an army and a nation at war. To this, Rickman would apply his experiences in Russia during World War I when he observed the dynamics of decision-making in a community, his deep immersion in psychoanalysis as an administrator of the psychoanalytic society and its publications, as an analysand and analyst and, of particular interest, as a pioneer of the psychoanalytic exploration of the psychoses. It is because of his sudden death in July 1951, when he had a coronary thrombosis sitting under a tree in Regent's Park, to which overwork and conflicts within the Psychoanalytic Society must have contributed, that his work was quickly forgotten and has been brought back to our attention by Pearl King, a former analysand and a great admirer of his work. Nor was it forgotten by his analysand and collaborator, Bion.

At the beginning of World War II Rickman had worked on a memorandum (the Warnmethford Memorandum, now lost) that outlined an active rehabilitation programme for traumatised soldiers. Bion, with his own traumatic experiences of World War I, knew how important these ideas could be, and we can see from the letters that they exchanged during the war how these ideas developed.

In 1942, Bion to Rickman: "*The first point about selection, as it has worked out in practice, has been the emergence of the psychiatrists as the peg on which the whole organisation hangs. This does not mean that our judgement on any particular case has been a deciding factor, rather which the presence of the psychiatrist in the unit has exerted a quite unmistakable influence in introducing a sane and fairly balanced approach to the problems of the unit as a whole. We first taught our lay colleagues, by refusing to be certain when we were not certain, that in the selection of potential officers there really was a problem. Thus, we paved the way for an absence of dogmatism in our approach to the selection. Our*

influence in this direction has I think been as invaluable as it is difficult to measure. But hundreds of officers strange to this work have now seen it and have been unmistakably struck by its importance. I must say a little about the influence we have had in checking quite dangerous pessimism and bringing something to changing into purposeful activity. In this respect, I felt myself to have played a big part; because when I first met the adjutant general, he was saying that officer material was bound to deteriorate and this indeed had been published in an official document circulated through all boards and elsewhere. I tackled this point at once and pointed out that it was quite fallacious. I said that by all precedents officers should not deteriorate in an army at war and that on the contrary army, if all were well, should sprout officers. I said that if it was not doing so, it was because the climate was wrong and as soon as a new atmosphere was abroad, one could expect the new shoots to come on instead of being frozen off." Later in this letter, he writes that "the thing about which I am keenest is to come to the touch tomorrow. I have been saying that no candidate should be allowed to come forward unless he has been voted by his platoon or company... Every officer I have mentioned this to, including many hard-backed regulars, have been thrilled by the idea. I pointed out to the adjutant general that if his privilege of election were granted as a sort of regimental privilege to the best regiments, a great increase of keenness was to be expected. Furthermore, officers of men would be compelled to think seriously about the problem of leadership and this fact by itself would lead to a growth of leadership". Later on, he says "there will be many difficulties in pushing this to the present point and I have learned the power of the mediocre mind as a really obstructive force." At the end of this letter, he urges Rickman to come and join him in the spearhead of an advance.

In 1946: "I suspect that group therapy may one day have a good deal to say about the factors making for health, or continued dependence in a hospital for physical ailments. I think I am still learning a good deal and to that extent there must be a lot in the group therapy technique. I am certain we must have a study group. This business needs studying. I find that one important thing with patients - dreadfully important and I kick myself for not having seen it before - is the need to let them make their own experiments and approaches however sterile they may appear to be. This time they need to feel in a family in which their sprouting curiosity and intelligence is not frosted off".

Now to Foulkes. We know from Harrison's research into the records of Northfield that Foulkes became the acknowledged teacher of group therapy, but that his ideas would be vigorously contested by Tom Maine, Harold Bridger and others. For them, his approach to group therapy was too tame, too conventional. In 1945, Tom Maine complained to Rickman: that the present state of development, which he saw as insufficiently dynamic, came about because of a cult of Foulkes-worshippers. This assertion Harrison feels was quite unfair. This issue of dealing with the here and now in the Bion/Rickman model continues to pervade our approaches to dealing with large groups, an issue ably dealt with by Gerhard Wilke in his chapter "The Large Group and its Conductor" (Building on Bion: Branches). He writes: "*It is clear that Foulkes's lessons are mostly in the small world and here it has been shown that his ideas have been under-utilised for the large group*". Foulkes claimed that the group conductor has to develop 3 roles in the service of the group: he has to be analyst, the dynamic administrator, and the translator. Through training, supervision and learning from experience the conductor eventually integrates these roles and develops a clearly identifiable group-analytic self, which the members of any group can use, abuse, perfect and defect as an object. What holds the conductor's personality together is his humanity, and more important than his technical tools are his integrity, honesty, directness and care. The boundary between the analytic role, the responsible citizen and the human being has to be translucent in the large group.

In fact, Harrison shows that in his last year at Northfield Foulkes' approach to the ward was very similar to Bion's, concentrating on the here and now and encouraging men to face up to the realities of their situation. "Perhaps this was the time when the two men's practices came closest to each other".

In 1948, Foulkes wrote his first book, "Introduction to group-analytic therapy", he clearly states that group analysis is not simply applied psychoanalysis, that it stands aside it, drawing its strength from the study of social processes, dynamic network theory and the practical experience came from Northfield, but also from clinical, small group therapy.

