

PATHWAYS IN GROUP ANALYSIS

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To meet up again on a project of considerable scope as was the III Regional Mediterranean Conference, as Hanne said in her presentation of the CD we edited, “offered an exceptional opportunity for presenting the multiple aspects of development of group analysis”; specially for our group of four (Juan, Hanne, Pere and I), giving us a new impulse for putting down in writing the work of Grup d’Anàlisi Barcelona.



One of the proposals was that every one of us describes his or her particular pathway in Groupanalysis, and here I admit great difficulty in starting to write about my own course, in a very difficult moment for all of us. At the first intent appears the question of how to include one’s own history in the process of the history of another? And the answer: This is not possible; one can only include what has been shared. I read and reread the pathways of Juan and Hanne... and, really, I could not connect myself more than in some partial aspects. Including in the case of Hanne, with such a long way traveled together, the dates did not coincide with Juan’s. I am afraid that he always went ahead of us all.

For the last three years we are making turns around Juan’s biography, and even if the themes and the highlights can be common to all the members of the group, and also to many others, the dates and the concrete facts distance us when we insert ourselves in our particular path. The creative way out of this particular knot, where we articulate the individual with the group, becomes concrete in the structure of the Blog of Gd’AB, as also in the intent of finding nodal elements and themes with which every one of us can identify our pathway in and with groups.

Finally, a way of positioning oneself and which explains the reasons why my pathway has multiple personal connotations: one cannot be a part-time “group analyst”, by the hour, when one charges, when one is in class, etc.; one is or is not a group analyst. This could be misinterpreted and I shall try to clarify it, since I would very much like that through the Blog or the List of Foro de Grupo Anàlisi we could talk about this. Group analysis produces profound changes in the way of understanding the individual, groups and society; these instruments make that, although “you don’t exercise as group analyst” at all time and place, you be one (something more profound), since your perception of reality is mediated by an experience which in many cases is transcendental in the development of a person.

One of the major preoccupations during these years of shared work with Joan, Pere and Hanne has been that the transmission of knowledge on “group analysis” is impossible without the experience and, moreover, this experience must be significative. It’s true, there is “knowledge”, but beyond this there is a “knowhow” and a “being”.

The prehistory of every one in relation to what finally crystallizes in knowledge, a knowhow, a way of being and of “groupanalytic” being

I always thought that life is full of points – nodal points, in which we take decisions which take us in a determined direction. From an autobiographic point of view in this section I shall try to point out some of the ones I think have taken me towards group analysis.

To be born is not something arbitrary; one is born in a family and in a particular socio-cultural context. Not without pride I usually say that I was born in the “Raval” (red-light district), in Cadena Street (famous between others, because there the killed “the kid of the sugar” ([noi del sucre](#)), one of the best known Catalan anarcho-syndicalist leaders. A “red” (left-wing) district of the city until the end of the Spanish Civil War, related first hand by my mother and my aunt, who saw their childhood broken by the war. During the Franco regime it became a marginal district, de workers and “people of the gay life” (I don’t know how gay could be the life of the prostitutes of the borough, but that is how it was known then).



Violeta Parra sang “To return to 17, after living a century, is like deciphering signs without being neither wise nor competent...” and returning to infancy and adolescence is something like it. For better or for worse, I have been writing for many years and at 19 I started the story of my biography (unfinished, of course) which presents my vision of the roots that link us like invisible threads (Mercè, June 1976). Here are some meaningful paragraphs related to my evolution and intuitions about “remembering” and “feeling-thinking” (the photograph of a couple of years ago also illustrates the idea of stop —station— and departures —choosing a direction.

... I remember that a great man, Pablo Neruda, published his memories under the title “I confess to have lived”, I don’t confess to have lived but to be living and feeling alive.

... I feel the need that my living experience and feelings acquire a certain written solidity that makes them less

deceitful with my future vision of them. I don’t want to forget how much I loved and hated, felt happy or wretched, illusions and castles in the air, solid ideas and thoughts for the future, all that makes of me at least a project of a person.

...time not only makes that we forget what happened, but it transforms it in such a way that nothing it has to do with what occurred and we are sufficiently beguiled to live from our own delusions.

I was born in an old borough which unites workers and vice, in Barcelona between the “Chinese” and the “Gothic”, to increase contrasts; in a narrow street which smelled badly, where even today during the night, children and old people look for food in the garbage. I was born then with eyes open to the beauty and the calm (which I always looked for in the “Gothic”) and the noise and caricatures of old women practicing prostitution. I was born between the beautiful words I read in the books which I loved always, and the crude realities that surrounded me. I was already born with the feeling of fleeing from this place at the same time that it attracted me and disgusted me...

Of which I am sure is that I learnt a lot from these contradictory surroundings, to live in uncertainty, to know that things are not what they seem to be, to tolerate frustration... An interesting history (the same as I was born to tell stories) you will say, but what does it have to do with the pathway in group analysis?

If we think in the idea of network, the primary nucleus is the family. I shall not enter into details of how my family functioned, but there is an important fact which marks a before and an after. My father dies when I was 10; this fact together with the mourning and the illness of my mother made that I matured very soon and that I start —together with my particular mourning— to have a role of observing the needs of the family as a whole (a feminine role). Half jokingly, half seriously I always say that there, by sure, started my autoanalysis, the tendency to analyze human relations and my own emotions.

But I also enjoyed an extensive family in two senses; the extensive family in relation with my mother while my maternal grandmother still lived, but also a very near extensive family formed by the neighbors of the house of the tenement in which we lived, also matriarchal. This is how I learnt that the networks of solidarity, support, security existed in this small space which was the courtyard of the neighbors. And a second network was in the street with the neighbors that made up a micro-society¹. Groups, groups, groups..., I recognize myself growing up in an environment of peers (adults) which offered sufficient security, even in an borough relatively insecure for people not belonging to it. To be re-recognized is a rare contingent nowadays in urban environments. Including the prostitutes who knew me all my life and who in the morning went to shop to the same stores everybody went to, at night (when I started to go out) turned into “mamas” who accompanied me home, called the night watchman... whatever, so that nothing bad would happen to me .

Cierto que esta red de la infancia acaba por asfixiarme cuando paso a la adolescencia, aquí reconozco el “afuera” y siento que puedo y debo salir del barrio que se va degradando lentamente, especialmente su tejido social. Analizar es escindir, separar, y del análisis surgen las diferencias con la gente del barrio que no tiene los mismos intereses que yo.

True, this network of childhood finished by suffocating me when I became an adolescent; here I recognize the “outside” and I feel that I can and must leave the borough which was degrading itself slowly, specially the social fabric. To analyze is to excind, separate, and from analysis emerge the differences with the people of the borough that do not have the same interests than I.

Juan speaks about his experience in the Opus; my experience between 13 and 18 years of age is in an excursionist center, in this case mixed, progressive and asserting our language (the Catalan). Although like all these centers, it was organized in age groups and had a hierarchical structure, but not excessively authoritarian. I feel that this was my first real encounter with a group of peers; I can take off my family rucksack, to put on a physical rucksack somewhat less heavy. There I learn to work in group, to do things between all... although this always is a little utopian.



In those years I consolidate other networks with friends of both sexes, “my families”, somewhat atypical but always with the idea of group at the back (the theatre group, the group of...). As I reflect on the groups to which I pertain, I am surprised to feel a sense of loneliness, of not totally fitting in... and now I realize that very early on (and totally unconscious) I always have taken the role of “the one at the boundary”.

¹ I relate these ideas with the ones of Pat de Maré on the large group and, concretely, with the concept of “Ethic-Koinonic”

Also culture has an important weight in my identity, I am more than anything Mediterranean, with all this implies from the way we have of communicating and approaching by touch, the music, the role of eating in our encounters. Reason and emotion always entangled in this half-caste inheritance which successive waves of invasions have left us with.

Training

Every one of us has had different training or formative experiences. I believe it is good to be able to think that we can arrive in different ways, with different theoretical integrations and experiences to a point of convergence where the dialogue between peers is possible.

1988 Licensure in Psychology (University of Barcelona)

1987-1990 Training in Group Dynamics (T-Group) with Pilar González (UB)

1989-95 Theoretical-practical training in groupanalytic techniques. Institution: Grup d'Anàlisi Barcelona. Tutor: Dr. Juan Campos. Accredited hours of training: 300 (Large Group) and 200 (Groups with a task and supervision).

1990 Licensure Degree in Psychology: Martínez, M. (1990) Training in communicative abilities. Master Thesis. University of Barcelona. Director: H. Boada Calbet. A "Cum Laude" by unanimity. (University of Barcelona)

1993 Doctor in Psychology: Martínez, M. (1993) Communicative Abilities: Incidents of training in communicative efficiency. The relationship between cognitive, linguistic and communicative abilities. Doctoral thesis. University of Barcelona. Director: Humbert Boada Calbet. A "Cum Laude" by unanimity (University of Barcelona)

I have multiple interests and, in consequence, part of my training has been formal, another part less formal and, finally, there remains an autodidactic part. In relation to my training, particularly in groups and in groupanalysis, this has not been a formal training; also I am interested in other group techniques as may be *T-group*, operative groups in teaching (Pichon-Riviere) or psychodrama; it has not been by my own desire, since for me group training and experience transcend having a title or an accreditation; for me this is part of me and of my life.

On the formal level, I went from the school of the borough (unitary, a luxury for a good intellect) to the school of Bosque (a very particular school, which I enjoyed a lot), to the religious school of the Sagrada Familia where I passed the elementary bachelor —not possible in the Bosque— and where I was granted a scholarship. I finished my bachelor's degree in the Boscán Institute and my pre-university studies in the Emperador Carlos Institute, at night since I alternated studies with work as an administrative.

These transitions did not help to establish lasting ties with the companions of my group; I had to start over many a times and, it seems that I am still in the memory of many school friends of the Sagrada Familia with whom I continued in the Boscán. This year, after many, we organized a reencounter and it was curious to find how much the others remembered me and our conversations. Obviously, with this "anarco-red vein" and even Masonic (inherited from somewhere) I stood out for organizing protests and strikes, and this in a school run by nuns! All of which I paid for with some punishment, to the annoyance of some of the long-suffering nuns, and some tears. The seed of a leader who gets into trouble was already there ;-).

In parallel, I attended two and a half courses of classical ballet at the Liceo (the Opera of Barcelona). I discovered that I was neither fit for rigidity nor for teachers who corrected us with the point of a stick. Fortunately, years later I could take classes of Jazz and... this agreed with my body. Now I can think that what my body did not admit my mind neither admits; nothing dogmatic imposed by simple authority of

somebody who believes he has it, nothing which cannot be understood and modified. Perhaps this is what has distanced me from the “official” schools of psychoanalysis, although I could integrate many of the ideas which come from different psychoanalytic authors.

To change to the Boscán, which was in the zone of the University, meant contact with people who went through their first years of university, the centre of which is the famous “SEU”; there I enter in contact with revolutionary and feminist ideas. The clearest memories are the long chats over a cup of coffee, discussing a bit of everything, learning something about the characteristics of the clandestine groups and mass phenomena which I clearly identify in the anti-Franco manifestations. This continued while I am at the Emperador Carlos Institute where I collaborate with companions members of the Catalan Socialist Party, but at that point I did not wish to comply with the servitude of a party. So, I continue on the boundary.

I entered university in 1974, the year before Franco’s death, attending the first year of Philosophy and Educational Sciences. It was a year of assemblies, strikes and, concretely, a strike of the PNN (non-tenured professors) —this is to say, few classes and a strong desire to change the world. And, of course, that year and the following are marked by the history of Spain and Catalonia: end of dictatorship, transition, demands for autonomy...

In 1976, I also started to study in the School of Artistic Studies in Hospitalet de Llobregat of [Ricard Salvat](#) (1934-2009), organized in the way of the German schools, a kind of a Bauhaus, like the interdisciplinary school of Weimar. I don’t remember how I obtained a scholarship; although, unfortunately the following year the school had to close down, so I attended only one of the two years of theatre. The discussions, the improvisations, the exercises of the Stanislavsky method... I remember kindly Joan Salvat; in his course we worked a lot with ourselves as instruments, the group class... This was almost my world.



I abandon the career in 1977, after having finished first and second year of the specialty of Psychology. The studies are not compatible with my work; I already had left the office to step onto the scene.

I meet my couple, Toni, we marry; in 1979 my first son Abraham is born and in 1980 my daughter Raquel. My academic and professional life goes through a pause since I decide to enjoy maternity and being able to bring up our children with us. On the personal level it is without doubt an important moment of maturation, the unruly adolescent lets in the young mother much calmer. This does not distance me from reading, writing and a thousand things we can do with and for our children.

I return to University in 1985 and, little by little, my vocation of teacher becomes clear. I ask for a working scholarship while I finish fourth and fifth year of Psychology; the scholarship links me to the Department of Basic Psychology. During those years, everything had changed: the PNN are now full professors, the SEU is a place where to enjoy oneself and drink or eat something, the companions have as an objective to obtain a title... and I also had changed. I am not anymore in the assembly with other companions, now I am class delegate... I experience my first process of institutionalization (or perhaps the second one, if we consider forming one’s own family is an instituting process).

During the fourth year, I choose the subject of “group dynamics” imparted by Pilar González and I attend a weekly *T-Group*. I write a paper comparing the work of Levin with the one of Moreno, which I don’t know if I still keep, but which obtains Special Mention. Pilar proposed that we continue the training in *T-Group*, so we continue a small group for two more years, the second one as observers and the third as group conductors. The group meets throughout these two years, coordinated by Pilar, analyzing the processes of the group we were observing and conducting.



Pilar González presents a paper on “Lines of creative innovation emerging from group crisis and conflicts” in the XVI Symposium of the SEPTG in Pamplona, an experience in which we had collaborated as members of the work group. Pilar also introduces me, during the mentioned Symposium, to the SEPTG, an important milestone for me, since I then know Juan and Hanne Campos with who I continue my training in groups. Once again I find a space where to grow in group and, in the SEPTG; I come to know many people who are to be important in my personal and group growth.

Here there is, then, a “waking” to group and group work. Something latent and unconscious which turns into a conscious need and, as I often said, “an addiction”. Yes, I confess, since then I am group addicted.

Of the Large Group of Barcelona to Grup d’Anàlisi Barcelona (1988-1993)

In 1988 Hanne, following a suggestion of Pat de Maré, convokes a large group in Barcelona. We start to meet every two weeks in the San Pablo Hospital during almost five years. There is where formally starts my pathway, although this group already had been meeting some months before with other companions, counting with the presence of “the old Pat White Beard”.

In a group of this type, little structured —beyond the call-up (space-time), with objectives that depend on the consensus of the group, and the conducting in principle limited to convoking —the basic objectives were the analysis of the group process in as much as it represented at the same time a micro-society which also was to be analyzed; although this objective was not always taken on board by the group, neither the compromise of continuity and implication in the project.

Preparing the Intergroup Symposium-Laboratory Metamorphosis of Narcissus: Group Identity or Group Culture (Barcelona 16-18 of April, 1993), we carried out an analysis of the process of the Large Group of Barcelona, as well as its written production. Then we said:

Actually the group counts with 10 active members: Isabel Admetlla, Hanne Campos, Joan Campos, Carmen Jauregui, Blanca Feldman, Susana Jover, Mercè Martínez-Torres, Pere Mir, Marta Ortega, Omar G. Ponce de León.

