
CORRESPONDENCE

From: Juan Campos-Avillar
Paseo San Gervasio 30
Barcelona - 22
SPAIN .

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Dear Harold

Congratulations to the April issue! It is a beauty and I am sure it will help. Finally, Group Analysis, the cluster of institutions founded by S. H. Foulkes, has taken the step of "doctor cure thyself" and, as it could not be otherwise, since their ills are of the nature of a group disease, they have chosen to do it the group-analytic way. The youngest, GROUP ANALYSIS the Journal, seems to be in charge of taking care of the Word.

Ours is a very uncommon sort of social organisation, in case that in such a loosely organised association the word organisation fits. From the "small band of trouble takers" that gathered around Michael Foulkes forty years ago we have now grown to be a "large band of trouble makers". And, of course, there is conflict and there are problems, but problem-solving is our speciality and when we do it we do it by the group. But, are we a group? Are we a family? Are we a mass or a horde? Or are we a community? My feeling is that among all these options we have chosen to be a community. What sort of a community, would you ask? A T.T.T's. Community.

To cure, to educate and to govern are impossible professions to which Freud compares psychoanalysis which embraces them all. Group Analysis on top has decided by Constitution as its main object "to relieve those suffering from psychiatric disorders and who are in need of treatment" (Art. 3). "In furtherance of the above object but not further or otherwise the Society derives the following powers ..." Like the Commandments listed I to X. No wonder we have problems, with such an ambitious undertaking. Who could avoid them?

I read the April issue of GROUP ANALYSIS as if it was the free-floating discussion of a large group. Let me tell you what I saw and what I heard. After a brief introduction by you as the convener, some afterthoughts of mine and the reports of Jane Abercrombie and Andrew Powell, the group takes over and decides to deal with the unresolved problems that "cannot be said" - the social unconscious in the group.

Several theories or hypotheses are examined as source of the malaise. The family myth of the Founding Fathers, the frozen mourning of S. H. Foulkes, the generation gap between old timers and young turks and also very pragmatic things: money, power, control: shit! and lack of communication, the words that bind the divided individuals into small fighting groups led by basic assumptions instead of by their group work.

So, there pops up our Robin Hood, the family therapist, and with great skill he throws onto the floor a parataxic intervention: *He mentions the U-turn!* Gee, Robin, you did it again! Never mind if your "interpretation" is false or correct, the fact is it stirred up a lot of feeling. People started talking and from now onwards the "system" cannot be the same. Of course, everyone understood you depending on where on the network hammock he sits and where it most presses his nodal point. Then they say "family therapy cannot be done the group analytic way"! Let me tell the group what I understood.

Group Analysis is to me a three-lane highway - theory, training and practice. This illegal U-turn can be taken from each of these lanes and, of course, is more dangerous the faster the traffic goes and depending on how many lanes you have to cross in order to commit the infraction. Let us forget about the theory lane, which unfortunately among our crowd is practically at a standstill and concentrate on the training and practice lanes that are moving faster.

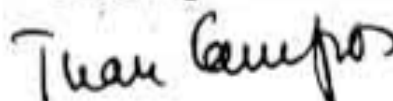
Taking a U-turn towards psychoanalysis from the training lane means to adopt as a model the one of the International Training Committee of the International Association of Psychoanalysis. Fortunately, among us was no Max Eitengon, and our training schemas are still flexible enough. Neither did we have a *Verlag* to process all our thoughts. The Qualifying Course presents a problem, though. Unqualified group analysts training qualified group analysts to feed the membership of a non-accrediting Society sounds non-sensical but that is how it is. The child becomes the father of the parents and on top it wants at least control and power, since it is not given independence. The eldest, the Mother Society, won't give up what it holds, which is the links with the dead Father, this is why nobody mourns. Then everybody goes on talking about unresolved transferences, when in reality, we should think of our own countertransferential links - of the purest kind - those which arise from the personality of its holder and of the network - the plexus - he or she is in. Societal problems are difficult to solve. The Trust, I hear, is gone. That is a good thing. No more "dirty" links! The problem is now between the Institute, the Society, and - do not forget - the International Panel, of which the Journal, Workshops and Symposia are the main tools.

But let us move into Practice. We have in this very same April issue several fair representations of what is to do the U-turn. There is Lisbeth E. Hearst (pp. 25-32) driving safely the group analytic way. The emergence of the mother on the route won't lead her astray from "conducting" properly her microbus. Regardless of how much "self-thinking" she gets involved in, she won't let her people be stranded during her summer break. She keeps to her chest her thinking and does her job, to help the group mature and to take care of its needs. Let us compare Lisbeth's report with the one that follows on: Reflections ... by Luiz Miller de Paiva and A. F. Faria, Jr. These two analysts of the group don't have to do much thinking nor to take care of the group. They follow step by step what is written in Bion's bible and they don't have to do much "translation" either; the group talks and dreams the language of Melanie Klein. My groups, Lisbeth's groups, they don't talk foreign languages, they speak their own mind in their own words, and what makes sense is our ancestral common sense.

Group Analysis is about communication, at all levels and for all people involved. We are lucky, Hanne said after more than five years studying the unwritten book of S.H.F., that he did not write it. We would by now have our own "bible" and, as Bion cleverly announced, bible reading is the best way groups find to stop their own growth. Group Analysis is a monster, a sort of sphinx, or like Medusa with many heads and many tongues, and what unites it is the language that between all we have learned to build. I am not afraid of the Lord of the Flies, we are not children, nor adolescents, we will be able to build the City, and the Tower of Babel, as long as we talk the common language, we use the mind of the group, and we don't allow envious Lords to confuse our tongues. Our Lord should be no Michael, no founding leader, but the "Group", that is why I talk of "groupniks" instead of group experts, or group therapists.

With my best wishes to all, looking forward to see you in Rome. Ah! and if Jane Abercrombie's idea of a retreat prospers, let us make it residential and I will ask for a seat.

Sincerely

 Juan Campos