A final word about Rickman. He wrote some very influential, short papers on number and the human sciences trying to schematise the different names of one body, two body, three body, and four body psychologies. From this table of psycho-social relations that was discovered recently in his archives by Pearl King, shows how deeply Rickman continued to think about the significance of the human as always immersed in group experiences, from the one body to a multi-body, to mankind as a single united group.

Now I want to focus on divergences and convergences between the theories of Bion and Foulkes. Here I draw considerably on Ralph Stacey "*Complexity and Group Processes*". He looks at the foundations of Western intellectual traditions and draws out the differences intrinsic in following either Kant or Hegel. Bion is avowedly Kantian. He was influenced by his Oxford tutor, Paton, a distinguished Kantian. Bion searches for a model of the mind as his basis in the search for "the thing in itself", an unseen, non-sensory reality, ultimately ineffable, "O". Victor Schermer writes that he was well-read in and utilised the ideas of logical positivism, mirroring Bion's interest in mathematics, logic, eventually manifest in the Grid and the concept of transformation. Later, he moves to the other end of the spectrum of thought, to the great eastern and western mystics. Driven by the search for "Truth", he has moved from the philosophico-scientific logic, finally to the mystics and art as ways to get to the truth. Nuno Torres (Personal Communication) writes: "*To get to the truth about how things work is the best way to survive and develop; but human mind is full of flaws that prevent this (including the basic needs of social conformity) and traps to evade truth for evidences (including negation, projection, and hallucination)*". In the end Bion turned to mysticism and art as a way to get to truth, and in this way he opted for an "intuitionist" instead of an "intellectualistic" path for mental growth. But the tension between these two extremes is always there and can be mind-shattering (Memoir of a future). What of Foulkes: Stacey places him firmly in the Hegelian path: individual, groups, society, are all interwoven; society is both inside and outside us. Where indeed can we find the dividing line or is our need for that because of our need for categorisation and for preserving the notion of separate individuals. Norbert Elias has drawn our attention to the development of the notion of "homo clausus", the gradual withdrawal of the person into the recesses of the self in response to the increasing complexity of modern society. The aim of therapy is to move us towards "homo apertus", achievable through our immersion into the dynamics of small and large groups. "In contrast to Kantian thinking, where there is a duality of the individual and the social, Hegel presents a perspective in which they cannot be separated. Indeed, individuals arise in the social, which they are simultaneously constructing. This is clearly a paradoxical or dialectical perspective, in which individuals are simultaneously forming and being formed by the social.

Foulkes is not drawn to the "formless infinite", the ultimate truth which Bion strove to reach. His interest is in trying to find out why and how individuals and groups go about trying not to understand. In "Method and Principles" (1975, 1986), he writes a number of maxims:

- 6.- Trying to find out why and how the group goes about it not to understand. (By the way, also now how each patient goes about it not to change).
- 4.- Always follow the group. Listen before you intervene. When you think you understand, listen again and see whether it is confirmed.
- 2.- You should not have to communicate to the group in order to satisfy your own need, such as relieving your own anxieties.

I think that I can see here a similar spirit of exploration and search for the truth common to both of our pioneers.

Again Foulkes (157): *"Honesty towards oneself and others is fundamental. There must be a love of truth, even if it is disagreeable and contrary to personal advantage. Nothing has impressed me more than the degree to which people bend their minds, their emotions, their convictions, their opinions, even the very structures of their minds, according to their personal advantages or disadvantages, and changes of all sorts in their fortunes".* And of the spiritual, so central to Bion's search *"However, while as scientists we cannot well be true adherents to a particular religious system, the artistic side in us, the creative side, is a full equivalent for us. This is all the more the case as our very work enables us to make full use of this side".* In the end it comes down to what Goethe said so simply: *"Who possesses science and art is religious, who does not possess both of these should have religion".*

From my own contribution to the two volumes I have written "Bion and Foulkes on Empathy". Foulkes writes about empathy: *"Undoubtedly we need to have the capacity for empathy with our fellow humans... The idea of this empathy comes from a certain philosophical attitude, by seeing things in proportion, as part of the human problem in which we are all continuously involved".* He writes about a therapist's receptiveness, *"the creative function in a way like an artist, in a way like a scientist, in a way like an educator, like a poet".*

Bion never uses the word empathy: "Empathy and compassion" are his words. In *Cogitations* he writes that compassion and truth are centres of man, compassion as a feeling that he needs to express, an impulse he must experience in his feelings for others, and likewise compassion is something he needs to feel in the attitude of others towards him. Here he evokes the essential qualities in human relations of reciprocity and inter-subjectivity.

Both Bion and Foulkes create vectors which have points of convergence and which help us to uncover the deeper truth, which groups so often try to hide from themselves. The place of empathy, sympathy, compassion and pity, continue to call for our attention. When we annihilate those feelings we become inhuman, arrogant, and capable of horrific actions towards others whom we cease to regard as in any way being of the same common stuff as ourselves. Bion's experience in World War I immersed him in the horrors of fundamental warfare and he never ceased to draw on those experiences in his exploration of primitive psychic processes. As Foulkes did not undergo such trauma, he was not so powerfully drawn to such explorations.