Perhaps we can stop for a moment to explain this “active members”. The group has become smaller during these years, more so if we take into account that at times new members had been incorporated, but not all the ones who left have stopped to belong to the group; they have left written imprints and active words which belong to the memory of the group. Beyond the “psi”, historians, professors, etc. have passed through the group. This evolution of membership has provoked phantasmies in us, anxieties which still are difficult to define, but which present three themes we think we should approach in our experience. In the first place, the variation and decrease of the components of the group seem to us to be related to the theme of narcissism, a subject we think of elaborating. In second place, and also related to narcissism, the problem of the multidisciplinary approach of themes. And lastly, we believe worthwhile investigating the fact that the majority of professionals that have continued in the group happen to be “psi”. There are many other themes with which we plan to contribute to the common task, but we believe that it is especially important that our contribution should remain close to our experience as a group.”

Returning to the ideas of taking on board, making a compromise and involve oneself... How much can you learn and grow in a group of these characteristics? My answer in this case is, as much as you are prepared to work with yourself and with the group. I recognize that I could work through many personal aspects and relations with others (work and personal), this meant that the work did not start and finish with every session but it implied continuity between sessions. It also often meant to write down thoughts and considerations coming up in the group and returned anew to its members. Subjectively, it seems that I learnt a lot and from a lot of people, we shared different models of conducting, observing and being in a group.

Although at any moment it had been a therapeutic group, it had been a group of growing, in any case as Joan Palet said, it was a group which "did no harm". This does not mean that it was an innocuous group, qualifying Joan Palet's phrase, but certainly it was pretty respectful—in spite of the discrepancies and differences between the members of the group, where we frequently touched the subjects of wars and of violence, but it never came to blows. Wars of succession, to kill the father, to kill brothers perhaps they emerged in the group but they only became manifest with or in other groups.

The group is a very potent sound box, the mirrors that return your image to you are multiple (something like going into one of these attractions of mirrors in a fair) and not always nice; changes are produced in oneself and in the way of interpreting reality; transferences and counter-transferences are not interpreted like in a therapeutic group or in the group of two of individual therapy (everyone has to make conscious, or not, his own, bring them to the group or not in function of the moment of the group or de status of who brings them). I don't doubt that for some people it could have been hard (not seeing satisfied their narcissistic expectations) and for standing five years in a group of these characteristics it is necessary to be prepared (predisposed) to tolerate quite some frustration. A situation so real as life itself!

My first impression I sent at the end of 1988 (the final written reflections of the trimester) and I said:

My first ideas turned around a theoretical reflection on the role of the group in personal growth, but after so many days I feel more inclined towards more personal aspects which this group represents for me.

My first expectations in attending this group were basically of training. It seemed a unique occasion that a group of "experts" or professionals very related to groups would reflect together on the group processes, the internal ones as the ones in relation to other groups.

If we were to make an analogy with systems theory, we could analyze our group like a system inserted in turn in other systems of higher order or wider, which in turn interact with other systems that contribute or represent their own individuals.

But perhaps the group has planned as an objective the analysis of its processes. I think that before the group fixes objectives, if it has to fix ones, it is necessary a time of "impasse" which is so rich of emotions, images, dreams... but which creates a certain ambiguity of sentiments in us in reference to the group.

We could think of the group as a child starting to talk. It seems that we first recur to a symbolic world, basically of visual impacts, where words themselves have very little meaning. Also, the first words of the child have many different meanings and at times it is difficult to know the one it wants to use is. We had, then, to learn to give a group meaning to all the individual contributions. We are elaborating a common language which will permit to understand each other, we widen our vocabulary and every time more it gives us the feeling of a common code and belonging to the group.

One of the anxieties we felt was the one of lack of time, but we can give it as much time as was necessary, if little by little we find common objectives, although not explicit, that are a priority for the group and not for every individual of the group.

To think together with others is a process infinitely more rich than to think by oneself; but we have to refine the "how" we can think together and to make that the group be enriching and a creative fountain for all its members. "I believe that we will arrive to it".

When the group had behind it about two years and in response to the demand of new people incorporating themselves, I wrote for the group a type of history, with touches of humor, but which I think describes the experience:

Extract of the verbal history of the newoldcarrierofthewrittenmemoryofthegroup, some days after the petition of the newnew.

...A long time ago came from the lands of northnorth the great masterpatwhitebeard, a group of the oldold met with him in the first place of the group during a large period of time. The story goes that this was a very intense experience, they had to overcome the great void (the gap which separated the ones from the others), to resist anxious silences, and look for a way of understanding one another. I cannot tell you more about that first encounter, but I also came to know the great master. He produced in me the impression that he was somebody who knew how to listen beyond words, who intervened few times but was listened to like an oracle, on occasions his words caused great impact —like when he talked about the word as an object of aggression— and on others we could not understand him —how achieve a cognitive "friendship" (he used the Greek term "Koinonia")? How cooperate in a large group to analyze social problems? You will forgive me if at times I lose the thread of the history, but memory plays bad tricks and for the moment we have not achieved a written code that gathers our events.

Where was I, ah! Yes! The first encounter, a chronicle from somebody of the north tells how impressed he was, so much that they lost themselves on the way back home. Afterwards there was a short transition till the migration took place to the new site-site, of fixed hour-place-day and convoked by-theonethatconvokes. These have been the only main ideas established there are no pre-established norms, there is not one and only group model, there is no unique objective, although every individual arrived with his own model and objective.

We, the new-old-ones, arrived about that time and we passed the strange rite of identifying ourselves without the others identifying themselves; a ritual, it seems, all the new ones have passed. There is a magical word which appeared constantly: "identity". We were looking for a group identity, we asked ourselves what type of a group were we: an organization (with what aims?), a group of investigation (what was our objective of study?), a confessional group (who was our god?) What social form did we reproduce? A family-patriarchal scheme, a democratic group, a type of organized anarchy... We also were looking for our identity within the group, but trying not to reproduce the roles given to us in the exterior. Yes, it is true; we knew that we were people related with conducting groups, immersed in work groups, investigation and therapy. A lot of psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, nurses, professors... preoccupied with processes, conflicts... which emerge in groups; but attempting to find new group structures (at times as if playing, as a possible luxury, as an ideal...). Perhaps this is the reason that we still have not defined ourselves, this is why our rules are not written, our identities come to the fore little by little and always in relation to the group.

We are not marvelous, far from it, we have been cruel when somebody dared to deny our existence, trying to impose his code or model, going against the unwritten norm. The history of the beheaded [the hall where we held the large group was dedicated to the founder of the nursing school, decapitated] had to do with all this; there was a time when speaking up was dangerous, the sanction imposed by the group was a symbolic decapitation difficult to bear, and many left.

The large group became smaller; the size of the group also preoccupied us. Absences were interpreted as aggressions towards the ones present, the empty chairs were a sign that the group lost its attraction, died a little. And death, also mourning occupied many sessions from the anthropological to the most intimate; every absence made us remember the death of another

person of another group of the past. The groups of our adolescence, the large families of before, the friend who went far away...

Hanne intervened little, perhaps it was for this that it was difficult to represent her as a leader of the group; at the beginning we expected of the one who convoked; interpretations, guidelines, objectives. I think that afterwards we stopped expecting it, although a halo kept her at a certain distance with the rest of the group; the empty chairs usually were on her sides marking a distance with the group. The one who convoked spoke some time ago about an objective, an objective shared by some of us; our group was without doubt a special frame where we could analyze social problems, what happens in groups, and that these reflections could give us new resources in working with other groups. The group, then, turned into a frame of reflection that reverted in our work and in ourselves, created chains of outside-inside-outside.

The truth is that we have only partially approached this objective; at times the discussions have been rich but the analysis little systematic, this has made me think that this group is not a task group or a group with a task, at least for the moment. This child-group needed and still needs time, like the child in discovering itself, first must recognize itself as different from the others, internalize the other in general to be itself; needs to elaborate codes, focus objectives, and it is difficult to go ahead of its natural development.

Heavens! I don't know about what I am talking, of the ones who died for the group, the ones born again, or the new-new. Some went because the hook (being in love) the group could have disappeared, others became fearful of the risk supposed by exposing themselves to the opinion of others, others progressively let the group go, and others...

New ones came with every cycle of renovation, but every time it was more difficult to know when they had come because the group assimilated them within a few sessions; this was the impression of the group, although perhaps the newcomers did not experience it that way.

The personal compromise and also its external reflex (the social compromise) was a subject of clear divergence; was it personal liberty that was a priority or the compromise of being (day-hour-place) with the group. What other activities could excuse us from the tacit compromise but not formalized? What pressure was felt with more force, the rejection of the group because of absence, or perhaps the feeling of guilt about leaving an empty chair?

And now, I hope you forgive this oldnew who told you something about the history of the group but perhaps has not known how to give you the key for deciphering it. In each phase there are many experiences and group sessions, and this intuitive and sensitive knowledge is difficult to transmit. One is not conscious that the fire burns until one has been burnt. We don't know how a group experience affects us until we have been immersed in one. The group can be a source of fear (not to be or to be swallowed), can have a therapeutic effect, be an evasion from reality (a group is always a world apart), a privileged space, a thousand more things or nothing at all because this also depends on oneself and the relations with the others. In the group, willingly or not, we repeat old schemes, we are ourselves or at best what we would like to be (like on a cruise or vacations with people we don't know), we can be sincere or find a way of not being it (although the group will not permit this for long), we can be part of the group and/or the group forms part of ourselves.

And here stop the notations of the story of the oldnewwhokept...

Precisely, one of the aspects we elaborated a posteriori was the idea of "group identity" which is assembled in the material of the Symposium-Laboratory already mentioned in the following way:

Leaving open the question about what could unite us in the group, without giving an element of identification, forced people to question themselves about their expectations. This led to desertions and to attempts of defining the group negatively: what it was not or what we did not want it to be. We should be watchful about the danger of the institutionalization of the group! It also made evident the difficulty of uniting the different interests of every member. The professional discourses

were not useful, more to the contrary they confirmed the individual identity instead of looking for what could unite us. This situation made us think that it seems that we tend to define our relation with the symbolic world through a paternal figure, an authority or an idea-leader, when the problem really seems to be more related with how we manage ourselves as a species. What hurt our narcissism are the differences.

The lack of motivation that took some members to desert the group at the same time put into play the question of group identity in relation to the exterior. There stayed in the group those people engaged to continue questioning the difficult relationship between the individual and the collective. This relationship is interfered the moment somebody appropriates him/herself of the group or the language. In principle the group is thought of as a place where we can put into play the metaphoric function of language, this is to say the possibility that there are diverse ways of interpreting human reality, in other words that there is no only truth but ways of responding differently to human problems. It is also the place where to articulate collective and individual objectives. Here appeared one of the questions more difficult and disconcerting: Have we desired the group? or what group have we wished for? Our pathway shows that everyone has wished for a group his own way. At that point is put into evidence the step that goes from the individual to the group generically, understanding "the question of group" as something very symbolic and, if we wish to avoid appropriation and dominion of ones over others, which makes it necessary to pass through a plural deliberation, a shared debate.

I must add that an important element was when Hanne decided not to go on coordinating the group. The group must coordinate itself and all the phantasies deposited in the conductor make that many people abandon because they feel "without a head" (I still remember various sessions talking about the decapitated). There were also a number of discrepancies between those who wishes to work in group and those who came to "have a good time" but did not wish to commit themselves.

The first presentation of the experience of the large group we took to the Symposium of the SEPTG, in Madrid (28 and 29 April, 1990). We convoked the group, and I remember the task of opening and closing the group, which curiously was interpreted as me being the conductor, bringing up funny associations (now I find them funny) like identifying me with the seductive Eva (I still don't know what type of apple I offered), or commentaries of other "young" people feeling envy of what they felt was my security. Me, sure? Not much, but confiding in the members of our group present in different places with whom — although it was difficult to understand— we were co-conducting the group, or simply to let it go on by itself, which at times is the best for making headway.

During this phase of the group we analyzed all the written production as a previous task towards Narcissus. After a first version of Hanne's I felt the need to write about the persons in the group, a letter for all, for every one of them... With the years passed it is evident that the relationships have changed, but I would like to share my notes on Juan, Pere and Hanne.

Juan, you asked yourself some time ago if there was a Dios, you tried through seduction and words, through authors and theories, occupy this role. Perhaps not deified but as a director of an orchestra somewhat unhooked and "laissez-faire" but a director in the end. Probably you would like to manage us, and we let you at times, on condition that we don't introduce the subject of language, communication or symbolization which surrounds transmits, gives name to the world in which we live. Don't you realize that the group is not so much interested in heads as in feet with which to tread a way? We have not been as intolerant with differences as the ones who wanted to sell us (like in a fair) the merchandise of their knowledge. We were interested in histories, they amused us, but below the role we wanted the person and if there was not this surrender we stopped being interested in the histories. No, don't misinterpret me, it is alright to introduce concepts and theories as you do of late, but in the group I prefer the Juan who had lost his friend, who elaborated a loss, who relived the Civil War, preoccupied with illness and death, with believes, because I feel him nearer to me as a human being. Often (and at the beginning he did not like it too much) I say to

Joan (Palet) that I would have liked to have a grandfather like him, with stories and jokes to the point, going fishing and talking about then when... (And he said with his habitual sarcasm, that I reminded him of a nurse girlfriend, during the war). And I would have liked to have a father, a teacher like you, because feel that you give wings to your symbolic children and the opportunity to find you again.

Always when I read the texts of Pere I am surprised by his capacity to remember the novel o the text most convenient for the subject under discussion, also surprises me his verbal fluidity, his sensibility and profoundness he does not show often when speaking. I think that his silences are terribly productive but it is a shame that he does not let himself is known more in the group. You see, Pere, I take the distance of the text and I communicate you indirectly what I think as if I could not do so directly, as if I could not tell you, I always have felt a certain distance which is in the way of communication.

Hanne, it is peculiar, how to talk to you?, I feel you so flexible in this sense that I believe if now I invented a new language you could understand it. What a strange bond ties me with you, in Pamplona it was like love on first sight, to know you and confide in you was something immediate. I could not see in you a mother (I already have one and fortunately I have not lost her prematurely like my father or grandparents) but the friend, at least that is how I feel you on a symbolic level. I am conscious of how different we are, but no matter, there is something essential we share; the differences are only little obstacles. Perhaps like you I also cry for the destiny of this species which learnt to dominate its instincts through symbols, a dominion which does not imply their elimination but their transformation. By means of social habits instead of threatening and confronting, we deceive and trip each other up (more civilized, no?). The instinct of survival is transformed into an instinct of aggression and competition; and with the objective of perpetuating the species we apply all our creative spirit to sophisticated weapons and techniques which make us feel like Dios. We have created gods to our image and likeness, gods that punish and give norms of conduct, ambivalent gods with the capacity to create but also the capacity to destroy, gods able to love but also able to devour their own children for perpetuating themselves as individuals. We substitute natural signs by artificial signs (sweat by perfume, sentiments by rationalizations...) It seems as if one of the driving forces of the appearance of language in the humans was culture and cooperative society; perhaps the instrument has escaped our control and now it is the instrument which shapes our culture and our non-cooperative society. I don't know. The bold frame of reference which you present for advancing comes near to my own ideas, in many senses, but more than anything by the wide perspective you integrate (it can be approached from sociology, philosophy, biology, psychoanalysis...) Will we be able to overcome the dualities? Are there not many colors between white (the sum of all colors) and black (which is the absence of light)? Will we find the way of solidarity? Will we find a language with which to communicate and not for being communicated...?

After so many years working with the three, now it seems curious to me this first appreciation of Juan, of whom deep down I liked more the person than the professional although demanding his function of father-teacher. Our relation throughout the years has so loved that I never had to claim his personal self, since he was always there and this way we could work on other subjects. With Pere, as is natural, has grown the climate of confidence and I believe we have been able to overcome the initial distance present in the large group, when collaborating in a smaller group and share more personal aspects, in the end we have a similar age. And with Hanne, what calls my attention is the initial identification of affects and subjects of interests, which has not diminished but on the contrary... every time we could share more and more.



After the organization of the Intergroup Symposium-Laboratory Metamorphosis of Narcissus: Group Identity and Group Culture, in which I functioned as secretary and editor of the working document, together with Hanne Campos; what was left of the large group was dissolving itself following the effort implied in the elaboration of the material emerged from the symposium. And what follows forms part of another period of history... the one of GdAB.

I must add, thinking in the [conceptual scheme](#), that **learning is a continuous process; the idea of lifelong learning is desirable for all and indispensable for the group conductor.** An open and flexible attitude and way of proceeding, a capacity for critical thinking —permeable to integration (between theories and disciplines) but also rigorous with that which is not acceptable or cannot be integrated, the continuous task of reflection and “cognition”, all together go into constructing the “toolbox” of everyone.

Going and coming back

(Encounters and dis-encounters / Inside and outside —something of this resounds).

Reading the title “Coming back” makes me think in the real meaning it had for Juan and Hanne, in their migrations, the feeling (also frequently expressed by Susana Kesselman²) of not being completely of one place. I have not had this experience, but I do feel that at a symbolic level I shared this feeling. Especially in relation to institutions and associations where the internal changes —the attitude (to live groupanalytically) make that one feels permanently a foreigner. I also relate it with the question we often made ourselves of being always like “a man/woman on the boundary”³

Who has not at some time felt a stranger in his/her own house? Have you not felt this sentiment of “alienness”, of not belonging to any place, or group? Or, while we develop and grow, others (which before we recognized as from the same “clan”) come to be “the others”, when before they were a “we”. Everyone has made different choices, one grew one way and another in a different way, we don’t recognize each other anymore and, finally, with the pain of loss we don’t share any longer. It is very frustrating not to recognize oneself in the mirror, although one should also admit that this reflection was perhaps only an illusion, something which is desolating.

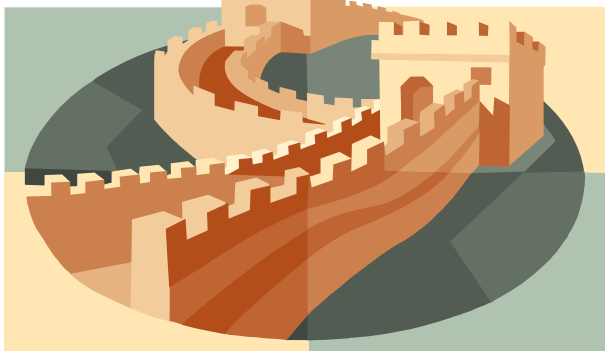
² My comings and goings have taken me three times to Buenos Aires, where I have intimate friends. On my second trip I knew Hernan and Susana Kesselman, I could share very beautiful moments with them, on top of attending some of their workshops. Susana made me a present of her last book of the moment (S. Kesselman (Buenos Aires 1998) *How to tune your body without going to California. Emotional intelligence in the underdevelopment.*) which I read on the plane on my way back. It was so much to the point that I rapidly wrote a letter to Maria (Susana) the protagonist of the book, “Talking to and with Maria”; perhaps it serves to ask us where the frontiers really are.

³ In this sense, I think, was very important the work we had done in Grup d’Anàlisi Barcelona preparing the Intensive Workshop in Group Analysis on the subject of “From Psychoanalysis to Groupanalysis: the difficult pathway towards a group culture” (1994)

As I said in the preamble, this sensation of exile I experienced for the first time in relation to my borough, even when looking for refuge in the little streets of the Gótico trying to draw in the history of my city, my street, my people stopped being this. With whom could a talk about...? Almost with nobody... I remember that a family friend said to me, when I was 18: "I don't understand how you were able to grow up in this environment"... I suppose that now they would say that I am a person with resilience ;-).

In 1986 we moved to the Eixample, leaving the house where my grandparents had lived, than my parents and afterwards my own family. Nowadays even the Cadena Street does not exist anymore, converted into Rambla del Raval, although the tenement in which I lived, constructed in 1888, still exists. The new wave of immigration has changed the color, the smells and the music of the streets.

In relation to my country, Catalonia, I feel every time more identified with it. Especially, I feel well as citizen of Barcelona, I am an urbanite and live in a privileged city: art and culture, cross-fertilization, sea and mountain... a lively and open city. With these sentences one says, giving oneself a little importance, often I have said to feel myself Catalan, European and a citizen of the world. Internet has made possible to make this reality of being a world citizen come true; and to be connected with people who live very far away but with whom one can maintain communication. Although the sentence is pompous, the implication in the way of thinking is important; the capacity of seeing the part and the whole should be developed; from the space best known to the ones unknown to you, open to experience and living together with other cultures and other forms of representing reality; once again, flexibility and the capacity of putting oneself in the place of the other, to be able to represent the personal and the foreign, always being respectful with these other ways of looking at the world. If we don't try it, communication will be impossible.



In an open letter to the large group of Barcelona (April 1992) precisely I remarked how the identification with our nation can be a source of conflict. I said (in Catalan): *In the last session had emerged the sense of nation, Catalan nationality concretely, for some of us and, perhaps for the first time, I have notices how strong were the ligaments with the concepts elaborated and how we could arrive to violence, verbal if you like, due to a concept of which we shared at least a part of the meaning... The two women discussing were Catalans but "I would never make a flag of my*

Catalan origin, like I neither would think of a group as a tree because, although I feel it to be a living being, I prefer giving it wings more than roots. Does it have to do with how we feel the roots are planted in our soil? It's possible. You have in Catalonia the roots, I have there the place where I want to rest from a long flight". ^{xxxxx}

The discomfort enclosed in the "where does everyone belong to" (be it origin, believe, discipline or accreditation) is a phenomenon that always appears in the groups, appears violently, as a weapon to discredit the other. Like phenomenon of differentiation and delimitation of boundaries, when one's own identity is threatened by the group.

In my own group, Gd'AB and in other spaces like the SEPTG, I also felt at times the "alienness" of the non-psychoanalyst, the non-therapist, a type of a "de-merit" which sometimes has been an obstacle with some people. If something tranquilized me in time it was that I knew every time a little more of psychoanalysis and, especially group analysis which is what I was interested in, while the ones who pointed out my lack, never integrated or tried to integrate all I could contribute from my psychological perspective or from my experience in groups in teaching.

Perhaps the nodal points of this coming and going center on the following aspects: acceptance of one's own limits, becoming conscious of oneself in the group (without loss of personal and professional identity), capacity for rapid changes in perspective (to be inside and to be outside), be open to differences as sources of richness and creativity (in spite of that homogeneous groups are more comfortable), attitude of mutual respect... To know that deep down we all are strangers, immigrants, aliens... at some moment and in some place.

Talking about limits, "the group analytic way of being personally and presently" at times is an obstacle in institutions. To conduct a group is a revolutionary element for a system and all institutional inertia tries to avoid, make fail or eliminate these way of proceeding which end up questioning the very system. For the system to maintain itself it needs changes "as if" something was to change, but for nothing to really change. The institution I know best is the University; neither within the organs of government nor outside as a representative has it been possible to introduce changes in its functioning, nor through cooperative work groups. It is so frustrating that one stops making the effort, keeps on the boundary and spends one's energy on ones class-groups because there at least some group seeds grow.

Groupanalytic method in education and training

I am still convinced that the groupanalytic method is useful in the training of any professional, that it is a tool for thinking and proceeding in a different way; even more in this global village, with much information at our disposal which must be classified, assimilated, rejected... The contents is still important but more important still are the tools for working with which we accede to new information. Including at the University we mark our teaching objectives on three levels: contents, competences and attitudes. These objectives cannot be attained with traditional methods of transmission of knowledge.

We can add wider reflections in relation to training, questions about if the objective is to train, to obtain a title or to accredit oneself. Perhaps, the three are relevant on a professional level, but we cannot avoid the fact the last aim is the training of professionals and not a simple accreditation. In the "psi" world, at least in the Spanish context, this subject of accreditation is not at all resolved and we are going around in circles for the last 30 years. A strange dissociation between University, professional colleges and institutions and societies which accredit training from a concrete theoretical perspective does not help to resolve this subject of accreditation of therapists.

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I entered Barcelona University, concretely the Department of Basic Psychology, with a scholarship of collaboration in 1986 while I completing the last two courses of Psychology. In 1988 I was granted a scholarship of personal investigator and teacher; this meant working simultaneously in teaching and investigation, and the required doctoral courses. Then I became assistant professor and, finally in 1997, I passed the examination of tenured professor. They are now 20 years of professor in the University where I have given numerous subjects and practicums, on master, doctoral and post-doctoral levels, with student groups ranging from 2 to over 100. I have directed a doctoral thesis and three master theses. I

have investigated in three fields: communication, high capacities and groups. In these three fields I have published some papers as can be seen in my CV.

My major preoccupation always has been to offer the students tools for learning; therefore I have always prepared my own class material. The latter has been developing with time and actually has turned into a virtual space (a virtual class) which gives continuity to the face to face activity and is eminently interactive.

Group analysis, together with other conceptual tools, has permitted me to reflect on the teaching function, innovate with the students and work with groups of interested professors in improving the quality of teaching in the University.

Also a very interesting experience turns out to be my work as teacher in a Master of Dance Therapy Movement, this time training therapists and realizing more profound group work, with a continuity of two year courses.

What has been the direction of my reflections... Let us see something I prepared for the Pensum of the two-weekly seminar on "Psychoanalysis and Sociology", directed by Juan Campos, which the members of Grup d'Anàlisi Barcelona gave during the second semester of the course 1993-1994 (see Martínez, 1994).

T. Burrow⁴ say (1917, s/p) that

"...all education is no more than a conscious adjustment to life. By education, in this case, I think in the conscious recognition and the direction of the processes understood in the totality of the experience which we know as life."

This definition of education makes us reflect on the role different psychological tendencies can play in the innovation of the educational practice. When we speak of education, we refer to something more than school, institute or university, this is to say, we don't mark educational stages nor do we separate "formal" education from the "informal" one, since as human beings we have the gift of being able to learn from the moment we are born till the moment we die and often what we learn from life (peak experiences for Maslow (1968) shapes our future more than institutionalized education. In this case, however, we will limit ourselves to the "formal education" since our last objective is contribute dynamics and change to the traditional educational methods. This proposal emerges from theoretical reflections as well as the proper practice of the professor and investigator.

When we apply psychological knowledge to education there emerge various problems:

A lack of integrating postures, which implies partial methods that are habitually contradictory. In many cases it is an attempt to apply directly a therapeutic technique or theoretical concept, without the necessary adaptation to the objective and the medium; this has obstructed more than helped the teaching task.

- Derived from the former aspect, there is a split between the affective and the cognitive aspect of the student and the professor. In terms of T. Burrow (op.cit), a "conflict" between objective-conscious- knowledge and subjective-unconscious-life. This implies a partial conception of the human being on the individual level (affective-cognitive) and as a member of the social group (family, culture, etc.).
- The difficulty of considering the class-group as a unity in interaction, which promotes partial models for the student, for the student-professor, etc. In other words, the resistances to integrating group work in the classroom for the modification this implies for the model student-professor-object of knowledge.

⁴ The authors mentioned, in consequence the bibliographical references appear in the papers uploaded in the Blog.

- The resistances to innovate the traditional educational methods and, consequently, the feeling on the part of the educational centers that the other science wants to occupy the place of didactic and pedagogy. One again a split, in this case due to the difficulty of realizing interdisciplinary work at least on two levels: between disciplines, and between basic investigation and the application in practice, this is to say, between investigators (theory) and professionals.

We think that innovation in the field of schooling, including from kindergarden up to higher education, with the objective of producing autonomous individuals in the acquisition of knowledge and integrated in their social group, would have to contemplate some of the following aspects:

- A model of processing information which should contain a theory on learning and storing knowledge.
- A model of transmission of knowledge, this is to say a model of communication.
- A model of functioning of the classroom, since the class-group can be contemplated in many different ways; one alternative which would be logical is to contemplate it as a “group” with the implications it has.
- A conceptualization of the role of the professor or tutor with the necessary questioning of the concepts of authority, of possessing the “knowledge”, etc.
- A reflection on the student with his own characteristics (Maslow, 1968), with learning previous to formal education (Vigotsky, 1974), etc. In other words, a unique and different human being who should be offered a rich medium in experiences so that he can develop his capacities and preferences al maximum.

In essence, the questions which underlie this introduction are: How to create dynamic processes of teaching-learning? How to foment understandable learning? How to overcome the barriers between experience and knowledge? How to motivate and stimulate autonomous and reflective thinking? I suppose that many teachers we pose ourselves these questions, although we don't always find the way of responding. Even if we find answers on a theoretical level, we not always count with the necessary instruments to carry them out in practice. A constant task of reflection and adjustment is necessary between our frames of reference and reality, keeping in mind that all the suppositions we start with are approximations of the answers we are looking for, and this always leaves an open space for creativity and teaching innovation.

The hypothesis to start with, the frames of reference, and I suppose that my own attitudes incline me towards a constructivist model of learning (Martínez, 1994, 1999; Martínez y Martínez, 1998; Pozo, 1989) y learning group (Vygotsky, 1977, 1979; Pichon-Rivière, 1977). This positioning is worth clarifying, since under the umbrella of theories of constructivist teaching-learning there are a number of contributions and conceptions that are not comparable one with another. My contribution in this sense is personal and selective; there are other constructivist visions, since it is the synthesis between the different theoretical frames of reference and the practical experience of the professor.

We think like Vigotsky (1977, 1979) that there exists a social construction of knowledge which is mediated by symbolic tools, and that the human being is not a passive object but an active being in the construction of himself. Vigotsky (1984) rejects the approaches which reduce learning to an accumulation between stimulus and response, because for him there are human-specific traits such as language and consciousness cannot be reduced to associations or stop being objects of study of psychology. In this sense, he considers that the human being does not limit him/herself to respond to stimuli but acts transforming them, and this is possible thanks to the mediation of instruments. Without a doubt, taking into account this conception, communication and the interpersonal relation between professor and student or between students acquires great relevance. Given the fact that a great part of education is transmitted in an oral way, this type of oral transmission implies diverse interpretations of

one and the same discourse. The construction of the symbolic representation of reality is a process of internalization and this process supposes qualitative changes due to the form that every one of us "interprets" what the others say. Group communication between peers, and between these and the professor, implies contrasting the different interpretations, clarifying possible ambiguities and misunderstandings, a process which does not take place when the communicative process is not interactive.

The instruments of mediation are proportioned by the social medium and the acquisition of signs is not a direct copy of the external medium, but these have to be internalized, psychologically reconstructed on an internal level. For Vigotsky, the learning-development will be a transformation of external and social actions into internal and psychological actions. In his own words: "In the cultural development of the child, all function appears twice: first, on the social level and, later, on an individual level; first, between persons (interpsychological) and, afterwards, inside the child itself (intrapsychological). This can also be applied to voluntary attention, to logical memory and to the formation of concepts. All superior functions originate between human beings". (Vigotsky, 1979, p. 94).

A proposition as this one about the model of teaching-learning goes far beyond the description of the process of acquisition of knowledge since it includes also some characteristics of the model of transmission and of interaction in the classroom. We postulated a model of transmission centered on dialogue and a dynamic and group functioning in the classroom, surpassing the traditional method of unidirectional transmission and individual learning.

Important is the observation of Pichon-Rivière (1970) in reference to that the teaching groups are groups one of whose objectives is learning "certain contents". Many models forget the transmission or elaboration of knowledge the same way that they criticize the classical models of teaching that forget the individual or the emotional part of the student. To fit together personal growth (subjective) with conscious learning of scientific subjects culturally transmitted would be the desirable.

Given the continuous advances of scientific investigation, in any area in which we work, another of the objectives of teaching should be to foment autonomous and critical thinking of the curriculum materials, though, it is not a question of transmitting finished information but to present instruments which allow the students to investigate and reflect on the proposed material. In other words, **learning to learn.** Pichon-Rivière states that there is only one way of doing this: "transform the students from passive receptors to co-authors of the results, achieving that they use, that they take charge of their potentialities as human beings. In other words: we have to energetize and dynamize the capacities of the students as well as the ones of the teaching body... In science we not only advance finding solutions, but also, and fundamentally, creating new problems, and if necessary training not to be afraid to provoke them. In this action, the student learns to problematize as well as employ the instruments for finding solutions and put forward certain ways of solutions" (op.cit. p.61-63). This way, then, the student as well as the professor should learn to think, not only individually but using dialogue as an enriching formula and alternative of individual thought.

One of the advantages of confronting different learning processes of one and the same subject, is the possibility of receiving information of the rest of the components of the group; also, the professor can clarify through dialogue the confused concepts and questions; in fact one learns more from what one believes to have learnt. "The information a group receives is greater than it can verbalize, and this is also valid for its members considered individually; in other terms, one always learns more from what one believes, than what one can verbally demonstrate or take in consciously." (Pichon-Rivière, op. cit p.78). Anyhow, to benefit from learning in a group it is necessary that all the members of the group take responsibility in preparing previously the discussions; otherwise they only take from the group without giving anything in exchange. This produces conflicts in the group and tensions which alter a good work dynamic (see examples in Abercrombie and Terry, 1978).

At this point we can come back to the role we can assign to the professor in a group and which we could call one of mediation in the acquisition of knowledge, as Vigotsky points out when defining the "the zone

of proximal development". The tutor mediates, offers instruments of mediation so that the student can "reflect on", learn new concepts, or resolve problems that on his own he still is unable to solve. It is important to point out that Vigotsky (1979) speaks about the adult or tutor at the same time than about the more capable companion, this is to say, a peer more expert in some subject. These roles, evidently, can be interchanged depending on the situation; because of this group work acquires a vital importance.

The learning group is a group with a task and not a therapeutic group, although indirectly, the adequate management and analysis of the emotional problems coming up in the group benefit psychologically the members of the group. In terms of Pichon, an operative group "is an assembly of persons with a common objective, which they try to approach operating as a team... In the field of teaching, the group prepares itself for learning and this is only achieved in as much as one learns, this is to say while one operates. The operative group has problems, resources and conflicts which must be studied and attended to by the group itself, as they appear; their examination is made in relation to the task and the proposed objectives" (Pichon-Rivière, 1951, p.57).

To achieve an understandable learning experience, mediated by dialogue, it is indispensable that the object of knowledge can be included in a network or structure and be assimilated (Ausubel, Novak y Hanesian, 1976). This implies that a professor know his students sufficiently well as to create "including concepts" in terms of Ausubel or "mediating" in terms of Vigotski, which make possible the incorporation and internalization of new knowledge.

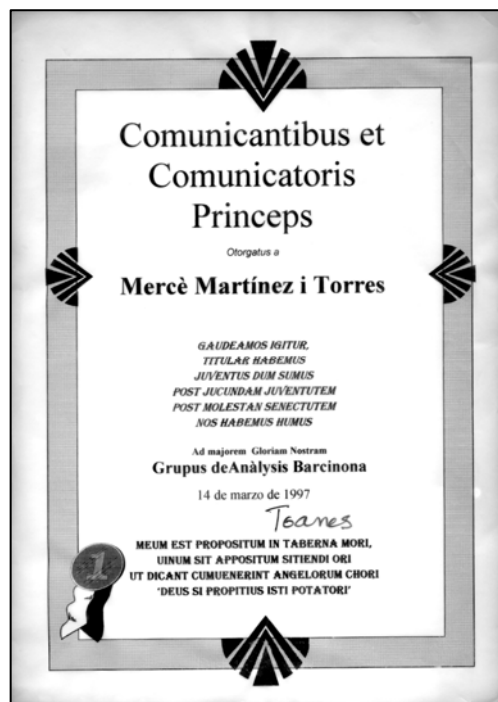
Ausubel's proposals center on learning produced in the context of education, this is to say in situations of assimilation of knowledge through instruction. One interesting aspect of Ausubel's theory is how to incorporate new concepts (especially, the scientific ones) starting from the concepts the student has formulated previously in his everyday life. His theory puts the accent on the idea of the organization of knowledge in structures and on the restructuring produced due to the interaction between internal structures or already adapted ones in the individual and new information; a difference with other constructivist theories, in that he attributes important weight to the instruction as a motor of restructuring. For Ausubel (Ausubel, Novak y Hanesian, 1976), there are certain necessary conditions for learning to be significant, in relation to the material to be learnt as well as the conditions of the subject and the way in which the material is organized for facilitating its being learnt.

Often the institution itself is turned into an obstacle for the task of teaching and, especially, if the former can question the latter in some way. In 1917, Burrow already warned about the sacralization of the institutions and what this could mean for the individuals when asking themselves the following question: "What social, economic or political order can secure the prevalence of the one who wishes to have a full individual life, when one thinks of the time and alterations this can provoke in every institution, at this moment firmly established and on some occasion sacred?" Pichon-Rivière shows his conviction that the institution must be questioned until it is converted in an educational instrument; and he expresses this the following way: "The Institution in which education is imparted must in its totality be organized as an instrument of education, and in turn, radically questioned in a permanent way. Conflicts of an institutional order transcend, in an implicit manner, and appear as distortions of education itself. The conflicts not made explicit or resolved on the level of the institutional organization, are channeled on lower levels, in a way that the student comes to be a kind of recipient into which the former fall and make impact" (op.cit. p. 62).

In fact, the obstacles I pointed out more than 15 years ago still are the same; it is the institution itself together with the resistances to change of the professors and students that limit the possibilities of professional learning and personal development. The individual efforts of professors and students are diluted in an institution where the important thing is more an "as if changes are produced" than that changes really produce themselves. This produces a feeling of loneliness and, often, a generalized burn out... and in this situation it is difficult to maintain motivation and feel oneself an agent of change.

Even if "cooperative work" between professors is promoted, this is limited to questions which do not transcend or provoke changes in the structures and, of course, the conclusions of these work groups are

not taken into account in decision making. The movements of renovation are phagocytized, systematized and de-naturalized in a way that they serve the objectives of the system.



Some of the experiences carried out with the students are described at the beginning of this section and will be uploaded in our Blog. I can say that I am still motivated; the relationships, the complicities established within the group-class are sufficient motor to go on with other groups. The endings, every year with every group-class are emotive, clear symptoms that bonds have been established between people and the subject... the seeds have given fruit, not in all but in many of my students. And I always learn from them; it is a relationship of mutual respect not exempt of critique that helps me improve as a teacher.

Of course, I would not have followed this path without the experience of the large group and of belonging to Gd'AB. And I would not have done so without Juan and Hanne Campos who have always been on my side, offering support and contention, recommending readings, lending me the corresponding book, being and accompanying me in the rites of academic transitions (see the diploma Juan prepared when I achieved my tenure). I have never been alone in this hard pathway, they have always accompanied me and always will.

They are intellectual parents in many senses, especially in the "know-how", loving parents but also demanding —how it should be, parents which have let me grow without annulling my signs of identity as professional. On another level, also the rest of companions who formed part of the large group and of Gd'AB, as also of the SEPTG, collaborated in this personal and professional "growing".

We with others. The professional associations

The nucleus group of Gd'AB from 1994 onwards makes an all out effort towards working with other groups; the material that emerges from the laboratories/workshop is elaborated in the nucleus group. There follow other projects already begun and taken ahead by some of the members (some remunerated, others not).

I have often posed myself the question, if a task group that does not get directly remunerated for this task, can maintain itself on a longtime basis. The necessary reformulation of objectives, joining individual interests with the ones of the group and articulate them is a process which has its wear and tear. The renovation of members and the changes of instituted roles is neither easy.

The group maintained itself in an ambiguous relationship in reference to our projection in wider professional ambits. The conflict in a way had to do with where we wanted to put our energies; the more we invested in the exterior it seemed that less time/space we were leaving for the projects of the group. It was a false conflict because a part of the projects of the group precisely were outside the group.

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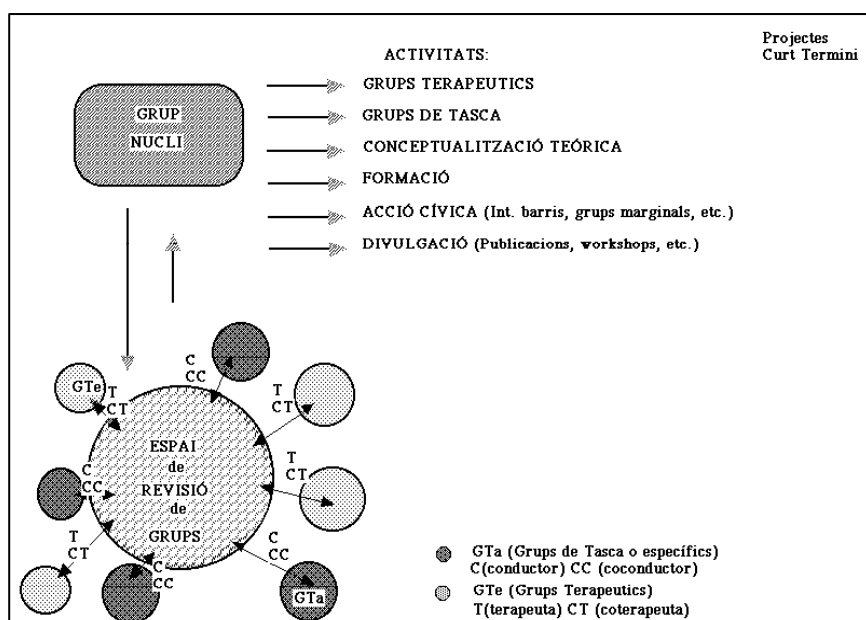
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The small group which was left of the large group of Barcelona, five of whose members are of Gd'AB, had become a task group and as can be clearly seen, within the group there is a small organizing nucleus in which I feel included. Not in a very explicit way I become a part of Grup d'Anàlisi Barcelona together with Juan and Hanne Campos, Pere Mir, Susana Jover and Isabel Admetlla. For example, in reference to the Symposium in the reformulation of objectives of 1994 is stated that "at that moment Gd'AB took on the task of convoking, coordinating and organizing the experience". I thought... eh! I looked for the meeting

place, hie... and officially I did not belong to Gd'AB (these complaints we always have when working in group), the reality is that I already was completely incorporated in the group... the group switched to Wednesdays morning which was the day we met every week.

A significant sentence appears in that document:

We need to distinguish between the activities carried out separately by everyone of the members of Gd'AB and those which are developed collectively as a group and, in this last case, the ones promoted by Gd'AB itself or carried out in collaboration with other organizations and institutions. In one case as well as the other the work is contrasted in the group of reference constituted by Gd'AB. At times it is difficult to delimit the boundary between personal work and the group work developed by the members of Gd'AB, and the inter-group work of the latter with other groups. A good example is the history of the Large Group. Thus, some activities I carry out in the University with groups of teaching or the support groups of parents I carried out in an association enter to be part of the text of reformulation and of activities of Gd'AB.



The scheme which appears here is from the end of 93, in an attempt to reorganize the activities of Gd'AB (nucleus group), establish links with other groups or with our professional tasks. We talk a lot about the space of "revision", which finally we call "covision", clearly in an attempt to transcend the idea of supervision. Undoubtedly, I am interested in advancing in the field of task and training groups, as also in a conceptualization of

the group itself in which to try and objectivate experience.

I think that the interesting material which emerged in the symposium on narcissism took us a step further. Thus, we convoked a new space of reflection with other groups and persons: the III Intensive Workshop in group analysis. Psychoanalysis and Groupanalysis: the difficult path towards a group culture. From my first reflections on the experience, which afterwards were unified in a shared document:

The title of the call for the workshop, which to a certain measure marks the theme of it, is full of meaning for the ones who convoke it and not so meaningful for those not initiated —even if it was on an unconscious level— in this trajectory or similar one. Maybe it was for this reason that it did not come off in June, and there were more responses than expected in November. Many who came had already shared other spaces of reflection with members of Gd'AB, be it in previous invitations (Large Group, Symposium on Narcissism...) or in other professional associations (SEPTG...). This shared history appear frequently during the sessions. From the point of view of Vigotsky we would underline the importance of the group's culture of the shared or not shared social trajectory. If the workshop is, as mentioned in the text which

convokes, is a “atelier” —a place of learning— it is impossible to leave out the prehistory, that what has been learnt previously, which every member of the group brings with him/her. As Mead would say, our social I is no more than the introjection of the other —let us understand other as individuals and groups with whom we have shared our experience.

Including between the ones who responded, perhaps not all had clear which path we were talking about, in as much as pathway, process and like all process difficult and painful. Two lapsus in the first session advised us about it “bruja” (witch) instead of “brújula” (compass) —first mention of the magical— and “inofensivo” (inoffensive) instead of “intensivo” (intensive). This reference of “inoffensive”, perhaps to be trusted, of our space of reflection (the workshop) and the continuous references, not only during the first sessions, to the magical, the prayer that protects, the guardian angel, the rites of transition, the solution of the riddle for passing a bridge, the magical water... in one word, the search for an easy path, suggest to me the search for the trick which permits to cross the pathway without difficulty, avoiding THE QUESTION AND THE ANSWER, that provoke fear and anxiety.



There also emerges the “as if”, as if we could imagine a society of peers without fratricide wars, without killing the father or the son, without analyzing our own group as an example of the social reality, professional as well as personal. In fact, there are always difficulties with the groups of elaboration — what crazy proposals we make! With this I don’t want to say that the group behaved “as if” we were in an intensive workshop in group analysis, but that some maintained and/or in some moments we maintained the phantasy that it could all be as innocuous and inoffensive as possible.

The cycle of workshops closes with the IV which is organized in Pamplona; we met a group of about 20 people prepared to dialogue... but I have a diffuse recollection of the experience, and feel that in some moments it was very hard for all. The V should have been held in Bilbao but... as I already mentioned it never was realized. This is not to say that we did not meet again, the ones from Pamplona, from Bilbao,

from Barcelona... and others for example, in the encounter in Tariqa on "Integration: how and for what?" And, naturally, in the SEPTG.

I shall close this part on workshops with an idea I mentioned some lines earlier: What crazy ideas we propose! And afterwards, in a certain way we feel that our expectations remain frustrated. Something significant of the III Workshop, I think, is the introduction of the work of Trigant Burrow and, especially, his relation with Clarence Shields. The step from Foulkes to Burrow —which is not given in an equal way, not even between the members of the nucleus group, not to say the difficulty of integrating not so much both theories but both "ways of proceeding". The questioning of "authority" cannot be questioned! It is a clear transgression which finishes by splitting. Thus, "the possible vices" of the analytical conduction are repeated in the analytic group, so much more when training is institutionalized. It almost seems logical to me that what splits is left apart and that almost all texts for IV encounter are related to Pat de Maré and the large group; an attempt, which perhaps we did not know how to make use of, to find anew *Koinonia*, a way of getting on between peers different. In fact, once and again we find ourselves in groups in which we participate with the difficulty of working as a group of peers, or somebody occupies the role of authority, or fratricide fights break lose.



A long period is initiated when the majority of the members of GdAB we implicate ourselves in the Sociedad Española de Psicoterapia y Técnicas de Grupo. This implication makes that much of our efforts center on the Bulletins, the Symposiums and the management of the society itself. I shall talk about this a little further on...

1998 is a very hard year for all of us; Susana Jover dies of cancer of the esophagus. We have the feeling that we could not say good-bye. We go together to the Montseny where her ashes were to be buried... I cannot help seeing us pick cherries there some years before, happy. I don't remember if all the members of the group brought their families on this occasion, I believe yes... at least mine was there. And in a certain way my family integrates itself in the project of Gd'AB, helping with some projects but more than anything creating links of friendship, especially with Juan and with Hanne. We break, in this sense, the classical professional barriers which the psychoanalytical world imposes.

Juan discovers his lung cancer and starts the fight, the madness of confronting the illness and to go on working. I remember the Symposium of Sitges, his trip to London to present the book on the history of the IAGP, in the middle of chemotherapy... There also appears my tumor in the esophagus, thanks God benign. I said to Juan in a message: "I don't know how we are going to come out of that one... perhaps we still have not come through with all. I remember that in those years on top of it Pere's ulcer became worse and Montse Fornós who had incorporated herself to the nucleus group, had to be operated on a nodule on the neck. The feeling was that the efforts were cashing in... and that it was a high price.

The nucleus group, as I mentioned in my message to Juan, did not completely recuperate itself; other forms of work were proposed, Juan and Hanne passed on the task of convoking to the rest of the group... After the work on "Integration, how and for what?" sessions spaced themselves out and stopped at

the end of 2000. Of course, we continued to work on shared projects. And finally we started again to meet Joan, Hanne, Pere and I. In 2004, Juan proposes a final closure, after almost three years of inactivity as a group... but in the end we decide that it was not necessary. Basically, the ones who wanted to continue, we continued.

In the period that goes from August to November 2000, in our internal forum a thread is started under the title "Reflections around Grup d'Anàlisi Barcelona"; I shall try to translate a part of my reflections along with other interventions, especially the one of Pere. This sentence of E. Morin illustrates some of what I thought at the time:

"...knowledge links up in all parts with the structure of the culture, social organization, and historical praxis. It is not only conditioned, determined and produced by them, but it is also in turn conditioning, determining and producing them (what puts into evidence the adventure of scientific knowledge). Always and in all parts culture transits the individual minds, the ones who dispose of a potential autonomy, in certain conditions actualizing and converting itself in personal thought." Culture and Knowledge. Edgar Morin.

I once again re-read the messages that had arrived after the invitation of Pere to reflect on Gd'AB. Due to those marvels of the computer I look at the date this message was sent: Monday, August 27, 1956, 21:18:01+0000 and the first thing passing through my head is that in 56 I was not even born. Probably because of this Juan had not found the message of Pere, filed with the "old" messages. This anecdote is the first chapter of the history of incommunication although it could have started a long time ago, completely independent of the caprice of the computer.

Pere says: *"Dear companions: In one of the last meetings in June I promised you that during the next months I would send you my reflections about our group as a response to the situations posed that appeared the last weeks of the meetings. Thus, to start with, I would like to sum up three points I consider important of what was said, or at least what resounded in me in a special way."*

Pere, I am grateful for the effort and that you comply with the compromise you mention, but (it is not a critique I want to clarify, but more a feeling which in this case I have not complied with): was it not a compromise of the group? Why it is so difficult to give continuity through writing (something which we have defended and worked on in all the groups we intervened in) to what we worked in the group? Why have we never activated this virtual group? I think that here starts the second history or chapter of incommunication.

I don't think these are technical questions, or laziness, or... I believe that we have kept silent about so many things that it is every time more difficult to talk. Sometimes, because we did not know if it was adequate (in the end, we were not so expert), in other moments for not hurting the others, but more than anything to uphold the ideal of equality (which never existed) and that our differences were accepted and worked through within the group. I think that we have done more "as if there were no differences" (of age, training, thought, ways of doing). With this I don't want to say that we don't have things in common, nor that the work we shared was not profitable. I point out the difficulties that have been always present when we tried to analyze the functioning of our own group and, more than anything, the possibility of putting in common what was for everyone of us —not only in praxis but in our life in general— the group of analysis.

From the point of view of communication, this is most relevant. We have no way of putting in common, constructing a common knowledge and culture (here is the reason for Moran's quote), but by negotiating the meanings which everyone gives the concepts, acts, words... If there is not this symbolic negotiation, everyone thinking that the other thinks the same than (or similar) than himself, then we interpret the intention and the sense from our own frame of reference... We have constructed many things with a "common sense" but I have listened to too many silences and, every time more, I found it harder to take the risk of writing or saying, what for me is Gd'AB. Forgive my egoism, but why should I be wrong all by myself ;-)))

Says Pere: *"Joan's words in reference to his change of attitude (and the one of Hanne) that he was going to be less active and, consequently, it would be us —the rest of the group— who would have to accept if it wanted a different role, possibly more active. Suggested was, from my point of view, a generational change, a type of succession with all the complexity this implied"*.

I think that this change started with Joan's illness, I particularly consider that my role has progressively been more active (like the idea of the *atelier* where the apprentice as he learns is taking on more and more tasks) and of support (true, it is my way of doing and I don't tend to wait until they tell me what I should do... but I am not the only one in this sense in the group). In any case, it would be necessary to confront the subjective effort everyone believes he puts in the group and in the tasks of the group. I underline the "subjective" —because it is not at all shared— and, in part, this may be the cause for having to reconsider the roles and the tasks.

Personally, (it cannot be otherwise) for me the figures of Joan and Hanne have been, are and will be transcendental for my personal and group growth. I know when it annoys them to occupy a parental space or simply of authority, but at times one cannot chose the role, the role comes given by the characteristics of oneself. I don't think it is only a question of age but more of experience and knowledge.

... It is not necessary to say that Joan and Hanne understand perfectly, they already have trodden this way, but I would like them to know that we also can understand, their position. It is not necessary to give too many explanations and here the links of affect help much more in understanding than reason. We can rebel, wanting to continue in the shade of a rich tree and full of fruit, in fact we don't want to admit that we are already tree (I don't know if you understand the metaphor).

Our society understands the changeover, the relay, rather like an indiscriminate felling of trees and we find it hard to think of a space shared by trees of different ages. There are the ones that start to mature, others give their first fruits and still others give less fruit but extremely rich and elaborated... I don't want to go on with the metaphor.

Now that we are preparing the blog, I see that there was much more work done than I thought in those moments. But the same than I had to talk about the Large Group of Barcelona, the levels of compromise and production were not the same for each of the members of the group. Without a doubt, there are different rhythms, different forms of appreciating the same reality... and barriers that impede a more profound analysis of the group processes.

As I said, the group, now of four, redefined projects and objectives... Our last "big project" with Juan was the preparation of the MedConf... and, now, the blog occupies all our efforts. I think that more than ever we have been able to reflect on Gd'AB, our processes, our individual and collective work... perhaps was necessary time-distance to be able to do it.



Sociedad Española de Psicoterapia y Técnicas de Grupo

In 2003, when I left the presidency, I presented a long report on my pathway in the SEPTG, and in consequence I shall here gather some of the more significant paragraphs and the report *in toto* can be found in the blog (also published in the Bulletin of the SEPTG in the hope of continuing the “Historia abierta...”) This pathway has to do with the organization of three symposiums, three years as Spokeswoman of the Press and four years as President...

... from the first assignment the assembly of the SEPTG gave me, to organize with Maite Pi the Symposium of Aiguablava ‘95

... In those years, the relevant subject was the one of training-accreditation and we were “going around in circles with the FEAP” [the Spanish Federation which ever since is trying to unite all the professional “psi” and training institutions and bring them under one hat in the negotiations on the European level]. As you know, finally, the assembly decided not to get onto the FEAP wagon. I name the subject because it has been of recurrent interest on part of some of the members, although not of the majority, that we should convert ourselves in a regulated training association, in a source of accreditation. I also participated in the meetings of the training commission directed by the spokesman of training, Victor de Dios. Undoubtedly, as a novice I had to listen much and learn from my elders in the SEPTG, luckily, we have wise people in theory as well as experience. Although I am of nature enthusiastic and participative, in this Society I have learnt to listen and have developed a great respect for what my companions can contribute to the group. I have also learnt to respect not only the others, as persons with their peculiarities — differences— that enrich us precisely because they don’t think the same than us, but to separate the person from the idea he or she defends or proposes. It may seem something obvious, but it is not. We can disagree, not be in accordance with what the other proposes, but the discrepancy should not mean a personal disqualification, neither a “a priori” with which to judge their posterior contributions. Although it is difficult, the emotions of the moment can tinge all future interaction; I think I have made some headway in this sense. It is a debt I have contracted with the SEPTG and its members. I should add that another good exercise is trying to understand, more than interpret and judge.

...I keep many memories in relation to Aiguablava. The contents of the symposium was worked on in group in the meetings of the Vocalía of training and also discussed in the Board meetings. Joan Campos —although he did not want to appear on paper— accompanied us, Maite and myself, in all the process. I think that if Aiguablava was a memorable encounter in many senses, it was so precisely due to this group work of support before, during and after the symposium. All this process is assembled in the reports, minutes and bulletins of the Society.⁵



⁵ See Boletín Extraordinario of the SEPTG of May 1995

...the group-staff was a very rich experience of continuous reflection (Pedro Guilló, Pablo Población y Elisa, Joan & Joan, Luís Pelayo and Paco Peñarubia, Pachi, Pepa, Victor de Dios y Hanne... a interdisciplinary team “de luxe” as you can appreciate). What is more, we achieved an important feedback of reflection post-symposium, with contributions from the four small groups and the conductors of the experience. I consider that it served as a bridge towards the “matrix and channels of the group” which was the work for the following symposium in the Escorial.⁶

About training in the SEPTG

In the first place, in reference to the work elaborated by the Vocalia de Training —the Spokesman being Victor de Dios— I agree with the general functions he points out in his report⁷, some have been adopted by the Vocalías —including the Vocalía of Training— and the Board of Directors itself, others not.

A first attempt of giving information on the training activities the member carried out through the Bulletin failed for two reasons: some members of the Board considered that this was publicity, the periodicity of the Bulletin made the information inefficient —they were published when they had already started. I think this second obstacle has been solved by the website, since we can publish the activities almost immediately. The first subject still is hairy; on top we have to add a subsidiary problem: do us back or not the activities of our members. I, particularly, I am inclined to inform of all those training activities (courses, workshops, etc.) which members carry out. I don’t think that to inform implies more backing than to recognize that these activities are organized by members of the SEPTG or that members of the SEPTG participate in them. My experience is that the good training has students every year; the continuity tends to be a good reference. In psychotherapy (individual and group) the offer is so wide that the social network itself of possible applicants to the courses takes charge of selecting them. On the other hand, I don’t think that the Board or the Spokesman of Training should evaluate the quality of the courses given by our members.

We have advanced somewhat in quantifying some way the “informal” training the SEPTG gives. We certify the attendance to workshop and symposiums organized by the SEPTG, quantifying the hours of group experience acquired in them.

I must be thankful to Berta for the fact that she pushed me to again think about the training of the SEPTG... She detected as a possible symptom of repetition in an assignment to a spokesman (the one of training in this case) and after the first meeting of the Board in which training was the subject (September

⁶ See Boletín of the SEPTG. Epoca IV, No. 9, December 1995

⁷ General Functions of the “Vocalía” of Training:

1. Report, suggest, encourage, advise, concerning TRAINING PROJECTS
2. Generate, create and propose viable, EXCHANGES SPECIFIC PROJECTS of EXPERIENTIAL and Theoretical.
3. To direct and encourage contributions from all members, being a platform for reflection and intercommunication, and continuing holding of a symposium. Assist in organizing and coordinating SIMPOSYUMS, MEETINGS, CONFERENCES... or any other training event.
4. Objectifying the way INFORMAL TRAINING that is taught in our society through symposiums, magazines, newsletters, conferences and various meetings, face to promote it, and recognize.
5. Encourage the maintenance of the most defining characteristics of our society and respect MULTIDISCIPLINARITY ANOTHER (in terms of different professional person)
6. To carry out these functions is necessary and close collaboration with PRESS vocal and ZONE vocals.
7. The goal of TRAINING vocalía is not the realization of projects, but PROMOTION thereof.

Note: To be able to perform the functions set out above, you need the direct collaboration of all members of the SEPTG, expressing their opinions through concrete suggestions, reviews, articles, etc.

2001) that implicitly what we think is that training “is like this and always has been like this; and there is no wish to change”.

My perspective is somewhat different, I don't consider that there is no wish to change, but that changes happen although slowly, and if there are “resistances to change” as is logical in any group, the wish is to preserve some of the things which characterize the SEPTG. I said to her that there is “something valuable and undetermined which we are not prepared to lose (at least I), and this is the possibility of sharing and interchanging from a position of peers (with different specialties) and in an “informal” way (as opposed to regulated training). Perhaps the big resistance is the change of model of learning with which the Society operates and which to me is satisfactory. Learning which passes through experience, with conceptual contributions, sometimes a little “smudged” and which implies not so much the transmission of knowledge (understood from the point of view of “formal” education) but more the personal elaboration starting from experience or the cognitive conflict when seeing other forms of doing and thinking different to our own. It is more than anything the change of “attitudes” in reference to our work. Evidently, it is difficult to define this type of training and, perhaps, the repeated assignment to the spokesmen/women has been: on one side, clarify this uncertainty —always there are demands for answers, when in the SEPTG we rather put forward the unknown which everyone has to solve; on the other side, always there has been a great curiosity for knowing what type of training offered our members —thus, the numerous questionnaires that have succeeded each other. I believe that really the assignment is in the line of clarifying what is this type of “training” so special which the SEPTG offers, perhaps in the way of understanding it better and apply it to other ambits.

...some spaces of the SEPTG are spaces of training in their own right. So is the Symposium, the meetings and workshops of the Zones, the Bulletin, the discussion lists and even the very Board meetings. It is true, that the use of everyone of these spaces depends in large measure of the personal disposition and the wish to learn and to change, of being prepared for the anxiety produced by uncertainty, of giving oneself time to assimilate the newly learnt and to modify the old structures.

... It needs time and a certain maturity to make use of the type of training the SEPTG promotes. Ernesto said once: “At the SEPTG one has to arrive with the head well furnished”, a sentence which to me seems sufficiently clear. The report that Berta presented to the assembly of Mallorca 2002 included an opinion of Pilar González which seems important to point out, it defines as “basic to learning is to maintain a state of uncertainty almost permanent, to doubt of what is acquired, and admit critique and self-critique”.

... I could conclude saying that training in the SEPTG is of post-postgrado; is not exclusively for therapists (something often forgotten) since the ambits of application of group techniques are multiple; only accredits hours of group work (something like “participation in a training activity”) but does not guarantee which has been the use made by the person that participated in the activity; is directed basically to the change of attitudes (many of our members in the questionnaires speak about training for tolerance, flexibility, diversity, integration, uncertainty...); that without doubt it promotes critical thinking and conceptual change.

The medium of communication in the SEPTG

... My second stage on the Board was initiated in El Escorial '96, when Pachi suggested that I take charge of the vocalía of the Press and the assembly accepted this suggestion unanimously. To be in charge of the Bulletin of the SEPTG implies a great responsibility and many hours of work. In my period as

spokeswoman of the press I had no Easter vacation (preparing the Bulletin of the symposium) and neither could I enjoy de December "aqueduct" (in Spain a constitutional holiday between in around December 6 and 8) because I was preparing the December number of the Bulletin. As spokeswoman I edited six ordinary numbers; and a monograph commemorating the 25th anniversary of the SEPTG. But in spite of the work it was an absolutely gratifying task. The vocalía of the Press allowed me to know many members, through their writings and through their way of writing, but especially through the telephone contacts (we still had not entered Internet). Even became to know through their writings and the writings of other members, members I had never seen in person, members who now live far away or unfortunately are not any more with us. I learnt, reading and correcting was I published, much of our history and the history of the people who are and have been significant in the SEPTG.



But the times are changing and the forms of registering events evolve: it would be unthinkable today to limit our written communication to the Bulletin and it is because of this that from this vocalia, and with a Joan Campos insisting (visionary as he always has been, ahead of his times) that the future was in the Web, we created the Web page of the SEPTG. I told you about the first steps of this project in my report of April '98: "With the approval of the Board of Directors, and through the vocalía of the Press,

the SEPTG now has at its disposal a space of information and of diffusion in Internet. We have found a gratuitous space in Psinet, a privileged space given the great diffusion of this red in the ambit "psi". Our WEB (www.psinet.com.ar/septg) has at its disposal more than 20 pages of information on the Society, its functioning and periodical activities. The information is renewed continuously and we have at our disposal an account of electronic mail (septg@psinet.com.ar) which reverts at this moment to the secretariat (M. Fornós) and the spokeswoman of Press (I myself). Next year, the messages related to the Symposium will revert to the organizers of it".



As in so many other projects, I was neither alone in this one. We started the page with Joan Campos and Montse Fornós, elaborating the structure and the contents. At that moment the three we were coordinators of the discussion list of Grupo-Análisis, of which some of the associates of the SEPTG are members (in fact, often the contents of the symposiums of the SEPTG we discussed and elaborated on the list, and we have reported on it in the Bulletins). From here my gratitude to all who have participated in the list Grupo-Análisis, which during a long time has been a space tan privileged as the SEPTG in maintaining open the dialogue between people. It would be difficult to name all the persons who have been significative, but I would like to name some who have sent their contributions to the Bulletin (I don't include the members of SEPTG, the ones who are here, you already know how much I appreciate your interventions): Luis Fau, Máximo Lameiro, Roberto Sánchez, Roman Mazzilli, Michel Sauval, Virginia Viguera, our loved José Adolfo, and many more who appear in the

dialogues (Walter, Angela, Jacinto,...) we have collected in the Bulletin⁸. Really, as Joan Campos anticipated, Internet has opened our network of communication and has made possible that some corresponding associates have voice and contact with us, as is the case of Susana and Hernán Kesselman. At some moment we will have to contemplate the idea of incorporating a category of members in the distance but close in interests, what Joan calls “virtual members”. We also will have to reflect more profoundly on virtual groups and workshops as one more of our training activities.

We have made headway little by little; also Pere Mir gave a helping hand, when I was still president, with the structure and the contents of the Web page. Another with of my apprenticeship has to do with personal limits; so I had to accept with sorrow that the Web page grew, and that it was our shop window towards the exterior and I could not continue with this task. Pachi accepted the charge the assembly asked him to take on and as Free Spokesman of the Society he took on the responsibility of administrating the Web page. We Pachi a Web page much more interactive, with spaces like the forum, with listas like the one of the actual symposium, etc.; also contents have been amplified and structures modified for it to be more accessible and intuitive. I gave you my thanks, but it is never sufficient: “thank you web-ero”.

I want to remind you of an attempt to concretize the functions of the spokesman of the press⁹. Although, the circumstances changed and every vocal must elaborate his vision of the vocalía. I visualized a vocalía of information and press, a vocalía of communication —with a support group (since it was too large a task for only one person). Experience has made us to divide some of these functions; some have passed to the Free Spokesman, others to the presidency and others to various members of the Board.

Structures, decision making organs and groups in the SEPTG

I named some compositions of the Board in which I participated but I would not like to forget any persons of the group-Board with whom I shared work, experiences, growth, decisions and many things more which are difficult to name.

⁸ See for example the echos of the Symposium of Sevilla (No. 16, época IV), the good-bye to Carmen Pitarch (same Bulletin) or the work carried out on integration in preparation of the Symposium of Segovia (number 17 and 18).

⁹ The Vocalía of the Press is in charge of the confection and edition of the Bulletin and the other texts of information, by the conventional media (written press) as well as the more innovational ones (Internet). Thus, the task has two sides, clearly related with the mass media, a task of scientific circulation and a propagandistic task or the diffusion of the Society itself, in the internal ambit of the Society as well as the external one. This second level includes interchange with different associations and the wider diffusion to the interested public in group work. These task not only require time but also a terrible responsibility, although it is the Board that evaluates and approves the realization of the projects.

Pointing out, superficially, the functions of the vocalía of the press, we can revise the functions of a possible support group composed of members of the Society who wish to collaborate in one or various tasks of the vocalía.

- Distribution of Bulletins to the libraries of universities and professional colleges. A task which could be taken on by the Vocalía of the Zone, with the help of members who live in provinces different of the Zone.
- Constitution of a editorial committee that informs of the activities of the SEPTG in each Zone, which researches the opinion of the members of the Society in collaboration of the Vocalía of the Zone, motivating them to contribute articles to the Bulletin, etc.
- Revise articles for their selection and correction, another task still more important: promote interchanges on the theoretical level and the level of integration of inter-techniques. The assembly should decide if we establish or not a system of selection and with which criteria.
- Elaboration of projects of diffusion of the SEPTG and collaboration in projects which have already been started (WEB or activities like the Symposiums or the activities of the Zones).

Before I was named president, being Spokeswoman of the Press, the preceding presidents were Hanne Campos¹⁰ and Ignacio Rodríguez de Rivera¹¹. Without a doubt, they had very different styles of approaching the task. Hanne, I think, for all of us is an example of generosity and dedication, nobody like she has put so much time and mental space at the disposition of the SEPTG. While Hanne was president, many task groups were promoted, of these outstanding tasks that nobody really came to face, for example: elaborate Rules of Internal Regime, the history of the first 25 years of the SEPTG, definition of the functions of the spokesmen, and a long etc. She stood the personal attacks produced in the assemblies, with pain of course —because although the attack is on the role one occupies, they are always personal. What is more, I came to see that the attacks are more virulent the more one works and, I would dare say that the better things turn out. Perhaps the SEPTG is not exempt from the sin (some say they that it is a national one), of envy; in the end, we are a reflection of the society we live in. Hanne cared for every one of the projects carried out by the members of the Board and she was always at disposition. I suppose that some can think that she exceeded herself; in any case I always preferred the sins in excess to the ones by omission. I thank you profoundly that you pulled us and that you sew —by suggestions and effort— a group way of doing of operating, cooperative and by consensus.

With Ignacio I learnt another way of doing, or operating, in his period ended practically all projects initiated in the previous period; he added a way of operating to the Board meetings and the assemblies and a space was opened which seemed valuable to me, the Group SEPTG (Symposium of Sitges '98). And, at last, he could carry out a complete assignment, since on petition of the Board he only was one year as a spokesman of the centre zone and one year as spokesman of training, his complaint, very reasonable, was that he could not complete the tasks he started. Thank you Ignacio! For having been so flexible and for your work on the Board.

This way, I arrived at the presidency with two models: with one I learnt the continuous effort, the task of sewing, and a way of exercising power rather feminine — I shall reflect on the subject later; with the other I learnt flexibility and organization and, of course, a more masculine vision of exercising power,

The vice-presidency always is an assignment little defined, depending too much on the tasks proposed by the president and the ones emerging from the Board. The ambiguity is uncomfortable and often can be frustrating. I cannot think how we could facilitate the tasks of the vice-presidency, unless they were defined by the Board and in the assembly, previous to the nomination. And, this would be much “anticipating” in the SEPTG!

Treasurer: There have been discussions and small changes in reference to our economy, we even spent one Board meeting to talk about the money of the SEPTG, but really the transparency is in the annual reports. We get our money basically through fees, exceptionally some symposium has an income (Sevilla, San Sebastián, and Mallorca) but the most frequent is that there is no income or we have to face losses. Some activities of the Zone East also have produced atypical income but not worth mentioning. The big expenses are the Bulletin and the activities of the Board (diet, mail, material, photocopies, and maintenance of the Web site etc.) When we have some surplus at our disposal we destine it to specific tasks, for example pass the minutes onto informatics support. Thank you “treasurers” for taking care of this ungrateful job (remember what it is to reclaim a fee or battle with the banks) but necessary for the functioning of the society.

¹⁰ See communication 12 and 13 “From the presidency”; 1997

¹¹ See elaborations of Ignacio en los Boletines 14 and 15, época IV SEPTG; Sociedad Viva.

Talking about ungrateful and heavy work, let us pass to the secretariat and vice-secretariat of the SEPTG. I think that saying thank you is not enough, the hours of listening and transcribing the minutes are endless, the efforts of understanding us when we speak all at once and when we whisper, the background noises... and more: maintain the directories up to date, send documentation, prepare certificates, organize board meetings, organize the material of the secretariat, etc. Congratulations for your work and, even if it is too little, thank you very much. If when talking about the Bulletin I said that it was our written history, the minutes are our memory —and of course, also our history. I feel sad when I think that many of our members do not read them, and consequently do not appreciate the task (and then the things repeat themselves once and again, do not value the patient work done by persons writing the minutes so that we know where we are in every moment.

Everyone who has been on the Board has contributed something valuable and peculiar to the work we realize in group —forgive if I don't speak of every one of them in particular. My intention as president has been that the Board functions as a task group, I say group and not team, with all the connotations this implies. We have tried that a part of the Board be operative, when we occupy ourselves with: informing of the activities, present subjects we have to treat in depth, take decisions. We dedicate another part giving time to some of the themes that preoccupy us and which have been brought by some of the members of the group (economy, training, functioning of the zones, have been some of the subjects of late) and, finally, we incorporated a space of the group (group-board) to free discussion to reflect on the group itself. At times it is inevitable that the spaces overlap; the meeting of the board celebrated in Barcelona on October 19, 2002, was especially chaotic —like in the best times of the SEPTG. Always there is the possibility that the president calls to order, it is a possibility I considered but did not exercise; in part because every time I like less this “call to order”, in a certain way as a group of peers we have to know how to self-regulate ourselves without the pressure of a conductor and, in part because I wanted to observe the dynamic of the new composition of the board. But, these last years the board had been the exception in relation to the delimitation of the spaces, and my sensation is one of good work done together. Objectives had been put, shared ones as well as of every one of the posts on the board and there was an advance towards objectives of consensus. Undoubtedly, there had been conflicts and discrepancies, but they had been resolved, firstly defining the conflict, then negotiating the parts in an attempt to arrive at a resolution by consensus and, finally, when it had not been possible to arrive at a decision with an ample majority of votes. In the latter cases, on the board there was the idea that we are representatives —elected by the assembly— of the members of the SEPTG, and that the decisions should not respond to personal interests and opinions but to interests of the majority of the members.

We neither had problems between the board and the organizers of the symposium. My experience as a president has been different with every organization, but always fluent and beneficial. I tried to act as support of the organization who asked for it. In Segovia I felt that my function was especially the one of contention of the organization itself. In San Sebastian the interchange was constant —given the place, dates and the theme— a “being up to date” and transmit confidence and support to the organizers. In Palma de Mallorca I was one of the organizers —to duplicate the functions makes it difficult to separate what one does in each post— and the organization of the symposium itself took up most of my time, to the point that a large part of my work in the SEPTG last year was concentrated in the symposium. With the organization of the symposium of Carmona, things have not been easy. Perhaps we embark ourselves with many changes at the same time, perhaps we have not discussed things enough, perhaps we were not clear about limits, nor the competencies of every one, nor the corresponding places for discussion, and on top of it there had been a heap of external conditions —dates, oppositions, imposed changes of

the place of celebration of the symposium, etc.; we were constantly questioning one another, something without a doubt painful for all.

The ghost of conflict emerging in the History of the SEPTG

1) The symposiums of the SEPTG.

In reference to the relation between organizers of the symposium and between organizers and the board of directors we have two versions which have repeated themselves often; they are rapidly to appear overhead and nobody is immune to them. During some years the fight between the ones organizing the scientific part and the ones organizing the rest of the symposium was a classic, perhaps they were a group who did not have the possibility of working together —although with separate functions; perhaps because the board did not mediate between the teams, there are many perhaps... I think that these conflicts were less when the zones or groups of the same zone started to take charge of the symposiums, being the responsibility of a group and not a personal one. We remember that before, somebody proposed a theme —and if the assembly accepted, the one who had made the proposal then occupied him of herself with the scientific part, and somebody else took on the organization of the symposium. The ghost which reappears in this sense, also in relation to the board, is the one of the “personalistic symposiums”, there seems to be a voice that says; “I organize it my way, I don’t have to give explanations to anybody, if you don’t like it than organize it yourself”. I am sorry, but I am afraid of this ghost, it makes my stomach turn... I don’t see the possibility of interchange... nor of group; however well and exceptional does the symposium turn out in the end. In a certain sense, all are exceptional in one way or another, since that in spite of the conflicts, when we arrive at the symposium we attained a common objective: that it be the best possible and we sustain the place the organizers have promoted. It is not a question of restrict the ideas of the organizers; the board is not a prosecutor but a guarantor of the space of the symposium.

As I said, for some years now this conflict between the board and the organizers has not appeared. Although there were some points of disaccord —for example, in reference to the invited guests; they were discussed in the board and, finally, the questions was resolved and accorded. Historically, the source of disaccord between board and organizers was produced by two questions: one did not want to present the accounts of the symposium —for the money— or a dilemma of a personalistic organization was presented —for the narcissisms. Without a doubt, at the bottom there is a conflict of power. Why does the board have the obligation to “know” how a symposium will be organized and afterwards ask for a balance sheet? I said “obligation”, compromise, and not “right”. Very simple, the board represents the whole of the Society, the symposium —like the Bulletin— are activities of the Society and the board must guarantee that these are organized in benefit of the members. Neither the money of the organization of the symposium is the organizers’ nor should the symposium be organized in function of particular interests of the organizers. Normally, this is my experience, the board supports the initiatives of the organizers, offers some suggestions —on some occasion they produce change and others not.

Another source of conflict can emerge between spaces of the SEPTG, simultaneous to the celebration of the symposium, and the spaces designed for the encounter. The meeting of the board, the assembly and, even, the group of the SEPTG are called up by the board of directors. Evidently, an agreement is reached with the organizers in relation to times and days used for these activities. On some occasions, activities were designed in parallel to the ones of the non-members; on others, these spaces have been left free so that the attendants of the symposium could take a walk or rest. It was

not arbitrarily that one arrived at the consensus of locating the assembly on a Friday or Saturday the last hour of the afternoon; this is more an attempt to facilitate the attendance of the maximum number of members, incorporating those who cannot be present on Thursday (because of problems with their work) or on Sunday (because of the distance between the place of the symposium and the place they come from). At the time it was neither arbitrary to introduce a group for free discussion — the group SEPTG— not only because of the lack of a group where to discuss “how we feel” towards interminable and little operative assemblies; also, because often the groups of the symposium were swamped with conflicts of the SEPTG, which lead to numerous complaints from the attendant no-members who claimed for their own space in the symposium.



2) The question of limits and/or boundaries. *Discussing the public and the private, what can be named and not be named in the SEPTG.*

Within the frame of the virtual symposium appeared accusations more or less hidden of concealment and deceit, and they appear precisely from the coordinators of the virtual symposium who occupy a delicate position of power within the group. These interventions worried me very much, since these are members of the board of directors and I felt the split of the group. The same than Hanne said in a message to the forum of the symposium, my weak point is the “we”. It is about a “we” with many faces that conform a network, a constant “we” —although the persons who shape the “we” vary, who sustain the space of the SEPTG.

I started to think that they did not feel part of the same group, a group which works towards common objectives. Inevitably, there emerges a process of differentiation and alienation, a “we” in front of a “they”. I ask myself if there exists a conflict of interests between the individual objectives and those which are by consensus. In as much as “emergents” —that which emerges as a symptom in the group— I start to ask myself which parts of the SEPTG has stayed isolated, split off, without communication and, from where onwards, since they are contents which have not appeared in the

meetings nor in the groups of the board of directors. I also ask myself why the distress and the distrust appear in a public space which not even is a private forum for members of the SEPTG.

There appears the phantasy, the ghost, of the “proposals not agreed and agreements not proposed”. To a certain measure, the communicative interchange between various members of the forum, emerge various ideas: a) that the minutes do not reflect the contents of the board and assemblies; b) that there are conversations which are not transcribed, under the pretext of “protection” or “caring”; c) agreements have been made without it being clear from where and who had proposed them...

I cannot speak of processes that occurred in board meetings or assemblies previous to my incorporation as a member of the board. I can only report on the history which I have lived and part of this history includes a change from the literal and very extensive minutes —read by practically nobody— to the minutes somewhat more concise. I am trying to explain this history, together with the limits between one space and the other, the following way: a) in the first place, I consider important to clarify the questions between the private and the public of the SEPTG; also, between the spaces of information and of decision making and, the spaces of free expression —I consider that of these latter it does not correspond to the board to report on them (take minutes). b) In the second place, without doubt there exists some problem of communication if we don't achieve to transmit the knowledge accumulated throughout many years of board meetings and assemblies, elaboration of rules and regulations, and a long etc. I insist that part of the problem still is that not all members read the minutes and, also, that that what occurs in “our absence” seems not to have occurred or not have been significative. Of course, there is one more bias, the “interpretative” —there is the problem of communication— which has to do with what is it what we understand ever one of what is being said and done, this is to say, our own mental construction on what is or should be the SEPTG.

1) Power and fear of conflict.

The history of the SEPTG is long, we have passed times of leaders and great fights —I caught it almost at the end, but I still remember, I don't think that this is our moment. Perhaps it was a coincidence with a moment of expansion of Psychology in Spain, especially therapies and group techniques, a moment in which there were few people with a wide training and with capacity of being trainers. I understand that many of these people were active members of the SEPTG. As it is that we are a space in which group workers of many tendencies live together, there have also existed leaders who, finally, set up their own association, school of training. I already pointed out this idea in a previous communication, always keeping awake the hope: “Precisely for being a “mil leches” (one of a “thousand milks”), many of our more veteran members set up their own spaces of training and also group associations linked with specific theories; perhaps, in some moment we will be able to come together again and reflect on the complementarities of these spaces.”

It is easier that one head (a charismatic leader) leads, than that a group leads or the task is converted into the leader. Hanne said in one of her messages talking about leadership: “I chose one which always seems important to me: it is leadership. I understand that some are not interested in it or prefer to leave it in the back room, because of it being too complicated. However, for me it is a key question if we want to take the step from the familiar group —where who leads is the older or the one who earns the bread— to the group of peers —where we are equal as much as beings of the same species, as different as circumstances can make us. I feel that in the SEPTG we try very hard and we enjoy the necessary conditions to make this pathway in the good direction”. Although we are always with it, I believe that the SEPTG can attribute itself the merit —which is an innovation of the

classical functioning of institutions, excessively hierarchical, stratified... almost a patriarchal model—that it is not an individual but a group that conducts the society. Partially, also it has achieved that the common tasks occupy the place of the leader but that the task, let us not forget it, the same than the group is sustained by the individuals.

Anyhow, I don't believe that plays of power lead anywhere, and that personalism has any sense in our society (at least as I perceive it). Anyhow, the post of presidency is symbolically invested with power, which has consequences in the interaction with the rest of the group. I have felt more than enough aggressions since I occupy the post of president (in the assemblies, sometimes in the group board and in the groups SEPTG). They have served me for reflecting, to see which errors I have committed and which not. I am responsible for my actions in the SEPTG and, therefore, I have reported to the board and to the assembly. I accepted the corrections but I have tried to take them not as a personal aggression. A part of the aggressions, those which I could call "harassment and knock down", frankly unjustified, too frequent in society of nowadays (I don't refer to the SEPTG but to the world in general), I have interpreted as a symptom of actual disease which also manifests itself in our group.

Something like this I expressed in a communication upon return of the Symposium of Segovia¹², where we also elaborated on the theme of integration: "...we were going to confront —face to face— one of our old phantasms. These last years, this ghost has dressed itself with many names, inter-techniques, interdisciplinarity, etc. but far down it is the same question, what do we do with our differences?, what can be share and integrate? How can we find a respectful way of proceeding ("un quehacer respetuoso") with all the ways of proceeding we bring with our experience and from our frames of reference? I think that all of us who have been some time in the SEPTG, we appreciate this group matrix as a space of enrichment and of continuous learning, and precisely, it is our differences which enrich the matrix more than our similarities. This has not avoided that in our historical pathway have merged conflicts —and the ones to come, resignations, critiques, resistances to work and a long etc.... The "devils" came out in the two groups on Sunday, in the group of the SEPTG and in the space of synthesis of the symposium. I want to think that symptomatic interventions emerged of what the group cannot integrate; they are parts which tend towards splitting, they alert us about the "not understood", the "not lived", of the difficulties of pushing a group task between peers —without privileges (age, training, role, etc.) and without identification with a paradigm. We have no more than a common objective in front of us and a shared pathway behind us. I cannot deny that complaints annoy me, more so when they are hurled aggressively against a group or a task, more so if they are little concrete and don't serve for constructing but rather for destroying. It is difficult not to respond with violence to violence, not to position oneself as aggressor or as victim, not to feel personally attacked. But there is our aggressive and violent part..."

In the following symposium, San Sebastian, we worked on violence, but we continued without resolving the question of why conflicts emerge in relation to the subject of integration and, to a certain extent, the one of training. Since we are with the subject of integration, more so with all we had worked before, during and after the Symposium in Segovia (I say we worked because we did so in various groups) and, also because of what we worked in Carmona, I am beginning to have clear that perhaps it is not possible, and perhaps not even desirable to "integrate all". It produces chaos or a one-track mindedness. Perhaps it is possible to understand different postures —I don't say from a

¹² "Integration, violence and power", Boletín of the SEPTG, época IV, no. 17.

perspective of tolerance, because this already puts one on a level of superiority— but from the perspective of respect. I believe this may be a way of opening dialogue, cooperate, learn and go on changing. Is it a form of integration? Could be, there is not an only answer. Evidently, if we consider integration as a synthesis of different parts, this is not the answer. And evidently, there are limits to what one can understand or accept. Just the same, perhaps our outstanding task is not integration but conflict and frustration. If this is so, this theme will emerge in a future symposium.

It has been pointed out repeatedly that in the SEPTG conflict is avoided, to maintain the illusion of “a space of living together” of equality and, in a certain way, of reparation. A place where we can unload the discomfort involved by the daily competitiveness, the consumer culture and the hurry, the limitations of institutional work and, also, private work. Also, on some occasion had appeared the complaint that the word eats up the time of the body and, especially, the emerging of the sentiments. I don't want to fall into the idealization of the SEPTG; there have been and there are conflicts, we resolve them on the spur of the moment as best we know, but at least many of us we try to maintain open the constant experiment of the “space of living together”. Is it necessary to provoke the conflict? The personal disqualification and frontal attacks, are they necessary? For what?

This year in the board meeting celebrated in Barcelona in September, I informed that this was my last year, a year of reflection and stock-taking, to be able of reverting to the board, the assembly and the spaces of the SEPTG some of what I have learnt from this lookout point, the presidency. This without doubt makes that I am somewhat more silent as is my habit and apparently less active, but it has also made me more sensitive to listening. I have listened to agreeable things which make me think that we continue in line, fighting to establish cooperative models —I was going to say democratic, but seen how the democracies go, the word died in the attempt; and, also I have listened to disagreeable things that hurt me because they attacked treasured ideas, beloved people, the essence of the group. Perhaps this is diversity. It is not only in ways of doing or thinking differently, but in ways of approaching the group and life, completely different. I think that one can be in disaccord in many ways. I particularly am only interested in the ones that serve for maintaining open the channels of communication and the ones that facilitate change from the point of view of “understanding”. I recognize that although conflict does not frighten me, violent conflict and aggression fills me with fear. Sometimes a silence or an interpretation which nobody had asked for is sufficient that neither dialogue, not understanding nor change is possible. In any case it facilitates dialectical fights, perhaps a form of showing off and self-satisfaction make it seem that there is change (a first order change according to the school of Palo Alto), because of the movement produced. A change so that nothing changes and we all return more convinced than ever of our positions, the possession of the truth and of being right. One sees only what one wants to see, hears what one want to hear and understands what one wants to understand.

Every time I value history more, the one of the group and of the people who have constructed it. Thanks once again to Joan and Hanne for looking after it that history is conserved and can arrive to the group. And also, every time I respect people more —tell me if it is a question of age— including the ones who do not think the same than I. I value that from all and every one of you who are reading me in this moment, I have learnt something valuable, something which has allowed me to grow and to reconstruct myself. Perhaps, it is due to these appraisals that the personal attacks hurt me “in my soul”, that far from expressing the disagreement of ideas, they sound to me like converting the other in a target, in an object to be destroyed. How can we resolve this type of conflict? Eliminating one of the contenders? In this situation I feel myself without answers, impotent, completely disarmed.

As a kind of farewell

I would like to add that to be president is not an easy task, it occupies lots of mental space, it means to change one's individual point of view, the 'I think' for a group point of view which implies before taking a decision to listen to every one of the voices of the group which I have internalized. Before starting any action, consider what this one or that one would have said or done... this and the group interactions, for this reason the live history is so indispensable. My voice, is my voice but also it is echo, it is made echo of all we have shared in groups... I know that I will feel an enormous void, an immense pain as I detach myself from these voices, from this internal group which has accompanied me in my walk as president of the SEPTG.

These last years I have lived through many losses, I have had to have two operations, and had to say farewell to two people I loved very much. Perhaps my personal circumstances have made me learn a lot about my limits, of what I can do by myself and what I can do accompanied, increase my sensibility and tolerance towards what others can do (not to be so demanding as I am with myself). I have learnt to delegate and deposit my confidence in the companions who have passed through the board; to be alert, vigilant, at disposal but letting that others take ahead their projects. I said, recently nominated, that my function was not to take decisions but to make possible that these were taken in group. And, the group, the groups have functioned. The magic of the SEPTG has produced itself...

As I told you after Aiguablava, this is a choral production, with many protagonists, all contributing something. There have been conflicts, but there have been much less difficult moments —with decisions which could hurt some people— than moments of dialogue and consensus. The primary in my doing always has been that which benefits the SEPTG, or at least the majority of its members. Bien sure, not always I have done or let do the best and most adequate, it is easier to be wrong than to get it right, but one also learns from errors. For me to be in charge is to take on charge, is more than anything a service towards the others. I have never expected a "pat on the shoulder" or recognition, since accepting a post is to carry out a task. Anyhow, I have felt recognized and supported, even without asking for it. The only benefit I expected was to learn and grow in group, something I obtained beyond measure. Thus, my debt with the SEPTG and its members is great.



In our nomad society I initiate a new transit, a change from the small group of the board of directors, where I spent seven years, and from a specific place, the presidency, to the large group of the SEPTG. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity of growth my colleagues of the SEPTG have offered me. I am also thankful for the confidence deposited in what you have entrusted to me; as for me I have tried to do it as major I could. I hope that the errors are compensated by my surrender and tenacity in carrying out a group task, in a certain

way integrating. I matured in this time and I feel that the task itself has been decisive in this change. I have learnt from my fears and my limits, and that I am very little if I am not with others, and I feel profoundly enriched. My very special thanks to all who have been and are in the board of directors, a real operative group —in Pichon's sense, creative and collaborating.

After such an intensive period of activity, the last year I simultaneously attended the presidency of the SEPTG and the Secretariat of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Barcelona, so I needed a rest. I permitted myself to skip some symposiums of the SEPTG and, also, my activity with Gd'AB was lessened.

In fact, we started an intensive task preparing the III Mediterranean Conference of IAGP and the XXXV Symposium of the SEPTG. Maite asked us to be part of the organizing committee... and, how could we refuse? The opening and closing workshops, the inaugural conference with Juan and Malcolm, the virtual symposium, the book of summaries of the Conference... and our next stop will be Bilbao ;-)

Groupanalysis in Cyberspace

Juan, always ahead of us, gives the jump to the virtual network... and we with him. Of course... he always has been able to enthuse me with his ideas. Perhaps in this point, together with others he has managed to entangle ("enredar"), of the group I have been the one who could share more projects with him. Because of a simple technical capacity... and, of course never as much as we would have liked.

I recognize, however, that he planted a group-cyber-seed with which I continue... naturally, working with virtual groups.

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Here, I shall permit myself to start with the reflections we made for participating as a work group — which as such was not admitted— in the 3rd Congress On Line of OCS. The motive which was given us was, basically, that the proposal contained an excessive number of ideas, that it was not very clear and they doubted that people would present communications to the group (it seems that this was the principal inconvenience). On that occasion Juan invited Jesús de Miguel and Francisco del Amo, with both of which we had been working frequently; with Jesús in the Faculty of Sociology and also in groups (Large Group, workshops...). With Patxi in the SEPTG, in groups... y, how could it not be, with the Web of the SEPTG and the list of grupo-análisis first and, later, with the list árbol (permanent symposium of the SEPTG).

The pressure with which texts always had to be presented (the summary for yesterday)... made that Juan on the telephone and myself on the keyboard... we gestated this, which in reality says much of what we had tried to do up to that moment. We said (I underline what seems most essential to me):

The coordinators of the group have spent various years collaborating in projects of elaboration and transmission of knowledge through the Net, as well as investigating the possibility of continuous work with professional groups by means of diverse technologies which have been emerging these last fifteen years.

Some of us work in the University, others have a long experience in the conduction of group and we hope to incorporate to the group colleagues which have been participating in the projects mentioned and some cybernauts (who have incorporated the new technologies as a part of themselves and who adapt rapidly to novelties, without opposing resistances).

Although we would like to approach in this work group all these subjects pointed out by key words and the title, in as much as core and central ideas of reflection:

- **The digital gap:** *Who are the new illiterates in our globalized and intercommunicated society?*
- **The ivory tower/s:** *“Information is power” Is there really a free Access to information and/or knowledge or does this possibility vanish in the hands of institutions and/or political and economic corporations? The only valid knowledge is the one evaluated by a group of experts? Can the pyramidal structure that dominates all institutions, change?*
- **Democracy in professional groups:** *Can stable relationship be established in virtual work groups that facilitate the creation and transmission of knowledge? What are the resistances to cooperative work and to the absence of a charismatic leader who guides and protects the task? When does conflict emerge? What are the problems of communication?*

Perhaps we will not be able to approach with the amplitude we would wish for what really would be an analysis of the present moment, through how we are and how we, the human beings, have arrived at this point (biologic, psychological, sociologic, anthropologic, historic...)

To put an example, an interesting analysis from the point of view of knowledge is which have been the channels of acceding to it. From the predominantly animistic societies, in which the myth had the value of true history, it complied with a normative function and, perhaps, its most important function was the transmission of knowledge on the environment that allowed survival. In the contemporaneous world the knowledge of the “reality” of the human being and his environment fragmented itself. To say it some way, the oracles have multiplied and professionalized themselves, se capacity of direct dialogue with nature has been lost. The network could become a true myth of the XXI century, but our reality also has become multifacetet and complex. Not even the chosen ones can accede nowadays “to knowledge” or to reality, if there is some reality to be shared.

Our conversations previous to the presentation of this work group have been in diverse ambits, but we will specify for the moment one of our experiences, which have carried out in the list “Foro de Grupo-análisis”.

And at this point we recovered part of the paper presented in 2005 (Evaluation of the list “Foro de Grupo Análisis”).

Grupo-análisis is conceived as an experiment in communication (of a group made by a group). The task of the group has been and is “to analyze the functioning of the group itself, in this medium (the virtual) and in a world context in process of globalization”.

The multidisciplinary group, although predominantly “psi” can be understood as social Microsystems, representative of the cultural, work and personal realities (the groups every individual brings with him) of the members of the group. This way, the analysis of the group is at the same time an análisis of the society from which it proceeds.

To facilitate this task, we have proposed ourselves to reinforce and organize the dimensions of investigation and of professional and public learning through the use of resources which allows us the zone of associated files and cooperative work of the BSCW of RedIris to which the Foro is linked.

The Foro of Grupo-Análisis emerged when Windows '95 was launched globalizing the access to Internet, and counts with more than 9 years of run. In our experience, cultural and linguistic barriers add themselves to the ones which already derive from discourses inspired in different orientations and distinct methodologies in group work.

I am coming back to the list [“Foro de discusión en Grupo Análisis”](#) trying to explain more this part of the way which, as I indicated, we have shared as administrators with other people, although Juan has been present... and I, almost, almost ;-) We must be very grateful to the interest and support of Juan de las Heras, our “guardian angel” in RedIris, where the list is housed.

Although the text of introduction to the foro has been modified more than once, the objective and methodology has been maintained. Centering ourselves in the latter, there are four important points:

- **In spite of using the term group-analysis in a generic sense, there exists a group compromise to use a group-analytic methodology in the attainment of the objectives of the group.**
- Although this methodology in its historic development has received the imprint of the world of group psychotherapies (the group as an instrument of individual change), as it is conceived in this Foro, its principal objective is not therapeutic *sensu strictu*, but is all group work with the analytic function added which takes as point of departure the fact that the human being is in essence and by nature radically social.
- **In this sense, group analysis has as an objective to overcome resistances which go from a solipsistic position to a solidary position with others in overcoming the obstacles to cooperative action.**
- Of course, it is a methodology which lends itself to be taken on board by anybody who subscribes these ideas, or which could be deduced or follow from them.

A good part of the conclusions of that paper (Martínez and Campos, 2005) are related to the questions which in given moment we made ourselves in and on the Foro of Grupo-analysis:

What is a virtual group?

Minimum requisites of a virtual group:

- A nucleus of participating persons that give continuity to the group.
- One or more objectives by consensus, explicit, and which can be revised.
- Respect for the explicit norms and the implicit ones the group constructs.

- On the part of the participants, the capacity to represent themselves to the interlocutors, their roles, their relationships, as well as, to the group as a whole (which is different to the parts).
- The group can heterogeneous (guarantee of creativity) but should share certain attitudes and codes which guarantee the possibility of communication and construction of shared knowledge.
- The figure of a group coordinator/s is necessary, although be it on a symbolic level, as a guarantee of: **contention** (control) in front of the uncertainty or conflicts; and, of **permanence** of the shared space.

In this sense, in a classical moment of “getting rid of the conductors of the group” I tried to clarify which were my functions:

- **As administrator** I have multiple assignments, some as stupid as checking that your mail addresses are correct and change the options of subscription. I can moderate somebody or eliminate him or her from the list, add him to the list, etc. Almost always I limit myself to do what you yourself ask me to.
- **As a coordinator** from the groupanalytic perspective:
 - a. I am one more member of the group
 - b. Like other members of the group I can point out or propose the analysis in a given moment.
 - c. I should keep certain limits of contention. In a face to face group, one of my assignments would be to convoke and take care of the space-time limits. In the virtual space the limits are looked after in a different way, but they are taken care of. I should guarantee a certain security for the members of the group, so that they can participate freely. Of course, although this is a recourse which I have used on counted occasions, I can remind people of rules and norms of conduct when the liberty of integrity of another or other members of the group is being harmed. It could help to remember that my liberty starts where the one of another ends. Fortunately this has not occurred often and other members of the group react; I always leave space for this type of resolution before intervening. In this case I am a “women on the boundary”, with a task of participating observer.
 - d. My concrete contribution: I always have a representation of the group in as much as Gestalt; individual contributions almost always acquire a sense of gestalt and I don't only analyze them as symptoms of the individual but as “emergentes” (or spokesmen/women of the word) of emotions of part of the group. The devolutions are always from this global point of view and not particular, and in any case when the “emergente” is very focalized, I try to see him or her as part of the group, not as an isolated individual. This implies a weight which without doubt I carry together with other veteran members of the group, able to have a representation of the group and dialogue with it.

We can clarify these functions if they are not clear, but the method of conducting is not going to change and the coordinator neither. This is not a T-group, nor an operative group, not a Morenian psychodrama...although at times we use these theories to better explain what is happening in the group. Many of these tasks are easier in face to face groups, a look is sufficient to ask that they let another talk, but in this medium at times I have to be necessarily explicit. And I could put in plural because it is not only a problem exclusively of the coordinator.

This sentence: “I hope that this time the work of writing and marking serves for something” has to do with what I call the “memory of the fish of the group” since sometimes clarification of information is asked for which is in the presentation of the list or uploaded in the BSCW... and one thinks, don't they read it before they inscribe themselves?... it seems not... the most curious is when the question is asked by somebody who has been years in the group.

One detail more: **The compromise improves if there is a complementarity between face to face and virtual sessions.** If this is not so, there is a latent and manifest wish to “know each other” although frequently this is not possible or it only happens to be a phantasy.

How does one acquire a group identity?

Although somewhat more complex, the essential coordinate is time. **Continuity.**

Other coordinates:

- Overcome the different phases and conflicts which obstruct the continuity of the group: conflicts with authority, conflicts inter and intra-personal, conflicts of role, conflicts with the task. Various symptoms in function of the phase (desertions, silences, misunderstandings, aggressions, etc.)
- Recognize oneself as a group in front of other groups of similar characteristics. To have a sign of identity of oneself, accepted by the group. Problems derived from pertaining to diverse groups.
- Construction of a group culture (norms and values) which transcend the contributions of the individuals to the group.

How to overcome the change of time-space coordinates?

One of the more notable differences between face to face groups and virtual groups is the **space-time and its consequences in communication and representation of the group and its individuals.**

The space, beyond the screen where we read, becomes a network of connections (many times we have defined it as a multicolor tapestry). “A phantom space which every member concedes the group, the internal group of every one.”

The time introduced by the virtual character: a group is always open, with different personal times, a kind of an infinite present; and the conflict, the spaces of latency between messages and the silences. “In this ‘impermanency’ of time we now must divide ourselves between the colleagues who are in our everyday “real” and in our virtual “real”, where Time takes another dimension... but the two “real” shape our reality in this XXI century. Then the ‘being’ in the tangible space is replaced by a ‘being’ in the symbolic space” (José Adolfo Segura).

The problem is that the ‘being’ (time and space) in as much as subjective, seems to dimension itself in a different form at the individual level, therefore, the problem is to find a ‘being in the group’ sufficiently shared.

How is the communication in a virtual group?

This subject has been discussed at length, words are often insufficient for communicating, it's not a question of mere information (meaning) but how it should be understood (intention and meaning). We

can add that the codes have to be negotiated (professional, cultural codes, etc.) for understanding to take place, the meaning and the sense, as well as establishing mechanisms of feedback. Obstacles and symptoms;

- Misunderstandings
- Latencies of waiting: expressed by forms of frustrations
- Changes of topics, impossibility of following the themes: expressed in form of anxiety, long silences take place.
- Messages outside the topic, concealed publicity; expressed in form of anxiety and aggressive reactions.
- Swamping: expressed in the form of rejection.
- The equivalent of conversations in parallel. “What one says in public and what one says privately”. It is expressed by reactions of “fight-flight” and manifestations of persecutory ideas.

How to overcome barriers of a communication exclusively in writing without CNV indicators?

- Creation of NV indicators substitutive and clarifying of intention.
- Use of creative and symbolic resources (in our list, poems are a frequent resource) in underlining the message.
- Creation of shared referents, clarify concepts, look for interpretative contexts through the different resources.
- Make manifest, conduct the group, and discuss any of the communicative conflicts which are detected.

What function and role occupy the members of the group? Personal identity versus group identity

Numerous classifications have been presented of the type of participation; the most accepted is the one proposed by Lorenzo García Aretio¹³.

- Cooperators
- Exploiters
- Silent ones
- Absent ones
- The governors and the leaders
- Mistaken ones, would be the ones that insist in introducing in the list or course themes which, although interesting, are not the objective of the group.

Commentary: we can all play some of these roles, depending on the moment.

Reaction: criticizes the silent and the absent ones and the exploiters.



Productivity and development of the group?

The group has been maturing but there is an outstanding task we have: conceptualize the rich

ercommunities II. In <http://www.uned.es/catedraunesco->

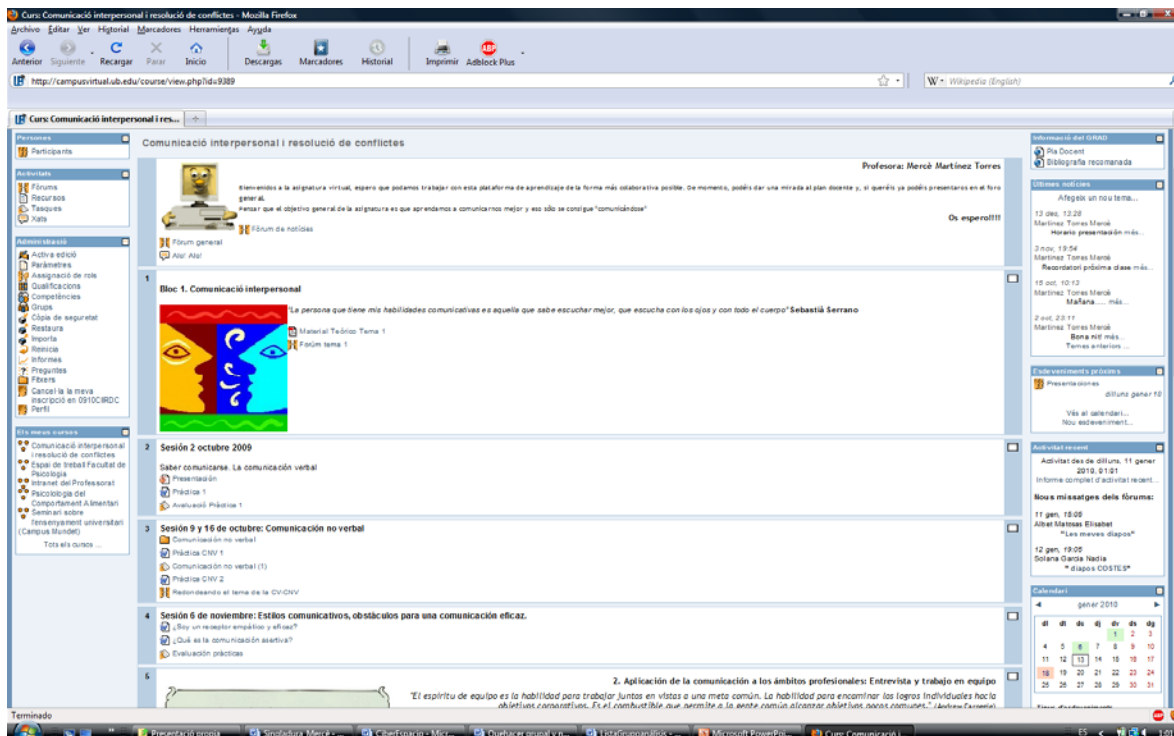
contributions that were made. “There is still something else that preoccupies us and which hardly has started: how to write the history of this group, how to make the experience into a conceptualization and vice versa”. We have already elaborated various papers in group (“Integration, how and for what?”; “What is a virtual group?”; “Communication, Group and Internet”...) but this “analysis of the communication of a group by a group” always wakes resistances to the task. This group is not unique, neither is it due to the fact that it is a virtual group, since similar phenomena have occurred in face to face groups.

Teaching platforms

From my point of view the finality of teaching platforms is to complement face to face and virtual teaching.

Objectives incorporated in the teaching methodology:

- **As a point of production and interchange of materials**(documents by blocks, evaluations, individual and group papers, complementary material and proposals of teachers and students, etc.) → **Learning cooperative**
- **As a kind of tutorial, communication in groups, between students and points of encounter not face to face**(continuity face to face space – virtual space) → **Communication**
- **As a way of continuous evaluation, with constant feedback** (diverse modalities of evaluation/ auto-evaluations...) → **Evaluation training**



This is the image of one of my courses in the teaching platform of the UB.

In the left bar one can observe some of the activities we use: Consultations (for example, in this course was chosen what type of product we were going to use for the experiment), Forum (we use many,

general, by themes, one of a more social type), Questionnaires (I used it to make auto-evaluations of the subject contents), Resources (contents, bibliography, etc.), Tasks, etc.

The notice for navigators introduced at the beginning of the course:

- To facilitate the beginning of the activities of the course in the Virtual Campus of the UB, let me give you some recommendations:
- This virtual space is ONLY a complement of the face to face classes and, in consequence, in no cases the activities we carry out substitute yours —rights and obligations— of attending regularly. Anyhow, your participation in the virtual classroom will always be of great help to you in passing the course.
- Follow with attention the messages and indications which I will give you in class as well as on the bulletin board in the virtual classroom. From this space I shall regularly send you the orientations, indications and suggestions necessary to facilitate your learning of the material.
- It is important that from the first moment on you organize yourself and plan on an individual level a daily time dedicated to this subject, with the purpose of working in an adequate way the contents and carrying out the proposed activities. Remember that it is your personal work and in group which will give the maximum possibilities of entering the dynamic of the course, of doing so in a satisfactory way and with the maximum benefit.

Results of the experience:

- Offers a space of continuity throughout the semester.
- Increases the communication professor-student and between students (quantity and quality)
- Improves shared planning of work, face to face as well as virtual
- The resources can progressively be brought up to date during the course in function of the didactic objectives and interests of the professor and the group class (it is a dynamic tool)
- Improves the follow-up and the carrying out of continuous evaluation
- Improves the efficiency and the attitude (at least in the small groups)
- A progressive identification with the group is observed and the feeling of being a group (at least in the small groups)

The subjective aspect from the point of view of the person sustaining the group/s

My experience is being much more gratifying with the virtual classrooms, perhaps because the objectives are better defined and the position of formal leadership is unquestionable. Although, there emerge informal leaders in the student group which, for the moment, has served as support in the continuity of communication of the classroom and as incentive for participation of the rest of the companions.

In relation to the foro of grupo-análisis, it is difficult to explain how a group can arrive to be a burden, a mental burden, especially in silence. How much time do we pass thinking: What has happened? What is happening to this one or that one? Why does not arrive a poem of... a reflection of... a proposal of... a wink of...?

In silence the phantasy overflows. The lack of response cannot but be thought of as a failure, not a personal failure but a failure of a project, the possibility of maintaining permanent spaces of group

dialogue, spaces that not only permit change (or that they be relevant) on an individual level, but which create alternative social networks in this individualistic, globalized and little solidarity world. **A group without a leader, the leader of which be the group, or this task of establishing a different social network. A space of living together –convivencia- in the differences, facilitator of communication and resolution of conflicts.**

The imagined is well reflected in this poem:

*Oh! This animal that doesn't exist
they didn't know,
but in any case they liked
its demeanor, its air, its neck,
even the light of its silent look.
Certainly it didn't exist.
They loved it,
it became an animal so pure.
They always left it space.
And in the clear and free space
It gently raised its head
and almost didn't need to be.
They didn't feed it grain,
always only with the possibility to be.
This possibility instilled such force
in the animal
that a horn grew on its forehead.
A horn.
There arrived a maiden so white...
and then it was... in the argent mirror and in the girl.*



Rainer Maria Rilke (Sonette an Orpheus)

The question is to go on nurturing these spaces with the “possibility of being”, I hope that, finally, they are to be.